

Engaging in Joyful Conversations With Your Child

As the family of a four-to-five-year-old child, you may wonder:

“How can I help my child talk with family members and other children?”

“How can I engage my child in storytelling?”

Building your child’s communication and storytelling skills strengthens their social emotional, language, and literacy development in early learning settings and later in school.



From four years old to kindergarten entry, children learn to:

Communicate ideas, needs, and interests

Have meaningful conversations with family members

Express themselves through play, stories, and art

Focus on topics of interest and ask questions

Ways Families Support Children’s Communication Skills

Through families’ everyday routines and experiences, children learn to engage in joyful interactions involving conversation, storytelling, writing, reading, or art. Children also learn their families’ ways of sharing stories.

Children learn different ways to communicate and express themselves through family relationships. For example, as families talk during meals, children learn to listen to and participate in conversations in their home language(s). In some families, as a sign of respect, elders or adults speak first. Then children may be invited to ask questions, answer questions, or share their own thoughts.

As you think about your child, ask yourself:

- How can I expand on my child’s interests through books, songs, pretend play, or pictures we draw together?
- In what ways do I engage my child in reading and storytelling? For example, do we regularly read, explore the library, or tell stories?
- How can I support my child to express themselves creatively, such as through art, movement, or music?



ACTIVITY IDEAS for Families

During meals, have conversations with your child about what happened during the day, what they enjoyed doing, or who they played with. Explore foods together and sing or tell stories about the food: “Let’s make up a rhyme about what we are eating,” or “Let’s sing ‘Apples and Bananas’ while we make fruit salad.” When preparing a meal together, ask your child: “Can you feel the texture of this dough? It started out lumpy and sticky, and now it is smooth and dry. What do you notice?”

During a family gathering, invite your child to engage in meaningful conversations with others, listen to a family story, and ask questions when appropriate: “Let’s ask your cousin about their favorite part of first grade,” or “Come listen to Grandpa’s story about how his mother first came to Nevada,” or “You can ask your uncle to tell you about his work on an alfalfa hay farm.” Later, offer your child ways to express their ideas through art. For example, invite your child to draw a picture to send to a relative about the stories told. Write down messages or questions your child has and include them with the picture.

Around your community, point out things that interest your child or that are new to them. Find street signs, posters, or vehicles like cars and trucks. Talk with your child: “I hear a beeping sound. What do you think is making that sound? A garbage truck! Now give me a clue, and I will try to guess something that you noticed.” Invite your child to communicate about letters or symbols they recognize: “Look at those glowing signs way up on that building. What letters can you spot?”

During bedtime, read with your child and tell stories. Invite your child to share their thoughts about a favorite story: “Which character do you like best?” Practice turn-taking and build your own story: “Let’s tell a story about a wild horse. Where do you think the horse should go next in the story? That’s a great idea. Now I’ll add an idea about who the horse meets. Then you add the next part of the story.” On another day, help your child make a simple book using folded paper, and offer to write down the story they tell.

Learn More About Children’s Communication Skills

Explore more about your child’s development using the [Nevada Pre-Kindergarten Standards](#). Below is a summary of key knowledge and skills from the standards that relate to children’s communication skills.

Social Emotional

Children communicate with others to share ideas, goals, thoughts, wants, and needs.

Social Studies

Children engage in daily interactions with their family and describe important experiences to others.

Language and Early Literacy

Children engage in meaningful language and early literacy interactions with others when they listen, contribute to conversations, read, draw or scribble, gesture, tell stories, and ask questions.

Creative Expression

Children use their senses, show creativity, and express themselves through art.



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