

## Promoting Language Development Through Turn Taking

Hello, Welcome to the Friends of Tennessee's Babies with Special Needs web site. My name is Robin.

Before a child can communicate well, she must have a regular habit of conversational turn-taking with her family and other important people. A child's receptive and expressive language grows through watching, listening, and taking turns during a conversation. The more they have the opportunity to take turns in conversations, the more they will learn how to communicate and acquire language and speech.

Today we're going to talk about several ways a family can encourage turn-taking during conversations.

Number one. Use communication cues to signal the child to take a turn.

For example, Let your expression and body language show that you expect the child to take a turn.

Wait for the child to respond and be alert to new words the child is attempting.

Then prompt the child to take a turn by suggesting a word.

Number two. Imitate the child's vocalizations and words. Imitation is a way to encourage the child to take the lead and to take turns.

[EI:] What's growing out there that we're going to look at?

[Child:] Uhh, potatoes and green beans.

[EI:] Potatoes and green beans.

[Child:] Yeah

[Mom:] What else?

[Child:] And..and..and..carrots.

[Mom:] Carrots, oh very good.

[EI:] Oh, what do the carrots look like?

[Child:] Uh, like carrots. Rabbits going to eat carrots in their mouth. Rabbits like carrots.

[EI:] Rabbits do like carrots.

[Child:] Uh huh.

[Mom:] Who else likes carrots?

[Child:] Umm, me.

[EI:] You like carrots?

[Child:] Yeah

[EI:] Oh, yummy. Does Mommy cook them for you?

[Child:] Yeah

[EI:] Yeah?

[Child:] And Mommy cook food for me too.

[Mom:] Food?

[Child:] Yeah

[Mom:] Yeah

[EI:] Mommy cooks food for you. What is your favorite kind of food?

[Child:] Food what you eat.

[EI:] [ laugh ] Food like you eat.

[Child:] That what Mommy cook for me.

[EI:] I know, that's a good Mommy to cook for you.

[Child:] Um hmm

[EI:] [ inaudible whisper ]

[Child:] Do you want to go outside now?

[EI:] I think so.

[Mom:] Yeah, who helps water them?

[Child:] Um, um, me.

[Mom:] You. What do you use to water the vegetables?

[Child:] Um, um, the water can.

[EI and Mom:] [ simultaneously ] The water can.

[Child:] Yeah

[EI:] So you have to fill it up with water and then pour it on the vegetables?

[Child:] And they grow big and big.

[EI:] Oh, they grow bigger and bigger.

[Mom:] That's true.

[Child:] And they like do grow long and big.

[Mom:] They do. They grow long and big, and do you remember what the roots are for?

[Child:] For they, for they grow big.

[Mom:] Yes, cause it sucks up the nutrients from the ground?

[Child:] Yeah

[Mom:] So they grow big?

[Child:] Yeah

[EI:] They have to get nutrients from the ground?

[Child:] Yeah

[EI:] Wow, that's very important isn't it?

[Child:] Yeah

[EI:] You know what else that the plants need other than nutrients and water?

[Child:] Yeah

[EI:] You see...

[Child:] Nutrients and water build it up and they grow big and put it in ground and they grow big.

[EI:] Oh, you had to plant the seed in the ground, didn't you?

[Child:] And they grow big.

[Mom:] That's right.

[EI:] Who helped Mommy do that?

[Child:] Oh, me.

[EI:] You and who else?

[Child:] And Mommy

[EI:] And who else?

[Child:] And Daddy.

[EI:] Daddy?

[Child:] And Tyson

[Mom:] Tyson

[EI:] Tyson

[Mom:] Yeah, Daddy was at work.

[EI:] You want to go look at them?

[Child:] Yeah

[EI:] Okay, are you going to show me?

[Child:] Yeah

Number Three. When you begin a conversation give the child the opportunity to communicate back. You can do this by asking a yes no question or by giving the child a choice.

Number four. If the child begins a conversation, do or say something to keep the conversation going.

Video Portion

[Child:] They grow big and red.

[Mom:] They are. Some will be red and some will be green.

[EI:] That's cool.

[Child:] They are going to be red and some will be green.

[EI:] I like it. That's very yummy!

[Mom:] Which one is bigger?

[Child:] The big one.

[Mom:] That's right.

[EI:] That's good, Mom.

[Child:] And little

[Mom:] That's right.

[EI:] That is very little. You're right. What a smart boy you are!

[Mom:] That's right. And which one has more?

[Child:] This one.

[Mom:] Yes

[EI:] That one has more plants?

[Child:] Yeah

[EI:] Wonder what happened to these right here?

[Mom:] Where did they go?

[EI:] I don't see any plants back there.

[Mom:] Do you think we should try again?

[Child:] Where is it?

[Mom:] Do you see it?

[Child:] And here too.

[EI:] Here, you see a plant right there?

[Child:] And here too.

[EI:] Yeah, I don't think those made it. We may have to plant another seed there.

[Mom:] That's right.

[EI:] You think? We might have to.

[Child:] We have to grow a plant there again.

[EI:] Now, Shawn, where are the carrots?

[Child:] I don't know

[EI:] I don't think they're in this box. Do you know where they are over there? The carrots? I don't think they're in this one. Mommy said those are peppers and those are tomatoes. Where are the carrots? He goes.... He's really conversing today isn't he?

[Mom:] He is

The key to natural, language learning conversation is to respond to the child's communication and interests. Good luck to you as you demonstrate these strategies with families so that they can help their child learn to take turns during conversation because remember – babies can't wait.