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Strengthen Holiday Language Skills at Home

by Kelly Faulkenberry Cheek, M.S.P, CCC-SLP

The holiday break often gives parents the opportunity to spend more time with their children. With the following activities, parents can use this valuable time to strengthen their children's language skills and have some fun, too!



Use Family Pictures to Develop Strong Language Skills

Pictures are a great way to develop family sharing and closeness while promoting a variety of language skills. Children and parents love looking at new or old pictures. Placing pictures into a personalized picture book, such as an inexpensive "flip-book" type album, can help your children understand **themes** such as holidays, birthdays, or vacations. Help them write or tell stories by using white label stickers and writing **who, what, when, where, and why** sentences about each photo. Encourage your children to use **past tense** when describing the pictures. Give them examples such as, "When you *were* a baby, you *loved* the stuffed bear Santa *brought* you for Christmas." Talk with your children about people, objects, and colors and take turns describing each. Allow them to describe their memories of these events and expand upon these with your own.

Reading and Telling Stories: A Great Way to Develop Imagination AND Language Skills

Another way to spend quality time with your children—and strengthen language skills at the same time—is by reading and telling stories together. Let your children **predict** the characters' actions and **describe** the pictures using **nouns, verbs, and adjectives**. Encourage your children to tell you their feelings about the book (i.e., Was it scary, fun, or funny?). Also, ask your children to retell the story while adding your own ideas and giving clues to the **sequence** of events.

Tell stories to your children to allow them to build their **imagination** skills. Children love to hear stories about their parents and other close family members. Tell them funny stories about what they did when they were little, such as their first birthday, their first word, or when they first learned to talk. Allow your children to **add to these stories** with real memories or make-believe. To bond with your children and strengthen their language skills, make this a part of the bedtime routine. You can also incorporate story-telling while sharing holiday traditions or mealtimes.



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