My personal observation and belief is that children who have caregivers involved in therapy, make faster progress and make functional progress that is better generalized to the home environment.

Jami Combs, MA, CCC-SLP
You are!

That makes you, and the people who surround your child, the very best language models.

What are your family’s goals for your child?
THINK ABOUT YOUR LONG TERM GOALS FOR YOUR CHILD......

Will verbal *interactions* with others be a necessary step to achieving those goals?

Playing with others is how kids learn to interact.

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*Sue Buckley, Down Syndrome News and Update 1999*

“The evidence suggests that most children and adults with Down syndrome could be talking more, talking more clearly, and talking in longer sentences, if we could provide those in daily contact with them with relevant practical guidance.”

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“Babies and children with Down syndrome need more, high quality learning opportunities in order for them to learn and remember the meanings of words and sentences…”

S. Buckley
How can I help my child learn language?

A child’s job includes:
Eating
Sleeping
Playing

AN IDEAL WAY TO ENCOURAGE LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT IS TO KNOW YOUR CHILD’S NEXT LANGUAGE GOAL AND
Hooray!!

Research demonstrates that our brains are hardwired to perform at their best when individuals feel positive.

Using a sample of preschool-aged children, Hom and Arbuckle (1988) found evidence that positive-mood-induced states fostered significantly higher goals and superior performance on tasks. ...
Recent research in the field of positive psychology has shown that happiness *fuels* success.

*When we are positive, our brains become more engaged, creative, motivated, energetic, resilient, and productive at work.*

This discovery has been repeatedly tested by rigorous research in psychology and neuroscience.

For instance:

- Doctors put in a positive mood before making a diagnosis show almost three times more intelligence and creativity than doctors in a neutral state, and they make accurate diagnoses 19% faster (Estrada, Isen & Young, 1997).
- Optimistic salespeople outsell their pessimistic counterparts by 56% (Seligman, 1991).
- Happy workers have higher levels of productivity, produce higher sales, perform better in leadership positions, and receive higher performance ratings and higher pay. They also enjoy more job security and are less likely to take sick days, to quit, or to become burned out (Lyubomirsky, et al., 2005).

**What helps us learn and remember?**

- Hands on activities
- Fun!
- Meaningful moments
- Response from others
- Eventful outcomes
Talk to your child throughout the day. Tell him what you are doing and why. Make your world interesting.

Find little jobs that your child can do to help.
Sometimes you have to be quiet to give your child the opportunity to talk!

Don’t help too much!!
Allow your kids the time and the need to talk.

Model language that is similar or slightly more complex than what your child is using

For example, if your child produces single words, try modeling two word utterances.
Something like this…..
Child: “Car”
Dad: “Car go!”

Know the next language expectation

Example: Your therapist may suggest that your child is ready to imitate reduplicated CVCV words
(mama, dada, bah-bah, moo-moo)
Children can communicate long before they can talk. Babies learn turn-taking skills by playing vocal games with others. Children will use their eye gaze to get your attention or direct you to a preferred object. Gestures or sign language allow a child to communicate before he has the fine motor skills to articulate, reducing frustration. Gestures allow a child to understand that language “pays off” and encourages language development.

Give your child a chance to feel successful when he attempts to talk.

When your child is hard to understand, give him two choices. Watch his eyes when he requests.

Children learn by DOING.
Peek-a-boo teaches turn-taking, anticipation, visual attention and provides facial stimulation.

Baby songs provide speech rhythms, rhyming, gestural communication and intonation.
Dolls

- Kisses
- Greetings
- Two-word utterances such as “baby eat, sit down, wash baby”
- Action words that are commonly used at home
- Concepts dirty, clean, sad, little, gentle, sleepy
- Easy words such as “pat, eat, night-night, down”

Kitchen Toys

- Descriptive words such as wet, hot, cold
- Household vocabulary
- Requests
- Play sounds
- Pretend play
- Prepositional concepts like “in, out, off, up, down”

Treats in a Sealed Container

- Children will initially show you the container without talking
- An adult can model an appropriate single sound or word to open
- Later, the adult can wait for an imitation of the model to open
- The child will learn the targeted word for a motivating treat
Think about ideas to encourage talking while playing with the barn and animals. Try to encourage labels and requests without asking "what's that?"

**WHAT CAN WE DO WITH FARM ANIMALS?**

If your child is just beginning to talk, model animal noises, “bah-bah, neigh-neigh, moo-moo, peep-peep”

If your child is learning prepositions, put the animals in, out, on, under.

If your child is learning multiple words utterances, model “Cow eat grass”, “Horse run fast.”

Blowing activities can benefit:
- Constriction of the muscles around the lips
- Lip protrusion
- Tongue retraction
- Breath support for volume control and sentence production
Kids like the echo of their voices in the pool.

It’s a great opportunity to work on closing lips, blowing, and imitating mouth movements.

The water on the body helps kids know where their body is in space.

Concepts: wet, dry, up, down, fast, slow,

Verbs: swim, splash, jump, kick, reach, blow

Counting: one, two, three, go!
Books will always be great language tools!

- Find age appropriate books
- Model 1-3 word models at your child’s level
- Remember that language is not just nouns—use verbs, adjectives and adverbs to label
- Avoid books with too many pictures on one page for your younger kiddos

Doll House

Doll house play can encourage:

- Functional home vocabulary—naming furniture and rooms
- Following directions
- Practice with verbal routines with characters
- Creation of story lines with characters
Race cars, wash cars, sell cars, and hide cars to teach:

- Action verbs: go, drive, wash, dry, stop
- Concepts: fast, slow, shiny, long, short
- Colors
- Numbers concepts: first, second, third, last
- Location: front, back, under, over, down, up
"On" and "Off" concepts
Vocalization with rings or cups to the mouth
"Up" and "Down" concepts
"Big" and "Little" concepts
Use repetition, "up, up, up", each time you stack an item on top.

Many baby and toddler games require a single touch to a switch
Name pictures just as you would with a book
Children learn verbs from the movements on the screen
Children will communicate to get to push the mouse
Many programs have songs and rhymes

- Gestures with vocalization
- Greetings
- Single word identifying
- Single word requests
- Add varieties of words such as action words, descriptive words, location words etc.
- Increase the number of words in an utterance
- Simple prepositional concepts (in, on, out)
- Build vocabulary
- Encourage productions—most children with DS understand more than they say
**Preschool period**

- Concepts
- Increase the mean length of the utterance
- Pretend play
- Grammar (after about 300 words)
  - plurals
  - tenses
  - possession
  - questions
  - determiners
  - auxiliaries
  - pronouns

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**Common Language Learning Characteristics in Children with Down Syndrome**

- Vocabulary learning is typically faster than learning sentence structure or grammar
- Language may develop slower than other cognitive skills
- Language learning may continue during adolescence
- Speech intelligibility may be challenging
- Reading should be expected

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**Now Go Play! Enjoy Language Stimulation**