



# RECEPTIVE LANGUAGE MATTERS!



Before children can use language, they first need to understand it.

We often focus on what children **CAN SAY**, but there is another side of language that is just as important—and often comes first:

## WHAT IS RECEPTIVE LANGUAGE?

Receptive language is the ability to:



- ✓ listen
- ✓ understand words
- ✓ follow directions
- ✓ process information
- ✓ understand questions and routines

It is the foundation for expressive language (talking). ❤️

## EVERYDAY EXAMPLES



Give me your cup.

Your child processes language and responds appropriately.



Put it in the box.

Your child understands the direction and what to do.



Go get the blue block.

Your child understands:

- the object
- the color
- the direction

★ That is a **LOT** of language processing happening before a single word is spoken!

## WHAT DOES RECEPTIVE LANGUAGE LOOK LIKE?

Your child may be building receptive language when they:

- ✓ look when their name is called
- ✓ follow simple directions
- ✓ identify familiar objects
- ✓ understand routines
- ✓ respond to "come here"
- ✓ point to body parts
- ✓ bring you requested items
- ✓ understand simple questions
- ✓ match objects/colors/shapes
- ✓ understand action words like eat, jump, or sit

## RECEPTIVE LANGUAGE COMES BEFORE EXPRESSIVE LANGUAGE



Children typically understand far more words than they can say.

A child may follow directions, understand routines, identify objects, and respond to questions before they are consistently talking.

That's why **listening and comprehension** skills are so important!

## WAYS TO BUILD RECEPTIVE LANGUAGE AT HOME

### NARRATE EVERYDAY ACTIVITIES



"Wash hands."  
"Open the door."  
"Time to eat!"

### USE SIMPLE DIRECTIONS



- Get the ball."
- Put it in."
- Give it to Mommy."

### ADD VISUAL SUPPORT + GESTURES



Point, model, and show objects while talking.

### READ TOGETHER



- Pause and ask:
- "Where's the dog?"
  - "Show me the apple."
  - "What is he doing?"

### PLAY LISTENING GAMES



- Simon Says
- Follow the Leader
- Scavenger hunts
- Clean-up directions



**LANGUAGE IS MORE THAN WORDS.**  
Listening, understanding, and comprehension are the foundation that helps expressive language grow.



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