



4 Steps for Using ABA Techniques to Develop First Sounds and Words in Children with Autism

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1

COMPLETE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE WHOLE CHILD (INCLUDING FEEDING, TOILETING, PROBLEM BEHAVIORS).

Before working on getting a child to talk, we must first assess not just his language but we need to assess the whole child and the supports and services that are currently in place.

2

ASSESS SPECIFICALLY THE SPEECH SOUNDS OR WORD APPROXIMATIONS THE CHILD CAN SAY, IF ANY.

Complete language assessment by setting a timer for 15, 30 or 60 minutes and recording any sounds, word approximations, words, or phrases the child says during their everyday interactions.

3

FORMULATE A LIST OF SOUNDS, WORD APPROXIMATIONS, OR WORDS THAT YOU OR OTHERS HAVE HEARD YOUR CHILD OR CLIENT SAY.

Keeping a list in Excel will allow words to be added in alphabetical order. This list can be hung on the refrigerator at home and/or kept in a binder at school so everyone knows what word approximations or words to practice throughout the day.

4

USE 1 WORD x 3 STRATEGY (SAYING ONE WORD, SLOWLY AND WITH AN ANIMATED TONE 3X BEFORE DELIVERING OF AN ITEM/REINFORCER).

USE THIS STRATEGY THROUGHOUT THE DAY TO ATTEMPT TO GET BABBLING, SOUNDS, AND WORD APPROXIMATIONS TO INCREASE.

If you are having the child build a simple animal inset puzzle, for example, hold the puzzle piece of a pig up to our face/mouth, and say “pig, pig, pig” as you hand the child the puzzle piece.

With each pairing of the word, move the reinforcer a little closer and don't hold out or require the child to speak (even if he or she has said the word before). Deliver the reinforcer after a successful sound or word approximation or after the third try, whichever comes first. Another example is if your child reaches for their cup say cup, cup, cup as you move the cup closer to them.

For more proven strategies, [sign up here](#) for a free 3-Step Guide and video workshop.