

## ***Expressive Language— Do's and Don'ts for Parents***

1. Don't let children know when you are worried about their way of talking.
2. Listen to children. Concentrate on WHAT they are saying, not HOW they say it.
3. Provide a good model for children to imitate.
4. Encourage and praise children. Make conversing with you enjoyable.
5. If children appear frustrated when they try to speak correctly, reassure them that everyone finds it difficult to talk at times. Tell them to help you understand by showing you what they mean or by pantomiming their message. It is perfectly all right, after several unsuccessful attempts, to console children and let them know you understand their frustration.
6. EXPAND children's words, signs, or actions by responding just above the level of communication they employ. For example, if the child says "milk," you could say "more milk" or "cold milk." If the child says "bye-bye," you might say, "Yes, we are going to the store."
7. Restate what children say providing a correct model. If a child says, "titty tat" you could respond by saying, "Yes. That is a kitty cat." Do not insist on the child imitating you; merely provide a model for the child to hear.
8. Use "self-talk." Talk about what you and your children are doing. "What are you doing? I'm getting dressed. I'm brushing my hair now, etc."
9. Take the pressure off children to produce the language YOU want immediately. Instead, patiently and consistently restate, expand and use self-talk to provide good MODELS. Children may need to HEAR correct models hundreds of times before they are confident and comfortable enough to attempt making correct productions themselves.
10. Remember to talk to your children often, but don't insist or expect that they immediately say or repeat modeled words or phrases.
11. If you are concerned about a child's lack of expression or about grammatical errors, consult a Speech and Language Specialist at your local public school for advice.