

## Outdoor Speech and Language Activities

- Sidewalk Chalk
  - Write letters, practice sounds or words
  - Hopscotch to the sounds or words
  - positional concepts: over, under, on, around, etc.
- Hoola Hoops
  - Jump in and out while practicing sound/word
  - Take turns by rolling it back and forth (use words)
  - Label body parts as you try to swing it around that part
- Bikes
  - Take turns using words
  - Answer “where” questions (where are you going?)
  - Play pretend: pretend to go to the store or pool
- Balls
  - Ask a question and throw the ball to someone who has to answer, then ask the next person
  - Name a category and whoever has the ball has to come up with one thing in that category until you run out
  - Use descriptive vocab: bounce it high or low, throw it fast or slow
  - Talk about verbs: bounce, throw, roll, dribble, shoot, etc
- Go for a Walk
  - Talk about things you see
  - Talk about things you’ve done
  - Talk about things you want to do
- Blow Bubbles
  - Have your child request more
  - See if you can make them big/little, a lot/few

- Ask your child how to blow them, high or low? fast or slow?
- Sports
  - Talk about the rules
  - Practice turn-taking
  - Talk about strategy

### **Playground Activities for Speech and Language**

It's finally Spring! That means time to go outside!! All kids love going to the park or the playground, but did you know that you can work on speech and language skills while you're there as well?? You can!! Enjoy these playground activities for speech and language development!

## **Taking Turns with Others**

Many children have trouble with taking turns but it is especially difficult when your language delay gets in the way of you using your words to take turns. While your child is at the playground, help her remember to use her words to ask others for a turn and to offer a turn to someone else. You can practice this at home before going to the park/playground by taking turns with a fun toy. Make sure your child says "my turn" or "can I have a turn?" each time she wants it. Then, make sure she gives it up when you ask for a turn. You can also practice having her offer a turn to someone else who is close by. Once you get to the park, you can use cues like "Would you like a turn with that? You can use your words." Or "That girl doesn't have a

swing, do you think you could offer her a turn on yours?” You may have to convince your child that sharing is required at the playground because most kids don’t want to share. If you have to, try telling her “you can share with your friends or we can leave, what’s your choice?” Be prepared though, if she continues to refuse to share, you will have to leave. Empty threats aren’t worth anything if you don’t back it up when she refuses.

## Starting Conversations with Other Children

Sometimes the hardest part about playing with new people is just getting the interaction started. If your child can just get his foot in the door, many children are nice enough that they will just start playing with him and he won’t have to do much talking after that. But the quiet kid who sits in the corner doesn’t often get invited to play. Teach your child some social scripts that he can use to initiate those interactions with other kids. Here are some ideas of scripts you could teach him:

- Hi, I’m Johnny, what’s your name?
- Can I play?
- What are you doing?
- That looks fun!
- Wow! I like how you...
- I like your...
- I bet you can’t catch me!

Practice these scripts before going to the playground and then once you’re there, ask him to choose a child that he’s going to try to play with. Then, ask him what he’s going to say. Having a plan before he walks up there will really help. It may happen that the other child

doesn't want to play so you'll have to teach him how to find someone else as well. It's not the best outcome, but that's real life. Better for him to understand how to bounce back from it now!

## Use Descriptive Vocabulary on the Playground

The playground is full of great descriptive vocabulary that you can use when talking to your child at the park. You can talk about where your child is (under the slide, on the slide, going around the pole). You can also talk about what your child is doing (running fast, swinging high, etc.). I also like to talk about how things feel on the playground. Much of the playground equipment is textured so there are plenty of opportunities to talk about smooth, rough, bumpy, hard, etc. Talk about whatever your child is doing. Let her take the lead and supply him with the words that fit the activity. You can even ask your child questions about how things feel or where your child is. This gives her an opportunity to use her words to describe things. You can also involve other children at the playground "What does your swing sound like? A monkey? An Elephant? I hear it squeaking like a bird! It's so squeaky."

Turn off the TVs, the I-Pads, and the computer and go play outside! There are tons of great educational video games and technological devices but nothing can beat real world experience and getting your

whole body involved in the learning. Get outside and have fun with your child with these playground activities!