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# Building Your Child's Conversational Skills

In order to help your child build conversation skills, you will want to teach your child to pay attention. One way you can be sure you have the attention of a hearing-impaired child, especially one who is just beginning to develop language skills, is to establish eye contact - even if it is only for a moment. From these fleeting glances, you will be able to build eye contact as a part of social conversation.

Children will naturally tend to look at adults in certain situations. Among these are: to ask permission, to seek reassurance, to get information, to get approval, to ask for help, to socialize, and to answer a reprimand. These natural situations can provide you with opportunities to reinforce your child's conversation techniques with your smiles or verbal responses. When a child is met with a pleasant, rewarding experience each time he/she initiates a conversation, the desire for interaction will increase in length and frequency.

Usually, the first eye contact that a child gives, particularly a child who is just beginning to develop conversation skills, is short. After your child has developed good auditory and visual attention skills, you will find your "conversations" getting longer.

As attention skills develop, more conversations will be initiated, and this will make it easier for your child to acquire language.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR BUILDING CONVERSATION SKILLS

1.) Call to your child, using his/her name, when you wish to initiate a conversation.

2.) If your child does not respond to your call, move closer so your child can see and hear you better.

3.) Anytime your child looks your way, respond with language - even if it is only to say, "Hi."

4.) Never touch or pull your child for attention.

5.) Reward your child whenever he/she glances toward you by talking or doing something. Talk about what is happening, what you or your child are doing, or about what you think your child wants.

6.) Have a pleasant look on your face when you respond to a glance. Smile and use a pleasant voice. You want to reinforce your child's expectations of a pleasant experience with language.

7.) Make the most of the natural, positive situations in which your child tends to look at you. It is your child's way of initiating a conversation.

