

Parallel & Self-Talk*

What Are Parallel & Self-Talk?

Parallel and self-talk are easy, natural ways to help your child learn language during everyday routines—like playtime, meals, bath time, and getting dressed. These strategies are indirect, meaning your child does not have to respond. If your child does talk or try to talk, celebrate it with lots of praise!

Why This Works

- Helps children hear language that matches what they are doing
- Models words at your child's current language level
- Reduces pressure to talk while increasing understanding
- Fits naturally into daily routines

How to Use This Strategy

Match your words to your child's language level:

- Gestures → single words
- Single words → short phrases

Think: "I'm narrating the moment!"

Important Tips

- Refrain from asking questions; stick to commenting
- Use simple, short phrases
- Avoid asking your child to repeat what you say. Eg don't ask him to "say car!"
- Follow your child's interests
- TRY SINGING IT EG. "THIS IS THE WAY WE BRUSH OUR TEETH, BRUSH OUR TEETH...!"

*(Based on K. Wedoff, 2020)

Parallel Talk: Talk About What Your Child Is Doing

Examples:

Barn & Animals:

- You put pig in
- Cow sleeping
- Feeding cow
- Opening door
- Dog eating

Getting Dressed:

- Putting pants on
- You picked red shirt
- Arm in!

Bath Time:

- You're splashing
- Bubbles!
- Duck swimming
- You're wet
- Pushing boat

Mealtime:

- You're chewing
- Uh-oh, spilled
- Crunch!
- Gulp!

Self-Talk: Talk About What You Are Doing

Playing with Cars:

- I am driving
- Fast car
- Going down
- My car stopped

Cleaning Up:

- Throwing trash away
- Wiping face
- Wiping table
- Turning water on



Making / Eating Lunch:

- Mommy cutting
- Yummy apple
- Hot!
- Yucky!
- I like it

Brushing Teeth:

- Toothpaste on
- Brushing teeth
- Water on
- Rinse mouth

Remember

You don't need to do this perfectly. Short comments, repeated often, during real-life activities help build language.