**Toddler Language Tips!**

I have been a Speech Pathologist for 13 years and a mommy for three. I found there to be an overwhelming amount of information out there on how to parent. I too have skimmed through those books and articles and thought, when will I have the time to do all of these things. I hope my top ten tips to enhance your interactions with your toddler will be a quick go to list to implement!

**Narrate!** Talk to your child about what they are doing/viewing. It might be the same landscape we ourselves have seen for years, but to their eyes, it is brand new! Throughout the day, talk about the actions that are occurring at each moment. For example, when food shopping, talk about the foods you are putting in your cart. This will build your child’s vocabulary!

**Raise the bar for your toddler, and he will rise!** Do not just assume your child will not understand the reason behind something you want them to do or that they do not want to do and that you will just have to endure a tantrum. Explain to them the reason you are telling them to do something!

**Play with toys!** Ten minute intervals of one-on-one time with your toddler throughout the day without a smart phone in sight makes a big impact. There is a strong relationship between language and play. The developmental patterns of language and play are highly correlated. As the complexity of your child’s play increases, so will his language.

**Little Reporters!** Little ones love to be part of our conversations! When an activity is done or the day is through, ask them about it! You can ask what they liked best, who they saw, what they did and what they want to do next. You might get tons of jargon from a toddler at first, but soon enough it will turn into true words!

**Road Blocks!** Give your little one road blocks! Verbal or gestural road blocks! They can learn they have to say or do something to have access to an item they want. If your little one wants a snack, encourage him to point to the items or say the item’s name. If your little one seems frustrated because he is trying to open a bag, encourage him to say “open” or “help.” If he cannot give you the verbal language, comment “oh, it looks like you want me to ‘open.’” This will give him a model of language to use in the future!

**Pretend!** Creativity in play is an amazing way to watch your child’s personality!

**Read books!** Throughout toddlerhood, your little one will learn a ton of language and sound awareness by reading books. Books with repetitive phrases make reading time extremely interactive for our little toddlers!

**Get on the same level!** Get low and talk eye to eye with your child. It will bring your child’s focus to you and the language you are using. It will also teach eye contact, an important piece of social language!

**Mirror language!** Encourage longer sentence use by mirroring what your child says! For example, if he says, “Hand!” You say, “You’re right, that is a big gorilla hand.”

**Make choices!** Let your child make choices. Instead of anticipating what your child wants, give him a choice of two items. For example, at breakfast, ask him if he wants strawberries or blueberries.