

18 Activities for Speech and Language Practice at Home

Mar 18

As many families adjust to this period of quarantine and begin to get used to the “new normal,” it is important to start incorporating speech and language into the routine! The goal of therapy, after all, is generalization – and what better way to generalize these skills than by practicing outside of the speech room?! Check out these fun FREE activities to practice speech and language skills while at home:

Listen to Music!

Choose two of your child’s favorite songs and print out the lyrics (or view them on a tablet/computer). Students should listen carefully to each song and describe them. Which instruments are featured? What genre does the song belong to and what is the overall message? Where might this song be played? etc. Then compare and contrast the two songs to figure out how they are the same and how they are different. Look at the lyrics and identify any figurative language, including similes, metaphors, and idioms. Talk about the meaning behind each expression (e.x. Katy

Perry sings, “*baby you’re a firework!*” What does this mean? Is the person actually a

firework? Students can also listen to a story Blog words in order to practice

phonemic awareness.

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Goals targeted: describing, compare and contrast, figurative language, phonemic awareness

Ages: upper elementary, middle, or high school

Cooking or Baking

Choose a recipe to complete with your child and involve them in preparing daily meals. To practice inferencing, take out all of the ingredients that you will be using to make dinner and see if your child can guess what is being made. Then, have your child describe each step as it is being completed. Give directions using temporal (before, after) and conditional (if, then) terms, and ask ‘What would you do if...’ questions to practice problem-solving skills (i.e. ‘What would you do if you saw smoke coming from the oven?’). Once the food has been prepared, students can retell the steps using sequencing words and describe the taste of the food using adjectives. Need a recipe to try? Here’s one for a triple berry smoothie, and here’s another for English muffin pizzas.

Goals targeted: inferencing, describing, sequencing, following directions, problem-solving

Ages: all ages

What’s in the Bag?

Find a small item from around the house (i.e. hair brush, whisk, battery, etc.) and put it inside a brown paper bag without letting your child see what it is. Then give clues about the item and see if you child can guess what it is (i.e. for whisk: it is found in the kitchen, it is used for mixing, it’s made of metal, etc.). Once your child guesses what’s inside the bag, you can switch roles – have your child find an item and give you clues!

Goals targeted: making inferences, describing, sentence formulation

Ages: all ages

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Create a Photo Album!

Using either family photos or photos taken by the student, create a digital or physical photo album. Using a word bank of either conjunctions, adjectives, irregular verbs, pronouns, or other parts of speech that the student is working on, write captions for each photo. Then share the album with family members and enjoy reminiscing on good memories!

Goals targeted: sentence formulation, expressive language, perspective-taking

Ages: all ages

This Day in History

Head to the history channel's website to read articles about what happened on This Day in History. These short passages describe significant events that have occurred on today's date in a variety of different categories...art, politics, exploration, sports, wars, film, presidents, and more! Students can identify any unknown vocabulary words and practice using reading comprehension strategies such as paraphrasing, visualizing, asking questions, and making connections.

Goals targeted: inferencing, describing, sequencing, following directions, problem-solving

Ages: middle or high school

Whose Shoes?

Gather several pairs of shoes from around the house and have students make inferences about the type of person who would wear those shoes. Think about what career that person might have, what hobbies they may like, and identify personality traits. To practice perspective-taking and sentence structure, have your child write a paragraph from the point of view of the owner of the shoes. Students can also

practice social skills by generating questions or comments they might make to the

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owner of the store

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Goals targeted: inferencing, sentence formulation, perspective-taking, social skills

Ages: upper elementary, middle, or high school

What's Going on in this Photo?

Head to the New York Times 'What's Going on in this Picture' website to view an entire library of images that have been stripped of their captions. Encourage your child to figure out what might be going on in the image by using what they see (clues) and what they know (background knowledge) to make an inference. Then, they can create their own caption for the photo.

Goals targeted: making inferences, perspective-taking, sentence formulation

Ages: upper elementary, middle, or high school

Mad Libs

Mad libs are an entertaining way to practice speech and language skills! To practice articulation, students can only choose words with their sound in them. Identifying nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs are also a great way to practice parts of speech. Once students have finished filling in their words, they should read the passage and edit any errors. Check out these free online Mad Libs!

Goals targeted: articulation, identifying parts of speech, editing

Ages: upper elementary, middle, or high school

Scavenger Hunts

Go on a scavenger hunt throughout the house to find objects that contain your student's articulation sounds; search for objects by attribute (size, shape, color, use, etc.); or find members of a specific category (fruits, electronics, furniture, etc.).

Goals targeted: articulation, describing, categories, attributes

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Ages: all ages

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Newsela Articles

Create a free account with Newsela to access thousands of engaging, informational articles at a variety of reading levels. Reading these articles are a fantastic way to practice using context clues and other vocabulary strategies, as well as reading comprehension strategies such as paraphrasing, visualizing, asking questions, and making connections. Students can also summarize the article, identify the main idea, and respond to comprehension questions that are included following the article. While answering questions, have students identify whether the question is literal (the answer is RIGHT THERE in the text) or inferential (need to search for clues and use background knowledge to make an educated guess).

Goals targeted: reading comprehension strategies, vocabulary strategies, making inferences, answering comprehension questions, summarizing, main idea

Ages: middle or high school

Animated Short Videos

Watching short, animated videos is an excellent way to work on a variety of speech and language skills while simultaneously keeping students engaged and motivated. Check out this list of 15 videos, complete with suggestions and descriptions of speech and language activities!

Goals targeted: making inferences, perspective-taking, sentence formulation, articulation, main idea, summarizing, problem-solving, predicting

Ages: upper elementary, middle, or high school

Describing Beanies

Gather up all those old beanie babies (or stuffed animals) and put them in a bag.

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Have the children select a beanie baby, make a bag, keep it hidden from other players. The student then gives clues to describe their animal until someone guesses what it is. Once the animal is guessed, the next person can select a beanie baby and give their own clues. Students can practice articulation of sounds, describing (category/type of animal, what does it do, what does it look like, etc.), comparing & contrasting (ex. someone guesses 'fish' when the animal is a dolphin, so the student giving clues must describe how it is different from a fish), listening comprehension strategies (visualizing, repeating what was heard, paraphrasing), and using conjunctions while giving clues (ex. Although this animal is small, it is bigger than a frog; My animal is fast SO that it can escape from predators), etc.

Goals targeted: articulation, describing, compare and contrast, listening comprehension, sentence formulation

Ages: all ages

Listening to Stories

Practice listening comprehension with your child by listening to audio stories on several free websites. Storynory has a library of fairytales, original stories, myths and poems from around the world and Lit2Go has many free classic novels and other short stories. Frequently pause while listening and see if your child can repeat information; paraphrase into their own words; visualize and draw a picture of what was heard; make connections with the main characters or events; and identify the story elements of setting, characters, problem, and solution. Using a scale of 1-5, encourage your child to rate how well they have understood what was heard and discuss ways they can improve that rating.

Goals targeted: listening comprehension, summarizing, story retell

Ages: upper elementary, middle, or high school

Origami

Make some fun origami animals to practice following and giving directions! Use

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together to create more complex instructions. See if your child can repeat each direction in his or her own words in order to check for comprehension. Once the origami is complete, have your child describe what they made. Students can also make several different animals to use for practice with comparing and contrasting by identifying similarities and differences between each one. Here are some directions for some simple origami projects.

Goals targeted: following directions, compare and contrast, describing

Ages: upper elementary, middle, or high school

Play Board or Card Games

Board games and card games offer tons of opportunities to practice just about any area of speech and language. Practice articulation, intelligibility (talking slowly and clearly), giving and following directions by having your student explain the rules to the game. Word games like Scrabble are fun for vocabulary practice, while Hedbanz and Pictionary are great for describing and making inferences. Scattergories is another fun game to practice identifying and naming categories, and Uno can be used for turn-taking and articulation (numbers and colors).

Goals targeted: ALL goals!

Ages: all ages

Have a Conversation!!

Choose a topic of the day to discuss during breakfast or dinner. Encourage your child to ask as many related questions or make as many related comments as possible to see how long you can all keep the conversation going while continuing to maintain the topic. Topics can be anything from favorite foods, to potential careers, to what you would do if you were stranded on the moon. Be creative! While speaking, encourage your child to self-monitor his or her own speech while

practicing articulation of tricky sounds, maintaining a good rate and volume, and/or using fluency strategies. Home Shop Blog

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Goals targeted: topic maintenance, asking related questions, making related comments, articulation, intelligibility, fluency strategies

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Ages: all ages

Functional Communication

In order to support functional communication, sabotage the environment by putting preferred objects out of reach so that your child must initiate communication with a request. If your child needs help getting started, provide sentence starters (I want, I like, I see a, etc.) and/or question starters (i.e. who, what, when, where, why. You can also create photo menus and hang them on the fridge so that your child may request any favorite snacks or drinks. Other photo menus of preferred objects can be used for requesting: favorite TV show, favorite game or toy, kitchen utensils, bathroom necessities (i.e. toothbrush, towel, hairbrush, etc.). Include common comment or question starters (I like, you have, do you want?) and refer to them while communicating with your child.

Goals targeted: functional communication, requesting, commenting

Ages: all ages

Functional Life Skills

Encourage your child to practice activities of daily living or necessary life skills that will help them be successful following high school. These activities include: washing dishes or loading/unloading the dishwasher, cooking pasta or other simple meals, changing a tire, writing checks, etc. Have students identify/retell the steps involved and practice following complex directions. Address any problem-solving opportunities that arise along the way and discuss solutions together. Additionally, practice describing and comparing/contrasting with everyday objects, such as cash vs. debit cards vs. credit cards.

Goals targeted: functional communication, requesting, commenting

Ages: upper middle and high school

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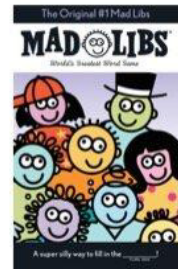
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