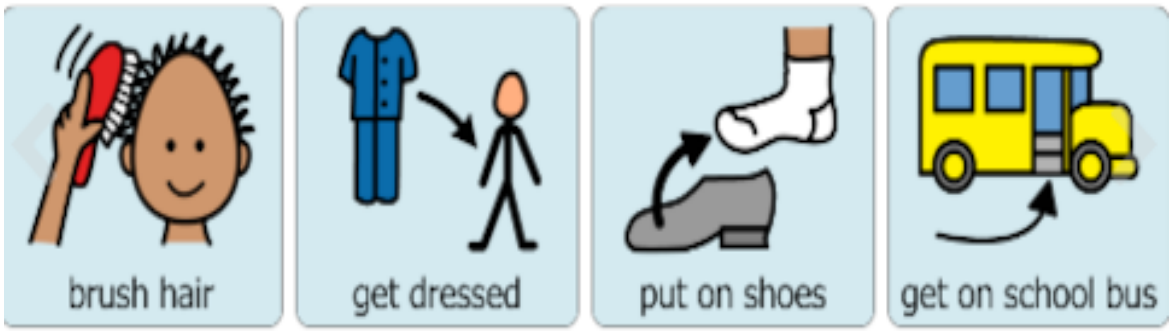
Elveden C of E Primary Academy

The Barn Owl Nest



An Information Guide for Parents



Developing Language During Everyday Routines

Dear Parents/Guardians

We are keen to share with our parents how we develop language into everyday routines in the Barn Owl Nest. To help your child progress with their speech and language needs, it is paramount that we all work together to ensure we provide them with a rich and broad language environment, whether that be at school or at home.

We have put together a useful information guide to support you at home to help your child to communicate their everyday needs.

Language During Mealtimes



1. Requesting

You can promote requesting of food at the dinner table by:

- Presenting a variety of foods on the table.
- Placing items out of reach, or making one person in charge of serving the food so your child must ask for what they want.
- Give only a little at a time so your child must ask for more of what they want.

The amount of language you expect your child to use should be based on his/her current skills. Try to make your child use slightly more language than he/she is currently comfortable with. For example, if your child uses one word to request ("milk"), make him use a two-word phrase to request (such as "more milk").

If your child has trouble asking for things at all, a single word (the name of the food/drink) is the best to aim for. If your child has more language, you can have him/her ask using a full sentence with correct grammar.

2. Review events of the day

During mealtimes, talk to your child about how the day is going. Ask your child to tell you or others in the family about what they did so far that day. For younger children or children who have more difficulty with the language, try asking very specific questions about their day, such as "what did you eat for lunch?" or "who did you build the Lego tower with?".

You may want to start with questions that you know the answers to so you can help your child if they have difficulty finding the word(s).

3. Plan for rest of the day

- **Talk about the Day's Activities:** Talking through a plan for the rest of the day will work on your child's speech and language skills and mentally prepare your child for the upcoming events. First, talk about all the things that will happen for the rest of the day. You could talk about taking a nap, having a bath, getting ready for bed, doing schoolwork at home, etc.
- **Order the Day's Activities** Make a plan with your child for what order these things will be done in. Then, if there is any free times left in the day, ask your child to make a plan for what he/she would like to do during those times. Ask your child questions like "what would you like to do?", "how will you do it?", and "why does that sound like fun to you?". You could even write your plan on a piece of paper to increase organizational skills and exposure to writing.

4. Describe what you are eating

- **Senses**: Meals are a great time to talk about textures, smells, and tastes. You can talk about how the foods feel with your hands or in your mouth.



You can also have your child smell the foods before they eat them. Once your child eats the food, talk about how it tastes and feels. You can talk about if it is sweet/salty/sour and about if it is crunchy/chewy/juicy, etc.



Language in the morning



1. *Washing and brushing teeth*

- **Sequencing/Following Directions:** You can work on sequencing and following directions while completing toileting, washing and teeth brushing routines. For younger children, give them one or two verbal directions at a time, like "wash hands" and "put on toothpaste".

  You can create picture supports for the steps of the task. For example, next to the sink, you could have a picture strip that has steps for washing hands or brushing teeth. For older children, write these directions down without pictures.

2. *Dressing*

- **Requesting Clothes:** Have your child identify and/or request the clothes they need. Ask them to request particular colours or styles.
- **Talk about the Weather:** Talk about the weather outside that day. After you find out, talk about what clothes would be appropriate for that type of weather? What type of clothes do we wear when it is hot? How about cold? What kinds of shoes do we wear when it is raining?
- **Talk about the Day's Activities:** If you are doing a certain activity today, talk about what types of clothes would be appropriate for that activity. For example, if you're going for a walk, what should you wear? Or if you're going to do painting, how might your clothes be different?

3. *Eating breakfast*

- **Requesting:** If your child is working on requesting, have them ask for different parts of the breakfast. You can still have only the choices that you want, but have them ask for the spoon, milk, etc.
- **Change the routine:** One great way to get children talking is by messing something up in your morning routine so your child has to correct you. For example, give your child the cereal bowl with milk but "forget" to give them a spoon, or give them a fork instead. You could also put cereal on a plate instead of bowl. When your child looks confused, play dumb for a while until they words and tell you what they need instead.
- **Label Vocabulary, Describe, and Tell Function:** Name the foods your child is eating and talk about how the foods taste, smell, feel, etc. Talk about the function of the food and drinks. *"What do we do with cereal? Eat it. What do we do with juice? Drink it*." Also name and talk about the function of the dishes and other things at the table.

Language at Bedtime



3. *Putting on Pyjamas*

- **Naming objects and actions**: while dressing, name the objects that your child is putting on (shirt, pants, pyjamas, slippers, etc.) as well as what your child is doing (put on, put arm in, pull up).
- **Requesting:** Let your child choose which pyjamas to wear each night. Make sure your child uses his/her words to request them though.

4. *Bedtime Story*



- Book reading is always a great way to work on speech and language skills.