



NAME/TITLE	Let your child lead and follow your child's lead!
AGE	0-3
DESCRIPTION	The best way to encourage your child to communicate is to let them start the interactions with you, and instead of leading or directing the interaction yourself, let your child lead. When you let your child lead and respond with interest to what he/she is telling you, they will want to communicate with you even more! First step is to get face to face, meaning you lower your position and place your head in front of your child's head. That way you can connect more easily, share the moment and both of you can see and hear each other better. The next step is to observe, wait and listen – meaning you observe their body language, notice what your child is looking at and after figuring out what is their current interest, you should comment on it! Then you should wait for your child to respond to the interaction by stopping your talking, leaning forward to your child, and looking at them expectantly. Waiting in this way will send them the message that you are ready for them to respond or, better still, to take the lead themselves. The most important thing to remember about waiting is to give your child enough time to understand that you expect them to send a message, regardless of the modality (sound, word, gesture, facial expression, eye contact, etc.). And after your child responds you should listen, meaning you should pay close attention to your child's words and sounds without interrupting them, even if you've already figured out what they are telling you. You should respond to your child's words immediately with interest, because replying to their message with enthusiasm helps your child to connect your response with the message they sent. Put on a smiling face, use different animations and pitch variations in your voice, fun sounds and words, and imitation. It is important to take turns to keep the interaction going because the longer you keep the interaction going, the more opportunities your child has to learn how to communicate. There will be times when you don't understand your child's message, and those situations can be frustrating for both of you. At times like these, try to look at the situation for clues and guess what they are telling you. It is important you let them know that what they say is important to you and that you are trying your best to understand them.
LINKS, SOURCES	Weitzman, E. (2017). It Takes Two to Talk: A practical guide for parents of children with language delays (5th ed.). Toronto: The Hanen Centre.





NAME/TITLE	Use routines to spark an interaction!
AGE	0-3
DESCRIPTION	Routines are activities which happen almost the same way every day, which are repeated many times and have specific roles for their participants. Some of the most common routines in your child's daily life are waking up, diaper changes, getting dressed, walking/driving to preschool, grocery shopping, feeding time, bath time and bedtime. Routines are also people games (like Peek-a-boo, Hide and seek, tickling or chasing), songs and rhymes. Routines offer us a variety of chances for our children to take turns and participate in different interactions. When engaging in a routine activity you should follow a few steps. Firstly, you should start the routine the same way each time (for example, <i>Let's play Peek-a-boo!</i>) because over time your child will start recognising routines and anticipating what's about to happen. Secondly, plan when and how your child will take a turn in the interaction and adjust the routine to give your child a chance to take a turn, whether the turn is saying a word, making a gesture or doing an action depends on the stage of your child's development and routine itself. During the routine you should repeat more or less the same actions, sounds and words because it will make it easier for your child to learn and follow the routine, and also keep the ending the same way so your child knows when the routine has ended. Keep in mind that even though routines are fun, your child may not always be in the mood for the routine you've started. If your child is interested in something outside of the routine, be ready to stop the routine and follow their lead!
LINKS, SOURCES	Weitzman, E. (2017). <i>It Takes Two to Talk: A practical guide for parents of children with language delays</i> (5th ed.). Toronto: The Hanen Centre.





NAME/TITLE	Add and expand language during the interactions!
AGE	0-3
DESCRIPTION	As a part of following their child's lead, parents spontaneously add language to the conversation. During these first interactions and experiences, children are hearing you repeat words over and over again, and thus learning new words and phrases and building up their vocabulary. Once your child learns many words, they may be ready to start saying some of them. You as an adult should take advantage of the time you spend together with your child to add language as a natural part of the interactions. When adding language to your interactions you should match what you say to what's happening at the moment, you should repeat important words and use a variety of other words and combine them to expand the message (for example, if your child sees a plane flying, you can comment <i>Plane! It's a plane. Plane is flying. Plane is flying high in the sky!</i>). You can also expand your child's messages (for example, if your child sees you eating an apple and says <i>Apple</i>, you should build up on that expression and comment <i>Yes, an apple. Mommy is eating an apple</i>). You should highlight your language expression by using different pitches, stress, different pace, and pair it up with gestures and visual cues. Try not to quiz your child with questions, but rather expand their one or two-word sentences, and instead of correcting them when they make a mistake, just gently repeat the sentence with the proper word or pronunciation. And always remember – repeat, repeat, repeat, because the more often your child hears a word or a phrase that captures what they are interested in, the more easily they'll understand and remember it, and the more likely they will attempt to say it!
LINKS, SOURCES	Weitzman, E. (2017). <i>It Takes Two to Talk: A practical guide for parents of children with language delays</i> (5th ed.). Toronto: The Hanen Centre.





NAME/TITLE	Play, play, play!
AGE	0-3
DESCRIPTION	We live in a fast and dynamic world and pace and sometimes we forget the importance of one-on-one time and playing with our children. Play helps our child learn about the world, how to interact and get along with others, it develops thinking and problem-solving skills, creativity and imagination, and boosts communication, as well as speech and language skills. The power of play also comes from the connection it creates between parent and a child. To get the interaction going, you should join in the play by following your child's lead, let the child explore and enjoy toys in their own way and see where the play takes you. During play you should create opportunities for your child to take turns, follow and comment on what your child is doing with short, grammatical sentences and gestures, and make sure you repeat the word or a phrase at least 3-5 times during the interaction because it creates opportunities for your child to learn new words and phrases, and expand the existing ones.
LINKS, SOURCES	Weitzman, E. (2017). It Takes Two to Talk: A practical guide for parents of children with language delays (5th ed.). Toronto: The Hanen Centre.





NAME/TITLE	Spark an interest in books and reading!
AGE	0-3
DESCRIPTION	Books introduce children to new worlds and opportunities for their minds to grow and develop, they offer a special time for you and your child to enjoy the feeling of closeness. They offer visual cues for the language we are communicating, and are always there to be read again and again. The earlier you begin to read and tell stories to your child, the sooner will reading become an important and enjoyable part of your day and life. Reading aloud is the most important thing you can do to build the knowledge of your child. When reading a book, you should sit close together with your child and get face to face. You should keep in mind that story time is not 'just about reading', but also a time for conversation and your child should be actively involved. Let your child choose the book, hold it, turn the pages, give them time to look at the page and spend more time on the ones they are most interested in. If you let them 'read' the book their way, they'll enjoy sharing books more and, over time, engage in the activity longer and more often. You can also make your own books or personalised stories, let your child scribble and draw, and make up songs and rhymes that go along with the stories.
LINKS, SOURCES	Weitzman, E. (2017). It Takes Two to Talk: A practical guide for parents of children with language delays (5th ed.). Toronto: The Hanen Centre.

