



Spring Break

The birds are chirping and the flowers are blooming. Spring break is quickly approaching and that means plenty of quality time to spend with our children and families. While a break from school and work is welcomed, it is still important to exercise our brains and work on our children's communication skills. Luckily, communication skills practice can be incorporated into every day routines and activities. Below is a list of activities (both indoor and outdoor) that you and your child can try over Spring Break. Get the whole family involved and have fun!

Cooking:

This does not have to be elaborate. It can be as simple as making a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. Cooking and snack making activities can provide many opportunities to help children practice the sequences of daily activities and identify specific items. Let your child choose a snack that has a few steps involved. During the process, offer your child the opportunity to practice identification skills by asking him or her to retrieve an ingredient or guide your child through the process of making the desired snack while pointing out the ingredients.

TV/Movie:

A TV show or movie is a great way to work on "wh" questions (i.e. who, what, where, when, why). If you're watching a TV show, commercials are perfect times to ask a question or two about what happened during the last segment. Start off with a "what" question ("What was the dog doing?") and then move on to more difficult questions when your child is ready ("Why was the dog feeling sad?").

Read a book:

Books can provide a wide array of language opportunities! Let your child choose his or her favorite book and go on a language safari. Throughout the story, ask your child to show you the characters or items in the book. Discuss how the characters are feeling and how certain items in the story are being used ("He used his toothbrush to brush his teeth). What a great time to practice some requests too. Before turning the page, have your child request using a sign for "more" or saying "more" or "book" or "more book."

Hide and Seek:

What a great game to practice following directions! If your child doesn't like the aspect of "hiding", this game can still be played using some stuffed animals for favorite toys. Give your child simple directions such as "Hide the bunny under the couch" or create a quick list of items that you have hidden and help your child search for items on the list. After one item has been found, discuss where the item was hiding (i.e. The bunny was under the couch!).



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Computer Game:

Computer games are a great activity to practice turn taking. Choose a simple game that allows you and your child to take turns. A letter matching game is a great way to take turns on the computer. Each person can take a turn adding a letter until the whole word is complete.

Playground:

There is no better place to practice making requests and choices than the playground! Have your child choose a preferred activity using signs, words or sentences. This is also a wonderful place to practice the words "go" and "stop". Encourage your child to use the words "go" and "stop" while swinging, sliding and during many other playground activities.

Plant flowers:

Flowers are a beautiful sign of spring! Planting flowers with your child can be another fun language learning experience. Discuss actions like digging, scooping, planting and watering or talk about all of the tools that we use to garden.

Nature walk:

Spring fever anyone? Get out and enjoy the spring weather with a nature walk. Make a list of animals/outside items for you and your child to search for while outside. Bring a bag for fun items such as feathers, sticks and rocks. After a nature walk, it is always fun to review what was seen by making a collage using things that were collected.

Bubbles:

Who doesn't love bubbles? Use bubbles as a tool to practice more requesting. Try using large and small bubble blowers to encourage your child to request small bubbles, big bubbles or both!

Sidewalk chalk:

Colors, colors, colors! Sidewalk chalk lends itself to teaching and talking about colors. You can provide your child with the opportunity to practice identifying colors by drawing pictures in one specific color. Or give your child the opportunity to request colors using signs, words or sentences.