

Ep 162: 10 Helpful Toys for Late Talkers & Tips for Play-Based Sessions

Welcome to the SLP happier podcast. I'm Sarah, a pediatric speech language pathologist. Today on the podcast, we'll talk about developing play routines for late talkers kids ages 2 to 4 with expressive language disorder. We will discuss how to keep kids engaged in play, my favorite toys and play routines and tips and perspectives for working with young children with expressive language disorder. Working with late talkers. 9s Whereas my students could mostly sit and listen to a lesson. My toddler and preschool students ran all over the room, and I found them difficult to engage when I started working with this age. So in this episode, I teach you everything I've learned since opening my private practice about working with these young kids so you can get started ahead of where I started. A few tips to start when you can start with play and follow the child's lead. Be patient and build rapport. It's pretty common for students. Of these ages to be shy or not to talk to you at first. And I know this is happening. Parents say to. 14s Like it's just building up to the. 38s Here you go. Giving a ticket? Sit down. Let's go. The routines can have as few or as many steps as is appropriate for your student, and you can also add variety within this routine to model more words. But a stable verbal routine is a great place to start, and these examples do have a lot of words in them. I typically would pick 3 to 5 words or phrases to model in each play routine, but it depends on the client. Building. Repetitive and predictable play routines can be an effective way to help a child with language delayed build their language skills. Once that routine is established, the child will understand the order of play and they'll anticipate the word or phrase you're going to use. This anticipation will help them gesture or use a new word. When it comes to getting started, I know it's helpful for me when I can picture the therapy. So today I'll share my top ten favorite toys to build language with late talkers in my speech therapy clinic, and I'll share examples of how I might use each. Of course, there are many more ways to play with these toys than I'll share today. These are just examples to get you started. Number one, large blocks. Blocks are a great toy to build on. Play routines and model words like up when you're stacking them or put it on and then boom when you knock the block tower down. I like to use blocks large enough that when they're stacked on each other, they are close to the size of a young child. And this makes building the block towers and knocking them down even more fun. Number two books. Books with simple language and repetitive words are best to facilitate early language, and a few of my favorites are high five animals. So in that book you turn each page and you high five the animals. So it's very action based. I love touch and feel books and I might just say are cute or all on each page. If I'm, for example, working on really early language with a child and I also like yummy yummy yuck where as you turn the pages there are things you eat and things you don't. And kids love it. When I make a big deal of the yuck, for example, there's a Band-Aid so we don't eat Band-Aids. Three trains and tracks. I have trains and tracks set for my kid. You can use whatever you want. We usually build the tracks and then we might have the trains derail. I might model an exclamatory word like whoa or uh oh, and you can also make your own train station or repair shop to repair the trains that fall off the track. Trains can also be used to model phrases such as put it on. Got it? Oh no, a crash, they fell off and let's do it again. Number four cars, ramps and tunnels. These are maybe not my favorite toys to play with, but they are certainly some of the favorites of the children I work with. So small cars really are a client favorite, and I often make tunnels with maybe a paper towel tube, or I might make my own ramp with books on the stack. And then I'll take another hard book with a hardcover and stack it at a 45 degree angle, making the cars go down. If I don't have a ramp with me and cars can be used to model exclamatory words like boom! Uh oh, and words and phrases such as ready,

set, go, get it out, let's go fast. Oh no! Fell down, it fell down. Watch out! It's a crash. Let's go slow. Drive in and get out. You can also get a shallow container and fill it with soap and water. And use a washcloth to wash the cars while modeling words like clean, dirty, and done. Number five a school bus toy. The Fisher-Price bus is a great toy to model the wheels on the bus song, which is a client favorite. You can also have people get on and off the bus. We've talked about an example of that earlier, and have the bus break down or fall over, and then have the bus drive to school and have the people in it get out and go to school. Number six small figurines. So small figurines like dinosaurs or the Fisher-Price Little People can be used for a variety of different imaginative play routines. So we can get in and off the bus, we can jump over a log and model like hop, hop, hop. We can pretend play with Band-Aids like model Booboo and ouch and put a piece of tape on the toy. So I also really like the repetitive nature of small figurines. For example, one of my students really likes to grab a toy house I have and do trick or treating, and with each person in the line, right, there's like maybe seven little people or ten little people figurines in line. Each one knocks on the door and says, hi. Trick or treat. How are you? Number seven ball toys, ball mazes. Those are the ones where you kind of pound the ball down and it falls down. Ball ramps, those pound the ball toys, they're popular with this age group. I can't use them very often because I have to be quiet for the neighbors in my building. But this is certainly a favourite and things you can model with these. If you can be a little louder where you are. Go down the color and the ball or if that was fast or got it. Number eight toys with keys and locks. So toys with keys and doors that open. So that would be the critter clinic or a garage toy where you put each car in the garage and then lock up each one are really motivating for young kids. And with these toys, you can model words and phrases like open clothes, get the key, put it in, turn, open number nine and you knew this one was coming. I'm sure is bubbles. There's so many words and phrases you can model with bubbles. So when we're popping the bubbles, I'm not just going to model a pop. Typically, we might pop the bubble and then stomp on the bubbles and then tap the bubbles and then kick the bubbles. Blow them high, blow them. Blow, blow big one. Blow a little one. Number ten I really like pretend play items like houses, ships and things like that. So I have a ship, a couple different houses, a playground, a bus and a car garage with an elevator that has a turn handle. So bringing out these items often means I can model language and follow the child's lead. For example, with the play ship, I bring in some toy sharks and then some magnet tiles to make a pool of water. And sometimes we even say, let's take the ship under the ocean and I blow bubbles like we're under the ocean. So pretend play is really fun. And I know that there are big plastic items that we don't always want, but if you can find these things secondhand, I do get a lot of mileage out of them. 2s So those are my ten favorite toys. Remember when you're first building these routines, your client may say nothing and that's okay. So continued modeling is effective and it takes time. If your client is not saying words, try pairing a word with a gesture like glue with your hand on your head after you've been running around. And you can also try adjusting the pace and melody of your voice to draw attention to the word. And a quick word here. These strategies are really based on neurotypical expressive language disorder only. I have lots of other episodes about autistic learners or Gestalt language, and so if you're interested in that, check out those upsets. And also, of course, make sure your child has had a hearing, screening and a hearing test when you're in these sessions. Also remember, it takes time to build rapport with some of these students, and play is the therapy until you can build on that relationship and build those verbal routines. 2s I hope this episode is helpful. If you want to know more about how to support kids ages 2 to 5 who are late talkers, check out my Late Talkers packet, which will be linked in the show notes. It'll help you understand analytic language development from pre intentional communication to first words and then phrases. And it comes with a parent homework packet that I actually use as lesson ideas. So

each page has a word like on or pop or shoe and a parent coaching strategy ways to incorporate that word into play and routines. So click the link in the show notes to check that out and see if it could help you as much as it's helped me. I hope this episode was helpful and that you learned something new you can use with your young clients, and that this was a little slice of an SLP happy hour for you. Until next time.