

# Home Training Program for Children with Speech and Language Disorders during Lockdown

Dear Parents/Caregivers,

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown, your children have been confined to their homes. But rather than viewing it as a compulsion, please consider it as an opportunity for spending more time with them and maximizing intervention.

By now, you must be aware that your child's speech and language development is not the same as other children of his age.

As the child's parents, you are with him/her at all times and hence are the best people to help him/her and give training.

This home training program will outline some of the difficulties that your child may face and several tasks and activities that you can teach or help him/her to do, to improve his/her ability.

The activities and tasks mentioned here are however, just guidelines. Each child as an individual will have his/her own interests, just like all of us and the activities should be modified to cater to your child's interests. Be flexible and creative, to make learning experience enjoyable for your child.

The next few pages will explain various areas that need to be worked on and a step by step method of performing activities. Before that, here is a small insight into your child's difficulties.

- 1. Slow reaction:** Your child may respond slowly to what others say and to what happens in his/her surrounding. Sometimes he/she may not respond at all. This may be due to his/her difficulty to understand your commands or inability to respond due to reduced neuromuscular control.
- 2. Inability to understand / learn quickly:** Your child may be slow in understanding and learning and it is little bit difficult for him/her to perform tasks as easily as other children.
- 3. Inability to speak clearly:** Your child may not clearly express his/her thoughts, needs and feeling. This can occur due to his/her inability to formulate words or to express them due to lack of coordination among speech muscles.
- 4. Lack of concentration:** He/she may not be able to give continuous attention to one person or activity for a long time.
- 5. Short-temper:** Inability to communicate can give rise to frustration and anger in your child and so he/she may have difficulty in controlling anger. This can lead him/her to cry wildly, throw things all around and injure themselves or others. In addition to this, they may be clumsy, have difficulty remembering etc.
- 6. Stubbornness:** Due to feelings of inadequacy, your child may show stubbornness in carrying out certain activities. So, it's essential that you identify his likenesses and use play method for teaching.
- 7. But most importantly, you must realize that it is very important to be patient with your child.**

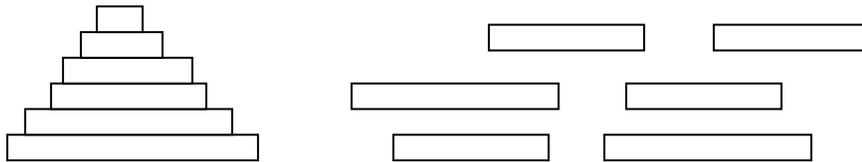
## SKILLS AND ACTIVITIES

### Attention and eye contact

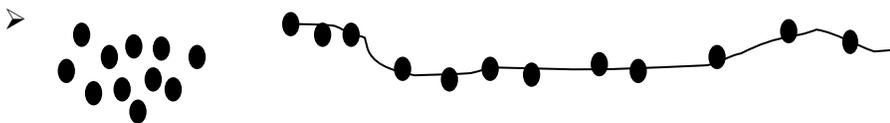
- For the child to learn speech and language and to perform any activity he needs good attention and eye contact. Some activities are listed below.
  - Show the child colorful toys or puppets and picture books and talk to him about them. Sustain it over a period of *time*.



- Teach the child to pick up colorful blocks (alphabetical/ numerical) or rings and ask him to stack it up according to their size (small to big).



- Make the child thread beads together to make a necklace. You can also use clay, wooden or paper beads for the purpose.

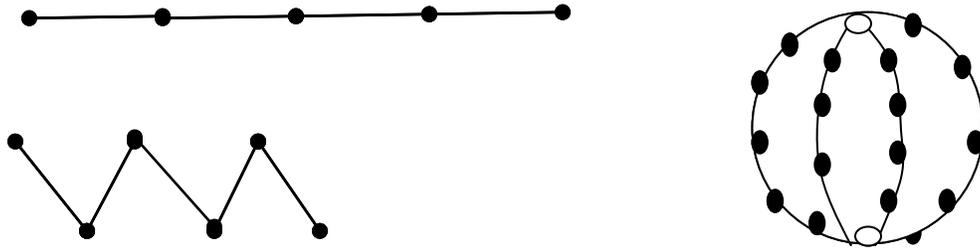


- Ask the child to put any object e.g. blocks, leaves, flowers, and/ or vegetables in a container or transfer them from one container to another.



- Give your child pictures/ drawing and ask him/her to color them with crayons or color pencils.

- Ask the child to join the dots and color the picture hence formed



- Give him/her simple jigsaw puzzles to put together.



### **For improving eye-contact**

- Every time he speaks, ask the child to look at your face



- While speaking to him, speak at eye level
- Try to hold more attractive objects such as dolls, toys etc. at your eye level so that the child can follow the movement.



- Use puppets, at eye level and make the puppet tell a story

### **Speech and language skills**

- Speech and language skills are not only taught through teaching but can also be learnt through observation

**These are two aspects in learning speech and language**

1. Comprehension (understanding)
2. Expression (saying)

**Every child has to understand a concept before he says it.**

**1. To improve/ work on his vocabulary**

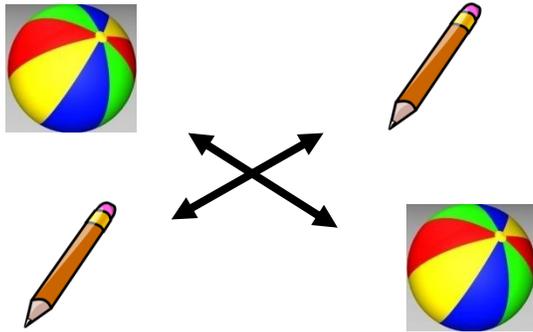
➤ First, the child's vocabulary has to be increased i.e. he has to be taught different lexical categories such as

- Family members
- Animals
- Vehicles
- Fruits
- Common objects

➤ These categories can be taught using matching exercises. These have to be taught in an order from simple to complex as follows:

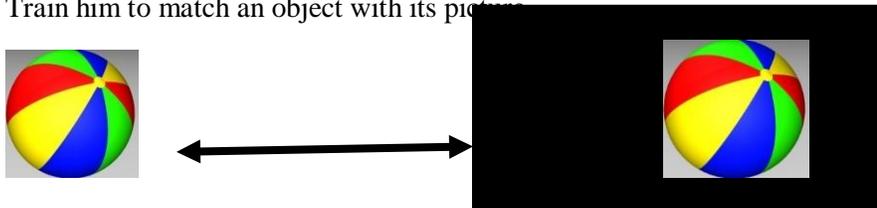
**a. Object-object matching**

Here, ask him to match an object with another object

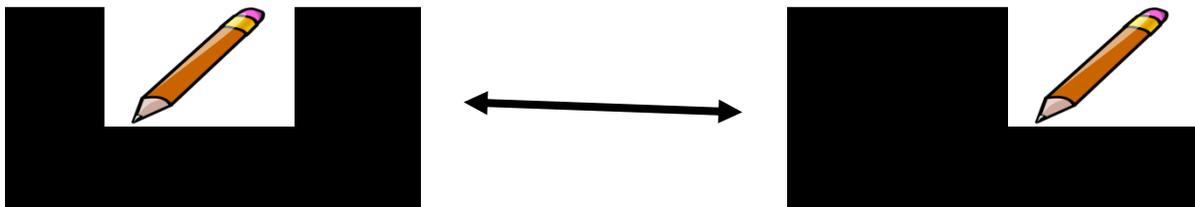


**b. Object-picture matching**

Train him to match an object with its picture



**c. Picture-picture matching**



#### **d. Spoken word-picture matching**

- Next, make the child point out to a picture as you say
- After this, your child should be able to recognize and identify most common objects and names.  
You can then move on to more complex categories such as action verbs, prepositions, adjectives
- Both comprehension and expression can be worked on simultaneously

#### **2. To improve comprehension/following of verbal commands**

- Train your child to follow simple commands such as
  - ✓ 'Point to your eyes'
  - ✓ 'Sit down'
  - ✓ 'Come here'
  - ✓ 'Pick up the book'
- Use a variety of activities such as reading, coloring, playing etc. to teach him concepts and modify them according to his interests.
- Use appropriate gestures along with verbal commands for better comprehension.

#### **3. To improve verbal expression/ saying**

- Along with teaching him the above mention categories, you have to concentrate on expression i.e., the speech of your child.
- Encourage your child to imitate your speech.
- First start with simple speech sounds such as:
  - /a/- associate with aeroplane
  - /i/- to brush
  - /u/- train
- And encourage him to repeat after you.
- Make sounds meaningful i.e. encourage him to say “dae” (ଦେ, ଦେ, ଦାଓ) whenever he wants anything, “nae” (ନେ, ଲୌ, ନାଓ) whenever he wants to give something and “aa” (ଆ, ଆ, ଆ) when he/she wants to call somebody.
- Also teach him to imitate cries of animals like dog, cat by showing him pictures.
- Then move on to the simple words (basic/ lexical categories), simple words and form sentences.
- Also encourage him to answer simple questions.

#### **Social skills**

- You must also train your child to utilize social skills constantly and appropriately.
- **To greet and bid farewell**
  - Instruct the child that whenever he sees a familiar person, he must greet the person by saying 'hello' or “namaskar” and with appropriate actions.
  - Instruct your child to avoid shaking hands etc.

- **Turn taking**

- Teach the child the concept of “sharing” by encouraging the child’s siblings to share some play materials with him/her. In absence of siblings, other family members can fill in the role.
- Encourage the child to share eatables with others in the family
- When children play games, show him/her that he/she must wait for his/her turn.

**Reinforcement:**

- Reward or reinforcement is a token of appreciation for the child that encourage him to perform activity better. It can be of many types
  - ✓ Verbal reinforcement i.e. you can encourage him by saying “good boy” and “very nice” etc.
  - ✓ Primary reinforcement i.e. give the child something he likes, such as chocolates or stickers etc to encourage him to do better.
  - ✓ Social reinforcement i.e. clapping, shaking hands or patting on his back.

**For toddlers and Infants:**

- Never force them to do anything.
- Use only positive reinforcers.
- Never scold.

**For older children:**

- Your child may demonstrate no response to exact repetition of the model. If he is not able to say, be patient and encourage him.
- Remember, younger the child less stringent the response demand.

**Follow up**

Be sure to regularly assess your child’s progress and improvement as they this will help decide the further course of training and effectiveness of already prescribed training. Maintain a diary of progress by the child as this will aid in future situations. If you carry out the mentioned activities firmly, regularly and sincerely, your child will definitely improve.

**We wish you ALL THE BEST.....**

If you have any doubts, feel free to contact us

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