

How to Talk to Infants and Toddlers

10 Phrases to Support Healthy Receptive/Expressive Language and Social Emotional Development



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Agenda




- The Power of Words
- Define Language as part of the Collaborative Parenting Methodology™
- Explore Receptive & Expressive Language Development in Infants - Preschoolers
- 5 Communication Modes for Healthy Language Development
- Learn 10 Intentional Phrases for Collaborating with Kids

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Words Become...



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Words Make Kids Feel...

SEEN

HEARD

LOVED

OR

SHAMEFUL

WRONG

SCARED

core


FAIRMIND

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What's the 1 thing we want toddlers to do?

The Toddler Years



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The Toddler Years

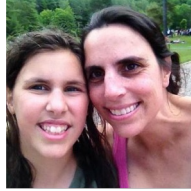


LISTEN!

6

The T&T Relationship

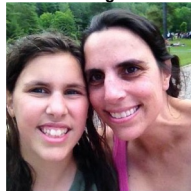
The Teenage Years



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What's the 1 thing we want teenagers to do?

The Teenage Years

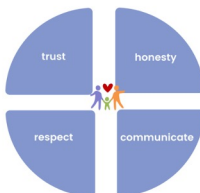


TALK!

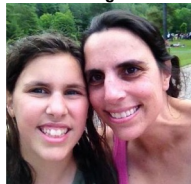
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Your Words Build The Relationship!

The Toddler Years



The Teenage Years



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Your words build their emotional...


awareness

tolerance

intelligence

→


Emotionally regulated infants & toddlers developing healthy 'self' skills!



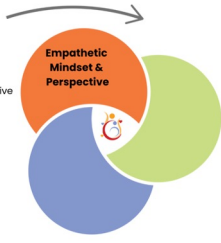
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Collaborative Parenting Methodology™

 **Step 1 - Connect**

- Emotionally align energy
- Physically align body position
- Mentally to see things with perspective

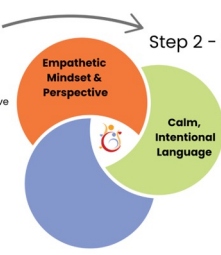



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Collaborative Parenting Methodology™

Step 1 - Connect

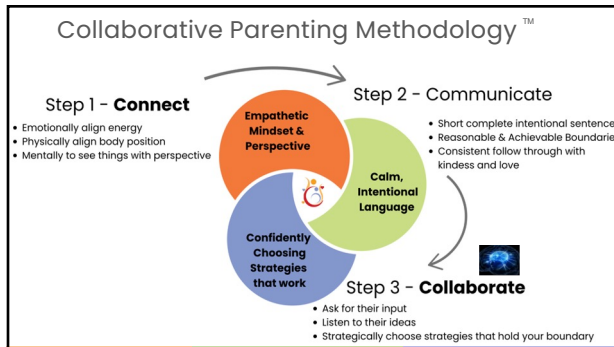
- Emotionally align energy
- Physically align body position
- Mentally to see things with perspective



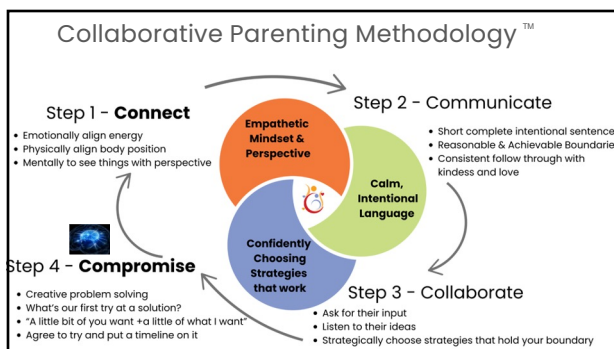
 **Step 2 - Communicate**

- Short complete intentional sentences
- Reasonable & Achievable Boundaries
- Consistent follow through with kindness and love

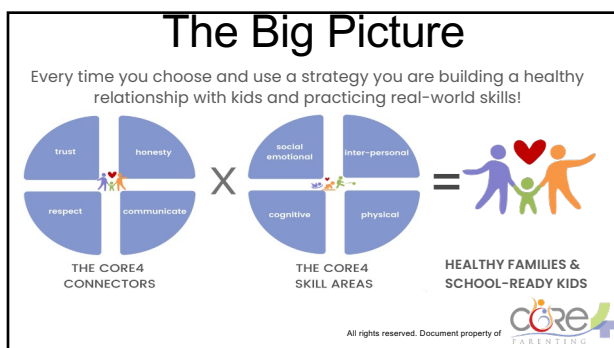
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Definition of Language

lan-guage
/lɑːŋɡwɪj/

See definitions in:

All Linguistics Computing

noun

1. the method of human communication, either spoken or written, consisting of the use of words in a structured and conventional way.
"a study of the way children learn language"
2. a system of communication used by a particular country or community.
"the book was translated into twenty-five languages"

Similar: tongue speech mother tongue native tongue dialect

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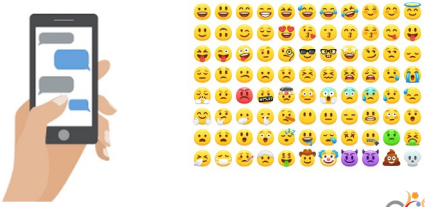
Language vs. Communication



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Language vs. Communication



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Language vs. Communication





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Language vs. Communication



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Communication ≠ Language

With our hands



With our faces



With our bodies



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What % of language is verbal?



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What % of language is verbal?



7%



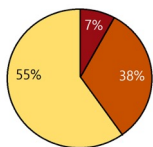
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The 7 - 38 - 55 Rule

Albert Mehrabian's rule of interpersonal communication



7% Spoken Words
38% Tone of Voice
55% Body Language



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My Definition of Language

A comprehensive system of communicating that simultaneously uses 5 methods to convey meaning.



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Comprehensive, Meaning-Based Language Includes

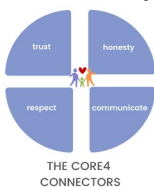
1. Non-Verbal Communication
2. Affectual Communication
3. Body Language
4. Verbal Communication
5. Tonal Communication



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Affect


Body position, Energy, Accessibility




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Body Language

Shoulder shrugs, arms crossed vs. open, etc.





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Body Language

Shoulder shrugs, arms crossed vs. open, etc.




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Non-Verbal

Facial expressions, deep sighs, eyebrow raising or furrowing

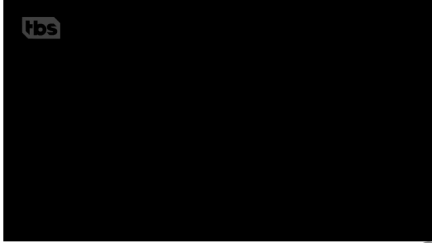



I'M SORRY, DID I
ROLL MY EYES
OUT LOUD?

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Tone



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Intentional Language to Avoid



Sarcasm relies on a type of subtlety that most children under the age of eight do not pick up on

They think literally so your words either make no sense or they interpret them incorrectly.

"Oh great! You spilled your milk again."

"Fan-tastic! You are going to have *another* meltdown."

"Wonderful! You broke your new toy."

"the use of irony or mock or convey contempt"

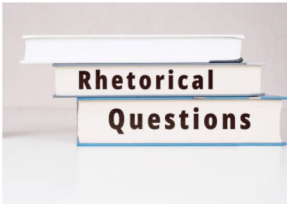


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Intentional Language to Avoid




Behavior: "Is that how we share?" in response to a child who keeps grabbing toys and running away.

New Concepts: "Is that how your shoes go on?" in response to a child who put their boots on the wrong feet.

Interactive Play: "Isn't this fun?" in response to a child who you are trying to engage after their parent left and they are currently crying.



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The Power of Pronouns

I am —> You are

You are —> I am


You-statements become I-statements in their brain.

You are + negative imperative = Negative identity building statement

You are so messy/loud/distracting => I am messy. I am loud. I am distracting.

You + action verb = Self-aware action statement

You made a mess. Good thing you know how to clean it up! => I made a mess. I know how to clean it up.



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The Power of Pronouns

We could —> We could

We + action verb = Shared action statement


You made a mess. Good thing **we** know how to clean it up!




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Mirror Neurons



- Non-Verbal Communication
- Affectual Communication
- Body Language
- Verbal Communication
- Tonal Communication




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Language Development

What is the difference RECEPTIVE and EXPRESSIVE language?





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Definition of Receptive Language

Receptive language - how kids make meaning of and comprehends language.

The INPUT



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Definition of Expressive Language

Expressive Language is defined as **active, outbound communication**, in other words, speech, gesture, writing, or signing.

The OUTPUT


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Expressive Language - Newborn

Defined as 0-3 Months


1. Non-Verbal




3. Body Language




2. Affectual



4. Verbal



5. Tonal



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Expressive Language - Infant

Defined as 4-12 Months

1. Non-Verbal



3. Body Language



2. Affectual



4. Verbal



5. Tonal



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Expressive Language – Toddler

Defined as 13-36 Months

1. Non-Verbal

2. Affectual

3. Body Language

4. Verbal

5. Tonal

All four categories are the property of the child.

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[illegible]


Expressive Language – Toddler

Defined as 13-36 Months

1. Non-Verbal

2. Affectual


5. Tonal



3. Body Language

4. Verbal

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[illegible]

Definition of Receptive Language

Receptive language - how your child makes meaning of and comprehends language.



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Receptive Language - In Utero

Your baby develops receptive language skills, the ability to understand and respond to **familiar words, sounds, and voices**, while still in the womb!



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Receptive Language - Newborn

Defined as 0-3 Months


1. Non-Verbal




3. Body Language



2. Affectual




4. Verbal



5. Tonal

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Receptive Language - Infant


Defined as 4-12 Months

Your baby is listening for up to 2 years before talking!

1. Non-Verbal

3. Body Language


2. Affectual



4. Verbal

5. Tonal

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Receptive Language – Toddler

1. Non-Verbal
2. Affectual
3. Body Language
4. Verbal
5. Tonal

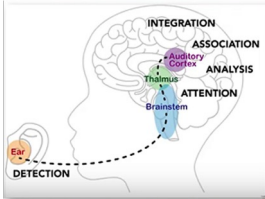
Defined as 12-36 Months




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Language Requires Processing





1. Attend
1. Hear
1. Process
1. Choose

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The Science of Being Small

Logic vs. Emotion

🧠 Adults speak from the 'head', using words to try and SOLVE kid's struggles.

💖 Kids communicate from the "heart" using body language, voice, and facial expression to share their FEELINGS.



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When we use **logic** to solve an **emotion** problem we inadvertently create an **identity** problem.



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Our job is to...

Shape **our language** to support their early cognition & identity.



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We are the architects of their early **dictionary**.

The way we talk to kids become their **inner self talk**.



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When can they 'hear' us?

The RED State

Brain State: Survival State

The Survival State: Survival State

The BLUE State

Brain State: Emotional State

The Emotional State: Emotional State

The GREEN State

Brain State: Executive State

The Executive State: Executive State

Am I safe?

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When can they 'hear' us?

The RED State

Brain State: Survival State

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The BLUE State

Brain State: Emotional State

The Emotional State: Emotional State

The GREEN State

Brain State: Executive State

The Executive State: Executive State

Am I safe? **Am I loved?**

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When can they 'hear' us?

The RED State

Brain State: Survival State

The Survival State: Survival State

The BLUE State

Brain State: Emotional State

The Emotional State: Emotional State

The GREEN State

Brain State: Executive State

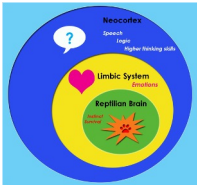
The Executive State: Executive State

Am I safe? **Am I loved?** **What can I learn?**

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Survival Brain


Survival Mode - a state of being where humans experience continuous, unresolved stress over time preventing their nervous system from relaxing.

The 3 Types of Reactions

- Fight** Yell / Negotiate / Demand
- Flight** Run Away / Avoid / Shutdown
- Freeze** Don't know what to do so you allow the behavior to continue / give in

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Survival Brain

Survival Mode - a state of being where humans experience continuous, unresolved stress over time preventing their nervous system from relaxing.

Chronic State of Being

- High Anxiety
- Fear & Uncertainty
- Trust Issues
- Difficulty focusing on daily tasks
- High-Emotion Outbursts
- Insomnia & Sleep Struggles
- Relationship Challenges

habitual

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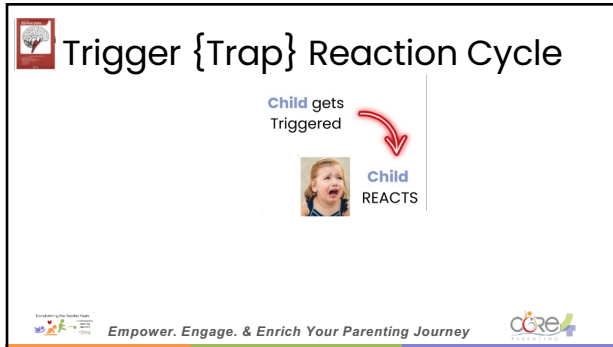


The 3 Types of Reactions

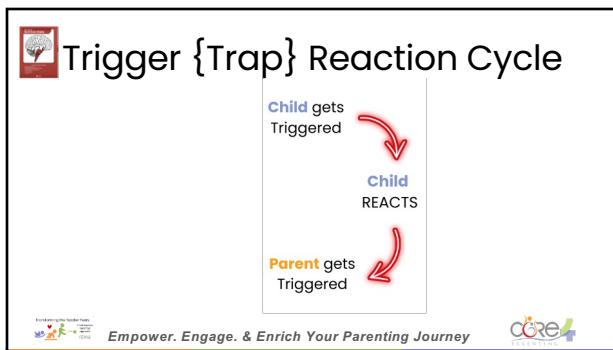
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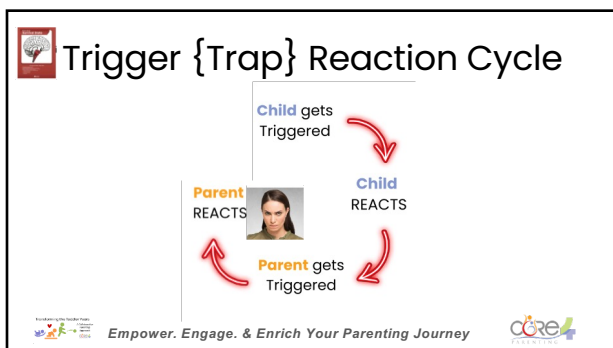
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Trigger {Trap} Reaction Cycle

- This is why kids are chronically **reactive**.
- This is why kids struggle to emotionally **regulate**.
- This is why kids need us to break the cycle!

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Trigger {Trap} Reaction Cycle

We need to use our words to respond to the child's trigger, not their reaction.

Example: Lila wanted the yellow cup. It was dirty so she got the blue one. Lila threw the cup. The top came off spilling her milk.

"Lila! No! Don't throw cups." vs.
 "Oh Lila, you wish you could have your yellow cup."

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Reaction vs. Response

A **reaction** is a subconscious, emotion based survival-oriented defense mechanism.


A **response** is a decision based on information from both the conscious mind and unconscious mind.

You are not in charge of a child's choices. They are. You are in control of how you choose to respond.

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Using Language Intentionally



We are designing and adapting the environment (nurture) to support kids in developing **essential life skills** while keeping our **expectations for success** reasonable and achievable.

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To Develop Executive Life Skills...

- Self- Soothe
- Self- Regulation
- Self - Awareness
- Critical Thinking
- Social Empathy/Compassion
- Decision Making
- Problem Solving
- Effective Communication
- Navigating Interpersonal Relationships

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6 Linguistic Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers

1

Kids need MORE time to process and respond than you think.

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6 Linguistic Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers

2

Questions are stressful for kids. Choose when to use them wisely.

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6 Linguistic Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers

3

Mean what you say and don't say "okay?".

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6 Linguistic Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers

4

Lead with 'yes' because there is always a way to avoid saying 'no'.

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6 Linguistic Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers

5

When all else fails – SING!

Use Music, Movement & Melody to inspire action.




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6 Linguistic Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers

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Why Sign?



- Your baby can sign long before they can talk.
- Signing lowers communication frustration leading to less tantrums
- Effective, early communication secures the parent/child bond and anchors a healthy relationship as they grow.
- Signs are grouped to match your baby's age and stage of development.
- Build Emotional Vocabulary and Support Early IQ

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Essential Signs for Infants & Toddlers

Basic Needs	Health, Hygiene & Safety	Needs, Wants, & Desires
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milk • Sleep • Diaper • Mom/Dad • Play/Toy • Eat • Happy/ Sad 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean/Dirty • Bath • Ouch • Car • Sit • Safe • Wait 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More • All Done • Which One • Where • Ready • Please/Thank You • Yes/No

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*Intentional Language that fosters **connection** and **collaboration** with adults & peers.*


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Get their attention before you communicate.


Connect Before You Expect

- Get down on their level
- Say their name
- Say, "Look at my nose so I know you hear me."
- Say, "I have something to tell you" or "I have a question to ask you."
- Change your tone or use a whisper voice





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It's my job to...
You can help by...



Defining grown up jobs while including kid friendly jobs helps kids feel included, while proactively avoiding a power struggle



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“Tell Me More”

Encourage connection and open communication, creative thinking and expressive storytelling whether they can “talk” yet or not!







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Language that develops
emotional awareness and
self-regulation skills.





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“I’ll wait”


When a toddler screams or cries, interrupting you as you’re trying to talk to them or they clearly need more time to process their feelings.

*You model waiting.
 They learn to stop and wait too!*





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Interpret Intonation and Affect

Connecting emotional vocabulary to how you look and sound helps them understand feelings and emotions.



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Allow side-by-side silence

Benefits:

Allows processing time
Relationship building
Safety in silent connection
Build Independent Play 'muscle'



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Language that develops a child's **sense of self, intrinsic motivation** and **early identity**.



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Emotional Response Language

Sensory Response Language:

It feels like you are...
It sounds like you are...
It looks like you are...
It smells like you are...



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6 Words or Less

Craft your responses like you were actually having a conversation, but string together short, complete sentences so they can process them.



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Narrate What You See & Hear with 'You are' statements.

If it's yes - say "yes"
If it's no - say "not"
If it's maybe - say "You wish"



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*Language as a catalyst that engages a child's **cognitive problem solving** skills.*

THE CORE4 CONNECTORS THE CORE4 SKILL AREAS

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Praise With a Purpose - 'You'

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What we say vs What they believe

You say:
I am so proud of you. I knew you could do it!

They believe:
 When I do things like this, I make her proud.
 I should do more things like this so she is proud of me.

You mean:
I am so amazed by all that you can do! I know you can do hard things.

What you want them to believe:
 I did that. I'm so proud of myself.

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"What's Your Plan?"

A proactive question inserted in potentially problematic or unsafe behavior.

- **You are trying a new way to go up the stairs.**
- **I trust that you feel safe.**
- **Wow! Look at your feet doing their job!**

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"Show Me"


Show me when...
 Show me how to...
 Show me where ...

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Language as a catalyst that encourages and empowers **early choice making** & ownership of **natural consequences**.



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If/Then Choice Opportunity



If you **choose** to _____, then you **choose** to _____. Make a good choice.

If you **choose to** (throw your cup off the table) then you **choosing to** (have me hold your cup until you're thirsty).


Make a good choice."

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"I Wonder"

I wonder when...
I wonder if...
I wonder how...



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“Wow! That was Unexpected”

- A loud noise (fire alarm)
- A child throws a toy across the room (behavior choice)
- A child takes a toy from another child (sharing struggles)





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4 year old example



[Let's Watch](#)



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Collaborative Parenting Podcast

Solo Episodes and Guest Episodes

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Free Resources for parents and educators!

Meltdown Mantra Guide



5 MINDFUL MANTRAS
FOR CONFUSED MINDS
MANAGING TODDLER MELTDOWNS

Text & Audio

<https://www.caratyrrell.com/mantras>

**5 Confidence Building Phrases
(to say everyday)**





<https://www.caratyrrell.com/toddlerstalk>

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How can I support your program?


Parent Engagement Programming



Collaborative Classroom Training





Professional Development



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Thank You and Let's Stay Connected!





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