10 Quick Speech-Language Stimulation Activities to do at Home

1. Read short stories to your child.
2. Naming and categorizing items in the grocery store
3. Playing “I Spy” while driving or visiting a place
4. Naming and describing items in the magazine/newspaper
5. Stacking blocks and Legos: Talk about the size, practice counting and storytelling.
6. Play Hopscotch: Ask your child a question each time he takes a turn.
7. Use Play-Doh to mould different things or cookie cutters to cut out shapes and name them.
8. Walk outside the garden and talk about what you see.
9. Blowing Bubbles: Shapes lip and cheek muscles and can be used to practice speech sounds.
10. Quick puzzles to stimulate cognition and language development

Red Flags for Hearing Concerns in Children

- Frequent ear infections
- Difficulty localizing to sounds
- Delayed language development and unclear speech
- Limited vocabulary
- Watching T.V. or listening to music/videos at a loud level
- Difficulty hearing when it is noisy
- Watches other children for cues/ lip-reads
- Frequently requires repetition e.g. Says “Huh” or “What?”
- Behavioural issues: fidgety, misbehaves, poor attention

Red Flags for Speech-Language & Hearing Concerns
Signs that may indicate the need for an evaluation by a Speech-Language Pathologist & Audiologist

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By 18 months- 2 years of age...
- Does not use at least 8-10 words by 18 months of age and at least 50 meaningful words by 2 years of age.
- Does not follow simple commands e.g. “Show me your cup” by 18 months of age.
- Does not follow simple two step commands such as “Get the ball and put it on the table” by 2 years of age.
- Does not engage in pretend/imaginative play
- Does not play or engage with other children.
- No two-word meaningful phrases (without imitating or repeating) by 2 years of age.
- Speech is not at least 50% understandable to strangers.

By 3 Years of age...
- Is not constructing short sentences e.g. “I go to the shop”.
- Speech is not at least 60-75% or more understandable by strangers.
- Cannot produce the following speech sounds clearly: /m,p,b,t,d,f,s,w/.
- Cannot accurately answer yes/no questions
- Cannot verbalize toilet needs
- Cannot answer simple “wh” questions like “What is that?”
- Does not engage in play with other children.
- Begins to stutter or repeat words continuously.

By 4-5 Years...
- Is not at least 75-100% understandable to strangers
- Cannot produce the following speech sounds clearly: /h,y,ing,k,g,sh,ch,j,l/.
- Is not constructing complex sentences e.g. “Yesterday I played games in the park”.
- Is not asking a variety of questions to gain information (who, what, where, why and when)
- Has difficulty answering simple who, what, where and why questions
- Does not use appropriate grammar in sentences.

By 5-6 years...
- Cannot talk about their day at school or relay a story in the correct order.
- Cannot use language to express emotion e.g. “I feel sad”
- Is not at least 85-100% understandable to strangers
- Cannot produce the following speech sounds clearly: /r,th/
- Cannot accurately relay a story in the correct order
- Cannot sing entire nursery rhymes, recite the alphabet
- Cannot use conjunctions in sentences e.g. “I want the ball and the bubbles”
- Cannot answer questions from listening to a story.
- Has difficulty communicating easily with adults and children.

By 6-7 years...
- Speech is not 100% understandable to strangers
- Cannot have a conversation with parents and strangers
- Cannot use descriptive words in sentences
- Cannot understand and use specific grammatical markers e.g. plurals, past tense.
- Cannot answer questions in class or talk about topics e.g. “Show and Tell”
- Has difficulty socializing and engaging with children and adults
- Stuttering or speaking too fast

Overall Warning Signs at Any Age:
- Not speaking at all or very unclear speech
- Difficulty following instructions
- Difficulty saying words and sentences
- Cannot ask/answer basic questions
- No social skills or social use of language