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HOLIDAY COMMUNICATION TIPS FOR PARENTS FROM YOUR SPEECH-LANGUAGE THERAPIST

Helping your child's communication grow — one everyday moment at a time

Why do the holidays matter for communication?

The holidays are a powerful time for communication development. **Children learn language best when they use it for real reasons** — to request, comment, protest, ask for help, share excitement, and connect with others. During the holidays, communication can **develop meaningfully** through **play, routines, and real-life interactions**. Small, consistent moments make a big difference.

5 SIMPLE THINGS YOU CAN DO EVERY DAY

1. Talk about what you're doing

Narrate everyday activities such as cooking, bathing, driving, or packing away toys.

Example: "I'm cutting the apple. Cut, cut. Now it goes into the bowl."

Keep sentences **short, clear, and natural**.

2. Pause and wait

After you speak or ask a question, **pause and wait with intention**.

Children often need extra time to: - Think - Process - Find the words

Your pause sends the message: "Your turn matters."

When pausing, look at your child expectantly (smile, raised eyebrows, open posture). This shows your child that you are expecting communication, even if it's a sound, gesture, look, or word.

3. Follow your child's interests

Talk about what your child is already interested in — cars, dolls, animals, cooking, or playing outside.

Communication grows best when it is: - Fun - Meaningful - Child-led

4. Repeat and model (don't correct)

If your child says: "Car."

You can say: "Yes, a red car? The car is going fast."

By doing this, you are **expanding** (adding grammar) and **extending** (adding meaning) to your child's communication. You are **modelling** a longer sentence **without correcting or pressuring**.

5. Read, sing, and play together

You don't need to finish a whole book or sing perfectly.

Try to: - Point to pictures - Name objects - Ask simple questions - Have fun together.

Make more comments than asking questions. Comments keep communication relaxed and enjoyable, especially for children who are still learning to talk.

These activities build vocabulary, understanding, and confidence.

REMEMBER

- **Communication is more than talking**, it includes gestures, facial expressions, pointing, and play
- Progress is not always loud or fast — **small steps matter**
- Children develop communication skills at **different rates**, and this is okay
- **You** are your child's **most important communication partner**

NEED SUPPORT?

If you have concerns about your child's speech, language, communication or feeding, or would like guidance tailored to your child, a **Speech-Language Therapist can help.**

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