

Helping young children build language skills

By Emily Webster, Speech-Language Pathologist

Here are some fun ways to encourage language with your young children using a simple object everyone has- cups!

1) Pull out a few cups and use them as a microphone.

You can try making sounds that will echo for our younger kids and see if you can get any imitation going where they copy the sound or the action of leaning into the cup. Make sure to copy any sounds they are making as well. You can do animal sounds or silly sounds like "moo", "wow", "beep", vowel sounds and so on. Try varying your volume and use your body to show what your voice is doing. For older children you can try taking turns, "my turn" and "your turn" and see if different cups make different sounds.



2) Try to stack the cups and build a tower.

You can use regular cups from the kitchen or nesting cups for this. When building the tower repeat words like, "up up up", "on", "more", and "build". You can ask for "help" and of course say "oh no" or "uh oh" when it falls down. Try and only

have a few cups in reach at a time so your child needs to request more cups to keep building. With older children try describing the tower with them. Use words like, "tall", "wide" "straight", and so on.

3) Hide things in the cups.

Put a mystery object in the cup and cover it up with your hand or by placing it face down on the ground. Ask questions like, "where is it", "hmmm what's inside" and so on. Shake the cup together and listen for the sound. With younger children have them find the cup hiding the item and yell "boo" when they turn it over. For older children play

a game to see if they can guess the object with hints. For example: "we drive it", "it says beep beep" and so on.

Hopefully these ideas will help you think of new fun ways you can incorporate repetition and language learning into everyday activities. Good luck!

**All children activities should occur under parental supervision.