

Strategies for Supporting Your Child's Language Development

1

Avoid asking a lot of questions. Rather, engage in a conversation, and as Jannie Van Hees, a New Zealand Educator, advises, "gift" language. In other words, add useful and interesting words into the conversation and use them repeatedly. Use phrases like "I wonder...." "Perhaps ..."

2

Be curious and model this for your child. "I wonder why that butterfly is orange and black." This could lead to "gifting" of words such as camouflage, attraction, warning, patterns, chrysalis, transparent and so on. You don't need to have all the answers! It is more important that you are modelling good patterns of speech and conversation

3

Encourage effective conversation between children by helping them with turn taking and listening behaviours. Create opportunities for your child to interact with other children.

4

Read to children every day! Research tells us that there is approximately 17 rare words in every 1000 words used in everyday language. Books are likely to use 31 in every 1000. Therefore, children who are read to will be exposed to many more rare words which they will use in their talking and writing.

5

Support sentence making in a natural way, with an appropriate starter, pronoun, adjective etc. Help children to extend a sentence to make it more interesting and detailed.