



## Every Word Counts: Practical Tips for Early Communication Support

Helping your child feel heard and understood starts with simple, thoughtful communication strategies. Whether you're a parent, therapist, or educator, these gentle reminders can make a big difference:

- 1. Honor their individuality**  
Treat your child as the thoughtful and capable person they are, regardless of how they communicate.
- 2. Keep it calm**  
Reduce background noise (TV, music, talking) to help your child focus on your voice.
- 3. Limit distractions**  
A clean, visually calm environment helps children stay engaged and process better.
- 4. Connect before you speak**  
Make sure your child is paying attention—use their name, get down to their level, or gently touch their shoulder.
- 5. Speak simply and gently**  
Use short phrases, speak slowly but naturally, and avoid raising your voice. Calm and clear is best.
- 6. Be patient**  
Give your child time to process and respond. Try not to jump in too quickly or answer for them.
- 7. Use your expressions**  
Facial expressions, gestures, and tone of voice help make your message more understandable—even without words.
- 8. Check for real understanding**  
Sometimes children may nod or respond politely without fully understanding. Gently confirm they've understood.
- 9. Include them**  
Always speak *with* your child, not just about them—especially when they're in the room. Assume they understand more than they can express.
- 10. Be encouraging**  
Celebrate every effort. Stay present, patient, and open to all forms of communication.