



Prompting Speech Requests At Home!

Rachele Heinrich, Speech-Language Pathologist

As a parent you are in tune to what your child needs throughout the day and many times can anticipate what they may need next. If you are struggling to encourage your child to communicate their needs and request for what they want, here are a few strategies that can easily be integrated into the home environment and daily activities.

Put Things In Containers Using a clear/transparent container, that is more difficult for little hands to open, can be a great tool to help promote your child to request for items. Containers found around the house may include storage bins, Tupperware, pencil case and even a plastic storage bag. Having an object visible to the child helps to motivate them to request for it. If you are holding the container, you can promote a variety of requests with "more, help, open" or a word for the object inside (for example, "fish" if there are goldfish inside). Honor the request by opening the container and giving your child the desired object, then close the container to continue promoting the request.

Use Toys That Require Help Finding different toys that your child needs assistance with to use can be helpful in motivating a request for help. For example; small wind-up toys, toys with keys/locks or toys that require a switch/button to turn on. When your child brings the toy to you or indicates interest in playing with it, promote a request for "help" before opening/activating the toy.

Use Social /Movement Activities Activities that include parent and child, or child with another peer can be used to promote a request for vocabulary such as "again, go, stop, more, my turn, your turn". Any reciprocal activity between two people can be a great way to encourage a request. You can model the request before each turn of the activity while your child is motivated and anticipating the action. Ideas include; throwing a ball back and forth, pulling a child in a blanket, tickles, and pushing on the swing.

Activities That Use Multiple Pieces It can be natural while playing with toys to allow your child access to all of the pieces as they explore it independently. However, you can use those pieces to help promote a request. Instead of giving your child all the puzzle pieces, start by providing them 1-2 pieces and when they look to you for more, model a request for vocabulary such as "more, puzzle, piece" or a label of the puzzle piece such as farm animals, colors, vehicles. This can also be helpful to use in conjunction with containers. For example while coloring, keep all the crayons in a bag and give your child one at a time. When they look for another color you can promote the request of "more, crayon, color" and the color name before opening the bag for them.

Use Their Motivation The best chance to promote a functional request for your child, is when they are motivated. Try incorporating these strategies into the activities they are interested in playing at that moment. Work on requests during snack times if your child enjoys eating, toys to play outside if they enjoy being outdoors, or a few special activities that may not be readily available at all times. The more motivated to play, the more motivated to request!



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Undergraduate Degree
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Years of Experience
3 years

Specialty Interests
Pediatric Autism, Feeding Therapy
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Philosophy
I believe that children achieve the greatest success when they enjoy their therapy session. I strive to create a positive environment to foster both fun and functional service to both the children and their families.

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