

# Tips For Using Toys To Elicit Language

---

How to use your child's toys to enrich his/her expressive, receptive language and social skills.

---

## Blocks

are an early intervention toy commonly used for a variety of skills, here are just a few ideas:

- Target social skills like turn taking. Take turns building with the blocks and have your child say "my" or "my turn" when it's their turn and be sure to have them wait their turn.
- Target receptive language skills by identifying sizes of the blocks like "big, little, short, long."
- Target expressive language by using the size words, like "do you want to make a big tower or a small tower?"

## Puzzles

are useful because they come in many different "themes" (farm animals, shapes, transportation, etc.) and you can use them in a variety of ways such as:

- Target social skills like joint attention- after labeling the pieces, hide a piece under a blanket and say "where is the \_\_\_?" and encourage your child to say "here it is!" or "I found it!"
- Target receptive language skills by identifying the pieces by attributes, for example, lay all the pieces out and say "find the animal that says 'moo'."
- Based on the child's level, target expressive language by having them ask for "more", when putting together the puzzle or simply labeling the vocabulary found in the pieces, then go a step further with 2-3 word phrases like "I want \_\_\_."

## Dollhouses

are awesome because they contain language that children use every day such as people, rooms in their house and furniture, try some of these ideas:

- Target social skills like pretend play- have your child reenact something you as parents do at home like cooking or cleaning.
- Target receptive language skills by having them following directions like "put the girl in the bedroom."
- Target expressive language by naming the items (or nouns) in the house, use verbs like "eat" "sleep" or "cook." You could also practice story telling, encourage your child to tell you a story with the people in the house.

## Play dough

can be used in many different ways here are just a few examples:

- Target social skills like choice making, ask your child "do you want "pink or blue play dough?"
- Target receptive language skills by making your own dough, have your child follow verbal directions to make your own play dough.
- Target expressive language by using action words like "roll," "cut," and "squeeze."

## Farm Play set

are another great tool for the following skills:

- Target social skills like imitating- show your child how to imitate animal sounds, pretend to be a farm animal and encourage them to do the same.
- Target receptive language skills by having your child identify the animals, possibly line up 2-3 of the animals and say "find the \_\_\_."
- Target expressive language by asking basic wh- questions like "who takes care of the animals on the farm?"

## Potato Heads

are an amazing tool because they help children learn about body parts and clothing, try these out:

- Target social skills like asking for help. Putting pieces on and taking them off are difficult for most children on the Potato Heads, encourage them to ask for help when they need it.
- Target receptive language skills by identifying body parts on the potato and on the child.
- Target expressive language by using descriptive words like "blue eyes" or ask wh- questions about clothing like "it is raining outside, what does Potato need to wear?"