



Dear Lynn,

Can you give me some ideas to get my toddler to imitate me?

Here are some ideas to help promote speech and language and verbal imitation:

- Speak slowly and use pauses when you talk to your child. This gives him time and opportunity to repeat or insert some vocalization, (sounds), babbling, etc.
- A few times a day, refrain from anticipating his needs and hold out until he makes some attempts.
- Accept approximations of words. Saying only the first sound of a word is a great start!
- Use short phrase of 2-4 words/ phrase to comment on what you see and do; you jump". "Big dog", "I see the sun". It provides a verbal model they may be more readily repeat than an adult size sentence.
- Songs with hand movements are a fun way to instigate verbal imitation. At first, begin by having your child can imitate the hand (motor) movements and then try prompting attempts to use some of the melody, sounds, words, etc.
- Books provide a great opportunity to imitate words.
- When "reading books", name common nouns and actions.
- You don't need to be obligated to what the author printed on the page.
- Read the same books over and over and over and over. Did I say over and over and over again? Kids love knowing the parts and will start trying to name things.
- HAVE FUN!

Lynn Epstein, MS, SLP-CCC

These suggestions and tips are provided to as a general guide to help promote communication skills. If you have concerns regarding your child's speech and language development, please contact your primary physician for a referral to the appropriate professional and/or consult your local speech language pathologist for a screening or evaluation.