



KIDCARE CANADA

nurturing the best possible start

Video Specific Discussion Q & A



Born to Communicate - Chapter Five

Communication Matters

Categories of questions:



Short answer questions (help participants to warm up and connect to their previous learning)

- *Do people tend to use a different tone of voice when speaking to a very young baby?*

ANSWER: Yes. It is a modification that adults and even children naturally do when speaking to babies. They tend to use high-pitched tones when speaking to very young babies and change to a more adult style of speech as the baby gets older. It is called Infant-directed speech.

- *Is it ever too early to talk to a baby?*

ANSWER: No. Even before the baby is born, he or she can hear the patterns in language. Babies are always listening and learning. Parents are encouraged to talk to their baby while in the womb.

- *Does nurturing have a role in language development?*

ANSWER: Yes. A key aspect of nurturing is talking to a baby in a gentle and warm tone of voice. This helps create a positive relationship between parent and child. Relationships influence social and biological development, learning, and virtually everything else in a new baby's life.

- *Hearing language from early in life helps a baby learn. True or false?*

ANSWER: True. Babies are born ready to communicate. Hearing language (or seeing it, in the case of sign language) in their family is how babies learn. Greater exposure (more time immersed in language) leads to greater learning.

- *Do children understand more language than they can produce?*

ANSWER: Yes. Almost everyone understands more words than they can produce but hearing words many times will lead to learning to say them. This is another reason why it is important to talk to babies and it is also for babies to hear adult conversation.

APPLICATION

Personal experience questions (help participants apply what they have learned – make it personally relevant and meaningful)

- *Have you seen a case where a parent's intuition/concern about their child's language acquisition was found to be correct when they took the child for evaluation?*

ANSWER: Parents or caregivers may know of someone who had concerns and took their child to a specialist. It's important to reassure parents that most children will learn at their own pace, but if there is a genuine concern, parents are often right. If a child is nearly two and does not speak, it is appropriate to seek an evaluation.

- *Have you ever pointed and named objects to a baby as a way to help them learn language? How did the baby respond?*

ANSWER: Parents will probably mention that the baby enjoyed this immensely and it is useful to know that naming parts of the body and objects in the outside world with babies and toddlers will enhance their learning. Even with adults, when a friend points something out, we look at it differently.

- *Is it normal for different babies to learn language at different rates?*

ANSWER: Absolutely. And the style can differ as well, with some babies preferring to name things and others engaging more in back and forth "conversation" (serve and return).

- *Have you experienced a baby responding better (or worse) when you changed your tone of voice? How did this work?*

ANSWER: Participants may note that a gentle but higher pitched tone is most engaging to babies. Others might recall that a baby cried when an adult used an aggressive tone of voice.

- *How have you played with babies in a way that felt like communication?*

ANSWER: Participants may describe the “serve and return” (back and forth) moments where babies imitate sounds, facial expressions, etc. The baby can initiate these sounds and expressions or the parent can.

REFLECTION

Open-ended questions (help participants reflect and move towards deeper learning)

- *There is a long tradition of reading to babies. Why do you think this is the case?*

ANSWER: Participants might talk about nursery rhymes and other baby-centred stories that engage the baby through patterns, novelty, etc. and help the baby to learn. The research today shows that early reading rhymes and songs contribute to language development. It is very helpful for babies to have an early introduction to books and how pages are turned.

- *As babies get older, how might you modify your language to communicate better with them?*

ANSWER: There is a natural evolution from baby language to short sentences and then to longer sentences. You will likely increase your vocabulary, use less of the high pitched tone, and introduce more adult style of conversation. Most parents and family members transition to this naturally as the child gets older.

- *Describe nurturing activities that help with infant development.*

ANSWER: There are many! Almost anything done with kindness can be a nurturing experience, as long as the child feels safe. Cooking, cleaning, and other daily adult activities can be nurturing if the parent involves the child. Playing with the child at the child's level is also nurturing. Gentle physical games, touching and tickling, are all a part of nurturing. Other nurturing activities include: talking to a baby or young child, describing the environment while out for a walk, singing, reading, naming body parts... the list goes on.

- *What role do you think play has in communicating with a baby?*

ANSWER: Experts say that play is how babies learn. A playful atmosphere while communicating with a baby helps create an environment that is best for learning.

- *What are some ways a community can help with raising a baby?*

ANSWER: Again, there are MANY! A healthy community is good for everyone, with family activities, parks, support groups, health care and so on. We know that stress has a negative impact on babies and children. Many parents are struggling. They could benefit by having a kind neighbour or a friendly contact (phone, email etc.) who takes an interest in the family. This support can dramatically reduce stress and improve the outcome for the family.

All questions are examples only and have been designed to be modifiable. They are currently framed for professionals who support families.

If your audience is comprised of parents, we recommend you change the wording to make it more personal.

e.g.

- *Have you ever pointed and named objects to a baby as a way to help them learn language? How did the baby respond?*

Could become

- *Have you ever pointed and named objects to your baby as a way to help them learn language? How did your baby respond?*

And

- *How have you played with babies in a way that felt like communication?*

Could become

- *How do you play with with your baby? When do you feel that you communicate best?*

And of course you may want to design questions of your own!

Suggested approach

Before showing the video

Decide on a couple of questions from the “Previous Learning” category above to put to your participants.

- Ask a first question and engage participants in a discussion. You may want to use questions like, “Have others had similar experiences?” to encourage all participants to speak.
- Depending on your time availability (3 hour session), ask a second question.

Ask participants to notice if these questions are also addressed in the video.

After showing the video

- Ask for first reactions to the video – words that come to mind? Interesting comments they recall, or something that was new to them
- Remember to refer back to your question(s) prior to watching the video and ask participants how those questions were addressed in the video

Application questions

- Then move onto the “application” questions to further discussion and provide participants with the opportunity to relate what they saw in the video to their own experiences
- Ask how participants might change their actions with infants because of the video – or suggestions they might make to new parents because of the video

Reflection questions

- Move on to “reflection” questions to encourage deeper thinking about the topic

Closure

- Depending on the time available and the group you are working with, either summarize key discussion points or ask participants to summarize some of the key discussion points and share what they will continue to do because of the content of the video or what changes they will make because of what they have learned from the video.

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DISCLAIMER

The content of KidCareCanada videos is informed by current research and shared by experts in the field. It should not be used for diagnosing or treating, and is NOT a substitute for professional care.