

Speakable

Speakable  Because you can.
Speaking • Reading • Confidence

A magazine with news and
articles about communication and
confidence

Improving Cultural Competence

Attitudes and techniques to increase your
cultural competence when working or
communicating with people from different
social and cultural backgrounds

Six crucial communication skills for early childhood

Since the earliest years of a child, it is
possible to stimulate some crucial
communication skills - learn how

Speakable Team
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Speakable Magazine #12

Hello Speakable family,

We hope that you are well and have found many chocolate eggs with your children during this Easter holiday!

At Speakable, we are excited for Term 2, 2023. Our team continues to deliver speech pathology assessments and therapy online and in person at the clinic in Bondi Junction.

This year, we have been able to support our young learners' memory by utilising the TALi and Cogmed working memory programmes. Various strategies from the Kwik Recall program have been added to the lessons to strengthen their ability to remember facts and details. Our partnership with Wiserkids continues to thrive in supporting our students with numeracy. We are training ourselves in the Hochman method or the Writing Revolution so that we can assist our students with their writing.

This new issue aims to inspire educators, parents, carers, speech pathologists and other health specialists by providing the most current speech pathology related information.

Please feel free to share your reading experience with others and together, let's support our children's communication and learning in the best possible way.

Because we can.

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Speakable Team



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Preschooler communication stimulation



Between two and five years old, crucial developmental milestones are reached by most children, which will influence the rest of their lives regarding school performance, entering the workforce, having a satisfying social life and self-realisation. Therefore, each and every effort from parents and carers over children in such age must be provided to keep the development on track. Sometimes, psychological or neurological factors might hinder the expected development, but healthcare and education professionals are always available to plan and implement extra activities to maintain stimulation.

However, the most important stimulation happens at home with family members, the child's main models for the rest of their lives. Because of this essential role, simple but meaningful activities can be conducted by parents, carers and other influential people in order to help the child's communication stimulation, such as:

- Word games and riddles. Since language and vocabulary are still under development, word games to analyse existing words, such as rhyming, and even making up words is something preschoolers might enjoy a lot.
- Storytelling is a must to help with vocabulary acquisition, but also to stimulate the child's imagination. You can take turns telling a story and then listening to a story retold by the child, or completely made up from him/her. Watch the following video where a French girl is making up a story:
- Music is always an enriching experience. When at home or in the car, songs with an interesting vocabulary to be acquired can be played, and even the child and people around could sing them to stimulate articulation and pronunciation.
- Reading aloud together can make a remarkable influence over the child's learning curve, by following the way other people talk and use intonation. It's crucial for preschooler literacy.
- Explore the child's interests when it's an opportune moment. For example, if the child likes animals, a simple bird nearby can become the topic of a rich and engaging conversation which will use a vast vocabulary and the child's confidence to communicate about it.

As you can see, not much effort is needed to stimulate a preschooler's communication skills – besides the rational and logical reasons for such activities, all of them are wonderful opportunities to strengthen family and friendship bonds with children. The more you spend time with children, the more both sides can share support, happiness and love.

Autumn communication activities for children



Autumn starts next week and this season can inspire amazing activities for children to stimulate language, speech and communication. See below some great activities to enjoy with children.

- **Make a sensory bin for the autumn.** In your home, locate a sizable container or basket and fill it with leaves. Look around your home for items you can conceal under the foliage. Ask your kid to locate the various items and then describe what they discovered. Your youngster can concentrate on the statement "I found _____" if they are practising coming up with short phrases or sentences. Hide various items under the leaves that begin with the target sound if your youngster is working on a specific target sound, such as the /f/ sound. Once they've located the item, ask them to recite its name so they can practise the desired sound.
- **Take a walk.** This activity targets so many different skills, which makes it my favourite. Talk to your youngster about what you see while you stroll. The weather in the autumn, people raking leaves, the changing colours of the leaves, the leaves on the ground, what we wear in the autumn, and these are just a few conversation starters. If a youngster uses three-word utterances, we should use four- or five-word phrases to model language. Hence, for example, when discussing the changing colours of the leaves with a young child, we can use a succinct phrase or sentence like, "Wow! Instead of saying "Look at how the leaves are changing colours since the season is changing," say "Leaves are different colours."

Autumn communication activities for children

- **Pumpkin/Apple Picking.** If you enjoy taking your kids pumpkin or apple harvesting, here is another option to practise speech and language in a natural setting. It would be an excellent time to practise prepositional terms like "in," "on," or "off" if your youngster is working on them. You can instruct your kid to pick apples off the tree, put them in the basket, or do something foolish like balance an apple on your head! Also, you can practise describing objects with terms like "large" or "small" when picking the ideal pumpkin to take home.
- **Pile of Leaves.** Playing on a pile of recently raked leaves is the best. As they practise their speech and language, this is the ideal time to get kids moving and having fun! Do different actions in the large pile of leaves if a youngster is working on various action phrases. They can, for instance, perch on the leaves or even sit in them while running or stomping through them. You can ask them to follow orders to assist you pick up the leaves after they've finished playing. Also, you might discuss the pile's magnitude if you're working on your descriptive vocabulary (big or small).
- **Pumpkin Carving.** Another excellent activity to work on a variety of speech and language skills is carving a pumpkin. You can discuss the processes required to make a jack-o-lantern with pupils who are working on sequencing. For example, First, we scoop out the seeds. The face is drawn next. Third, the pumpkin is carved. We finalised by placing a candle inside the pumpkin.) You can also discuss the type of face you plan to carve onto the pumpkin (i.e., a scary face, a happy face, etc.). You can also talk about the sensations you have when removing the pumpkin's seeds.

Enjoy this beautiful time with your children! See below two previous posts with more ideas to enjoy during autumn.

- [Autumn as inspiration for activities](#)
- [Vocabulary activities for Autumn](#)

Improving Cultural Competence



When performing speech-language pathology, many speech-language pathology therapists could feel uncertain and occasionally perplexed. They might work in places with a diverse population of kids, representing many different racial groups, linguistic groups, and cultural groups. In light of this, even the most seasoned SLPs may wonder to themselves, "Should I treat everything when treating a child who is bilingual, when I don't know the rules of their original language?" or "Was it my fault or the parent's when they didn't finish home practise?"

A dynamic and complex process, developing cultural competence calls for continuing self-evaluation, ongoing cultural education, openness to other people's values and beliefs, as well as a readiness to communicate one's own values and views. It takes time for this process to develop. Understanding one's own culture is the first step in the process, which is followed by reciprocal relationships with people from other cultures and one's own lifetime learning.

Three individual initiatives can be conducted in order to improve cultural competence:

- Constantly seek out first-hand accounts from friends or co-workers about what it's like to be an African, Latino, Asian, or Polynesian, as well as material from memoirs and documentaries, about what it's like to face discrimination because of your race, religion, or culture. How does it feel to be a target in our culture?
- Asking questions about their life and treatment will help you learn more about specific clients. What were their treatment objectives? Who participated in the at-home practise? How does it feel to live with someone who has a disability?
- Modify materials so they reflect the experiences of customers. For instance, by eliminating holidays that not everyone celebrates, including bilingualism-supporting activities, and including subject matter relevant to their everyday environments and experiences.
- Conducting constant cultural competence self-checks, such as the ones from ASHA, [click here](#).

These steps towards cultural competence are just the beginning, but those who take them now will be better prepared to help and interact with people from a variety of backgrounds. To direct therapeutic procedures, empathy and the willingness to assist will be even more strongly encouraged. Also, there will be a notable rise in family engagement and communication between parents and their kids throughout time.

Writing with figurative language



It's fairly likely that we may come across some passages using figurative language while reading a book that contains poetry or prose. These passages provide an additional layer of meaning to what we are reading. Yet what exactly is figurative language? How should I utilise this properly?

Figurative language is a phrasing strategy that transcends the literal meaning of the words employed to better convey emotions, mood, and the significance of an action, character, or event. We can employ a wide range of strategies from figurative language to make it work, including:

- When someone or something is compared to something that seems unconnected, it is called a **simile**. When you say, "They walked as elegantly as a cat," for instance.
- Writing a **metaphor** involves connecting the seemingly unrelated subject as a predicative rather than comparing it, as in the sentence "those kids are such busy bees."
- Similar to a metaphor, an **implied metaphor** makes use of components that relate to one but is less overt about it. "I can't stand this person!" could be an example of an implied metaphor. He never stops voicing his ideas!
- **Personification** is the process of imparting human characteristics to animals, natural forces, or inanimate objects rather than onto living beings. "The Sun is smiling to me on this warm day," is a wonderful illustration.
- **Hyperbole**: Everyone enjoys making exaggerated statements, such as "I'm so busy today, I have a million jobs to accomplish by the end of the day," therefore this one is highly prevalent.
- **Allusion** is when you make a reference to a different person, place, text, event, or piece of art in order to contrast one aspect with another. "I'm quite proud of this, that's my Monalisa of science projects," could be an example of an allusion.
- **Idiom**: Some statements, like "hey, my friend, hold your horses, soon we'll get there," are figurative since they depict an action or occurrence.
- **Pun**: A pun is a word play with a comic connotation. "Time travels like an arrow" is a suitable illustration that has frequently been explored. Bananas fly like fruit.

Writing with figurative language

- **Onomatopoeia:** Despite having such a long word, onomatopoeias are frequently used and extensively studied when we are learning to talk and are attempting to mimic the sounds we hear. Great examples are words like "buzz," "whoof," "tick-tock," "ding-dong," and others.

Now that you're aware of these nine figurative language strategies, it's critical to understand that you shouldn't employ them consistently, under any circumstances. Our advice for using figurative language correctly is as follows:

1. Always be aware of your motivations when using figurative language. Why not just say, "Our love is dead," as opposed to, "I no longer love you"? Is your character's mouth expression true to life? Does it fit your tone and fashion? Don't use it if it isn't.
2. Choose your figures of speech with care. You can use a simile to describe someone's beauty, such as "her beauty hit me in the eye like a squirt of grapefruit juice," but how would that improve the tale or clarify its point? It's a good idea to incorporate it if one of your characters has significant communication difficulties; otherwise, stay away from it.
3. Only use metaphors when absolutely required. It can be challenging to understand a work that is jam-packed with similes and metaphors. Don't employ figures of speech just because you can; pick them because they will help you accomplish your aim (improving mood, meaning, or subject).
4. Make sure that whatever figurative language you employ in conversation is appropriate for that character. Flowery language should not be used by characters who communicate simply.

Watch this entertaining video to learn more about some of these figurative language strategies:

- [Figurative language | Reading | Khan Academy](#)

Six crucial communication skills for early childhood



Failure to impart effective communication skills could socially isolate a youngster for the rest of their lives. One of a parent's most important responsibilities is to teach their children how to speak efficiently and politely. It is a grave error to assume that children will acquire appropriate communication skills on their own. From the time their child is born, parents should start teaching them the fundamentals of communication, and as the child gets older, they should continue to develop those skills.

A fundamental pillar of civilisation is effective interpersonal communication. Basic communication skills can be modelled by parents to their children in daily talks. Laying the groundwork for effective communication later in life can be done by intentionally conversing with children and employing polite conversational techniques.

The parent's ultimate goal is to create a person who can communicate politely, listen to what others have to say, and convey his or her own thoughts, ideas, and opinions in a clear and concise manner. The author of Emily Post's book on etiquette outlines six fundamentals of communication that parents should impart to their children.

- **Making eye contact is the first appropriate skill.** It is crucial to teach kids how to make eye contact with the person they are speaking to. Direct eye contact conveys respect and demonstrates interest in the other party to the discourse. It's important to teach kids that averting their eyes is impolite and a sign of disinterest.
- **Second, use clear, appropriate language.** Parents should set an example for their kids in terms of using proper grammar, speaking slowly, and pronouncing words clearly. Parents should listen to how their kids are speaking and gently reprimand them without making them feel bad. Correcting errors in front of others is not necessary because doing so could make kids feel self-conscious and prevent them from speaking in public.
- **Third, take turns and avoid interrupting.** Children need to be taught to refrain from speaking up in conversations just because they feel like it. Parents must stop their children from engaging in this conduct and instill self-control in them. The parent should stop talking when a child interrupts, firmly instruct the interrupting child to wait their turn, and then resume the conversation.

Six crucial communication skills for early childhood

- **Fourth, pay attention and be thoughtful in your responses.** The best method to teach effective listening to youngsters is to set an example for them. Parents should listen intently and repeat words and phrases back to their children during conversations so that the youngsters feel heard. Ask the youngster the right questions, and then let him or her respond. Affirm your interest in the child's viewpoint. The most effective conversationalists are good listeners.
- **Fifth, politely join conversations.** There is a proper technique to enter a discussion using polite behaviour. Children will eventually pick up the habit if parents continually model how to politely initiate a discussion. Parents should model for their children how to enter a gathering discreetly, smile at those conversing with them, pay attention to what they are saying, and wait to speak until they are addressed. Parents should also teach their kids appropriate behaviour when someone joins a conversation that is already in progress. When the speaker is finished, the group can welcome the newcomer and introduce him or her. Members of the group can smile and nod to acknowledge the person joining them.
- **Post concludes by saying that it's best to end interactions on a pleasantly.** It's important to know how to leave a conversation with politeness, and parents should put a lot of effort into teaching their kids this valuable lesson. The phrase "I promised my cousin that I would throw the ball with him and so I need to go now, but it was really wonderful talking to you" is a good example of how children can end a discussion politely. Controlling volume, refraining from utilising "potty talk," and maintaining the privacy of sensitive concerns are other crucial communication skills that parents should emphasise when teaching their children.

Children should be taught how to read nonverbal clues and communication by their parents. Eye rolling and grimacing, yawning at speakers, hair twisting, turning one's back on the speaker, picking one's fingernails, and checking one's watch are all examples of impolite facial expressions. Children must be taught that their nonverbal habits and actions might offend others. Children will eventually start to grasp when to conclude discussions, wrap up stories, or shift the subject after learning to interpret nonverbal clues from others.

Today's environment requires people to be skilled communicators. For children to learn how to interact efficiently and nicely, their parents must provide instruction. You can learn how to listen well, regulate yourself, use proper grammar, and be sensitive. Parents who practise conversational skills from a young age will aid their children in developing advanced communication abilities that will serve them well as adults.

Activities for the Autism Acceptance Month



The month of April is recognised worldwide as Autism Acceptance Month. Every year in the month of April, mainstream, print, and social media outlets shine a focus on autism. People and organisations unite to celebrate difference throughout society, in our neighbourhoods, in our schools, and in every sector of the economy. Actually, accepting differences should be a daily practise.

There are so many amazing ways to help the autistic community, as well as some things you should avoid doing in order to do so.

Things to avoid:

- **Light It Up Blue.** Please don't turn it blue to mark Autism Acceptance Day. The "Light It Up Blue" slogan came from a "Autism Speaks" campaign that had a highly unfavourable, medicalized view of autism as something that needed to be cured or extinguished. Many in the autistic community urge that people not "Light It Up Blue," since such campaigns designed to illuminate the route to autism cures only serve to reinforce the damaging pathologizing narrative on autism.
- **Puzzle Pieces.** Please refrain from using puzzle pieces as a representation of autism or the autistic experience. Non-autistic led organisations and groups have a long history of using the puzzle piece as a symbol. As well, due to its history of use by organisations led by neurotypical or non-autistic people who claim to speak for autistic people or to be the foremost authorities on the autistic experience, the majority of the autistic community has rejected the puzzle piece. The puzzle piece has long been used as a symbol for the idea that there is a "piece" missing from autistic persons, and that this missing piece could really be the last component needed to find a "cure" for autism. The idea that there is a "piece" missing from the group of autistic people and, furthermore, the notion that people need to be "cured" are rejected by the majority of the autistic community.

Activities for the Autism Acceptance Month

- **Autism Awareness Language.** Please refrain from using terminology like "Autism Awareness" or encouraging others to become "aware" of autism. There was a need for awareness of autism in earlier times, especially before the internet, social media, and global access to information, as we did not have the information as easily available as we do now, where it can be found in a matter of seconds. Instead, speak in terms of "acceptance" or "appreciation" of autism and/or autism-related experiences.
- **Silence Autistic Voices.** Please don't suppress autistic people's voices. Even in 2023, we frequently observe occasions where non-autistic people take centre stage while discussing autistic life experiences. We need to centre autistic voices, be autistic-led, and elevate autistic professionals, social media postings, and publications rather than pulling the mic away from autistic voices and effectively silencing them. Work with autistic people, hire autistic consultants, and support autistic organisations.

Things to do to support the Autism Acceptance Month:

- **Amplify Autistic Voices.** We need to centre autistic voices, be autistic-led, and promote autistic professionals, autistic advocates, their social media posts, and publications rather than pulling the mic away from autistic voices and effectively silencing them. Work with autistic people, hire autistic consultants, and support autistic organisations. Autism voices should be heard loud and clear.
- **Use Red Instead or Light It Up Gold.** You can observe Autism Acceptance Month without using a colour, however most members of the autistic community support the use of red or gold. The "Autism Speaks - Light It Up Blue" campaign was opposed by the autistic community, who opted to go "Red Instead." Many autistic people prefer to self-identify as such by using the Gold Infinity Symbol or the Rainbow Infinity Symbol. Also, a lot of autistic people enjoy including the chemical symbol for gold in their social media pages.
- **Use the Infinity Symbol.** Several members of the autism community favour using the Infinity Symbol to signify the autistic experience for the reasons outlined above (See Puzzle Piece).
- **Use language of Acceptance.** Autistic people prefer the language of acceptance and understanding of the autistic experience for the reasons mentioned above (see Autism Awareness).

For any topic related to professional support to people with Autism, Speakable is here with its highly specialized team to help you. Feel free to contact us!

Thank you!

This was the 12th issue of our new Speakable Magazine, which compiled the articles and relevant news about communication, confidence and our clinic from 2023's school term 2.

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