

Reading

Ask a child to describe an illustration or picture. Point out and name objects, animals, colors, or shapes.

- "What do you see?"
- "Can you find ...?"
- "How many ____ are there?"

Make personal connections between a book and a child's life.

- "This story is about _____. Have you ever _____ before?"
- "Can you think of anything else like _____?"
- "How is _____ feeling right now?
When did you feel this way?"

Support deeper thinking by asking open-ended questions.

- "What if ..."
- "How might ..."
- "Why did ..."
- "What do you think will happen next?"

Ask a child to sort stories into beginning, middle, and end.

- "What happens at the beginning of the story?"
- "How did this story end?"
- "What part of this story did you like best? Why?"



Pretend Play

Notice what a child is looking at or playing with. Add words to describe their actions, toys, or surroundings.

- "You have an orange carrot in your basket. What else will you buy at our store?"
- "The blue hat goes on your head. What can you put on your hands?"
- "How is your baby doll feeling?"

Engage children as they imagine and explore.

- "I see you are a _____ today! Who can I be?"
- "Tell me about what you are playing."
- "What will you do next?"
- "What else do you need?"
- "What can _____ do?"

Guide healthy communication that supports cooperation and peer-peer interactions.

- "How does _____ make you feel?"
- "I notice you ... (taking turns, sharing, using kind words). What a great way to play together!"
- "What she said hurt your feelings. What can you tell her?"
- "You both want to play with _____. How can we work together to solve this?"



Curiosity & Learning

Sit down with children to facilitate and guide exploration.

- "How do you know ...?"
- "Tell me about ..."
- "Do you think ..."
- "What is your plan?"
- "What other ways can you ..."
- "What will you do next?"

Encourage predictions with "I wonder" comments.

- "I wonder why/how ..."
- "I wonder what you need in order to ..."
- "I wonder what will happen if ..."



Support observations, adding vocabulary as needed.

- "What does ____ feel like?"
- "How are they the same? Different?"
- "How/why did ____ change?"
- "What else can we do with ..."

Math

Build one-to-one correspondence by counting fingers, blocks, crayons, toys — everything!

- "Let's put 1, 2, 3, 4, five toes into your sock. Where is the other foot?"
- "Each friend gets one apple for snack. Can you help me count them?"
- "How many steps until we get to the door?"

Use descriptive math words and terms during everyday routines.

- "What shape is our snack?"
- "How many circles can we find in the room?"
- "Who is in front of ... Who is behind ...?"



Ask a child to describe or compare objects by size, color, shape, or weight.

- "What are you playing with? Tell me more!"
- "How can you tell which ____ is bigger/smaller?"
- "The square blocks are blue, what color are the triangles?"

Support early numeracy thinking by asking open-ended questions.

- "How can we sort the ... (toys, blocks, shapes)?"
- "What do you think comes next?"
- "Who has ... (more, less, the same)?"
- "What will happen if we ... (add more, take away some)?"

Outdoor & Active Play

Encourage children to touch and explore what is around them. Share new words that describe the things they see, smell, hear, feel, and do.

- "What do you ... (see, hear, feel)?"
- "You are looking at a tall tree. Tell me about what you see!"
- "I spy something that is green and starts with a s-s-s sound ..."
- "I see you running! How fast are you going?"

Help children practice ways to respectfully handle conflict with others.

- "How can we play with this ball together?"
- "Who can help ____?"
- "Let's talk with them about taking turns. What can you say?"



Support children in learning how to problem solve through exploration.

- "What else could we use this for?"
- "How/what are you going to ..."
- "What should we make?"
- "Is there another way that you could try?"

Mealtimes

Build sentences around a child's one- or two-word communication.

- "Yes, the apple is red. Do you see anything else that is red?"
- "I like eating snack, too. What does it taste like?"

Use descriptive words to talk about the flavors, temperature, or texture of foods.

- "This orange is very juicy and sweet."
- "Those crackers are crispy. Crunch! Crunch!"

Ask open-ended questions to support imaginative thinking.

- "What do you think ... (birds, cats, dinosaurs, dragons) eat for lunch?"
- "If we were to make a ____, what ingredients would we need?"
- "If a ____ went to a restaurant, what would they order?"



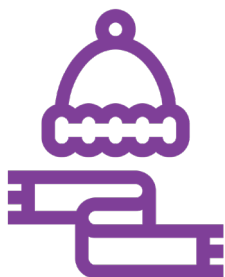
Build classification skills by asking a child to name foods by color, flavor, or beginning sound.

- "Let's think of all the foods we know that are ... (sweet, sour, green, crunchy)."
- "I am eating food that starts with a t-t-t sound. What could it be?"
- "What is your favorite ... (dinner, breakfast, spicy food)?"

Personal Care & Transitions

Add words to your actions during daily routines.

- "I am going to change your diaper. How does it feel to be all nice and clean?"
- "Coat on, hat on, what comes next?"
- "Let's wash our hands. How does the water feel?"



Add words to a child's emotions. Labeling helps children recognize and vocalize the strong emotions they might be feeling.

- "He just grabbed your toy. Do you feel ... (angry, upset, sad)?"
- "I notice you are playing by yourself. Are you feeling lonely right now?"
- "You have a big smile on your face! Why are you feeling so ... (happy, excited, joyful)?"



Support children's understanding of routines/schedule.

- "It is time to clean up. What will you put away first?"
- "What do we do right before we eat?"
- "How do you ... (clean up, get ready to go outside)?"

The 14 Talking Tips

1. **Talk about** what you're doing and thinking.
2. **Comment on** what they're doing or looking at.
3. **Name things** that they're interested in.
4. **Get down to their level:** face to face.
5. **Touch, hug, hold.**
6. **Tune in and respond** to what they look at, do, and say.
7. **Wait for their response.**
8. **Imitate them,** and add words.
9. **Make faces, use gestures.**
10. **Take turns** – don't do all the talking.
11. **Repeat and add** to what they say and do.
12. **Follow their lead,** do what interests them.
13. **Encourage them,** be positive.
14. **Be silly!** Relax and have fun!



Visit [LENA.org/resources](https://lena.org/resources) to download other resources, including the 14 Talking Tips in multiple languages.