

Getting Ready for Kindergarten: Talking Together

One of the best ways to help children get ready for kindergarten is to talk with them. Talking gives children lots of opportunities to hear and use words. The more words they hear, the better they do in school!

When families make time to talk, children learn to:

- Listen and respond to others
- Tell about their needs, interests and experiences
- Understand and use increasingly complex sentences.

The activities in this handout support the following Lincoln County Schools Kindergarten Readiness Skills:

- I can express my thoughts and needs using words in a sentence.
- I can talk about things I am doing now, things I did yesterday, and things I will do tomorrow.

Here are some fun ways to talk with your child!



All children hear "Business Talk"	Try adding "Extra Talk"
"Time for lunch."	"We're having tacos for lunch. What would you like to put in your taco? We have meat, cheese, tomatoes, lettuce and salsa."
"Hold my hand"	"The parking lot's really busy. Let's hold hands – that will help us keep together and safe as we walk to the store."
"Let's go"	"We're going to Grandma's. I wonder what we'll see on the way. Do you think the donkeys will be out in the field like last time?"



Talk about what you're doing. For example:

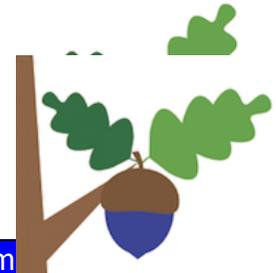
"I'm folding the laundry. Here's a pair of your socks – see, there are two of them and they match! Let's see if there are any more pairs in the laundry basket."

"I just poured the last of the milk on your cereal. I'd better put milk on the grocery list so we remember to get some when we go to the store. Can you think of any other things we might need from the store?"

Talk about what your child is doing. For example:

"You're putting a lot of sand and rocks in your yellow dump truck. It's getting really full!"

"That's a really tall building you're making. You're balancing each block carefully on top of the other so it will stay up. That takes a lot of patience!"



Introduce interesting words and phrases. For exam

"See those people wearing the yellow hardhats? They're construction workers. They're going to help build that house."

"Wow! Look at those waves hitting the beach – they're humongous!"

Humongous means really, really big.

“You built a really fancy machine out of those cardboard boxes – you could be an engineer when you grow up!”

Give your child plenty of opportunities to talk.

Try these steps to **get a conversation started** – and see how long you can keep it going!

- **Watch to see what interests your child.** What is he/she looking at or doing?
- **Make a comment.** Say something about what your child sees or does.
- **Pause.** Give your child time to think about what you said and wait for a response. Be patient. Sometimes your child may respond with actions rather than words. That’s okay!
- **Follow your child’s lead.** Expand on what your child says or add a bit more information. For example...

Child: “There’s a bug!”

Mom: “Wow – it’s a little red bug with spots. I think it’s a ladybug. Where do you think it’s going?”

Make time for conversations throughout the day: in the car, running errands, during meals or at bedtime. Talk about funny or interesting things that you’ve seen or done together. Plan what you’ll do the next day.

Whenever your child wants to tell you something, take a moment to listen and respond.

Tell and read stories.

There are lots of interesting words and things to talk about in books. Take time to talk about what’s happening in the story. Look at the pictures together and talk about what you see.

Tell stories about things you and your child have done, stories about your own childhood or stories that that your family told you. Try making up your own stories with your child as the main character.

