

Supporting Verbal Communication

**Simple ways to build communication
in everyday moments**

A Caregiver Resource by 2villages.life



www.2villages.life

A Note To Caregivers

If you're here, you're already doing more than you think.

Supporting communication can feel overwhelming—especially when progress is slow, inconsistent, or looks different than expected. It can be hard to know what to say, when to say it, or if what you're doing is even helping.

You don't need to have all the answers.
You don't need to get it perfect.


Communication is built in small, everyday moments—through connection, repetition, and trust.

This guide is not about doing more.

It's about doing things differently, in ways that feel more natural, more supportive, and more possible.



1. Start with What Matters to Your Child



Communication grows faster when it's meaningful. Focus on what your child wants to say.

If they love bubbles → give them a way to say “bubbles.”

If they want snacks → prioritize words for requesting.

When communication leads to getting needs met, it becomes worth trying.



2. Model Instead of Asking Questions

If your child is not responding to questions, shift the approach.

Instead of:

“Do you want the truck?”

Try:

“I am playing with the truck.”

“I like mac and cheese.”

This removes pressure and invites them to join in naturally.



3. Keep It Simple and Build Slowly

Start small and grow from there.

One word → two words → short phrases

Use simple starters like:

“I want...”

“I have...”

“I like...”

Progress happens step by step, not all at once.



4. Use Clear and Specific Language



Say exactly what you mean using simple words.

Instead of:

“Can you get ready?”

Try:

“Put on your shoes.”

Clear language helps your child understand and respond.



5. Say Less

Use fewer words so your message is easier to process.

Instead of long sentences, focus on key words:

“Shoes on.”

“Time to eat.”

Less language = more understanding.



6. Give Time to Respond

After you say something, pause.

Wait.

Give space.

Avoid repeating the same question over and over.

Processing takes time and silence helps.



7. Join Their Attention First

Before expecting communication, connect.

Get at their level.

Watch what they're doing. Imitate their actions or sounds. When you follow their lead, they're more likely to engage with you.



8. Practice Through Play



Play is one of the best ways to build communication.

Use games and favorite activities to create opportunities for:

- Turn-taking
- Requesting
- Commenting

Practice doesn't have to feel like work.



9. Create Opportunities to Communicate

Set up moments where communication is needed.

Pause during a game.
Hold back a toy.
Wait expectantly.

This gives your child a reason to use words.



10. Be Playful and Unexpected

Silliness grabs attention and invites interaction.

Put pants on your head.
Use a funny voice.
Do something “wrong.”

Your child may be more motivated to respond or correct you.



11. Encourage, Don't Correct

Focus on effort, not perfection.

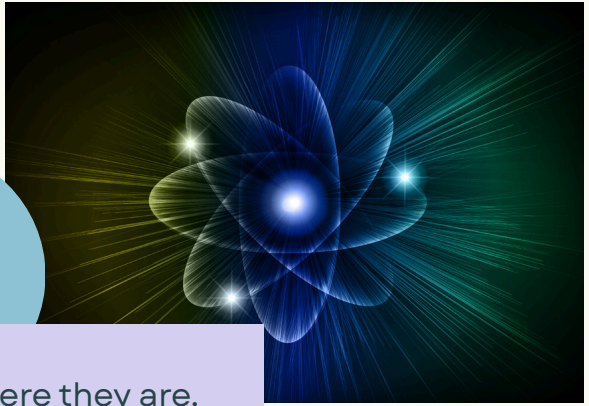
Instead of correcting:
Say what they did do.

“You said ‘ba’ for ball. I heard you.”

Encouragement builds confidence to keep trying.



12. Match Their Energy and Sensory Needs



Meet your child where they are.

Some kids need:

- Calm, quiet spaces
- Others need:
- Movement and energy
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Adjust your approach so communication feels easier for them.



13. Show What You Mean

Use gestures, modeling, and demonstration.

Point.

Show.

Act it out.

The more ways they can understand, the more likely they are to try.



14. Tell Them What TO Do

Give clear direction instead of focusing on what not to do.

Instead of:
“Don’t throw.”

Try:
“Hands down.”
“Put it here.”

This gives them something they can actually follow.



15. Expand How Words Are Used

Help your child use the same word in different ways.

Not just to request:
“Milk”

But also to comment:
“Oh no, milk spilled!”

This builds flexible, meaningful language—not just scripts.



A Gentle Reminder

Progress in communication doesn't always look big or obvious.

It might look like:

A sound.

A glance.

A pause.

An attempt.

Those moments matter. They are the building blocks.

Your child is learning in every interaction even when it doesn't look like it.

Stay close.

Stay curious.

Keep going.

You don't have to do this alone.

