

# ENCOURAGING LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

## WHAT CAN I DO IF MY CHILD IS FOUR TO SIX YEARS OLD?

- When your child starts a conversation, give your full attention whenever possible.
- Make sure that you have your child's attention before you speak.
- Acknowledge, encourage and praise all attempts to speak. Show that you understand the word or phrase by fulfilling the request, if appropriate.
- Pause after speaking. This gives your child a chance to continue the conversation. Continue to build vocabulary. Introduce a new word and offer its definition, or use it in context that is easily understood. For example, "I think I will drive my vehicle to the store. I am too tired to walk."
- Talk about spatial relationships (first, last, middle; right, left, in, and on) and opposites (up, down; on, off)
- Offer a description or clues, and have your child identify what you are describing: "We use it to sweep the floor," (broom) or "It is cold, it is sweet, it is good for dessert, I like chocolate." (ice-cream)
- Encourage your child to give directions. For example, have your child give you directions on building a tower.
- Work on following two and three step directions.
- Play games such as "house". Exchange roles in the family, with you pretending to be the child. Talk about the different rooms and furnishings in the house.
- While watching TV together ask questions about the program. What is going to happen next? Are they sad? Happy?
- Take advantage of daily activities. For example if in the kitchen talk about the utensils used, describe the food, color, texture, taste. Where does the food come from? Likes and dislikes. Cleaning up, etc.
- While shopping for groceries, discuss what you will buy, how many you need, and what you will make. Discuss the size, shape, and weight of the packages.