

Helping Kids Discover and Develop Language

4 YEARS

1. The child asks "Wh-" questions to learn about the world.

For example, the child will ask "What", "Where", "When", "Why", "Who", and "How" questions.

SUGGESTIONS:

- never ignore your child when he/she asks a question. Always provide your child with an answer.
- occasionally, when you are asking your child to do something, fail to provide enough information. This creates the need for your child to ask you questions to fill in the missing details.

2. The child speaks in complete, complex sentences.

For example, the child may say, "The cat is hiding under the couch".

SUGGESTIONS:

- expand or rephrase your child's 2- or 3-word sentences to make a more complex utterance
- read stories to your child which involve sentences of 4 or more words



3. The child uses the past-tense ending "ed" correctly.

For example, the child may say "walked", "played", or "jumped". The ending may still be applied incorrectly to irregular verbs such as "goed" for "went", or "eated" for "ate".

SUGGESTIONS:

- talk about events and objects that interest your child
- talk about things that happened in the near past with your child (e.g., things that happened earlier in the morning)
- model the correct form for your child (e.g., if your child says: "I **jump** off box", you could say: "You **jumped** off the box.")
- emphasize the "ed" when you use past tense verbs (e.g., "Look, the dog **wagged** his tail.")
- have your child draw pictures to show things that happened in the past that he/she enjoyed and talk about them

4. The child can listen to and is interested in stories for extended periods of time.

SUGGESTIONS:

- use story books with moving parts or noises to encourage and to increase your child's interest in stories
- use a lot of expression in your voice while reading to your child
- use different voices for the lines of the various characters
- buy books that your child is interested in. This will help to increase his/her motivation to look at and talk about stories.
- have a number of books available around your home
- set aside a "special reading time" for you and your child
- have your child make up his/her own story using picture books without words

5. The child uses such contractions as "can't", "don't", and "won't".

For example, the child may say "I **can't**" or "I **don't** want it".

SUGGESTIONS:

- model the correct form for your child following his/her incorrect production
- emphasize the contractions during conversation
- read stories that have a lot of contractions such as "Murmel, Murmel, Murmel" by R. Munsch



6. The child uses "is + verb- ing" consistently.

For example, the child may say, "He **is going** to the store."

SUGGESTIONS:

- model and stress the correct form in your speech (e.g., "She **is jumping** in the water.")
- emphasize the "ing" ending while reading story books
- use a variety of verbs with "ing" endings while playing with your child