

Early Communication Strategies



Objects of Reference

- This is where a specific object represents an activity.
- Ideally, the object will be related to the activity it represents such as coat for home time, cup for snack.
- The object needs to be kept the same each time and it is better if the specific object is not used during the activity.
- Once established, objects of reference can be used to tell the child what is going to happen next, to let the child make a choice between activities and help the child build up his/her knowledge of meanings.
- Some children may use photos or symbols as an alternative to objects of reference.



Language and Interaction

- Follow the child's lead and play alongside him/her – look for any opportunities to make eye contact, smile or share interaction with him/her.
- Provide a running **commentary** of what is happening – do not ask questions, just say what is happening.
- Keep your language **simple and short**. Try to use one or two word phrases only.
- Give one instruction at a time.



Choice Making

- Give the child a choice between two activities.
- For example, a choice between two things such as toys, snacks or drinks.
- Try to have a choice between something the child likes and something that he/she does not like. This will show if they are making a meaningful choice.
- The child must be familiar with the objects before using them for choice-making.

Anticipation Games

- These are games like Ready, Steady Go. This can be played as a tickling game or with cars or a ball, etc.
- The child will anticipate what is going to happen next.
- Once you have established what will happen after 'go', leave a slight pause before saying 'go' to see if the child will request using 'go'.



Turn Taking

- For example, rolling a ball back and forth to each other, building a tower together, putting things into a bowl one after the other, etc.
- This skill is needed to have a conversation with someone.
- It will also help develop attention and listening skills.