

10 Language Activities for Home

Simple everyday activities to boost your child's communication

You don't need special equipment or a therapy room. These activities fit into daily life — bath time, the car, the supermarket, bedtime. Even 5 minutes of intentional interaction each day makes a real difference.

1. Narrate what you're doing

bath time · cooking · getting dressed

Talk out loud as you do things together. "Now I'm pouring the water. It's warm! In goes the soap." This builds vocabulary and helps children connect words to the world around them.

2. Read aloud — every single day

bedtime · morning · any time

Reading together is the highest-impact thing you can do for language. Point to pictures, ask "what's that?" Re-read favourites — repetition helps words stick.

3. Follow your child's lead

play time · outdoor time

Join whatever your child is doing and talk about it. If they're rolling a car, talk about the car. This makes language feel relevant and motivating.

4. Expand what they say

all day

When your child says "dog!", say "Yes, a big brown dog!" or "The dog is running!" Add one or two words — not more. This models the next level up without pressure.

5. Reduce questions, increase comments

meal time · play time

Instead of "What colour is that?" try "Oh look, that one's blue!" Comments invite conversation; too many questions feel like a test. Aim for 5 comments for every 1 question.

6. Pause and wait

all day

After you say something, pause 5–10 seconds and look expectantly. Give your child time to find their words. Resist the urge to fill the silence — that's where language grows.

7. Create communication opportunities

snack time · play time

Put a favourite toy just out of reach. Give a little of something they want and wait. Pretend to forget a step. These "sabotage" moments create a real reason to communicate.

8. Sing songs and say rhymes

car trips · bath time

Nursery rhymes and songs build phonological awareness — a key foundation for reading. Pause before the last word of a familiar song and let your child fill it in.

9. Sort and name during play

tidy-up time · craft

"Let's put all the red ones here." Sorting activities build vocabulary for categories, colours, sizes, and positions (in, on, under, next to).

10. Turn off screens during meals

breakfast · dinner

Meal times with conversation are one of the best language environments. Talk about the day, tell stories, and include your child even if they can't contribute much yet.

Want personalised guidance?

These activities work well for most children, but every child is unique. If you're concerned about your child's language development, an assessment with a registered SLT gives you a clear picture and a tailored plan. Join our waitlist at sallysays.co.nz.