Book 4. FUNCTIONAL SPEECH   
Martin Kozloff

**1. WHAT THIS BOOK IS ABOUT**

Book 3 on Verbal Imitation gave you ways to teach a child *how to* say basic sounds, syllables, words, phrases, and sentences. But that is not enough. The child must learn what words and phrases *mean* and when to *use* them to ask for and name things, answer questions, and make conversation. In other words, the child must learn *Functional Speech.* “When do I start working on Functional Speech?” The answer is simple. *When the child can say (imitate) a sound, word, phrase, or sentence fairly well, start teaching him to use it right away.*

**This Book Will Be Useful for All Kids.**

Pearl Ironton, Jimmy Maretti, and Rickie Parker know some objects, places, persons, and simple routines (eating, dressing, playing) in their homes and schools. But they don’t know that their home---and homes in general---is divided into rooms and halls; that time is divided into minutes, hours, days, and weeks; that things “have” color and shape and weight and texture and uses. They don’t “get” much of the Functional Speech (language) that they hear (it doesn’t tell them much), and they use little Functional Speech that enables them to connect with other persons. However, they learned basic skills in the books on Learning Readiness, Motor Imitation, and Verbal Imitation. It was slow going at first, but now these kids are ready to learn the Functional Speech needed to make sense of their world (“That’s a dog.” “It’s raining.”), and to use Functional Speech to interact with others (“Hi. Momma.” “More oat.” “That’s a cat.”).   
Tito Rodriguez, Jack St. Vincent, Tommy Tucker, and Mark Stein have a pretty full picture of reality (knowledge) for their age. They know a lot of what’s in it. They “understand” what many words and sentences mean, or point to. They use language (Functional Speech) to tell themselves (to think) about reality and how to act in it (“It’s cold. I better put on a coat before I go out.”), and to connect with other persons. “Let’s play catch, Pop.” Tito, Jack, Tommy, and Mark worked on paying attention, cooperating, using good sounds and words rather than noises, moving their bodies more skillfully, and saying hard sounds and words from the books on Learning Readiness, Motor Imitation, and Verbal Imitation. This book will teach them more Functional Speech.

What Is Functional Speech?

It’s important to get the difference between imitating speech and using it to communicate. *Functional Speech means that a child’s words and phrases are guided by natural signals and natural consequences.* Let us talk about natural guidance for a minute. When Pearl imitates the word APPLE, what is the signal that gets her to say Apple? It is the word model APPLE, or the request “Say APPLE” that Mom gives her. In other words, she is repeating or imitating Mom’s signal, APPLE. When we worked on Verbal Imitation, the signals that guided the child’s speech were the models (sounds, words, or phrases) that we said to her. After we showed her the signal (model) she imitated the signal. All she did was imitate the signal.  
 And when the child imitates the words CAT, UP, BOOK, or MAMA, what does she get? What are the consequences or effects of speaking? Most likely, the consequence when she imitates signals (models) is a tag, praise and verification (“Yes, APPLE.”), and maybe a small treat. These consequences are important. Rewarding her (reinforcing) when she imitates speech signals (models) teaches her that it’s a good idea to imitate speech more often and more accurately---closer to the model---because it brings her what feels good.  
 But are these rewarding or reinforcing consequences (tag, verification, praise, and a treat) natural? Is candy a natural reward for saying UP? No. There is nothing natural about rewarding a child by saying, “Good for saying UP” or with food for saying up, book, or cat. In everyday life, people do not reward us by saying “Good” or by giving us food when we say words or phrases. Instead, our speech is guided by more natural consequences. Talking brings us into contact with other persons who naturally reward our talking by doing things we like. For example, other persons look at us; we get things we ask for; persons answer our questions; and persons keep talking with us. These are natural (everyday) rewards for speech.  
 Think of a natural consequence that is a reward or reinforcement when a child says “up?” Of course, picking her up would be a natural consequence--as long as she enjoys being picked up.  
 In other words, Functional Speech is more than imitating models/signals. It is answering questions, asking for things, and responding to what others say or do. And the consequence when we talk is not usually a reward like “Yes, you said cookie fast!” or a bite of food. Instead, our speech is rewarded by natural consequences, like getting what we want and having other persons interact with us.  
 Two examples show what we mean. The first is Verbal Imitation. The second is Functional Speech. Look at the difference between the signals and consequences.

Verbal Imitation: What Pearl and Jimmy Do Now

Parent or Teacher Child Parent or Teacher  
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Gives a model/signal. For Imitates or repeats Says, “Yes, OUT!”   
example, “Say OUT.” the model/signal. and gives the child a  
 treat.  
  
 Functional Speech: What Pearl and Jimmy Will Learn to Do

Parent or Teacher Child Parent or Teacher  
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Asks a question. For example, Answers the question. Says, “Yes, OUT!”  
parent stands by the door and “Out. and opens the door  
says, “Where do you want to for the child.  
go?”

In Verbal Imitation the child repeats the model/signal. And the rewarding consequence is a hug and a piece of candy. But with Functional Speech the consequence is a natural one. The child asks to go out, and he gets to go out.

Okay, so here’s what we’ll do now.

1. Make the world more familiar to your child.  
2. Find out (evaluate) which kinds of Functional Speech (naming, asking, describing, greetings and goodbyes, and others) are stronger and which are weaker. This tells us where to start; namely, with the kind of Functional Speech that is within the child’s grasp, or her point of success.   
3. Then we ease the child into Functional Speech by firming earlier skills needed to learn Functional Speech.  
4. Then we teach Functional Speech in small steps. Every word your child learns to say and use makes it easier to learn more and more.

**2. MAKE THE WORLD FAMILIAR**.

The more language we use/have, the more we learn and the more we know of the world around us. For example,  
1. We learn the *kinds* of things there are---concept knowledge.  
 “That (thing) is a (an example of the concept) cloud.”  
2. We learn the *features* of individual examples of concepts (fact knowledge).   
 “This cloud is puffy and white. That cloud is skinny and grey.”  
3. We learn which came first and next.  
 “First we sit down at the table. Then we eat. Then we clean up the table. Then we go outside and play.”  
4. We learn that some things are the same and some things are opposite.  
 “These are tables. This table is for eating. That table is for playing.”   
5. And we learn much more from language---why things happen, where and when they happen, how many there are, where they come from, how they will change….  
  
Question. Which makes more sense to you?  
1. Teach children about their world, one new name/concept (“This is a plate.”) or one new fact (“This plate is blue.”) at a time? Or  
2. First get children familiar with a lot that is in their world, and THEN teach the *names* of and *facts* about what they’ve seen, pointed to, touched, handled, and heard you tell about?   
Correct! Number 2!! You get the cigar or coconut as you prefer.  
So, now we will (1) teach children to hear about, look at, point to, touch, feel, smell, tap, squeeze, make sounds with, pick up and move objects; and (2) if possible, teach them to repeat what we tell---names and facts. And if they do not speak yet, at least they will have heard what things are called and some facts about them. So that when we teach them to speak, their learning mechanism will say to itself, “Oh, yeah, I heard about that thing.” Let’s call this activity….   
   
 **L**ook-**P**oint-**T**ouch-**Tell**-**S**ay (if the child can speak)-**D**o (Feel, Smell, Rub, Tap, Squeeze, Pick up, Make sounds with, Give to you, Move)

How we’ll do this. Basically,  
1. You and the child look at, point to, point-touch, pick up and hold an object. At the same time,   
2. You tell the *name* of the kind of object (concept: apple) and maybe *fact* *words* about the object (red, hard) that you are looking at and touching/holding.  
3. Try to have the child repeat/say the name and facts. “Say, apple.” Or, “What is this?” Or, “What is this…(prompt) apple?” Or “What is this?... Say… apple.” Or, “This apple is RED… RED. Say RED.”   
 If the child does not speak, perhaps use an alternative means of communication, such as signing or pictures. “Touch the apple.”  
4. Help the child to explore the object by DOING something with it.  
 Look at it, pick it up, turn it this way and that, feel, smell, rub, tap, squeeze, make sounds with it (such as scratching fingers across a table cloth or tapping a pot), give it to you, move it, place it.   
  
 Make sure that you tell what you and the child are doing!  
  
 Use model-lead-test/check-verify to help the child to explore the object. Please say the script with me!  
 a. Gain attention. “SEE what I (point to yourself) HOLD.”  
 b. Model. “I HOLD the apple… HOLD….”  
 c. Lead. “Now you (point to child) HOLD the apple with me.” Exaggerate your fingers holding the apple so the child sees the small movements. Physically prompt the child’s hand if needed “Yes, WE HOLD the apple.”  
 d. Test/check. “Now YOU HOLD the APPLE.” Let go of the apple so that it is in the child’s hand, or pass the apple to the child.   
 e. Verification. Tell what the child is doing. “Yes, you HOLD the APPLE.” Reward with hug, praise, and maybe a treat. Use tag-treat-verify the instant the child takes hold of the object if behavior (exploring) is weak.  
 f. In all of the steps above, try to have the child repeat your words, such as “apple,” “hold.”

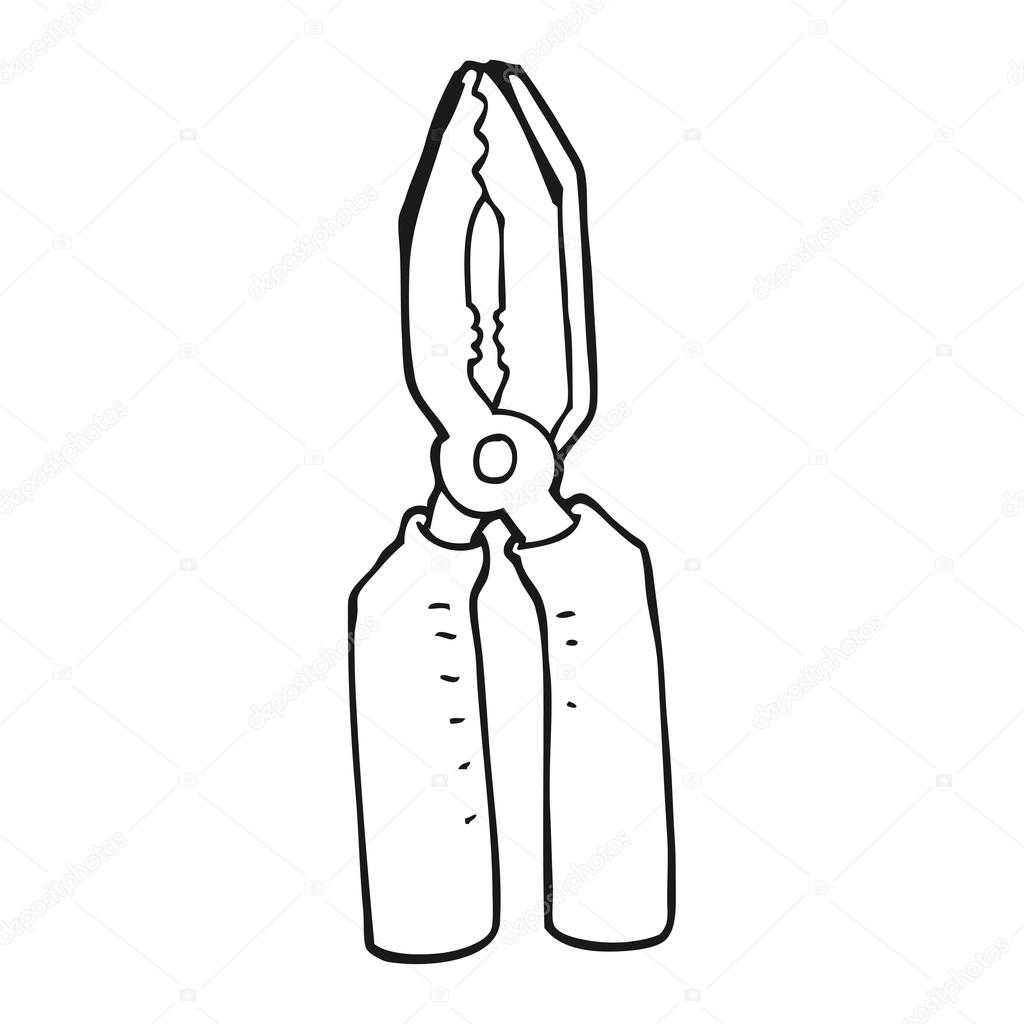
Result?  
The child becomes more interested in her surroundings and learns different ways to connect with it (see, hear, touch, squeeze, tap, hold, move), and so it is easier for her to learn the names of things and facts about them, to ask for them and answer questions about them, and do actions with them.

Here are a few more examples. Please review how to teach skills LR3.16-18 (looking at and tracking objects) in Chapter Sixteen in the book on Learning Readiness. We are building on those skills now.

Dad and Jimmy are at their usual teaching spot---the kitchen table. Jimmy uses little language and his attention often wanders. Dad has several everyday objects nearby. He (1) focuses on only a few features of the objects, and (2) repeats the information. Maybe you could speak along with Dad.  
 Gain attention. “Jimmy, look at Daddy…Yes! Jimmy looks at Daddy!”  
 Frame. “Let’s play LOOK and TOUCH.”   
 Model. “This is a CUP….I LOOK at the CUP…..I TOUCH the CUP….This is a CUP.”   
 Jimmy can say some words, so Dad says, “Say, cup.” Jimmy makes a K sound, and Dad verifies. “Yes, CUP!”  
 Lead. “Now you (Dad points) Jimmy, LOOK at the CUP with me… NOW TOUCH the CUP with me….”   
 Test/check. “Now YOU (or Jimmy) TOUCH the CUP.”

Dad repeats this little routine with a second object---a spoon.   
Then he repeats the routine with the cup *and* the spoon.   
He helps Jimmy to see, feel, and hear how the objects are the *same*.   
 “We use the cup (Dad holds the cup and drinks from it.) to DRINK….. and we use the spoon (Dad hold up the spoon and eats a bit of food from it.) to (EAT, PUT food in our MOUTH.)”  
Dad also shows how they are different---the shape, how you hold them, what kind of food you put in them.  
 Next session, Dad *reviews* the cup and spoon, and then adds a *new item*---a plate. Notice that Dad emphasizes important words; repeats important words; uses prompts (pointing, gently moving Jimmy’s head in the right direction), and rewards “good” responses.

Here is Jimmy and his Mom in the grocery store. Practice with Mom!  
 “Jimmy, this is a flower…flower. LOOK…at this flower… Say FLOWER… *Fff.. Fff…* (Mom will improve Jimmy’s speech using Verbal Imitation methods at the start of sessions! You’ll see how later.) “Yes, FLOWER…. Touch the flower… touch…. Yes, TOUCH…. This flower is red… Red… Say…RED... *RrrEhh…* Yes, RRReeed…. Feel the flower. (squeeze squeeze) Soft…. Soft. Soft flower…Say, sssoooft… *Ssss….*Yes, SSSoooft…. Look at this aaaapple. APPLE…..Hold the apple. HOLD. Yes, you HOLD the aaapple… This apple is RED. This flower is red. This apple is red. SQUEEZE this apple with me…. Squeeze…. squeeze. This apple is HARD… Let’s EAT the apple…”   
  
Mom uses lots of hugs and treats. She uses the same words and phrases with other objects. She ends with an enjoyable activity.   
  
Jack St. Vincent uses more language. So, Jack and Dad examine objects more like this.

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 “Jack. Look at this pliers!”  
 “Pliers is a hard word to say. Try it. PLIERS… *pliers…* You got it! Pliers!” “These are the pliers handles… Hold each handle in your hands.…That’s it!”  
 “See. These are the HANDLES… *handles…*and these are the JAWS…” *jaws…*   
 “What are these on the pliers?... *jaws*… Yup, these are the pliers JAWS…. And what are these on the pliers.” *handles…* Yup, handles here… and jaws here…”  
 “Now PULL your hands APART…. Like this (Model)…See how the jaws open!....You can put a pipe BETWEENthe jaws… Right here!… Put this pipe between the jaws with me…. That it! Pipe between the jaws.”  
 “Now CLOSE the handles together… Like this (Model) See? The jaws CLOSE together…. The jaws CLOSE and GRIP a pipe TIGHT… That’s it.”  
 “You GRIP the pipe TIGHT…That’s it!”  
 “Let’s try to move the pipe in the jaws. (They try to twist the pipe in the jaws…) The jaws hold the pipe TIGHT.”  
 “Now YOU put the pipe between the jaws….”

Next day, Jack and Dad review the first pliers. Then Dad and Jack study a second kind of pliers---with longer handles and jaws.  
  
Here is Ma Rogers and Steven exploring the home.  
 “Let’s play See (Find, Tell) Things in the House. This is Steven’s BEDroom. Look, I touch the DOOR… Now you touch the DOOR with me… Yes, WE touch the DOOR. Now YOU touch the DOOR…. Yes, you touch the door!....” If the child CAN speak, Mom says, “Say DOOR….*DOh…*Yes, do**rrr**.”  
   
Even if a child is not able to speak, or has a hard time with Verbal Imitation, he is still learning the *names* of objects (plate), their *features* (round, blue), what you can *do* with them. “We PUTpotatoes ON the plate.”   
   
Mom and Steven work on look-point-touch-say in the bedroom and in other rooms.  
Dad and sister also do this activity with Steven. Sister Kate says, “Let’s play See (Find, Tell) Things in the Yard!” Dad says, “Let’s play See (Find, Tell) Things in the Store.” Later, the family builds on these names using our Functional Speech methods below. They teach Steven to name and/or point to many objects. “This is your BED. What is this?” or “Point to your bed.” Or name it and point to it.

How about making up your own script? Maybe do only a few items in each part of the store, instead of a lot in the fruit and vegetable area.

**3. LET’S EVALUATE FUNCTIONAL SPEECH SKILLS**There are many kinds of Functional Speech, and the older we get the more we learn. So, this book cannot tell you how to teach all the kinds of Functional Speech, especially when children already use a lot of Functional Speech. This book tells how to teach the basic and most important kinds. The idea is to get your child talking! Here are more materials for teaching Functional Speech.  
1. Mark L. Sundberg and James W. Partington. *Teaching Language to Children With Autism or Other Developmental Disabilities.*  
2. *Language for Learning*. [https://www.nifdi.org/programs/writing-and- language/language-for-learning](https://www.nifdi.org/programs/writing-and-%09language/language-for-learning) and https://www.mheonline.com/directinstruction/language-for-learning/  
3. *Language for Thinking.* https://www.nifdi.org/programs/writing-and- language/language-for-thinking and https://www.mheonline.com/directinstruction/language-for-thinking/  
4. *Language!* <http://www.voyagersopris.com/literacy/language/overview>  
5. *PECS. Picture Exchange Communication System.* See Bondy, A. and Frost, L. (2011) *A picture’s worth* (second edition). Bethesda, MD: Woodbine House. And see Tien, K-C. (2008). Effectiveness of the Picture Exchange Communication System as a functional communication intervention for individuals with autism spectrum disorders: A practice-based research synthesis. *Education and Training in Developmental Disabilities*, 43(1), 61- 76.  
6. Bonvillian, J.D., Nelson, K.E., & Rhyne, J.M. (1981). Sign language and autism. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 11, 125-137.  
7. Schwartz, J. & Nye, C. (2006). Improving Communication for Children with Autism: Does Sign Language Work? *Evidence Based Practice Briefs*, 1,1‐17. <https://pecsusa.com/research/improving-communication-children-autism-sign-> language-work/  
8. Tincani, M. (2004). Comparing the Picture Exchange Communication System and sign language training for children with autism. *Focus on Autism andOther Developmental Studies*, 19, 152‐163. [https://pecsusa.com/research/comparing- picture-exchange-communication-system-sign-language-training](https://pecsusa.com/research/comparing-%09picture-exchange-communication-system-sign-language-training) -children- autism.  
9. Nunes, Debora, R.P. (2008). Interventions for autism: A research summary. *International Journal of Special Education*, 23, 2.

Now, please skim the FS items, below, to see the behavior that is in each item, and to see the sequence. Then come on back and we’ll evaluate each one.

Note: This is not a medical examination. You don’t have to be exact! You want to learn how much of the different kinds of Functional Speech your child uses. If your child uses lots of words to name things (FS1), then we will teach more names, and teach your child to use these names more often, in more places, with more persons. If your child uses no words or few words to name things, then we will start with that behavior.

Here are a few ways to get information on your child’s Functional Speech.   
1. Think about times you have tried to get your child to USE speech to:  
a. Ask for something. “Say, PLAY.”  
b. Name something. “Give me the FORK, please.”   
c. Answer a question. “What is this?” “What do you want? Tell me.”  
Write what you remember in the Functional Speech items below.  
2. Does your child try to imitate or to USE sounds and words? For example, you say, “This is a bunny.” Your child responds, “This bunny.”   
3. You used Table 2. Speech Table for Verbal Imitation and Functional Speech when you kept track of your child’s speech in the book on Verbal Imitation. You may have written down sounds, words, phrases and sentences that your child was starting to use. Check out what you wrote and use it now to help you evaluate the items below. For example, maybe your child started to use words like “eat,” “Pick up,” and “Go out.”  
4. Have short sessions at a teaching table and in ordinary places, such as kitchen, bedroom, yard, in the car, stores. For example, naming objects and pictures, describing, asking for, or pointing to objects that you name. How?  
a. Gain your child’s attention. “Listen” or “Look at Dad.”  
b. Frame the task. For instance,  
 (1) “Let’s tell (things in the kitchen; these toys). When I touch a thing, YOU tell me (what it is, what we call it, its name). I’ll touch this plate, and I’ll say, ‘What is this?’ Then YOU say (plate, or It’s a plate.).” Or,  
 (2) “I’ll tell the pieces in this puzzle (Point to each piece). Look, here’s (Point.) a horse. Here’s a bunny. Here’s a bird. Here’s a cat. Now YOU tell the pieces in this puzzle.” (Point-touch pieces.) Or,  
 (3) “Look! Daddy is home. Say, Hello, Daddy.” Or,  
 (4) “Momma turns off the light. I’ll say, Night-night. Now YOU say, Night-night.” Or,  
 (5) “Do you want mmmooorrre? Say, MORE.”  
5. Take notes on your child’s Functional Speech during daily activities.   
a. Does she respond to YOUR speech, such as questions and observations? “Look. A red truck!”   
b. What does your child say on her own? “See a horse.” “Push high.”   
c. If your child uses only a little Functional Speech, try to record a lot of it.   
d. If your child uses a lot of Functional Speech already, write a sample over a few days; for instance, naming things, asking, describing.  
  
Use your information to answer the questions below.

**FS1. NAMING. THE CHILD SAYS/USES WORDS TO NAME OR TO CALL ATTENTION TO MANY OBJECTS, PERSONS, OR PICTURES.** This means learning the names for different objects. For example, you hold up a cup and the child says, “Cup.” Or, the child looks out the window and says “Car.” Naming and asking go together. *Teach the child the name of a thing so that he can use the name to ask for it.*   
 Note: when we teach names, we are teaching concepts. “Cup” is the name of the concept---small, bowl-shaped containers to drink from, usually having a handle. Each cup (short, tall, red, brown, for tea or soup or coffee) is an example of the concept. Here’s what we’re looking for.  
 The child says/uses words like egg, cat, house, table, chair, tree, apple, or car:  
 (1) To answer when you ask, “What is this?”; “What is this called?”; or “This is a…(Pause for child to respond.).” And

(2) To tell you, on his own, what things are called. “My spoon.” “A dog.” “More pie?” (Underline below.)

a. How many things does the child name when asked? (a normal number for his age; between thirty and fifty; between twenty and thirty; ten to twenty; just a few; does not name things when asked)

If the child names only a few If the child names many things when   
 things when asked, please list asked, please list a sample of these. them all.

b. How many things does the child name on his own? (a normal number for his age; between thirty and fifty; between twenty and thirty; ten to twenty; just a few; does not name things on his own)

If the child names only a few If the child names many things on his  
 things on his own, please list own, please list a sample of these.  
 them all.

c. How often does the child name things when asked, and name things on her own? (Underline below.)

(1) Child names things when asked (most of the time; about half the time; once in a while; rarely names things when asked).

(2) Child names things on her own (very often; a fair number of times; once in a while; rarely names things on her own).

d. Please list sounds and words that your child has a hard time saying correctly when she tries to name things. For example, she says “og” instead of “dog.” We’ll use Verbal Imitation to teach these.

e. Using your answers for a.-c., above, let’s plan what to teach. Please make lists of names to teach your child. Note: the lists can have some of the same names. For example, you might list spoon, cup, and plate as names to say when asked, and to say more often.

Words about…. Say more often. Say when asked. Say on her own.

1. Play.

2. Eating, dressing,   
 hygiene, chores.

3. Persons.

4. House, stores,  
 other places.

5. Parts of things: eye,  
 leaf, wheels, tail.

6. Other things.

**FS2. ASKING. THE CHILD USES WORDS TO ASK FOR MANY THINGS HE WANTS**; for example, a glass of water, music, help, a toy, or to go outside. This means using words to get things. For example, you say, “What do you want?” and the child says “Cookie.” Or she comes to you and says “Up,” and so you pick her up.   
 So, we want to know how the child asks for something. (Circle as many as apply, and underline, below).

a. Child (usually; more than half the time; once in a while; never really) uses words to ask.  
 b. Child (usually; more than half the time; once in a while; never) cries and whines for what he wants.  
 c. Child (usually; more than half the time; once in a while; never) pulls and pushes.  
 d. Child (usually; more than half the time; once in a while; never) gets what he wants for himself.  
 e. Child (usually; more than half the time; once in a while; never) just makes sounds to tell people to get him what he wants.  
 f. If prompted or required to ask for what he wants, the child usually (will ask for it; cries, whines or tantrums instead; gets it himself; loses interest and walks away).  
 g. Please list names that the child uses to ask for things. If your child uses few name words to ask, you might list all of them. If your child uses a lot of name words to ask, list a sample of names for different kinds of things she asks for.

Child Uses Few Name Child Uses Many Words for Asking. Name Words for Asking.

1. Asking for objects.  
 (toy, ball, ice cream)

2. Asking for actions or   
 activities. (play, go  
 come to, ride, music)

3. Asking for contact.   
 (hug, pick up, help,   
 play, talk)

h. Now, use your answers for g., above, to make a list of name words that it would be good for your child to learn to say (through Verbal Imitation), and then use to ask.

New name words to Name words to use  
 use to ask. to ask more often.

1. Asking for things.

2. Asking for actions or   
 activities. (play, go  
 come to, ride, music)

3. Asking for contact.   
 (hug, pick up, help,   
 play, talk)

**FS3. IDENTIFYING AND DESCRIBING.** The child identifies (picks out or points to) things when she hears their names, and she describes (tells about) things using words. For instance, she identifies and describes things by name, color, shape, and size.

*Identifying means that the child picks up, points to, or chooses between different objects or pictures* when she hears their name (apple) or hears words that tell their features (red, round, you eat it). For example, you put red, yellow, and blue blocks and circles on the table and say, “Give me the RED block,” and she picks up the red block. Or you show a picture of a cat and a picture of a cap and say, “Point to the CAT,” and she does. Again, this means that we have to teach the child the concept/name---the group of examples that are **called** red; that are called blocks and circles; that are called cats---so that she can tell that the *individual* things she sees are all *examples* of the larger groups/concepts.  
 *Describing means telling about* objects, pictures, and activities. For example, you hold up a red sock and ask, “What color is this sock?” and the child answers, “White.” Or you point to a picture of a horse jumping over a fence and ask, “What is the horse DOING?” and the child answers, “Jump,” “Jumps,” or “Jumping.”   
 (Circle as many as apply, and underline, below.)

a. How many objects does the child identify (point to, touch, pick up, or give you) when you say its name? (a normal number for his age; more than thirty; twenty to thirty; ten to twenty; a few; none really)  
 b. How well does the child identify (point to, touch, pick up, give you) objects when you say color words? (very well; fairly well but needs some help; not very well and needs a lot of help; does not really know color words)  
 c. How well does the child identify (point to, touch, pick up, give you) objects when you say size words (big/ little; big/bigger)? (very well; fairly well but needs some help; not very well and needs a lot of help; does not really know size words)  
 d. How well does the child identify (point to, touch, pick up, give you) objects when you say their use words (to eat with, to wear, to play with)? (very well; fairly well but needs some help; not very well and needs a lot of help; does not really know objects by their use words)  
 e. When you try to teach the child to identify (point to, touch, pick up, give you) objects when you say their names, the child (is interested and tries; makes a half-hearted try but soon loses interest; hardly ever pays much attention; puts up a fuss)  
 f. How many objects or actions does the child describe with name words? For example, does she tell you the things she sees in a picture (dog, house, tree) or tell you what a person is doing (eating, sitting,)? (a normal number for her age; more than thirty; twenty to thirty; ten to twenty; a few; none really)  
 g. How well does the child describe things by color words? Does he tell you what color something is? (can tell you the color of almost anything; uses a few color words well; uses a few color words correctly but only once in a while; does not really use color words)  
 h. How well does the child describe things with general size words (big/little; big/bigger/biggest)? (uses many size words correctly; uses a few size words correctly most of the time; uses a few size words correctly once in a while; does not really use size words)  
 i. When you try to teach the child to use name words to describe or talk about things, she usually (is interested and tries; makes a half- hearted try but soon loses interest; hardly ever pays attention; puts up a fuss)  
 j. Now, using your answers to a.-i., and observations of your child, please make a list of things your child **now** identifies (points to, touches, picks up) and/or describes with words.

Identifies by pointing, Describes when you giving, touching, moving. ask.

1. When you name it. 1. What its name is.

2. When you say its 2. Its color, shape, size.  
 color, shape, size.

3. When you say what 3. What it’s used   
 it’s used for. for.

4. When you say whom 4. Whom it belongs to or  
 it belongs to or uses it. uses it.

4. When you say what it’s 5. When you ask what it’s  
 made of. made of.

k. Now, use your answers for j., above, to make a list of **new** concept words that would be good for your child to learn (red, round, lamp, chair, shirt, toothbrush, dog, book, big) to use to describe things with the concept words, and to identify things you name by picking up, giving you, touching, going to or pointing to.

New words to learn so New words to learn so that he can identify: give that he can describe. point to, touch, pick up,  
 go to.

1. When you name it. 1. What its name is.

2. When you say its 2. Its color, shape, color, shape, size. size.

3. When you say what 3. What it’s used it’s used for. for.

4. When you say whom 4. Whom it belongs to or  
 it belongs to or uses it. uses it.

5. When you say what it’s 5. When you ask what it’s  
 made of. made of.

The next kind of Functional Speech is an important part of carrying on conversations.

**FS4. THE CHILD USES WORDS TO ANSWER SIMPLE QUESTIONS IN A CONVERSATION.** If your child uses little Functional Speech, it’s okay if your child answers with single words. For example, you ask “What is MY name?” and the child answers, “Mommy?” Other questions are “What is (your, his, her) name?” “How are you today?” “Where do we live?” and “How old are you?” (Underline below.)

a. How does the child answer simple questions such as “How are you?” or “What is your name?” (usually answers them correctly; sometimes answers them correctly; answers them correctly once in a while; does not answer questions like this)  
 b. How often does the child answer simple questions using words she can say, when you ask? (most of the time; sometimes; once in a while; does not answer questions like this)  
 c. Now, using your answers to a. and b., and observations of your child, please make a list of simple conversation questions that your child answers.

d. Now, use your answer for c., above, to make a list of simple conversation questions and answers that it would be good for your child to learn to say more often, and a list of new simple conversation questions that it would good for your child to learn.

Simple conversation questions New simple conversation  
 to answer more often. questions to answer.

**FS5. THE CHILD SAYS “HELLO” AND “GOODBYE” AT THE RIGHT TIME AND PLACE.** Of course, this means that the child says “Hello” or “Hi” or “Hola” to people when she sees them, and says “Goodbye” or “Bye” or “Adios” when he leaves or when they leave. (Underline below.)

a. The child (usually; sometimes; once in a while; never really) does this.  
 b. The child needs (no prompting; a little prompting; a great deal of prompting) to do this.  
 c. When you try to get the child to say “Hello” or “Good­bye” he usually (says it; sometimes makes a half-hearted try; just ignores you; puts up a fuss)

Using you’re answers to a.-c., please make a list of greetings and goodbyes to teach your child to use, or to use more often.

New greeting and goodbye Greeting and goodbye words to  
 words to teach. Please teach child to use more often, in  
 list these. more places, with more persons. Please list these.

The next item has to do with using the kinds of Functional Speech talked about above in a more advanced way--in phrases and sentences rather than single words.

**FS6. THE CHILD USES PHRASES AND SIMPLE SENTENCES TO NAME, ASK FOR, OR DESCRIBE THINGS, AND TO ANSWER QUESTIONS.** This means answering questions, naming, asking for things, and describing things with phrases or sentences, and not just with one word---as we saw in FS3 and FS4, above. For example, the child says, “That’s a ball” or “That ball,” instead of just “Ball”; she says, “I see a ball and a block” or “See ball and block,” instead of just “Ball ... block.” (Circle as many as apply, and underline.)

a. How many phrases or simple sentences does the child use? (a normal number for her age; more than thirty; between twenty and thirty; between ten and twenty; a few; none really)  
 b. How often does the child use phrases or simple sentences that he can say when it is proper to do so? (most of the time; sometimes; once in a while; does not really use phrases or simple sentences).  
 c. What does the child usually do when you try to prompt her to use a phrase or simple sentence? (she uses it, or at least tries hard; she sometimes makes a half-hearted try; she often ignores you; she puts up a fuss)  
 d. Now, using your answers to a.-c., and observations of your child, please make a list of phrases and simple sentences your child uses to name, ask for, or describe things, and to answer questions.

e. Now, use your answers for d., above, to make a list of new phrases and simple sentences that it would good for your child to use, and also phrases and simple sentences that it would be good for your child to say more often.

New phrases and simple Phrases and simple sentences to teach  
 sentences to teach. the child to use more often, in more places, with more persons. Please list these.

**FS7. THE CHILD IDENTIFIES AND DESCRIBES ONE AND MORE THAN ONE (PLURALS).** The ending of a word usually tells if we are talking about one thing (dog) or more than one thing (dogs). A later section in this book tells how to teach the child to identify one object or more than one object by the ending of the word, and to describe what she sees by using the right ending.

For example, if you show a picture of one dog and another picture of two dogs, she points to the right one, depending on whether you say, “Point to the dog” or “Point to the dogs.” And she puts the right ending on a word to describe one thing (block, boy, glass) or more than one thing (blocks, boys, glasses). (Circle as many as apply, and underline.)

a. How much help does the child need to identify (point to or pick out) one or more than one? (does this very well; needs a little help; needs a great deal of help; does not identify one and more than one)  
 b. How much help does the child need to describe things with the right ending (dog/dogs; block/blocks; match/ matches)? (does this very well; needs a little help; needs a great deal of help; does not really describe with plural endings)  
 c. Now, using your answers to a. and b., above, and observations of your child, please make a list of things that your child identifies (points to, gives you) or describes (tells you) as one or more than one. For example, if you say, “Please give me (or point to) a (or the) spoon,” the child gives you (or points to) one spoon (identifies). If you show one or more than one fork, and ask, “What (is/are) (this/these)?” the child correctly says “fork” or “forks.” If your child looks out the window, she correctly describes what she sees. “Bird” or “Cars.”

Things the child describes (on Things the child identifies (gives,   
 her own) as one or more than points to) as one or more than one   
 one, with the right endings. when you ask, using the right endings.

d. Now, use what you just wrote, above, to make a list of things (one thing; more than one thing) to have your child identify and describe more often.

Things to identify (point to, Words to use to describe (tell about)  
 give you) as one or more as one or more than one more often. than one more often.

e. Now, using your answers to c., above, please list new things that it would be good for your child to identify or to describe with words as one thing or more than one thing.

Things to identify (point to, Words to use to describe (tell about)  
 give you) as one or more as one thing or more than one thing. than one thing.

**FS12. THE CHILD USES THE FUNCTIONAL SPEECH HE IS ABLE OR KNOWS HOW TO USE.** In other words, how much does the child say out of what she can say? (Circle as many as apply, and underline.)

a. Child uses (about all the speech he knows; over half the speech he k

**FS8. THE CHILD UNDERSTANDS AND USES PREPOSITIONS SUCH AS “ON,” “IN,” “UNDER,” “NEXT TO,” “OVER,” “IN FRONT OF,” “BEHIND.”** Prepositions tell us where things are. The idea is to teach the child to say/use prepositions to describe where things are (“ON the table”) and to identify (move things or point to things) according to the preposition that you use (“Put the book UNDER the table” “Point to the block that is ON the box.”). (Circle as many as apply, and underline.)  
 a. On her own, or when asked, the child correctly uses prepositions to describe (tell) where something is. The child says/uses (all or most prepositions; two or three; none really).

Please list the prepositions that the child uses to describe, or to tell about where things are, such as on, in, under, next to.

Now please list new prepositions that it would be good to teach the child to use to describe or to tell about where things are.

b. When asked to move or to point to things according to the preposition that you use (“Put the soap IN the dish.”), the child does this correctly (all or most of the time; about half the time; once in a while; does not use prepositions).

Please list the prepositions to which the child correctly responds when you ask her to move or point to something on, in, under, next to.

Now please list new prepositions that it would be good for the child to respond to when you ask her to move or to point to something on, in, under, next to.

**FS9. THE CHILD UNDERSTANDS AND USES PRONOUNS.** Pronouns are words like “I,” “you,” “me,” “he,” “she,” “us,” “they.” The idea is to teach the child to USE pronouns to describe what she sees (“HE is running”). For example, if you ask, “What is the dog doing?” she says, “It (or He) is eating.” Or, if you ask, “Who is Billy?” the child says “Me” or “I am.” Or, the child uses pronouns on her own. For example, “I see him” or “Give (it to) me.” (Circle as many as apply, and underline.)  
 a. Child correctly responds to pronouns that other persons use; for example, when someone says “Look at her,” the child looks at that person. Or if someone asks, “What is she doing?” the child answers, “Sitting” or “She is sitting.” The child responds to (all or most pronouns; three or four; one or two; none really).

Please list the pronouns to which the child responds correctly most of the time.

b. Child correctly uses pronouns on her own to describe what persons are doing (“I am eating” or “I eat.”) or to ask questions (“She go?” or “Where did she go?”) The child correctly uses on her own (all or most pronouns; three or four; one or two; none, really)

Please list the pronouns that the child usually uses correctly on her own.

c. Using your answers to a. and b., above, please list pronouns to work on: new ones, and pronouns that she already “knows” but could use more often.

Pronouns to teach child Pronouns to teach child Pronouns to use  
 to respond to when other to use on her own. more often.  
 persons use them.   
 For example, to answer  
 questions.

**FS10. THE CHILD USES OPPOSITES.** For example, he answers some questions such as “Fire is HOT; ice is\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Or “Mom is a WOMAN; Dad is a \_\_\_\_\_\_.” And he correctly uses “Yes” and “No” to answer questions like, “Is this a book?” (Circle as many as apply, and underline.)  
 a. How many questions such as “Mom is a woman; Dad is a \_\_\_\_\_,” and “This light is ON. Now this light is (off).” does the child answer? (many; five or so; one or two; none really)

Please list all of these (if the child answers only a few questions about opposites) or a sample of these (if the child answers many questions about opposites).

b. How often does the child correctly answer “Yes” and “No,” to questions such as, “Is this a book?” or “Do you want a cookie?” (all or most of the time; about half the time; once in a while; never really)

Please list all of these (if the child answers only a few “Yes” and “No” questions) or a sample of these (if the child answers many “Yes” and “No” questions).

Please list new “Yes” and “No” questions that it would be good to teach the child to answer. For example, “Do you want to go outside” or “Is this (dog) a cat?”

**FS11. THE CHILD ANSWERS QUESTIONS ABOUT TIME, AND USES TIME WORDS MORE ON HER OWN, TO DESCRIBE EVENTS. BEFORE/AFTER, FIRST/NEXT/LAST, NOW/THEN/SOON/ LATER.** This means teaching the child to use words having to do with time; for example, teaching her to answer questions like, “What will we do FIRST?” “What did you pick up AFTER you picked up the block?” or “What did we do BEFORE we went for a ride?” Or, “When do you want to eat lunch.” Also, the child uses words about time MORE on her own. For example, “Cookie AFTER eat,” “I Play NOW,” and “Brush teeth THEN story.”

a. How many simple questions about time does the child usually answer correctly? (all or most; more than half; a few, none really)

Please list all of these (if the child answers only a few questions about time) or a sample of these (if the child answers many questions about time).

Now, please list time words to teach the child to use to answer questions. “What do you want to do NOW?” “What do we do FIRST. Clean room or play outside?”

b. How often does the child more on her own describe events with time words? (enough; needs a little work on this; needs a great deal of work on this; does not use time words to describe events)

Please list all of the time words (if the child uses only a few time words on her own) or a sample of time words (if the child uses many time words on her own).

Now, please list time words to teach the child to use more on her own. “When can I go outside?” “I will take a bath later.”

The next few items are about certain problems learning or using Functional Speech. For example, (1) the child does not use the speech he knows how to use; (2) the child parrots, repeats, or echoes speech she hears instead of using speech; or (3) the child uses speech only in a few places or with a few people.

nows; says only a little of what he is able to say; can talk but hardly ever does; does not know how to talk yet).  
 b. When you try to get the child to use the speech she knows how to use, she usually (cooperates or tries; makes a half­ hearted try; ignores you; puts up a fuss).  
 c. How often does the child use nonspeech gestures (pointing, noises, waving) instead of the speech he is able to use? (all or most of the time; more than half the time, gestures once in a while; uses speech, not gestures; uses no gestures and no speech yet).  
 d. Now, using your answers to a.-c., above, please list some of the functional speech to teach your child to use more often, and nonspeech gestures and noises NOT to reinforce.

Functional Speech Nonspeech gestures (pointing, taking to use more often. you by the hand and leading you) and noises (grunting, yelling) NOT to reinforce.

**FS13. THE CHILD USES SPEECH INSTEAD OF JUST ECHOING OR PARROTING.** For example, if you ask, “What is your name?” does she tell you her name or does she repeat, “What is your name?” or “Name”? Does she repeat television commercials over and over right after she hears them, or days after she hears them? (Circle as many as apply, and underline.)

a. How much of the child’s speech is echoing or parrot talk? (all or most; more than half; some parroting but mostly proper speech; no parroting, all normal speech; no speech yet)  
 b. What does the child usually do when you try to get him to say something or to answer a question without parroting? (cooperates; ignores you and says nothing; keeps parroting anyway; puts up a fuss)

**FS14. CHILD USES HIS FUNCTIONAL SPEECH IN MANY PLACES AND WITH MANY PERSONS.** (Circle as many as apply, and underline.)

a. Child uses his functional speech (with anyone or anywhere; in most places and with most persons, except for a few; uses his speech only in a few places and with a few persons; uses no speech yet).  
 b. In a new place or with a new person, the child (uses his speech in the usual way; will talk after a while; will talk with prompting; will not talk even if prompted; starts to fuss or withdraw).  
 c. Using your answers to a. and b., above, and observations of your child, please list examples of Functional Speech to teach your child to use in more places and with more persons.

Functional Speech to use Functional Speech to use  
 in more places. Please list with more persons. Please list  
 these. these.

Now, using your evaluations, above, please go back to Table 1 and add anything new that you’ve learned, such as sounds and words to teach with Verbal Imitation, or words and phrases to use as Functional Speech, or new places where your child can generalize her Functional Speech. Then, we’ll firm up your skills for teaching and your child’s skills for learning Functional Speech.

**3. EASING INTO FUNCTIONAL SPEECH (FS1-14)**  
  
From now on, the child’s speech is in *italics.*

**Firming Your Tools for Teaching.**   
  
1. Remind yourself of your child’s Learning Readiness skills that we need to firm up. See Chapter Three, Figure 3-1, in the book on Learning Readiness. Notice the sequence of skills from Learning Readiness 1 to Learning Readiness 5.   
2. Review teaching methods in the book on Learning Readiness.  
 a. Chapter Seven, section 2, on how to teach concepts and facts. We teach the *features* and the *names* of *concepts* so that a child can *name* and *identify* (point to, pick up) examples. The child’s learning mechanism tells itself, “It has a leg or legs, a seat, a back, and one person sits on it. So, it’s a chair.”   
 And we teach *facts* so that a child can *describe* examples. “This chair is small, blue, and has four legs.”  
 b. Chapter Nine, section 1, Clear Communication; section 2, Choosing and Using Examples; and section 3, Choosing and Using Add-ons.  
3. Skim the book on Motor Imitation (especially how to teach mouth movements and positions) and the book on Verbal Imitation (how to teach a child to imitate sounds, words, and phrases so that she can USE these to communicate).

**Spend a Week or So Firming Earlier Behaviors That are Used in Functional Speech.**

Here is what we’ll do.

1. *Work on earlier skills* during (a) sessions, (b) everyday routines (meals, dressing, play), and when (c) chances come up (socks to put away, grocery shopping).   
2. *Increase rewards for desirable behaviors* with praise, hugs, and activities. Tag-treat-verify behaviors that have weakened a lot. Which behaviors? These are listed below. Also,  
 a. Rotate reinforcers---treats, big hugs, head rubs, activities.   
 b. Maybe add a token system for certain behaviors---such as cooperation and doing simple tasks. See the book on Learning Readiness for examples.  
 c. Make sure that your praise, hugs, activity rewards, and verifications “light” your child up. “YES, you put the toy IN the box!”   
3. *Reinforce often when an inattentive child responds to changes*---sounds, lighting, new objects, activity---to keep her alert. This is item LR1, in chapter Eleven in the book on Learning Readiness. For instance,  
 Pearl turns her head as a loud truck drives by.   
 Mom says, “Yes, Pearl HEARS (Points to Pearl’s ears.) a TRUCK! RRRRR. Let’s go SEE the truck!”  
4. Firm up *spontaneous eye contact and eye contact on request*---LR1.2 and LR1.3, Chapter Twelve in the book on Learning Readiness. How?   
 a. *Reinforce-verify spontaneous eye contact more often.*  “Yes, you are LOOKING at Momma.” Tag-treat-verify if it is really low.  
 b. *Request eye contact when it is natural*; for example, before you ask the child to do something. Reinforce with enthusiasm!  
 “Steven (or Steven, look at Dad.).” Steven makes eye contact. “Help me PUT dishes in the WASHER.” (Dad points.)  
5. *Reinforce as the child* *watches what is going on*. The book on Learning Readiness has many examples of teaching a child to watch.  
 “Jack, look at my hand…. I put the drill bit in the chuck, here…. Now watch… Yes, you are a TERRIFIC watcher… Now YOU put the drill bit in the chuck... Look at your fingers… That’s it!”   
6. *Quiet mouth. Good sounds and words*. See Chapter Thirteen in the book on Learning Readiness.  
 a. Increase reinforcement for speech. “Yes, you said, ‘Momma EEET.’”   
 b. If a child has gone back to making noises, reinforce or even tag-treat small intervals of Quiet Mouth (LR1.6). Gradually increase the interval before reinforcing.  
 c. When the child uses nonspeech sounds to “ask” for things or to point things out, use Verbal Imitation methods to replace these with speech sounds. Dad firms each sound in the word and then the whole thing. Child: “*EeeUhhh*.” (up)  
 Dad: Model. “Watch my mouth…Listen… Uhhh. Listen again.… Uhhh...”   
 Test/check. “Your turn. Say Uhhhh.”  
 Child: “*Uhhh.*”Dad: Verification. “Yes, Uhhh...”  
 Model and Test/check. “Listen… P… P.…...Your turn. Say, P…P...”   
 Child: “*P.*”Dad: Verification. “Yes, P.”  
 Model and Lead. “Listen… UhhhP… UhhhP…. Say UhhhP WITH me. Get ready.” (Signal)  
 Child “*UhhhP.*”  
 and Dad:Dad: Verification and Test/check. “Yes, UhhhP. Your turn. Say, UhhhP….”  
 Child: “*UhhhP.*”You: Verification. “Yes, UhhP. I pick you UhhhP!” (Natural Reward)  
7. Firm up *sitting big and sitting calmly*.   
 a. Model how to sit big---sitting up, hands calm, quiet. Have the child do this with you. Have the child do it by herself. … “Now YOU sit big. Feet calm… Hands calm…. Looking at Dad… Now WE are sitting BIG!”  
 b. Reinforce sitting big often during sessions. “Your hands are calmmm.”  
 c. If you need, see LR2, sitting big skills, in Chapter Fifteen of the book on Learning Readiness.  
8. Firm *Cooperation With Requests to do Tasks.* (LR1.7). “Which ones?” Easy! What someone else would have to do.   
 (1) Gain attention.  
 (2) Make the request. “Put the wrapper (Point.) IN the trash can.”  
 (3) If needed, model how to do it and then have the child do it with you.   
 (4) Then have the child do it on her own. “Your turn. Put the WRAPPER (Point.) IN the trash can.”  
 (5) Prompt (Point, move child’s arm.) as needed.  
 (6) Big reinforcement!  
 b. Use Grandma’s Law a lot. “As soon as (you, we)…., (you, we) can….” The more little tasks the child does, the more Functional Speech the child will hear (“Now I/We/You STIR the soup.”) and the more she will learn to say. “Stir soup.” 9. Practice Verbal Imitation with sounds and words that the child needs to say in Functional Speech. Make sure the child looks at your mouth as you give speech models.

**Does all this seem like A LOT to do?**

Let’s fill out Table 1, below, to make it simple.

**Table 1. How We Will Keep Earlier Behaviors Going Strong**

Behaviors we will be on the Behaviors we will the give child  
lookout for and will reinforce. many chances to do.

Behavior How we will reinforce How we will give How we will  
 when child does the opportunities to do reinforce these  
 behavior on her own. behavior: request, behaviors. Grandma’s Law,  
 gesture, pause  
 sequence.

Things around What the child How we will   
the house to will do with these. 1. Model, lead, test/check/  
name and look, point, hold, 2. Reinforcement: tag, treat, hug,   
explore. feel, squeeze, tap, verify.  
 smell, rub, make 3. Prompts: models, gestures,  
 sounds with, pick instructions, physical.  
 up, move, place, give 4. Words we’ll use.

**4. PLANNING TEACHING PROGRAMS IN THIS AREA**

**Which Functional Speech Item Do I Start With?**

1. *It is best to work first on naming, asking, identifying and describing (FS 1, 2, and 3) with all children.* Children who are just beginning to use speech NEED these first three items now. Children who already use Functional Speech will learn more about their world and how to communicate.  
2. *When we move to a new kind of Functional Speech, we will keep working on the earlier ones.* For instance, when we start teaching Answering Simple Questions (FS4), we will keep working on items FSl, FS2, and FS3---naming, asking for, describing, and identifying *new* objects and activities.   
3. *When we are working on Functional Speech, we keep earlier skills strong.* We a. Spend time playing with the child, and practice Large and Small Motor activities.   
 b. Work on more complex Motor Imitation models, such as Object Placements.   
 c Keep giving the child chances to make eye contact, watch what other persons are doing, cooperate with requests, and do small tasks. Reinforce!  
 4. *Go back to Verbal Imitation* to teach the child how to say new sounds, words, phrases, and sentences. Then we use this book to teach her to understand and use those words, phrases, and sentences.

**The Basic Method for Teaching Functional Speech**

When we teach Functional Speech, we teach a child:   
1. To say “Apple” or “I want an apple” after we ask, “What do you want?”   
2. To say “Dog” or “That's a dog” when we ask, “What is this?” or when we hold up a picture of a dog.   
3. To point to, touch, pick up, or give an object when we ask the child to do these actions.  
4. To say “Jimmy” when we ask, “What is your name?”  
5. To answer, “Happy” when we ask, “How do you feel?”   
6. To say “Out” or “I wanna go out” when she wants to go outside, and “Milk” when she wants a glass of milk.   
7. To say “Hi” and “Bye” when persons come and go.  
In other words, we are teaching a child to *use* the words and phrases she can say in order to *name* and *ask* for things, *answer* questions, and *make conversation.* This may seem like a big order, but the truth is that you already know many of the methods to teach Functional Speech. And if you ever used Grandma’s Law to get a child to say a sound or word before you gave him what he wanted, you have already started working on Functional Speech. Here is the basic method with different words.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Gain attention.  “Let’s sit big” or “Show  me ready” | Frame the  task.  “Let’s learn about these tools.”  “Here’s a new shape.”  “Let’ say Hi to Daddy.”  “Let’s get ready for a bath!”  “What color is this truck?” | Model the information.  “This is a pliers.”    “This is a triangle.  “Hi, Daddy!”  “First we pick up toys; then we have a bath.”  “This truck is red.” | Test/check (maybe with prompt).  “What is this?.. Pliers.”  “What shape is this?” Or “Point to (touch, give me) the triangle.”  “Say, Hi, Daddy.”    “What do we do first?... Pick up toys.”  “What color is this truck?” Or “Point to the red. truck” Or, “Is this truck red.”  Prompt by saying the word or by pointing or by helping child to point. | Child answers.  “Pliers.”  “Triangle.”  Or points to, touches, gives triangle.  “Hi, Daddy.”  “Pick up toys.”  “Red.” Or, “Yes.” Or  points to red object. | 1. Reinforce imitating the prompt. Bigger reinforcement for answering before the prompt.  2. Repeat several times to firm up.  3. Reinforce closer tries, faster answers, and answers that got less prompting  4. Prompt more if child still makes errors or is slow.  5.Fade prompts by waiting longer before prompting, saying less of the prompt, saying the prompt more softly, pointing or moving child’s hand only part way. |

The basic method is the same even though the words we teach are different.

**Where and When to Work on Functional Speech.**

Work on Functional Speech during regular sessions, just as you have been working on Small Motor tasks, Motor Imitation, and Verbal Imitation.   
1. Start by adding a few minutes of work on Functional Speech to regular sessions on Verbal Imitation or other skill areas.   
2. Slowly add more and more time on Functional Speech, and start having short sessions on it at other times of the day. Work up to sessions that are 20 or 30 minutes long. Less depending on your child’s attention, interest, and energy.   
3. Also, *it is very important to work on* *Functional Speech whenever you can.* A child’s Functional Speech will not help him much if she uses it only with you at the table. She must ask for things and to answer questions whenever and wherever it is *natural*. So apply Grandma’s Law and *prompt* the child to *use* functional speech in the car, at the store, on the playground, in the kitchen, at friends’ houses, at times when she wants something in class, in the yard, and in any other place where she can and should be talking. *As soon as he imitates a word or phrase, prompt and require her to use it (or try) whenever it is natural or useful.* And you should have the child use his speech with *other people,* too, or else he will learn to talk *only* with you.

**Teaching Materials**

Part of Functional Speech is naming, identifying, and describing. So, we need:  
1. A box of common objects---cups, saucers, knives, forks, spoons, pencils, paper, sock, shoe, ball, colored pegs or blocks, toy animals, toy cars and so forth.  
2. Pictures---foods, animals, furniture, people, tools, clothing. You can buy sets of pictures at stores or educational supply companies or cut them out of magazines and paste them onto cardboard.  
3. Picture books showing large and real-looking objects that the child can point to and name, and simple stories that you can talk about.  
4. Anything around the home, school, or outside that the child can name or describe, like furniture, foods, walls, rugs, door, ceiling, floor, sidewalk, street, mailbox, and many, many others.

**Planning a Teaching Program and Keeping Track of Progress**

The Functional Speech items below tell you   
1. How to teach.  
2. How to list the words and sentences you are working on from day to day.   
3. How to keep track of speech that your child is learning and using.   
Let’s keep this simple. Use the table below.

**Table 2. Functional Speech Table**

Make a copy of part of Table 2 for each day. Write down examples of the kind of speech you are working on: (1) Verbal Imitation of basic sounds, words, phrases, or sentences; and/or (2) Functional Speech, such as words for FS1 and FS2. When the child learns to *imitate* a basic sound, word, phrase, or sentence, underline it; for example, “eat.” When the child learns to use a Functional Speech example correctly (for example, she answers “car,” when you point to a toy car and ask, “What is this?”) put a circle around it, like this. car The Table shows a few examples.

Day\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  
   
What we worked on, and Teaching Sessions Everyday Child’s progress during… Activities

**Verbal Imitation**.

Basic Sounds to Imitate. *Ee, R Ee, R  
 Ee needed for cookie; R  
 needed for car and more.*

Words to Imitate. *more, eat more, eat*

Phrases and Sentences to  
Imitate

**Functional Speech.**

Words Used to Name. FS1. Mom, cookie (says cook),Mom, cookiecar car

Words Used to Ask. FS2. up, go up, go

Words Used to Identify or  
Describe. FS3.

Words Used to Answer  
Simple Questions. FS.4.

“Hello” and “Goodbye.” FS5.

Phrases and Simple Sentences to   
Name, Ask for, Describe, and to   
Answer Questions. FS6.

Identify and Describe One   
and More Than One (Plurals).  
FS.7.

Understands and Uses Prepositions:   
On, In, Under, Next To, Over, in Front   
Of, Behind. FS8.

Understands and Uses Pronouns:   
I, you, me, he, she, us, they. FS9.  
  
Opposites: hot/cold, on/off, yes/no.  
FS.10.

Answers and Asks Questions   
About Time. FS11.

Uses Functional Speech He is Able   
to Use. (Speech we need to increase.)   
FS12.  
  
Uses Speech Instead of Just Echoing   
or Parroting. (Speech we need to   
increase.) FS13.  
  
Uses Functional Speech in Many   
Places and With Many Persons.   
(Speech we need to increase.)  
FS14.

You do not need to study all of the Functional Speech items now!   
Just focus on the one you are working on.   
Get good at teaching it; watch as your child gets good at learning it; and then read about how to teach the **next** Functional Speech item.

Okay, now that we have done all THAT, let’s teach. Feel free to come back for a refresher.

**Naming, Asking, Identifying, and Describing**

The first three Functional Speech items (FS1-3) are about concepts and their names (vocabulary words).What are concepts? For a quick review, see Chapter seven in the Book on Learning Readiness…. Here are the main words we’ll be using: concept, features, examples, nonexamples, compare and contrast, definition.

1. *A concept is similar things that human beings group together and name.* Shapes, colors, kinds of animals, kinds of foods, things in a house, kinds of plants, materials, and thousands more.

The concept (or class of) things called “dogs.” Millions of examples that are the same in certain ways that define dog.

2. *Why do humans make concepts?* Because concepts and their names help us to make sense of our reality, guide what we do, and communicate.   
“Jimmy. Look. These are dogs.” *I wondered what those things are. It looks like dogs have hair, waggy tails, four legs, and they lick your face.*“This is your bed.” *So, bed is what I sleep on.*“Pearl. This is soap. We WASH with it.” *Okay, so when Mom says, “Let’s wash your hands,” I’ll look at the soap thing and pick it up.*  
3. *Individual things are IN a group (concept) because they have some of the same features.* A list of these shared features is the *definition* of the concept. See if you can answer these.  
a. What makes something a (what is the definition of) sandwich?..... A sandwich has……   
b. Is color a feature that is part of the definition of triangle? No. If a shape has the features of (1) three lines, (2) straight, (3) that come together to make corners, it is (by a definition that tells the features) a triangle. Color and size are *extras*.  
4. Anything that is not part of (not an example) of a concept is a *nonexample.* A stool is a NONexample of chairs. A square is a nonexample of triangles.  
5. Nonexamples are important. When we teach a child to contrast (to see the differences between) examples (chairs) with nonexamples (stools, couches), it helps the child to identify which features define the concept, chair. Why is a couch NOT a chair? They both have a seat, a back, legs, and you can sit on them. A Ha! Chairs are for one person. Couches can be for more than one person. Why is a stool not a chair? Chairs have backs; stools do not. So, having a back and being for one one person to sit on are some features that define chair.

Why work on concepts first?  
1. The world is a scary place for some children. They see, hear, and feel, but they don’t know *what* they see, hear, and feel. Their learning mechanism says, “What’s going on!? Where am I? I don’t know how to deal with this!” And so they melt down or try to escape by closing their eyes, rocking, running, and making sounds over and over. Concept/name knowledge may help children to be calmer. “Hey, I know this place. This is a store. Where’s the cupcakes!”   
2. Each new concept/name adds more kinds/groups of things to a child’s picture and knowledge of reality. The child’s world becomes richer.   
3. Also, concept/names give your child a way to connect with other persons, using desirable behavior. She can say names (instead of making noises) to ask for things (“Red one!”) and to describe things. “See red hat.”

Please go back to section 2, evaluation, and read items FS1-3. Here is what we’ll teach a child to do!  
1. When you show (hold up, point to) an object and ask, “What is (this, this called)?” the child says the name. This is item FS1.  
2. When you ask, “What do you want?” The child says the name of an object (milk) or activity (play), or points to an object or activity (swing set) if she is unable to speak. This is FS2.  
3. When you say, “Look at (or point to, touch, pick up, give me) the cup (name of the kind of object).” The child does it. This is FS3. We teach these nonverbal behaviors (pointing, looking, touching, picking up, giving) to children who DO speak, and *especially to children who* ***do not*** *speak.*

**FS1. NAMING THINGS.**

We teach the different kinds of Functional Speech much the same way. So, read this section slowly, and practice before you use the method.

**What Are the Best Names/Concepts to Start With?**1. When kids have little language, we’ll start with names/concepts  
 a. That the child already imitates or says (or is close), and   
 b. That are the *basics of the child’s world*---furniture, eating and cooking utensils, clothing, foods, activities, persons, and parts of the body.   
2. When kids have more language, teach names/concepts that   
 a. *Fill in knowledge gaps*. For example, Nancy looks through picture books, but she doesn’t know the parts---covers, title, page number, and  
 b. *That they are* *interested in*; tools, animals, cars, science.   
3. Also, *use objects at first, if you can*.

**We Teach Names/Concepts Six Ways.**

Why so many? Because some children use more vs. less language; and some children have an easier vs. a harder a time saying/imitating words. So, we start with a method that is at a child’s point of success. Please skim the descriptions below. Don’t get tense! Start teaching with Method 1. It’s easy. Methods 2 and 3 (if you want to use them) just add a few steps.

Method 1. We start *with one example, and then add more.* I would use this method with all children. It is a MUST for children who use little or no Functional Speech. All we do is:   
 a. Examine one example (for example, a cup) with the child, and name it. “This is a cup. Hold here. Drink here. Put it down (bottom) here.”  
 b. Test/check to make sure that the child names the object. “What is this?” *cup.* “Yes, cup!... Hold cup…”  
 c. Repeat a. and b. with a FEW more examples of cups that are different colors, shapes, and sizes but still show the main features.  
 d. Later that day, and over the coming days, add a few more examples in different places---generalization. Contrast with nonexamples—bowl, plate.  
Method 2. *With a verbal definition followed by examples and nonexamples.* In Method 2,   
 a. We first teach the child the features that define a concept. For instance, “Triangles (the concept, word, or set of examples to define) have three lines, straight, that come together to make three corners (angles).”   
 b. Then we show examples to back it up. So, Method 2 teaches *what a definition is.*   
 c. Then we teach the child to USE the definition to tell whether objects are examples (triangles) or nonexamples (squares, circles) of the concept   
3. *With a set of examples and nonexamples shown one after another.* In Method 1, a child learns that a name/word goes with one example of a concept. So*, we use Method 1 with all kids.* In Method 2, we teach a definition first, that tells the features that define a concept (a set of examples), and then we teach the child to examine examples to see how they are the same, and to examine NONexamples to see how they are different from examples. For example, bowls and plates hold food (like cups) but we don’t drink from them. We use Method 3 when kids use more language, and we want to teach them how to *examine, compare, and contrast objects one after another* (for example, red apple, red car, red block, red bird) to figure out how they are the same (color).  
4. *With synonyms.* “Another (word for or way to say) fatigue is tired.” We use this method to teach a new word/concept quickly, and to expand a child’s vocabulary.   
5. *With morphemes.* Some words have parts that have meaning---morphemes. We can teach some names/concepts by teaching the meaning of the word parts. Blameworthy  
 “You know what blame means---when someone did a wrong thing, like making a big mess, and we tell them. We blame them for the mess. And you know what worthy means---you deserve something. She is worthy of a prize. She deserves a prize. So, what do you think blame…worthy means?”  
6. *With context.* Sometimes we can figure out what a new word/concept might mean by seeing how it is used among other words.   
 “She **leapt** onto her horse and rode away fast. What does leapt mean? Well, if you’re going to ride away fast, how would you get onto your horse? Would you climb on real slow or would you **jump on fast**? So, maybe leapt means to jump onto something fast.”

Don’t worry about memorizing all six methods. For most kids, these three are all you need.   
Method 1. One example and then more.  
Method 3. Tell a definition and then show examples and nonexamples.  
Method 4. Tell another word that the child already knows, that means the same thing as the new concept/word.

**Method 1. Teaching Concepts/Names With One Example To Start**  
This is the easiest method. It isTHE starting method for children with little Functional Speech (Rickie, Jimmy, Pearl). Also use it to teach children with more language.  
  
**Okay, Let’s Do It!**  
Please say the speaking part out loud, as if you were teaching. Maybe do this several times!

We are (1) at our teaching table or (2) in a place where we usually do routine activities with familiar objects---kitchen, living room, classroom, child’s bedroom, grocery store.

1. *Gain attention and frame the task.* (30 seconds)  
 “Okay, let’s get ready to learn.” Or  
 “Show me ready.” Or  
 “Let’s sit big.” Or  
 “Let’s learn WORDS!” Or  
 “Let’s say our words.” Or  
 “Check THIS out!” Or  
 “Wow! New tools!” Or  
 “Let’s see what THIS is!”  
 Make sure to reinforce!! Treat, hug, “I love the way we are all ready!”

2. *Review and firm* ***saying*** *names/words for objects*/*examples that you’ve worked on.* (Five minutes or so.) Select object/names that you worked on a good while ago (to keep them strong) and in the past few days (to get them strong). Maybe a child needs to firm saying a whole word. Or maybe a sound. So, spend a few minutes on this at the start of a sessions a teaching table or during everyday activity. Like this.

Here are three simple ways to firm up sounds and words.  
a. *Child imitates the whole word*---if you think the child can say the word or has said it many times.  
 Model. “Listen…. Watch my mouth… CUP… CUP.”   
 Lead. “Say cup with me.” *cup* or *cuh*. Verify. “Yes, cup,” and reinforce.   
 Test/check. “Your turn. Say…CUP…. *cup* or *cuh*… Tag-“Yes, CUP.”- reward (treat, praise, hug).   
 Repeat a few times to firm it up.  
b. *Firm up one of the sounds*---if the child has trouble with one of the sounds; for example, the *P* in cup.  
 Model. “Watch my mouth. Listen, *P*….*P*…”   
 Lead. “Say *P*….*P*… with me. Quick and quiet…*P*.” Prompt by gently putting the child’s lips together. Repeat a few times to firm. Test/check. “Your turn… Say, ….*P*…Quick and quiet… *P….*Yes, *P*!”  
 When the child is pretty firm saying *P*, go back to the word (CUP) that USES the *P* sound.,   
 “Watch my mouth…Now say CUUP…. *Cup….* Yes, CUUP.”  
c. *Firm up each of the sounds---*to be safe.   
 “Watch my mouth…”  
 “Say, *K…* (child repeats*.*)Yes, *K….*”“Say *Uh….* (child repeats.) Yes, *Uh*.”  
 “Say *P…* quick and quiet…*P…* (child repeats.) Yes, *P.*”  
 “Say the whole word…*….*Listen again… *KUhhhP* (child repeats) Yes, *KUhP…*”

Now that the child says the words,   
3. *Review objects and names that you already worked on.*   
 This is easy. Just use our little routine of **L**ook-**P**oint-**T**ouch-**T**ell-**S**ay (if the child can speak)-**D**o **S**omething **W**ith. *Please read the examples in section 2 above*. Do the same thing now.   
   
   
 Ma Ironton and Pearl have worked on Verbal Imitation of sounds and words for a month. And they will keep on doing this during sessions and every day activities to (1) firm up hard sounds and (2) teach new words that USE those sounds.  
 Pearl is pretty good saying/imitating a dozen or so words now: mik (milk), cah (car), ship (chip), baw (ball), appa (apple), cap, coo..ie (cookie), up (pick up), cm (come), play.  
 What basic sounds do you think Ma and Pearl need to work on now? Correct! R, CH, L, K, Ma will NOW firm up these sounds using our Verbal Imitation methods, and then will teach Pearl to USE these sounds in her words.  
 Notice that most of Pearl’s words are names for things (milk, car). And a few are names for actions (come, play, up).   
 Mom added work on Functional Speech to Verbal Imitation sessions. She taught Pearl to answer questions such as, “What is this?” and to respond to request such as, “Point to (give me, pick up) the (ball, car, cap).” Mom also *naturally* taught Pearl to ASK for milk and to play. For example, When Pearl looked like she wanted milk, Mom taught her to ask, like this. “What do you WANT?... Say UhhhP (prompt).”   
 When Pearl made a close try, Mom said, “Yes, UP” and picked Pearl up. Then Mom faded out the full prompt (“Say UhhhP.”) by saying it more softly, by waiting a few seconds longer to say it, or by saying only the first sound in UhhhP. In a few days, Pearl simply answered the question, “What do you want?” on her own. Asking is FS2 below.

*So, here is Mom and Pearl reviewing, before they work on new concept/names.*

“Look. Here’s our CAR. What is this (or What is this called?)… *car.* Yes, car. Here are the WHEELS… We SPI**N** the wheels on the car…. YOU spin the wheels. Mom prompts by again modeling how to spin the wheels, and gets Pearl started with a physical prompt.) Yes! Spin the wheels. Let’s make the car ROLL!… What will roll?... The….. *cah.* Yes, the caRRR will roll.”   
 Mom firms up saying car, like this.  
 (Sound.) “Pearl, look at my mouth… Say, Rrrrr…. Rrrrr.” *Rrr* Yes, Rrrr.” Repeat a few times until firm.  
 (Whole word.) “Now say, CaRRR… *caarrr.* YES! Car.” Tag, big hug, and maybe a treat. Repeat a few times.  
 (Back to the question.) “Pearl, look. What is this? (point-touch). *carrr.* Tag-treat- Yes, car!!”

Mom and Pearl continue reviewing earlier names/objects by: (1) saying the name/words (“Say… cap.” “Say…milk,”); (2) hearing about the objects and doing something with them (pouring milk, drinking milk, rolling the car, putting on a red cap and taking it off); and then (3) naming and picking up, pointing to, or moving the object.

“Okay, look at this ssspoooon…. ssspooonn. What is this?” *spoon.*   
 Tag-treat-verify. “Yes, spoon. We eat with a spoon.”   
   
 Dad loads the spoon with a tiny amount of ice cream, while Dad says, “You EAT with a SPOON…. What do you eat with?....”   
 Dad prompts if needed with the word or part of the word. …*spoon…* “Yes, you EAT with a SPPPOOONN.”

**What to do if the child does not answer, “What is this…?”** Prompt, like this.  
 (1) Use time delay. “What is this?…cup.” The child imitates the prompt. Next time, wait a second longer before giving the prompt.  
 (2) Tell the child what to say. “What is this?...Say CUP.” Child imitates the prompt. Then  
 (3) Say the prompt more softly (whisper) or say less of it. cuuu.  
 (4) Practice having the child just say cup. Then  
 (5) Go back to the original question. “This is a CUP…CUP… What is this?” When the child answer correctly a few times, fade out the prompt. “What is this?... *cup…*Yes! Cup.” Reinforce.

3. *Use Model-Lead-Test/check-Verify/reward (or correct and repeat) to teach the new concept/word.*   
a. Start with objects with which the child is VERY familiar and whose names he says (or imitates) and has heard many timesduring everyday activities and during Look-Point-Touch-Tell-Say-Do tours of the home (bed, soap, water, shoe, cap) and other places (tree, car, leaf, cart).   
b. “Okay, let’s sit big for Dad…Yes, now we are sitting big. Ready to learn.”  
c. Frame. Use words with which your child is familiar.  
 “Look. Cup….Cup.” Or  
 “Let’s learn a new word…CUP.” Or,  
 “Here is your CUP. You DRINK from your cup.” Or,  
 If a child already knows “things we eat with,” you could say, “Here’s a new thing we (eat with, drink from)….CUP.”  
 “Let’s learn a **new** word…Cup.”  
d. Model the information. “This is a CUP.” Or just, “CUP.” Then  
e. Lead. “Cup. Say cup with me….” As you and the child look at or point-touch the cup. Repeat a few times till firm.   
f. Test/check. “What is this?” Wait 1 or 2 seconds. If he answers, *Cup*, give a big tag-treat-verification. “Yes, cup!”   
 If he does not answer, *Cup*, prompt by telling the answer. In other words, you say, “What is this? CUP.” (Zero time delay.)   
 Since he already imitates the word “cup,” he will likely imitate the prompt. If he does not imitate the prompt (“CUP”), use other ways to prompt verbal imitations, such as (1) giving an instruction (“What is this?... **Say** CUP!); (2) moving his mouth into the right position, or (3) saying the prompt louder.

*If he still does not imitate the prompt (“CUP”), go back to imitating sounds and words that he imitates easily and reliably.* Then have him imitate the new word “cup” a few more times, and reinforce it. This is just to get his speech rolling. Then try again---hold up a cup and have him name it. Tag-reinforce- verify when he imitates your prompt.

Make sure to *correct all errors* *immediately*. See the example, above, with the word, cookie.   
g. *Repeat the whole sequence several times to firm it up*.   
 Hold up the object and look-point-touch it.  
 Wait until the child is looking at it and perhaps point-touches it.   
 Say, “What is this? ... CUP.”  
 If needed, prompt him to imitate “CUP.”  
 Reinforce imitating the prompt.  
 Once he imitates the promptalmost every time, begin to *fade out the prompt*. How?   
 Say it softer.  
 Say only part of the name. Cuuu… or C.   
 Wait longer before you say the name.

*What if the child makes an error---does not answer, repeats the question, says the wrong name?* This is GOING to happen! It’s easy to fix. Just add a prompt. Like this.

(Dad holds up a cookie.) “And what is this?” *cup.*   
 (Dad corrects.) “This (point-touch) is a COOKIE. (Model) Again, this is a COOKIE. Say cookie with me.” (Lead)…*cookie*. “Yes, this is a cookie.”  
 “Your turn. What is this? Coo…” (Partial prompt.) *cookie.* Tag-treat. “Yes, this IS a cookie.” Dad repeats this a few times and fades out the prompt. “What is this?” … *cookie…* Yes, cookie!” Treat and hug.

Remember the three-try rule. If the child keeps making errors, stop.  
a. Go to a name word that she uses correctly when you ask, “What is this?” Then come back.  
b. Prompt faster (“What is this? CUP”). Child imitates answer. Repeat. Then ask the question and delay the prompt.  
c. Prompt a bit louder and make sure the child is looking at the cup and then at your mouth.  
d. Use more powerful rewards.  
e. Tag-treat-verify any speech sound that the child makes when you ask, “What is this?” Then practice just saying/imitating the word. Then go back to “What is this?”

FADING OUT THE PROMPT

If you have been prompting the child to answer the question “What is this?” by telling her the answer (“CUP”), then all she is doing is imitating the answer/ prompt. Now you want her to *say the correct answer without a prompt*.

You want her to say “Cup” when you hold up the object and ask, “What is this?”

Here are ways to fade out the prompt. Please say these prompts with me.

FADING THE PROMPT BY WAITING

One way is to *wait a little longer on each try before you prompt by saying the name.* In other words, on the first try, you say, “What is this? CUP.” The next time, you say, “What is this? (one second) CUP.” The next time, “What is this? (two seconds) CUP.” The next time, wait three seconds. After that, wait four seconds—“What is this? (four seconds) CUP.” And, if the child says “Cup” before you prompt her, give an extra strong treat/praise.

FADING THE PROMPT BY SAYING LESS AND LESS

Another way to fade the prompt is to *say less and less of it.* For example, once the child imitates the prompt (“CUP”) when you say, “What is this? ... CUP,” start to leave out parts of the prompt until the prompt is gone. At first:

Parent or Teacher Says Full Prompt Child Says  
  
“What is this?....CUP?” “Cup.”

Later:

Parent or Teacher Says Partial Prompt Child Says

“What is this?…CUUU…” “Cup.”   
“What is this?…CUU…” “Cup.”  
“What is this?…CU…” “Cup.”  
“What is this?…C…” “Cup.”  
“What is this…(mouth in position “Cup.”  
for *K*)  
“What is this…” “Cup.”

If the child WAITS for you to prompt him before he says “Cup,” reinforce only with praise. Save treats for times when he says “Cup” with less prompting than before.

FADING THE PROMPT BY WHISPERING

Still another way to fade out the prompt is to *say it softer and softer*. At first you should give the prompt (“CUP”) loudly and clearly. Once the child is imitating the prompt, say it more in a whisper, like this.

Parent or Teacher Says Full Prompt Child Says

“What is this?...CUP!” “Cup.”  
“What is this?...Cup.” “Cup.”  
“What is this?...cup” “Cup.”  
“What is this?...cup (whisper)” “Cup.”  
“What is this?... (mouth the sounds) “Cup”

Make sure to tag and to use your strongest rewards when the child says “Cup” with less prompting than before.  
 When you are fading out a prompt (“CUP”), do not be afraid to *back up and give more prompting if a child needs it*. For instance, you might have to go back and say the prompt loudly and clearly a few more times; you might give the prompt faster; you might move the child’s mouth some more; or you might give the whole prompt again. Then, once he is back to imitating the prompt, start to fade it out again.

**Don’t work on the same word/object for too long at once.**   
  
It will get REAL boring! Mix things up. For example, work on cup for a few minutes, and then do a few motor imitations, or puzzles, and then go back to cup for a LITTLE while.

Also, you can make the naming activity more “real” by giving the child a small amount of drink in the cup after she names it. You can drink along with the child.

NEXT STEPS

It could take several sessions for you and the child to be fluent at doing the format, and for your child to reliably name the first example. So, don’t get tense! When the child reliably and quickly says the name for the first example of the concept (steps 1-7), we follow with the next few steps, starting with 8.

8. *Spreading the name around---generalization.* Now we teach the child that there are *many objects/examples* of the concept with the *same name.* Once he reliably names one object/example, show other examples *like it*, and teach him to use the word “CUP” to name cups of different shapes, sizes, and colors. For instance, show cups with the same general shape and material but different colors. NOT a small ceramic cup with one handle, and then a second HUGE metal cup with a handle on each side. Otherwise, the child’s learning mechanism will see the second cup and go, “Hey! That’s not a cup!”   
 Here’s how to teach the new example.   
 a. Show the first cup and have her name it as usual.   
 b. Then show another cup **next to it** that looks SIMILAR. You could also c. Point-touch to show ways that the cups are the same.   
 “Look! This (old cup) is a cup. And THIS (new one) is a cup.”   
 *Now show how they are the same*.   
 Point-touch, and have the child point-touch, the features.  
 d. Then you and the child USE the features. “HOLD the cup here…. You hold it…. Yes, cup!... We DRINK here. You drink…. This is a cup. We hold it here…. See, this is a cup and THIS is a cup…. What is this (new cup)?”

It’s okay if your child does not know what you are getting at---teaching that cups may look different but still have the same main (defining) features. She IS seeing these features, and the names of the features are being connected with the word “cup.” *If the child does not name the new one as “cup,” reteach “cup”* *as you did with the first example*. Then show both examples gain and test.   
“What is this (old one)…. And what is THIS?” (new one)  
 *Now you can also start look-point-touching and telling how the cups are* ***different****.* This will prepare the child for the later skill of describing, even if she doesn’t yet use the words---colors, sizes. For example,   
 “Look. This cup is red. Red. And this cup is blue. Blue.”  
 Once she names a new example quickly and reliably, add another and teach it the same way. Slowly, the new examples can look more and more different, as long as they still have the features of cups---that you point out.

White Blue White Blue White and Black Metal

*Each next session, or whenever, show all the cups and have the child name them--review and firm.*

*You should also teach her to use the same word to answer different questions*. So far, she has learned to say “Cup” when you ask, “What is this?” But it’s a good idea for her also to answer questions like,   
“This is a \_\_\_\_\_.” (child fills in the blank)  
“This one is a \_\_\_\_\_\_.”  
“The name of this is \_\_\_\_\_.”   
“This is called a \_\_\_\_\_.”  
“That is a glass, and this is a \_\_\_\_\_.”

Give practice by going back and forth between   
1. *Different questions about the same example*. “What is this \_\_\_\_\_.” “This is called a \_\_\_\_\_.” “The name of this is \_\_\_\_\_.” “This one is a \_\_\_\_\_.”  
2. And *different objects with the same name*---blue and white, big and little cups. Prompt as needed, shown above in “Beginning Instruction,” using point-touch; time delay (say the name immediately, after one second, after two seconds, etc.); saying less of the prompt; and/or saying the prompt more softly.

Another way to spread around the name is to have the child use it in other places and with other people. Show cups outside the house; for instance, in a store or restaurant. And have other people show cups and ask the child, “What is this?”

A final way to spread words around and teach the child new ones is to spend time reading to him and self-talking. “I see a horse. Look at the horse. It is a pretty horse. Brown. Look, a girl is sitting ON the horse**. Let’s touch the girl** sitting ON the horse.” Sit down with him and have him look at and point to the pictures. Then have him name some of the pictures. You should also keep on with the self-talking, especially with the words you are working on.

You can teach many names/concepts starting with one example, and then, when the child reliably uses the name with the first example, add more and more examples during sessions, everyday activities, and when opportunities come up. “Look! Fire truck!” Examples include cars, trucks, bikes, utensils, colors, furniture, things in a playground, things in a grocery store, toys, shapes, clothing, actions (run, sit, walk, stand, throw).

ADDING NEW NAMES/CONCEPTS

When (1) the child gives you the correct answer (“Cup”) to the question, “What is this?” quickly, and/or (2) look-point-touches an object that you name, without any prompt, a few times in a row, start working on new concepts/ names.

The new names should sound different from the first one, and the objects or pictures should look different.   
  
In other words, do not go from “cup” to “cap”; they sound too much alike. And I wouldn’t go from cup to glass; they may look too much alike. Instead, move from cup to spoon, cookie, ball, or plate.

Once the child is naming (when shown) or look-point-touching (when asked) two or three objects, *go back and forth between some of them during sessions;* that is, *review and firm the concept/names*. In other words, make sure that the child really knows the **difference** between the different objects. The fancy name for this is *discrimination test.* For instance,   
1. Have him name and/or point-touch the cup, then the ball, then the cookie, then the ball again.   
2. If he makes a mistake naming or point-touching one of the objects, work on it a few times (model-lead-test-verify) until he names or point-touches it correctly again.   
3. **Point out the defining features**---the part you hold, the part you put your mouth on.   
4. Then go on to another object.   
5. After a few minutes, go back to the one he had trouble with to see if he still names or point-touches it correctly. (Please read the last sentence again.)

USING THE WORD TO ASK FOR THE OBJECT

Finally, once the child uses a word to name and/or point-touch a named object, teach him to use the word to ask for the object. For example, when he has learned to say “Cookie” when you hold up a cookie and ask, “What is this?” start having him say “Cookie” before you give him one. The next section (FS2) tells how to teach the child to ask for things.

What to Do If the Child Waits for Your Prompt

Sometimes a child will imitate the prompt just fine, but when you fade out the prompt, he does not say anything. For example, if you say, “What is this? ... BALL” he will say “Ball”; and if you say, “What is this? ... COOKIE” he will say “Cookie.” But when you hold up a ball and say, “What is this ...?” he does not answer.

What’s going on? The child is waiting for your prompt. Here’s how to handle this.   
1. Back up and have him imitate the word several times until he is fluent.  
2. Then hold up or point to an object and say, “What is this ...?” and give only part of a prompt; for instance, whisper “ball” or say “b….”   
3. If needed, move his mouth into the right position for the word.   
4. Reward him if he says “Ball.”   
5. Slowly, give less and less of the prompt and wait longer and longer before giving the prompt. Reward with food only when he says “Ball” without a prompt.

Sometimes a child imitates the question. For instance, you say, “What is this? ... BALL” and she repeats, “What is this?” or “What is this? ... BALL.” Don’t praise the child for this! Instead,  
1. Ignore it and wait about 5 seconds before you ask again.   
2. A better way is to say the question softly (almost a whisper) and say the prompt in a louder voice. For example, say, “what is this? ... BALL!!” And reward if she imitates the prompt (“BALL”).   
3. Then, slowly increase the loudness of the question and decrease the loudness of the prompt until you are asking the question (“What is this?”) and saying the prompt (“Ball”) with the same power.

Teach Lots of Words This Way!!  
  
The more concepts (kinds of things) your child learns, the more the world becomes familiar and safe. The more names for concepts that your child uses, the more she joins you in your shared world. And the easier it will be for her to learn more words/concepts!

Moving to the second method.

Our first method, above, can teach many names/concepts with one example to start---hats, shoes, spoons, books, balls, blocks, doors, beds, pillows, socks…. As the child becomes reliable at naming, pointing to, or picking up one example, we add more examples of the same concept/thing so that she sees examples that are different in some ways (such as color or size or shape) but are all still called cups. Then we add new concepts---again, starting with one example. We can use this method with any child, but especially with children who start with little Functional Speech. Why? Because this method only requires that they (1) see one example; and (2) hear one name; and (3) make one response that shows they get the connection---saying the name, pointing or touching, saying “Yes,” when asked, “Is this a cup?” *So, I would use this first method for a long time with kids who start with little Functional Speech.*

Here’s our second method.

**Method 2. Teaching Concepts/Names With a Set of Examples and Nonexamples**

Our first method taught a concept/name using one example. “This is a cup.” When the child answered correctly over and over when asked, “What is this?” or “Is this a cup?” or “(Point to, touch) the cup,” we spread/generalized the name to new examples. “This (new one) is a cup.” We checked that the child got it that the new ones were basically the same as the first ones. How? We asked, “Is this (new thing) a cup?” Or “What is this (new thing)?” Now, in our second method, *we start not with one example, but with a small set of examples.* Each one (1, 2, 3) shows all the features that define the concept…

Note: It is best to use objects at first; pictures later. Why? Because with objects, the child can see and feel “on” and “not on.”

1 2 3   
 “This is **on**.” “This is **on**.” “This is **on**.”

Then we help the child to contrast examples (such as 3) with NONexamples (such as 4) that do NOT show the features that define the concept.

“**This** is NOT on.”

4

Since 3 and 4 are the same *except for that one thing* (touching), touching vs. not touching must be what “on” and “not on” mean. Working with this set of items should be enough for the child to generalize pretty easily to new examples.

“Is **this** on?” Is **this** on?”

Note, *you should MOVE the top objects on and off the bottom objects*. For example, 1. Lower the ball to the top of the block and say, “Ball ON block.”  
2. Have the child point-touch where the ball meets the block.   
3. Then raise the ball, and as soon as it is off the block, say, “Ball NOT on block.”  
4. Have the child point-touch the space between the ball and the block.  
5. Have the child name the examples and nonexamples with you.

Why use this method if the first one (one example to start with) works just fine?

Two reasons.

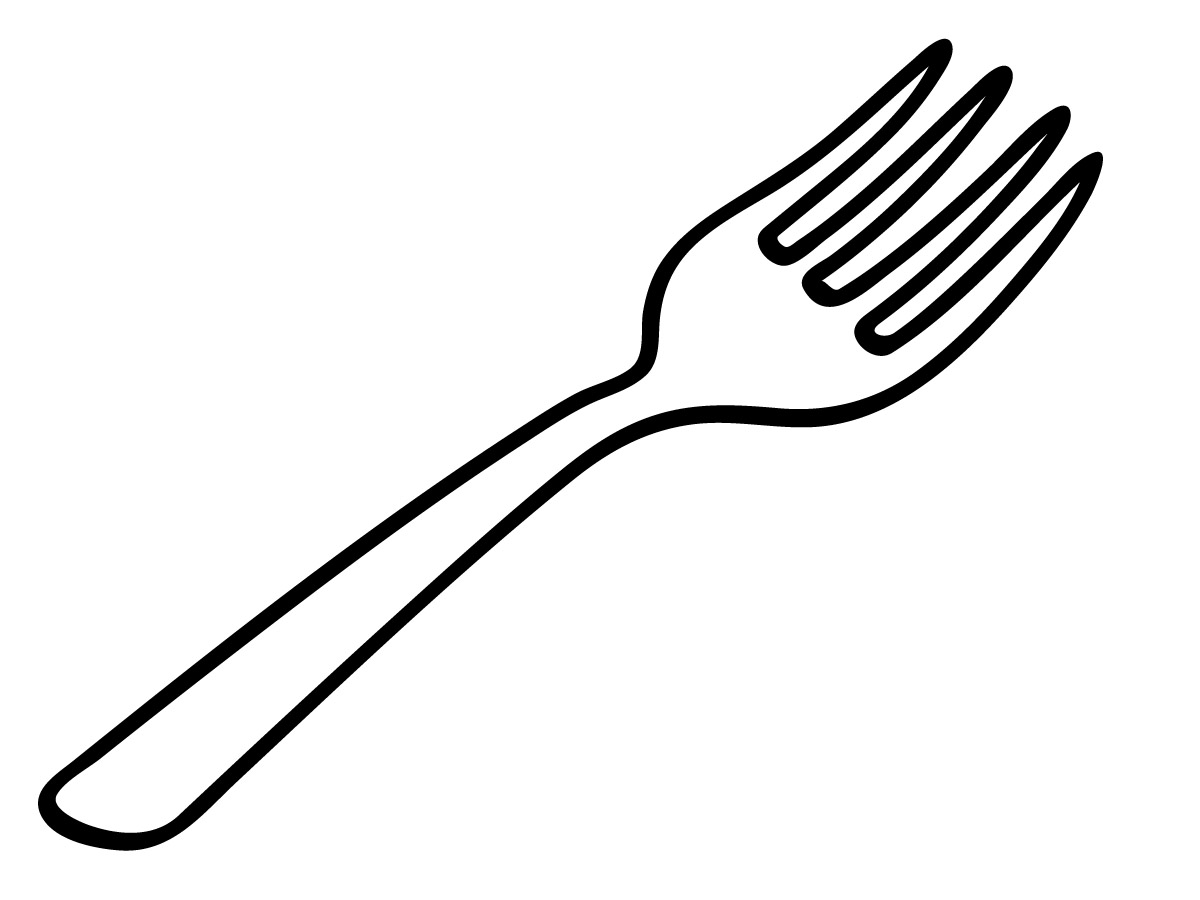
1. It is quicker. Instead of adding one new example at a time to the first one (as in the first method), this method shows a bunch of examples at once.

2. This second method also teaches new skills for HOW to learn. We are not just teaching the child the name (“cup”) that goes with one example that has ONE set of features---holds liquid, handle, drink from it. We are teaching the child to **compare** a bunch of examples (of chairs) all at once to see how they are (a) **the same** (in the features that define the concept: legs, seat, back, one person sits on it) and (b) **different** (in features that do not define the concept: color, size, material). Then we teach the child to **contrast** examples (chairs) and nonexamples (couches, stools), to see how they are **different** in the defining features (no legs, or more than one person sits; or no back). See the “on” and “not on,” above.

As I said, you can use the first method with children who already use lots of Functional Speech. But you can also use this method. It will teach these kids to focus closely on features, to compare and contrast, to find how they are the same and different, and to draw a conclusion. The learning mechanism says,

“Well, I examined all the things Dad called ‘chairs,’ and I saw how they were the same in some ways---legs, back, seat, and for one person. Then I contrasted the chairs with things Dad called ‘not chairs.’ I saw that the things he called ‘NOT chairs’ did not have legs, or did not have a seat, or did not have a back, or they were for more than one person. So, I made a generalization that chairs are things with legs, a back, a seat, and are for one person.”

*We teach tons of concepts/names with examples and nonexamples*---colors (red, blue, white), shapes (straight, curve, triangle, circle), materials (hard, soft, smooth, rough, wood, cloth, paper, glass), size (big, little, tall, short, thin, wide), positions (on, in, next to, under), temperature (hot, warm, cold, colder), objects and actions (fork, spoon, milk, plate, eating, box, bed, shoe, soap, tub...). Just make sure that (1) the concepts are defined by *only a few features*, and that (2) every example **clearly** *shows all the features*. Note! Examples of spoons are different (metal, wood, plastic, longer and shorter handles, larger and smaller bowls), but they all have the same defining features---handle, a bowl, and you move food with them. So, what’s the difference between spoons and forks?  
 Both have a handle and move things. But  
 Bowl Pointy things

So, what samenesses and what differences are you going to help your child to see?   
   
Samenesses (that define spoons) Differences (that do not define spoons)  
Handle Made of metal, plastic, wood.  
Bowl Large/small bowl  
Move food Longer/shorter handle   
 Kind of food to carry  
 Color

All the examples you show The examples you show will be   
will have these. different in these ways.

Also make sure that (3) the first examples are pure. Plain circles, not circular swimming pools, donuts, and plates. Why? Because these examples have too much extra stuff---noise. Later, we add examples that have extra stuff, and help the child to focus (home in) on the defining features. So,

Concept is defined by few features.  
 Examples show all the defining features.  
 Examples are different in some NON defining ways but all show the same defining features.

Please read   
1. Section 1. Clear Communication, and Section 2. Choosing and Using Examples, in Chapter Nine of the book on Learning Readiness!!  
2. Also read We Can Teach Concepts Three Ways, in Chapter Seven in the book on Learning Readiness!! Focus on using (a) examples and nonexamples, and (b) using a definition first, followed by examples and nonexamples.

Use the evaluation of your child’s Functional Speech, above, to make a list of names/concepts/words to teach your child using examples and nonexamples. Write these in the section for FS1, on Table 1. Functional Speech Table. Make sure to note on your Table when the child starts to use the word/concept correctly as you teach it, and mark when you hear her use it during the day.

Here are the steps. Then we’ll do each one.

1. Keep in mind the child’s current skills. Teach new skills (pointing, touching) and firm up earlier skills (imitating names).   
2. Gain attention and frame the task.  
3. Teach the child to compare a set of examples (by focusing, seeing, touching, tracing the same defining features), and to connect the name (“straight”) with the defining features.  
4. Teach the child to contrast pairs of examples (that show straight) with nonexamples (that do not show straight), so that the child sees the feature (straight = the line goes in one direction only) that makes the difference in whether it is called “straight” or “not straight.”  
5. Test to see if the child generalizes to (names or point-touches) new examples and nonexamples. “Is this straight?.... Is this straight?”  
6. Retest/reteach if the child makes errors with new examples.  
7. Teach the child to use the concept/name in many ways besides just naming examples---for example, pointing, touching, picking up, giving you, answering “Yes” if you ask, “Is this straight?”

Okay, here we go. Please read the teaching words out loud!

1. Keep in mind the child’s current skills, so that we know how best to teach concepts. For instance,  
 a. Does the child know the names of objects and shapes, as in red car, straight line? If not, for now we’ll just name examples as “red” or “straight.”   
 b. Does the child point-touch when you say things like, “Point to your cap”? Or, “Where is Kitty?” Or, “Touch the apple.” If not, we should teach this now! Here’s how.  
  
 Model pointing. “Look. I point at the horse. Now I **point** at the **cup**. Now I **point** at the **ball**….”  
   
 Lead. Have the child point with you. “**Point** at the **horse** with me.” Manual prompt at first if needed.   
   
 Repeat with the other objects one at a time. We just want the child to point, not to choose between them.  
   
 Test/check. Have the child point by herself. “Your turn at **point** at the **horse**.” Manual prompt if needed. Repeat with the other objects.  
   
 Tag-reinforce-verify. “Yes, you point at the horse!”   
   
 Model-lead-test pointing to more things at the table and other places. Fade the prompt. Big tag-treat as the child points with less prompting.  
   
 In addition, it would be smart to teach the child to touch objects and to trace lines. For instance,

Point-touch here. Trace along here. C:\Users\kozloffm\Desktop\Untitled.png

“THIS is on.” “Not straight.”

c. Does the child say “Yes” and “No”? If so, you can test by asking, “Is this (straight, red, on)?” If not, we will test by saying, “What is this?” or “Point to red.”   
 d. Most important, does the child easily say or imitate the names of the concepts: on, red, straight? If not, either work on saying the names until the child is firm, or, for now, work on concepts whose names she easily says/imitates.

2. Gain attention and frame the task. “Okay, let’s get ready to learn with Mommy.” Or, “Let’s sit real big!... That’s it! Now we’re sitting big.” Then  
 “New shape!” Or, “Here’s a new color.” Or, “Look. Let’s learn about triangles.”   
  
3. Show and help the child to compare a set of examples one after another, and to see how they are the *same*. Not so slowly that it drags, but slowly enough that you can name and point-touch or trace each example. Notice that the examples below are the same in the defining feature (straightness: the line goes only one way) but are different in NOT-defining ways, such as being straight tubes, ropes, highways, pointed in different directions, or made of string, a pencil, or the edge of a table. *Going only one way is the feature that matters*.

4. The teaching looks like this. Please point-touch-trace and tell about each example below with me. Help the child point-touch-trace with you!

1. Model. “This is straight....” Test. “What is this?”

2. http://thumbs.dreamstime.com/t/steel-pipe-silvery-closeup-white-background-38594611.jpg Model. “This is straight....” Test. “What is this?”   
 3.  Model. “This is straight....” Test. “What is this?”

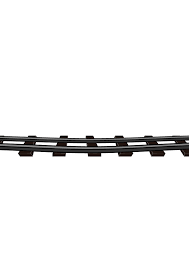
4.  Model. “This is straight....” Test. “What is this?”

With each example,   
a. We help the child to focus on the few defining features of the concept--- straightness of line, or color, or one thing being ON another thing.   
b. We do this with exaggerated point-touch as we name/model each example.   
c. Depending on how much language the child has, we name the example as “Straight,” “This is straight,” or “This line is straight.”   
d. We immediately test to see if the child got what we just did---connected the name with what she saw and touched. How do we test? Depending on the child’s current language, we ask, “What is this?” “Is this straight?” or “Is this line straight?”  
e. We reinforce and verify correct reponse. Tag-reinforce-verify. “Yes, straight!”   
f. Or we correct errors. How? We  
 (1) Model the answer. “This IS straight!” as we point-touch-trace. Then  
 (2) Test. “What is this?” Or “Is this straight?” Or “Touch straight.” Then we  
 (3) Go back a few examples and “start over.” “Is this straight?” Only now, when we get to the example that the child missed, we give a little reminder- prompt. How? We exaggerate pointing-touching-tracing the defining feature (as if to say, “See, the straight part.”) as we ask, “What is this?” Or “Is this straight?”

5. After we do the series of examples, we teach the child to see *differences* by *contrasting* examples and NONexamples. Here’s how.  
a. Juxtapose (put next to each other) examples that we just used, and nonexamples that are very similar to the examples, but are missing the defining features.

“This (or This line) “This (or This line)  
 is straight.” is NOT straight.”

b. We help the child to see, touch, and trace the difference that makes the difference in whether it is called “straight” or “not straight.” Please say the teaching words and do the point-touching with me, below!

5. Model: “This **is** straight....” Test: “What is this?”  
 6.http://cliparts.co/cliparts/8cx/Kqk/8cxKqknji.jpg Model: “This is NOT straight....” Test: “What is this?”

7.  Model: “This is straight….” Test: “What is this?”

8.  Model: “This is NOT straight…” Test: “What is this?”

9. Model: “This is NOT straight…” Test: “What is this?”

10. Model: “This IS straight…” Test: “What is this?”

c. We focus on each pair: 5 and 6, 7 and 8, 9 and 10.  
 We name and point-touch-trace the defining features of (for instance) the straight example (“This is straight”), and we immediately name and point- touch-trace the NOT defining features (the curve) in the nonexample (“This is NOT straight.).   
d. We help the child to notice the difference (straight, not straight) between examples and nonexamples by *exaggerating the point-touch-trace*. For instance,  
 (1) We move our finger, and the child’s finger, along a straight line and we say, “This is straaaaight.”   
 (2) Then we exaggerate tracing along a curved line. “NOT straight.”   
 This will help the child’s learning mechanism to figure out that “straight”   
 must be the one thing that the line called “straight” has (it goes in one   
 direction only), because THAT is what the “not straight” object is *missing*.   
 (3) So, we might juxtapose a picture of a straight road vs. a curved road, or a   
 red ball vs. a blue ball, or a box that is on a table top vs. a box that is just   
 above the table top.  
e. We immediately test each one of the pair. “What is this…?” Or, “Is this (straight, red, on)?” Or, “Point to (straight, red, on).” We tag-reinforce-verify correct answers. “Yes, NOT straight… But THIS one (show the example) **is** straight!” Or, we correct errors. How?   
 Basically, teach the example and nonexample again, and retest.   
 (1) Make sure the child sees-points-touches-traces the defining feature in the example. Model/name it. “This IS straight.” Now test. “What is this?” Or “This is….” (Give child a chance to finish.)  
 (2) Now show the nonexample right next to the example. Point-touch-trace with the child and say “Not straight.” Now test. “What is this?” or “This   
 is…”  
 (3) Repeat with several more pairs of examples and nonexamples.

Please practice with the above pairs. Pretend the child makes an error when you ask “What is this?” or “Point to straight.”

6. Now we test generalization to new examples. Like this. Please point-touch- trace and say the test with me. Then YOU do it. *Show these as pairs* (11/12, 13/14) as we did with the examples and nonexamples (5-10) earlier. Of course, we will use MORE pairs than just these two.

11. Test. “Is this straight?” Or, “Point to straight.”

12. Test. “Is this straight?” Or, “Point to straight.”

13.  Test: “Is this straight?” Or, “Point to straight.”

14.  Test. “Is this straight?” Or, “Point to straight.”

We tag-reinforce-verify correct answers. “Yes, it IS straight. THIS one (show the example) is straight!” Or, we correct errors. How?  
Basically, teach the example or nonexample again, and retest. For instance, “It IS straight.”  
a. Make sure the child sees/points-touches-traces the defining feature in the example. Name it. “Straight.” Then test. “What is this?” “This is….”  
b. Now show the nonexample. Point-touch-trace with the child and say “Not straight.” Then test. “What is this?” or “This is…”  
c. Repeat with several more pairs of examples and nonexamples.  
  
6. Retest/reteach if the child makes many errors with new examples. Just repeat what we did for 3, 4, and 5, above.   
   
 Your child does not have to learn all of this in one session or one day. Also, the child does not have to get them all right---naming the examples; naming the examples vs. nonexamples; naming new examples---in one day. A few more correct each day and a little more joining with you are what we are after. Once she learns skills for HOW to learn names/concepts this way with you---to take her turn, to focus, to look at one item and then the other, to see sameness and difference, to remember what she saw---it will go faster and faster. It could take a week for some children to get it down pretty firmly with one or two concepts.  
 If a child has a really hard time with a set of examples and nonexamples, because the skills I just listed are still too weak, go back to teaching concepts with one example. It’s not like being demoted! She will still pile up lots of knowledge one example/concept/name at a time! Then come back and try a **small** set of examples and nonexamples. But I would use different ones so that your child doesn’t go, “Uh oh! Nuts to this!”

7. Teach your child to use her new concept/name knowledge in different ways. For instance,  
 a. Coloring with colors she knows.  
 b. Going on a hunt for colors, shapes, textures, objects (books, lamps, spoons). “Let’s find (red, soft, straight, on, smooth, hard).”   
 c. Sorting objects into piles by colors or shapes or types. “Let’s put all the books here.”   
 d. Stacking things (blocks, books, towels, plates) “on” each other.   
 e. Drawing straight and not straight lines.   
 f. As you work with new examples, as above, they will become less pure. The shape or color, for instance, will be mixed with other stuff. For instance, a book sitting *on* a table is not as clean an example of on as a small ball sitting on a small box. So,   
  
 When you show noisy examples….  
   
 “This is a NEW circle.”

…make sure to help the child to see-point-touch-trace the defining features!!   
“See? It goes round and round. Circle. Round and round. What is this?...It goes round and round?” *Circle.* “Yes, circle!”  
  
Please read the above again. Then go back and do the teaching part---imagine helping the child to look; point-touch-trace; reinforce or correct. Repeat until you are fast. Then come back and we’ll see how Dad teaches Nancy a new concept.

Here’s our third way to teach names/concepts.

**Method 3. Using a Definition Plus Examples and Nonexamples to Teach Names/Concepts**

We use this method when:  
1. Concepts have so many defining features, and examples are so large, that you can’t show all the features, or you can’t show examples at all. How could you bring an example of an ocean into your house? So, we give a definition that **tells** the features, and then we use examples (for instance, pictures) that **show** these features, and nonexamples that do not. Please read that sentence again.  
2. A child enjoys working with you with lots of words, pointing, and examining. Also, using a definition first, teaches the child about definitions, and how we back up definitions with examples. This will be useful to children with more language, such as Jack, Tito, Tommy, and Mark.

Here’s Ma St. Vincent teaching Jack triangles. Jack is into shapes. Later, he and Mom will describe shapes that they find in things, and build stuff made with different shapes.

Bird house

Please teach along with Mom.

Gain attention. “Jack. Show me ready,” “Let’s sit big,” or “Listen.” Jack is so tuned into Mom, that Mom does not need to tag Jack’s instant response with a click sound. Mom, smiles at Jack and rubs his head---a big reinforcer.

Review.  
Mom and Jack review words/concepts that Jack has already learned that he now needs in order to “get” triangle. If triangles are shapes that have three lines, straight, that make three corners, what concepts/names do we need to firm up?  
a. Shapes he already learned (square). So, Ma reviews squares (four lines) so that Jack doesn’t confuse triangles (three lines) with squares.  
b. Lines.  
c. Straight lines.  
d. Corners (instead of “angles,” at least for now).

I’m pretty sure you know how to do this. If you are unsure, see how parents did it in the above examples. Mom simply models and tests each example.

Squares.  
 Red Black Blue Red

“This is a “This is a “This is a “This is a  
 square. What square. What square. What square. What  
 is this?” is this?” is this?” is this?”

Lines.

Note that some lines are straight and some are not. Mom and Jack point-touch-trace these as Mom names and then tests each one.

“Let’s review lines.”  
This is a line. What is this? Touch the line.”

Straight.

“Let’s review straight lines. I’ll tell straight lines and then YOU tell straight lines.”

“This is “This is “This is “This is “This is “What is What is “What is  
 straight. straight. straight. straight. NOT this? this? this?  
 What is What is What is What is straight. Straight Straight Straight   
 this?” this?” this?” this?” What is or not or not or not   
 this?” straight?” straight?” straight?”

Corners. Mom and Jack point-touch-trace these as Mom names and then tests each one. Note that the angles and the lengths of lines are different, just as in the triangles Mom will show. Also, the corners are different colors. The only way the examples are the same is where the lines make a corner.

“This is a “This is a “This is a “This is a “This is a   
 corner. corner. corner. corner. corner.  
 What is this?” What is this?” What is this?” What is this?” What is this?”

So now Jack is firm on the knowledge elements he needs to get the definition and to see the features. Mom starts.

Frame instruction.   
“Listen. (Point-touch) New shape. (Keep it simple.)… (pause)…..triangle. Our new shape is…. triangle. What’s our new shape?” (Firm it up.) *triangle.* “Yes, triangle. (Verify child’s behavior.) If Jack knows how to spell, teach him to spell triangle. Show him the written word. “Spell triangle…" *t r i a n g l e.* “What’s our new word?” *triangle.* (This connects spelling with saying.)

Model-lead-test/check-tag-reinforce-verify.  
Note: Mom and Jack do a lot of work with the examples and nonexamples---focusing, pointing, tracing, naming parts, checking the list of parts with what the definition says. Do they need to do all this? Probably not. But some children do need it. So, why are Jack and Mom doing so much with triangles? Because they enjoy it! Also, they are going deeper and deeper into triangles. All the way down to inspecting the corners/angles. This will help Jack go into greater detail with other kinds of knowledge.

First Mom teaches the definition. She tells the features of the concept. We do this when a concept is defined by so many features, and when examples are spread out in time and place, and maybe are so big, that you can’t show examples at all (solar system) or you can’t show all the features. So, *we tell the features.* Jack epeats the definition. Then Mom uses examples and nonexamples to *show* that some things have the defining features (and so they are triangles) and other things do not have the defining features (and so they are not triangles). Here she goes. Talk along with Mom!

Model. “Jack, listen. (Mom and Jack quickly point-touch the examples.) Triangles are shapes that have three things. Three lines…Straight lines….Make three corners.” (Mom points to these features as she says each one.) “Listen again. Triangles are shapes that have three things. Three lines…Straight lines….Make three corners.”

Lead. “Jack. Let’s say that definition together. (They point-touch the features as they say them.) *Triangles are shapes that have three things. Three lines…Straight lines….Make three corners.”* (Repeat until firm.)

Test. “Your turn. What’s our definition of triangles?….Think about it. Look at the triangles. Touch the parts.” *Triangles are shapes that have three things. Three lines…Straight lines….Make three corners*. (Mom corrects any errors, such as Jack leaving out a feature or a word. Model-lead-test. Big tag-reinforce when he gets it right.

Now that Jack says the definition and has seen and touched the defining features ON triangles, Mom and Jack look at more examples that have *different* angles and colors and sizes, but that still show the three defining features.

1. “Jack. Watch my finger.” (Gains attention.) “Yes, I love the way you are watching my finger.” (Reinforces this behavior.)

“Here’s a triangle.” (model)

Mom moves her finger along the three lines. “One line…Two lines….Three lines…” (Models how to trace and count lines.)

Mom repeats this step. “Again….One line…Two lines….Three lines…”

“Gimme your finger. Let’s do the lines. Count the lines with me…. Get ready… *One line, two lines, three lines.”* (lead) Notice how Mom and Jack keep using the name for the feature, “line.”

“Three lines.” (Repeats what has been learned.)

“How many lines in this triangle.” (Test/check) *Three lines.*

“Yes, this triangle has three lines.” (Reinforces Jack’s knowledge and Jack’s behavior---answering.)

If Jack takes too long to answer or seems unsure, Mom treats it as an error. “Three lines…See? One, two, three lines… (model) How many lines? (Retest). *Three.* Yes, three lines. I knew you’d get it!” (Reinforcement)

2. “Watch my finger.” Mom quickly repeats what she and Jack did with #1, and then they do the same thing with the new one, #2---so Jack can easily see how both examples have three lines and are both called “triangles.”

“This is a triangle. AND this is a triangle.” (model)

Mom by herself (model), then Mom plus Jack (lead), and then Jack by himself (Test/check) trace and count the lines as with #1.

“How many lines in the triangles?” (Mom has Jack tell what he’s just learned.)

*Three lines!* Mom clicks a clicker to tag Jack’s quick and correct behavior, to draw Jack’s attention to his own behavior, so that Jack’s learning mechanism will tell itself, “Ah HA!, so THAT’S what I *do* to learn about triangles! I count the lines. “Yes, Jack, a triangle has THREE lines.” (Mom verifies what Jack knows and did. She gives Jack a small treat, to sweeten the deal.)

3. “Here’s another triangle. Look…. Watch me count the lines.” (Mom traces the sides and stops at the angles. (Model. Only now, Mom adds corners---another feature of triangles.)

“One line…Uh oh. A corner! (Points.) One corner. What is this?” (Test/check.) *Corner. “*Yes, corner!” (Reinforce, verify.)  
   
 Mom keeps on. “Two lines….and two corners. How many corners do we have? (Mom traces the two lines and touches the corners. Count with me. *One corner, two corners…* (lead) *Two corners.”*

“Yes, two corners.” (Verifies.)

(Mom traces the third side, stops at the third corner and taps it.)

“Three lines…three corners.”

“Now move your finger and YOU count the lines and the corners. (Test/check) Put your finger here…. Go.” *One line…one corner…Two lines… two* *corners* (“Yes, keep going!”) *Three lines…three corners.* (Test/check) Mom gives a hint… “You’re coming to a corrr….” *Corner!*

“Yes, three lines. Three corners.” (Verifies)

“So, how many lines in a triangle?” (Mom might point to the lines as a hint.) (Test/check knowledge of features.) *Three lines.* “Yes, triangles have three lines.” (Verifies)  
 “And how many corners in a triangle.” (Mom might point to the corners, as a hint.) *Three corners.* “Yes, triangles have three corners.” (Verifies.)

Mom will fade out these hints as Jack’s responses (pointing, touching, counting, summarizing) get firmer.

“Triangles have three lines and three corners. Say that…” *Triangles have three lines and three corners.* (Test/check of the whole definition.)

Click---“Yes, a triangle has three lines and three corners.” (Verifies.)---treat.

4. Now Jack and Mom look at pairs of juxtaposed examples and nonexamples.  
 “Now look at this. This is NOT….(pause) a triangle.” (model)  
  
 “Look….” (Mom traces and counts the sides and corners---models HOW to find out if something is or isn’t a triangle!)

If Jack already uses the word/concept, square, then Mom will say, “Now, look at this. This is NOT a triangle. It’s a …..” *Square.* “Yes, we know this is a square. NOT a triangle.”  
   
 “One, two, three, FOUR lines….One, two, three FOUR corners... This is NOT a triangle. It’s a …..” *Square.* (Jack traces and counts with Mom—Lead—to firm up the features of squares.)

Mom puts a triangle #3 next to the square (#4) (just as we put straight vs. curved lines, tracks, and cars next to each other) so that Jack can easy see, compare, and contrast the features.

“Look at this triangle. Count lines with me… *One… two…three lines*….(lead)… Now you do it, Jack. (Test/check) *One…two…three lines.* How many lines? (Test/check) *Three.* Yes, three lines.”   
 Now count **corners** with me. *One, two, three corners.* (lead) Now you count corners. (Test/check) *One…two…..three corners*… Yes, three corners.” (Verifies)

“How many lines and corners in a triangle?” (Mom makes sure Jack still has this knowledge, because now he’s going to USE it. Mom and Jack trace a triangle, because Jack just learned to do that to tell if something is a triangle.) *Three lines. Three corners.* “Yes, a triangle has three lines and three corners…. Does this have three lines and three corners?... *Yes.* So, what IS it? (Test/check) *Triangle.* Yes, it IS a triangle. You figured it out yourself. You counted the lines…one, two, three. And you counted the corners…one, two, three. And you said ‘Hey! Three lines, three corners….triangle’!”

Mom and Jack now go back and contrast the triangle with the square.  
  
 “And how may lines and corners does THIS have?” (Test/check to see if Jack has learned the little counting routine taught above.)  
 “Count them.” (A hint, to remind Jack to compare and contrast by counting how many. Mom helps as needed. Mom has Jack do it again, with less help.)  
   
 *Four lines. Four corners.*  
   
 “So, is this a triangle?” *No.*

“How do you know?” (Test/check) Mom has Jack use the features of the concept---triangle---to explain his decision.  
  
 *Four lines and four corners. Triangles have three lines and three corners.*

Click—“Correct. This (point-touch-trace.) is NOT a triangle. Triangles have three lines and three corners. THIS (point-touch-trace) has four lines and four corners. So, it is NOT a triangle.” (Verification.)

Mom and Jack do the same thing with a few more examples and nonexamples. Then they go around the house looking for examples and nonexamples, and squares. Jack uses the little tracing-counting routine to decide if a new thing is or isn’t a triangle (or a square).  
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What if Jack didn’t have enough language to count, or to say “Three lines” or “Triangle”? No problem. Mom does the counting and naming while Jack traces and touches with Mom. Instead of asking, “Is this a triangle?” Mom lays out a bunch of triangles, squares, and circles, and says, “Is this a triangle?” or “Touch the triangle.”

5. Now that Mom and Jack have compared, contrasted, and named each item in the pairs, and Mom has corrected any errors, she and Jack look at *all the examples and nonexamples*, and Mom asks Jack to name them or to point to them by name. Mom corrects errors with Model-Lead-Test, and then retests a little later. She has Jack trace and count to prompt himself.

6. Spreading the name/concept around. Now Mom and Jack work on generalization and integration.   
 a. They look for examples in Jack’s daily life. “Let’s see if there are triangles in this picture.”  
 b. Jack draws different triangles.  
 c. Mom and Jack use wooden shape blocks to build designs.  
 d. Maybe Dad or Mom and Jack build things with different shapes.  
 e. Maybe Jack learns the names for different kinds of triangles.

This is an This is a This is an  
 equilateral. right obtuse  
 triangle. triangle. triangle.

Mom would teach these exactly the way she taught triangles vs. squares vs. circles. Either with examples and nonexamples, or with a definition followed by examples, or starting with just one example and then adding new ones.

7. Teaching more names/concepts. Jack and Mom will work on many new concepts. Sometimes Mom will use one example to start with---tools, cooking utensils, furniture. Sometimes---when a concept has features that are right in front of you (such as colors, textures, animals), she will use a set of examples and nonexamples. And sometimes---when a concept has a lot of features, or when it is a good idea for Jack to learn definitions that tell the features---she starts with a definition and then uses examples and nonexamples---furniture, plant, animal, toad.

Now let’s use the next three methods. Kids need a good deal of Functional Speech to learn new words/concepts with these next methods---synonyms, morphemes, and context---because these methods USE a lot of language.

**Method 4. Using Synonyms to Teach Names/Concepts**

This is pretty simple. Kids with a good deal of language/Functional Speech will benefit from knowing that *many words mean pretty much the same thing.* The more words they know, the more they will understand what other persons are saying and what they are reading, and the more ways they will express themselves. You might teach synonyms when you are reading with a child, or looking at something, or having a conversation. Here’s a general format.  
Tito. “What does grasp mean?”Dad. “Grasp? How do we spell grasp? (Dad wants Tito to connect reading, spelling, and defining. If he has trouble, they look at the word.)  
Tito: “Okay. g r a s p. grasp.”Dad: “Here *another way* to **say** grasp. Grasp means to **hold tight**. The iron frying pan is heavy. So, we grasp the handle. The ground is bumpy. So, we grasp the handle bars of our bikes. We hold the handle bars tight. Can you think of something else you grasp?”  
Tito: “The football is big for my fingers. So, I grasp it. So, I hold it tight.   
Dad: “Yes, you grasp it.” (Verification.)  
Dad: “Listen. When you say a word another way, it’s called using a synonym. Can you say synonym.”  
Tito: “Of course. I’m not five! Synonym.”  
Dad: “What’s a synonym for synonym?”  
Tito: “Another way to say a word.”  
Dad: “You got it!”

Nancy: “Mom, can I buy a new cap?”  
Mom: “I’ll buy you a new cap when you learn a new way to say ‘buy.’”  
Nancy: “Okay.”  
Mom: “Another way to say ‘buy’ is ‘purchase.’ What’s another word for ‘buy’”?  
Nancy: “Purchase.”  
Mom: “Yup. Another word for ‘buy’ IS ‘purchase.’ You want me to buy you a new cap. Ask me with our new word.”  
Nancy: “I forgot.”  
Mom: “Our new word for ‘buy’ is ‘purchase.’ So, use that instead of ‘buy.’”  
Nancy: “Mom, can I purchase a new cap?”  
Mom: “Sure, smart girl.”

Of course, review old words and synonyms. If you child can read and write, maybe she can keep her new words in a little book.

**Method 5. Using Morphemes to Teach Names/Concepts**

Many multi-syllable words are made of morphemes. Morphemes are word parts that have meaning.

pre = before  
de = remove or undo  
co = together  
tract = hold, grab on  
con = with  
in = put in  
spire = spirit  
tion = a way things are; a way something is being done (construction)

You can use morphemes when your child has enough language/Functional Speech that she will get what the word parts or morphemes mean.

Here’s Mom teaching Nancy using morphemes. Maybe they are reading, or maybe Nancy wants to know what a word means, or maybe Mom thinks this is a good chance to teach a new word.

An ad on TV says, “These snow tires have all the traction you need to go through snow.”

Mom: “Know what that means?”  
Nancy: “What?”  
Mom: “Tires have traction. Know what ‘traction’ means.”  
Nancy: “Uh uh.”  
Mom: “Look at (reading) the word. (Or, “Listen to the word.”) It has two parts. tract and tion. Say those parts.”  
Nancy: “Tract and tion.”  
Mom: “Well, tract means to dig or to pull. What’s tract mean?”  
Nancy: “Dig or pull.”  
Mom: “Yup, tract means dig or pull…. And tion means what something is doing. “Like, an inspection is when something is being inspected. And addition means adding things.  
 “Okay. So we have tract. And that means….”  
Nancy: “To dig or pull.”  
Mom: “And we have tion. Which means…”  
Nancy: “What something is doing.”  
Mom: “So, if a tire has traction, the tract part means that the tire can…  
Nancy: “Dig or pull.”  
Mom: “And the tion part means that when the tire goes through snow it will be doing what?”  
Nancy: “Digging and pulling.”  
Mom: “You got it. Here’s another word that has tract in it. Tractor. Tract…or.”  
Nancy: “Tract and or.”  
Mom: “Remember tract. What does it mean?”  
Nancy: “Dig or pull.”  
Mom: “Right. And the word part---OR---means what a thing or a person that *does something*. For instance, an inspector is someone who inspects. A reflector is something that reflects or bounces stuff back. A mirror is a reflector. It bounces back light. So, a tractor would be something that does what?”  
Nancy: “Digs or pulls.”  
Mom: “Right. Here are pictures of tractors. Different colors. Some are large and some are small. But look what they are doing…”  
Nancy: “Pulling!”  
Mom: “Yup, tractors are something that digs or pulls.”

Here’s our last way to teach names/concepts.

**Method 6. Using Context to Teach Names/Concepts**

Sometimes you can help children to figure out what a word means (the concept) by seeing the word among other words.It’s like finding synonyms in the text!

Dad: “Mark. Listen to this. ‘She jetted down the road like a fighter plane.’ I wonder what **jetted** means. Well, she jetted like a fighter plane. How do fighter planes go?”  
Mark: REAL fast.”  
Dad: “Yeah, fast! So, if she jetted down the road like a fighter plane, she was going…..”  
Mark: “Real fast.”  
Dad. “Yup, I think you got it. Another word---fighter plane---helped us to figure out the word jetted…. Here’s another cool word. entire. She read the entire book in one day. It was a long book. What do you think ‘entire’ means? They’re making a big deal about how she read the entire book.”  
Mark: “She read the whole thing? The entire thing?”  
Dad: “You got it. You figured it out. Entire book. Long book. She read the entire, whole thing.”

Well, that’s it. Please read and practice the formats until you feel comfortable. And be confident! These methods work!

**FS2. ASKING FOR THINGS.**

Getting what you asked for is a natural reward. (Well, it depends on what you asked for.) So, it is important to teach a child to use words, phrases, and sentences to ask for things he wants.

What Should the Child Learn to Ask For?

*Start by teaching the child to ask for the things he is learning to name.* For example, if he names a ball when you hold one up, it is time to have him learn to say “Ball” before you give him one to play with. Second, teach him to ask for things that are in *many places*, or that *happen often.* For instance, teach him to say and to ask using words like “eat,” ‘‘out,” ‘‘up,” ‘‘play,” “ride,’’ “bath,” “toys,” “come,” “TV,” “food,” “more,” “kiss,” “open,” “look,” and “go.” And, third, if the child has been using *sounds to “ask’’ for things* (for instance, he says “Ow” for “Out” or “Wa” for “Water”), those are words to work on.

Meals and play sessions are good times to start working on asking. During meals the child can learn to ask for the foods he wants. During play sessions he can ask for different toys on the table (puzzle, block, boat, horse) or for different activities (roll, up, jump, wrestle). Also, the child should learn to ask for things he wants during the day. When he is standing by the door, teach him to say “Out” or “Open” before you open the door; teach him to say “Go” before you push him on the swings, “Up” before you pick him up, and “Music” before you tum on the records.

The Basic Method for Teaching a Child to Ask

First, *make sure the child can say (imitate) a word fairly well before you try to have her use the word to ask*. You cannot expect her to ask for a ball if she cannot say the word. She does not have to be able to say it perfectly. If she can say or imitate “Baw” for “Ball” or “Coo-ie” for “Cookie,” that is close enough to start. At the same time, use the book on Verbal Imitation to help her say the word better when she asks, and as she gets better at saying it, tag-reinforce closer tries.

Make sure the child is looking at the thing she is to ask for. When she is looking at it (the natural reward), say, “What do you want ...?”or “Tell me what you want.” If she comes close to saying the right word, quickly tag-reinforce (by giving her what she asked for)-verify. “Yes, OUT. Now you can go OUT.” If she does not say anything or does not even come close, prompt by telling her (modeling) the right word to say. If she imitates the prompt, reinforce. For example:

Parent or Teacher Child Parent or Teacher  
  
“What do you want?” Doesn’t say Waits a few seconds.  
 anything.  
“What do you want… “Cookie” or Tags-gives cookie-  
COOKIE.” (prompt) “Coo-ie.” Verifies. “Yes, cookie. Here’s your cookie!”

Repeat this several times: (1) wait until the child is looking or prompt him to look; (2) ask what he wants; (3) prompt with the right word; and (4) reinforce when he imitates the prompt.

FADING OUT THE PROMPT

Once the child is imitating the prompt (“COOKIE”), start to fade out the prompt--the same way we did when we were working on naming. For instance, wait longer before you give the prompt, say the prompt softer, or say less of the prompt.

Parent or Teacher Child

”What do you want? ... COOK ...” “Cookie”

When you are fading out the word prompt (“COOKIE”), you can use other prompts to help the child ask with the right word. For example, say, “What do you want?” and then *wave* the cookie around or *point* to the cookie. If you want him to say “Eat,” ask “What do you want to DO?” and then *pretend* you are putting food in your mouth. Or, if you want him to say “Out,” ask “Where do you want to *GO*?” and then *point* to the door or to the outside. Later, you should fade out these prompts, too. But go slowly.

Use Grandma’s Law during the day wherever you can teach the child to ask for things. As soon as she imitates the word, have her try to say it before she gets what she wants.

FADING OUT THE QUESTION

When the child has learned to ask for something when you say “What do you want?” teach her to ask more on her own. This means fading out the question. Instead of always asking her, “What do you want?” or saying, “Tell me what you want,” wait until she wants something. Then give her just a little prompt by pointing to what she wants; by holding it up; by saying, “Speak up,” “Tell me,” or “Ask me’’; or by whispering the question, “What do you want?”

If the child does not say anything, do not give her what she wants. Have her wait a little while and then give her another chance to ask more on her own. Use another child who already knows how to ask on her own as a model. Have this child come up and ask for what the first child wants. Reward the child who is the model. If the first child imitates the model, reward her by giving her what she wants.

Modeling works nicely during mealtime, too. Just have another child who can already ask on his own (the model) sit with you and the first child at the table. Give each child a chance to ask for something on the table. Go back and forth between the two children. Reward the child who is the model when he asks for something. Reward the other child if he imitates the model. Later, reward the other child only if he asks when it is his turn. If he misses his turn a few times because he did not ask on his own, prompt by (1) quickly giving the model child a turn so that the other child can hear how to ask; (2) asking the other child what he wants or telling him to ask you (“It’s your turn. What do you want?”); or (3) giving him the name of something to ask for (“SANDWICH”). Then fade out the prompts until he asks on his own when it is his turn.

Keeping Track of the Child’s Progress on Naming (FS1), Asking (FS2), and (next skill) Identifying and Describing (FS3)

There are two things to keep track of each week: (1) words you are working on; (2) new words the child is learning to use to name, ask for, and describe things; and (3) ABOUT how often the child is using words to name, ask for, and describe things (which we work on next).

HOW MANY NEW WORDS IS THE CHILD LEARNING?

As we said in Section 2, write all the words you are working on for FS1 (Naming), FS2 (Asking), and FS3 (Identifying and Describing) in the column for that week on a copy of Table 1. Functional Speech Table. When the child learns to use a word in a functional way--to name, ask for, or describe things---also write it in the column for that week.

Below is a copy of part of the Functional Speech Table made by Steven Rogers’ parents. Each time Steven’s parents worked on a word during the week, they wrote it in the column for that week. You can see that they usually worked on words for a few weeks in a row. Mom and Pop wrote down whenever Steven started to use a word during teaching sessions or everyday activities. They made a hash mark next to the word every time they heard him use it. This is not the most accurate measure, but Mom and Pop Rogers are sharp enough to notice whether he is using a word more often.

Week: Week: March 3- 10 March 11-17

FS1. Naming.  
a. Child’s speech during   
 evaluation.  
 cah (car), Ma (when asked  
 who I am), ‘Teve (Steven),  
 cahny (candy), reh (red),  
 bu (blue)

b. Speech we’re working on. red, blue, cup, red, blue, cup, spoon, plate, spoon, plate, car, car, Dad. Dad, chair, book, dog.   
   
c. New speech child now uses. red ////// (play) spoon ///// (meal)  
 Mark (//) when we hear it. red /// (in book) dog /// (in book)  
 dog /// (session) blue /// (session)   
 cup. //// (session) chair. //// during   
 car // (outside) “tour” of home.  
 Dad //// (When Dad  
 comes home)  
   
 Once Steven starts using a word, we will keep working on it---giving him lots of chances to use it, and reinforcement when he does.

FS2. Asking.  
a. Child’s speech during   
 evaluation.  
 eat, Ma, Da (Dad),   
 up (pick up) I, go, out, look,   
 mihk (milk), me, me wahn   
 (want), bah (bath), canny   
 (candy).

b. Speech we’re working on. I want, want (eat, I want (eat, go,   
 go, play, bath, bath, Ma, come,   
 Ma, come, candy, candy, milk, go  
 milk, go out, out, more, pick up). pick up),  
   
c. New speech child now uses. want eat ////// want Da //// Mark (//) when you hear it. (meals). Dad to come to him.  
 want up /////// go out. ///// asked  
 want Ma //// asking me to come to him.

When Steven starts using a word, we give lots of chances during the day and home and everywhere else for him to use his new words.

FS3. Identifying and Describing.  
a. Child’s speech during   
 evaluation.  
 reh (red), bu (blue), hot,  
 guh (good)

b. Speech we’re working on. Things that are Things that are red  
 red (ball, block, and things that are  
 cup, toy, car). blue (ball, block,  
 cup, toy, car, plate,  
 cap).  
  
c. New speech child now uses. Correct Correctly describes   
 Mark (//) when you hear it. describes and and points to red  
 points to red and blue objects. objects.  
 You can see that Steven is learning to use a few more words and simple phrases each week to name, ask for, and describe things. Keep in mind that he had little speech when his parents started using the methods in this book. And the number of new words and phrases he learns, and how often he uses these, will increase faster and faster. Why? Because it will be easier for him to say the words. He will be more aware of opportunities to speak. And he will find out that speaking pays off a LOT!

“What If I Want More Accurate Measurement?”

Easy. All you have to do is to wear a wrist counter and click the counter (or make a hash mark in your note pad) each time the child uses his words in a functional way during the day, to name, ask for, or describe things. You can either count all day or for a certain amount of time each day, say 1or 2 hours. At the end of the day, write down the number of times the child used his words (the number of times he communicated with them) in the box for that day. Then you can make a graph of the numbers you counted.

Here are some numbers that show how much Jack St. Vincent’s learned from Mom and Dad made. Every day, they counted how often Jack used his new words to communicate. They made a hash mark in one column on a small note pad every time Jack used his words to name things or ask for thing on *his own*, and another column every time he used his words to ask for or to name things after they gave him a *signal* by asking a question (“What do you want?” “What shape is the table?”) or by telling him to use his words (“Jack. Use your words to ask to play.”).   
 Jack’s parents had good results increasing the number of times Jack communicated with new words. During the first week of their home program, before they started learning how to teach him, Jack used his words only a few times a day. For the first 6 weeks of his educational program, Jack’s parents worked on Eye Contact, Sitting, Cooperating, Large and Small Motor skills, Motor Imitation, and Verbal Imitation. During week Seven, they added Functional Speech. Note: It takes some children more time to get to this point! His parents counted Jack’s speech every day. By the end of Week 15, Jack was using his new words about 80 times a day, and most of the time on his own.

What Next?

When the child names about six things (objects and activities) and asks for most of them, start on the next skill, “Identifying and Describing.” Remember to keep teaching the child to say new words using the book on Verbal Imitation. Then teach her to use those words to name and ask for things.

**FS3. IDENTIFYING AND DESCRIBING.**

When the child has learned to name about six different objects and to ask for most of them by name, it is time to teach her to identify and describe. Identifying means that the child picks out or chooses between different objects by their names. It means that she hears the difference between the names and shows that she knows which name goes with which object (by *pointing, touching, or picking up objects* when you name them). Describing, on the other hand, means that the child uses words to *talk* about the scene around her. She tells the names for things she sees; their color, shape, and size (big/ small); and what they are doing (running, sitting).

To work on identifying and describing we need (1) a box of common objects for when you teach at a table, and everyday objects around the house for when you teach during routine activities; (2) color chips or blocks of different colors; and (3) picture cards, books with large, real-looking pictures, and magazines. Work on identifying and describing during sessions (you can work on Verbal Imitation, naming, and asking at the same time) and at other times (for instance, during meals and play, walks, in the store, or in the car).

Keep track of the child’s progress as we did with naming and asking. See the example, above, from the Rogers family. Write down in the column for that week on the Functional Speech Table the words you are teaching the child to use to identify and describe. Also write down in the column for that week when the child uses a word to identify or describe with a word. Okay, let’s get to work.

Identifying and Describing by the Whole Name

The idea is to teach the child to pick out or talk about things by their whole names, no matter what the color, shape, or size. You will need pictures and a box of small objects to work on this.

Pick three or four objects to start with; for example, a dog, house, car, and apple. *Use objects the child already names.* Spend a while making sure he names them by (1) holding them up one at a time; (2) asking, “What is this?”; and (3) rewarding him for naming them correctly. Second, make sure the child picks up or points to objects. Put one of the objects or pictures on the table in front of him, and tell him, “Point to the dog,” “Pick up the dog,” or “Give me the dog.” If needed, prompt him to point to it or pick it up. When he picks up or points to one object when asked, start working on identifying.

IDENTIFYING BY THE WHOLE NAME

Put two or three objects the child already names in front of him on the table. When he is looking at them, you point to each one and say the name. “This one is a DOG. This is a HOUSE. And this is a BOY.” Then tell him to pick up or point to one of them: “POINT to the BOY.” If he does this correctly by himself within about 5 seconds, give a big tag-treat-verification. “Yes, boy!” If he does not start to point in about 3 seconds, prompt by gently moving his hand to the right one and/or by pointing to the right one. Also, try to catch him and move his hand in the right direction before he makes a mistake. Repeat this a few times with the same object or picture.

If the child makes many errors, prompt by pointing to the correct object or picture at the same time you tell him which one to point to. On the next try, wait 1 second before you point. Each try, wait 1 second longer before you give the pointing prompt---up to 4 seconds (Touchette, 1971). You want him to start pointing before you give the prompt.

Slowly fade out your prompts by (1) moving his hand only part of the way; or (2) pointing to the right picture or object for only a second or only part way. Save strong rewards for when he points correctly without a prompt or with less prompting than before. If the child makes a few errors in a row after you start fading the prompt, go back to prompting some more.

When the child points to or picks up his first object or picture without a prompt (for instance, the boy), start on the second one of the set (for instance, the house). Do the same as before. Just put the same two or three objects or pictures on the table (including the first one he learned---the boy), and have him point to or pick up the house. Prompt when needed. When he gets better at pointing to the second object or picture (the house), start switching back and forth between pointing to the first one (the boy) and the second one (the house).

Each time the child learns to point to or pick up an object or picture by name, add a new one. Give her the most practice on new ones, but practice the ones she has already learned. Make sure to correct errors by:  
1. Modeling the correct response. Point to or pick up the one you named. “**This** is the car.” Make sure the child is looking!  
2. Have the child respond to the name *with* you. “Point/pick up the car with me.” Say, “car” as you both move towards the object. Make sure the child is looking!  
3. Test by having the child try it by herself. “Your turn to point to (pick up) the car.” Physically prompt BEFORE she makes an error, and try again!  
4. Come back to objects on which a child made an error and firm up (practice) the child’s naming or pointing or picking up objects by name.

Also, start moving the pictures or objects around to different spots on the table, so that she learns to identify by name and not by place on the table. Later, start using pictures or objects that have the same name, but look a little different. For example, have two pictures of boys and two pictures of houses, and have her pick the boys from the houses. Or have two cups and two spoons on the table, and have her choose the cups from the spoons. Remember: when you add a new object for her to point to, teach her to name it as well.

DESCRIBING BY THE WHOLE NAME

When the child is identifying (pointing to or picking out) three or four different objects or pictures, start teaching hers to describe scenes that have those objects or pictures in them. For example, lay out all the objects or pictures she has learned on the table. When she is looking at them, say, “Tell me what you see” or “What is on the table?” If she names any of the objects or pictures on the table, quickly tag-reinforce-verify. If she does not name any of the objects or pictures within a few seconds, prompt by pointing to one of them or by telling her all or part of the name of one of them. If she then names the one you prompted, reward her and repeat this a few more times.

Then say, “Tell me **what else** you see” or “What else is on the table?”

Prompt by pointing and by telling her the name for a different picture or object on the table. As the child learns to tell you the names for these objects, add a few new ones.

Remember to tag-reinforce-verify correct responses.   
 Remember to tag-reinforce-verify faster or less-prompted (improved) responses.

Use the same methods to teach her to describe different scenes. For example, sit with her and hold up a picture book for her to see. As before, say, “What do you see?” or “What’s in this picture?” Tag-reinforce-verify if she names one of the objects in the picture on her own. If she does not, prompt by pointing and telling her. Reinforce if she then names an object. Then have her name a different object in the picture.

It is important to have the child describe things in many places. For example, use the same methods to have him tell you what he sees (1) in the store (shelf, can, box); (2) on a walk (house, sidewalk, tree, car); (3) while he is riding in a car (car, street, tree, store, house); (4) in the home or classroom (carpet, chair, TV, desk, bed); and (5) in the mirror (face, shirt, arms, chest, mouth, hair).

When the child identifies and describes a few dozen objects by their whole names, move on to the next section.

Identifying and Describing What Is Different About Things

Things are different by colors, shapes, and sizes. Sometimes a *whole word* tells how things are different (red ball/ blue ball; big dog/small dog). And, sometimes, *part of a word* tells how things are different (big ball/bigger ball/biggest ball). When a child identifies and describes many objects by their whole names, teach her to identify and describe how objects are different.

COLORS

Do not work too long at a time on colors. Spread it out over a few months. Get small objects and pictures with the same shapes but different colors; for example, sets of dogs, horses, circles, and blocks of different colors. First teach the child to imitate four or five basic color words (“red,” “blue,” “yellow,” “black”).

Hold up one of the objects. (The child should be able to say or imitate the color name for the object.) Wait until he is looking at it. Then tell him the name of the color; for example, “RED. RED. This is RED. What color is this?” If he says “Red,” tag-treat-verify. “Yes, RED!” If he does not say “Red,” prompt like this: “This is RED. What color is this? ... RED,” or “This is RED. What is this? ... RED.” Reward the child if he imitates all or part of the prompt--“RED.”

Repeat this four or five -times with the object. When the child begins to answer by himself, or begins to quickly imitate the prompt, start fading the prompt. You can do this by (1) saying less of the prompt (What color is this?... RE ...”); (2) saying the prompt in more of a whisper; and (3) waiting longer to give the prompt (“What is this? ........ RED”). Start holding out on the rewards except when the child gives the answer with less prompting than before. But, if he makes more than a few mistakes in a row, *go back* to prompting him and then fade out the prompts more slowly.

When the child describes (gives the name for) one object or picture, show him other objects with the same color, so that he will learn to describe the color even if the objects are different. For example, once he says the color for the red circle, have him name the color for the red block and the red dog.

When he has one color down very well, add a second one. As before, teach him to name one object or picture with the new color. When he names an object with the new color, have him name other objects with that color; for instance, blue blocks, dogs, and horses.

*Then go back and forth between the different objects and the two colors.* Have the child give you the name for the red block, then the blue circle, then the blue block, and then the red dog. When you get to this point, you may have to use a little more prompting. After some prompting, start saving the biggest rewards for the times when he gives the color correctly without a prompt.

When the child describes objects using a few color names, start having her identify objects and pictures by the color names. Use the same method we talked about for teaching the child to identify objects by their whole names. Just spread out three or four pictures or objects of different colors on the table in front of her. Tell her, “Point to the RED horse” or “Which one is the RED horse?” Prompt by moving her hand or by pointing to the right one, and tag-treat for correctly pointing by herself. When she points to the red horse, have her then point to the red dog and the red block. When she picks out red objects, start having her point to objects of a second color. When she is doing fairly well at pointing to objects of the second color, switch back and forth between objects of the two colors. Then work on a third color.

It is important to teach the child to identify a small set of different objects that have the same color. A good way to do this is to have the child point to or give you one object (“Give me a BLUE one”). When she does, reward her and then say, “Give me ANOTHER BLUE one” or “Give me SOMETHING ELSE that is BLUE” or “Find ANOTHER BLUE one.” Prompt if needed.

COMPARISONS

There are many ways to compare things: small/big, wide/narrow, short/ long, near/far, small/smaller, big/biggest. To teach a child to compare objects, we need two and sometimes three objects or pictures of the same thing to compare (to find sameness) and to contrast (to find difference); for example, three circles (one bigger than the next) or three lines (each wider than the next).

First teach the child to imitate or say the words---“small,” “smaller,” “big,” “bigger,” “wide,” “narrow.” Work on only a few sets at a time, though. Then hold up one of the objects or pictures in a set; for example, a picture of a small circle. Wait until the child is looking and tell him, “SMALL. SMALL. This is SMALL. What is this?” If the child says “Small,” quickly reward him. Repeat this a few more times.

If the child does not answer “Small” the first time, prompt by saying, “SMALL. This is SMALL. What is this? ... SMALL.” And reward him if he imitates the prompt. Then slowly fade out the prompt.

It is also a good idea to have the child point to the picture or object that you are having him describe. “SMALL. This one is SMALL. You POINT to it.... That’s right. SMALL. What is this?”

When the child is using the right word to describe the first object or picture in a set, add the second one in the same set to compare/contrast it with­--a picture of a big circle. Teach it in the same way as the first one: (1) make sure he says or imitates “Big”; (2) hold up or point to the object or picture; (3) tell him what word to use to describe it (“BIG. This one is BIG”) and ask him to describe it (“What is this?”); (4) reward if he describes it by himself; (5) prompt, if necessary, to use the right word (“What is this? ... BIG”); and (6) fade out the prompt when he begins to answer more by himself.

When the child is describing the second object or picture in the set, start *switching* between the two. First hold up the big one, then the small one, and so on. Also have the child point to them. For example, put the two on the table and say, “Point to the BIG circle.” Reward if he does it right; prompt by hand if he starts to do it wrong. Then move the pictures or objects around and have him point again. When he points to one of the set, teach him to point to the other (“Point to the SMALL circle”). Then move the pictures around again.

Move on to another set (wide/narrow; short/long) when the child describes and identifies objects in the first (small/big) set. Remember to practice the first set a little each session. Also, have the child describe and point to big and small, wide and narrow things in other places; for instance, big and small chairs, balls, and windows; wide and narrow streets, belts, and pieces of paper.

When the child has learned a set of two (such as big/small), you can add words that end with “est” and “er.” For example, you can teach her to compare the big circle she learned first with an even bigger one, or to compare the narrow line she learned first with lines that are narrowest.

Use the same method you used above: (1) teach her to imitate the words; (2) show her a picture or object to be described; (3) tell her the word to use (“This one is BIG. And this one is BIGG**EST**”); (4) pull back one of them and have her describe the one that is left (“What is this?”); (5) reward if she answers correctly and prompt if she does not (“What is this? ... BIGGEST”); and (6) slowly fade out the prompts. Have her go back and forth between describing and pointing to the two different objects or pictures.

Action Words (Identifying and Describing What Is Happening)

So far, we have talked about teaching a child to identify and describe things by name, color, shape, and size. We can also identify and describe what is happening around us. Action words, such as “running,” “sitting,” “jumping,” and “raining,” tell what is happening.

We teach action words the same way we teach other kinds of words.   
1. Make a list of action words to teach. Start with actions the child can see and hear often; for example, “sitting,” “eating,” “cooking,” “banging,” “washing,” “sleeping,” “ringing,” “walking,” “running,” “jumping,” “dressing,” “laughing.” Work on only a few action words at a time.   
 Get pictures that show people and animals doing the actions you picked. It is best to have *two or three pictures showing the same action*. You can find good pictures in children’s books and magazines. Also use toys and other objects that make noises the child can describe; for instance, the telephone, a bell, or a hammer.  
2. Next, practice imitating or saying the few action words you picked.  
3. Now teach her to identify and describe with an action word. Hold up a picture; for example, a picture of a girl running. When the child is looking at the picture, say, “The girl is RUNNING. RUNNING. The girl is RUNNING. What is the girl DOING?” Wait 2 seconds. If the child says “Running,” quickly reward: tag-treat-verify. If she does not say “Running,” wait a few seconds and repeat the question, “The girl is RUNNING. What is the girl DOING?” Then prompt by giving all or part of the answer; for example, “What is the girl DOING? ... RUNNING (or RUUUUUNN ... ).” Reward if she imitates the prompt.  
3. Repeat a few more times. Slowly fade out the prompt until the child answers “Running” when you hold up the picture and ask, “What is the girl DOING?” If she keeps having trouble answering without the prompt, have her just imitate the word “running” a few more times---to build momentum with that word. Then go back to asking the question. When the child gives the right answer to the first picture three times in a row without a prompt, start on the second picture. Make sure the second action picture looks *very different* from the first. When the child gives the right answer to the second picture three times in a row, start switching back and forth between the two pictures. Only do this a few more times or else it will get real boring!  
4. Next, teach the child to *identify* the right picture by the action word you use. Hold up one of the pictures; tell what it is (“The girl is RUNNING”) or have her tell what the girl is doing; and put it on the table in front of her. Then have her point to it: “Point to the girl is RUNNING.” Reward doing this correctly. Then hold up the second picture; tell what the girl is doing (“The girl is SLEEPING”) or have her tell what the girl is doing; and lay it on the table next to the first one. Have her point to the second picture: “Point to the girl who is SLEEPING.” Again, reward correct pointing.  
5. Have the child point to the same picture a few times in a row. Then switch between the two. Prompt (if she needs it) by moving her hand to the right picture or by pointing to the right one. Have her point again (by herself) the next time after you prompt her.   
 Occasionally move the pictures around on the table. When the child identifies and describes pictures with two action words, add other pictures that show the *same* actions; for instance, pictures of girls running and jumping, dogs running and jumping. It is important to have the child describe and identify real actions and sounds. Have her point to other children who are jumping, and have her tell you what they are doing. Have her run and jump on request (“Nancy, let’s see you JUMP ... VERY GOOD ... Now let’s see you RUN”). Prompt her to do the right action, and have her tell you what she just did. “What were you DOING?”  
 Then add a few new action words to work on. Be sure to give the child practice on the earlier ones. And use every chance to have her identify and describe what is going on around her with the action words. “What do you HEAR? ... A BELL.”  
6. Remember to work on identifying and describing at other places besides the table. Go for walks around the house or school. Have her point to and name what she sees and hears. When she learns color names, have her point to and name objects of different colors. Have her point to big objects and small objects. And have her tell you what people are doing. Caution.   
 Don’t ask questions so often that it is like badgering the child.   
 Spread it out. Mix up (1) asking the child questions and (2) YOU pointing out, naming, and describing what you see and hear.

The next section has to do with another and very important kind of Functional Speech---answering simple questions.

**FS4. ANSWERING SIMPLE QUESTIONS.**

So far, you have taught the child to answer questions like “What is this?”; “What color is this?”; or “What is the boy doing?” The reason that he could answer these questions was that he could see or hear the answer; for instance, the picture you were holding up. Now let’s teach him to answer questions when the answers are not so plain to see; for instance, questions like:

What is your name?   
How do you feel?  
How old are you?

We’ll use the same method as when we taught the child names.   
1. Practice imitating or saying the words in the answer.   
3. Then, tell the answer to the question you are going to ask; for instance, ‘‘Your NAME is STEVEN. STEVEN is your NAME. STEVEN. Your name is STEVEN.”   
3. Point to him and prompt him to point to himself while you are saying this. Then ask the question, “What is your NAME?”   
4. Wait a few seconds. If he answers “Steven” or comes close, tag-reinforce- verify. “Yes! Your name is STEVEN!”   
5. If he does not answer or gives the wrong answer (for instance, he just repeats “NAME”), wait about 5 seconds and repeat the question. But this time, prompt before he gets a chance to give the wrong answer. Prompt by telling him all or part of the answer: “What is your NAME? ... STEVEN (or STEE) .” If he imitates all or part of the prompt, reward.  
6. Ask the same question a few more times, and then go on to another task for a few minutes. Then come back and work on the same question a few more times. Slowly fade out the prompt by saying “Steven” more softly, by waiting longer before you give the prompt, or by saying less of the prompt. Give big reward---treats, hugs, praise---when he answers with less of a prompt.

When the child answers the first question a few times in a row without prompting, start on a second question, such as “How old are you?”; “Where do you live?”; or “How do you feel?” Work on the second question the same way as the first. When he answers the second question a few times in a row, take a break. When you come back, switch between the different questions. Later, practice a few times a day on earlier questions. Also, have other people ask questions you have worked on.

Again, don’t ask questions one after another after another.  
 Anyone would feel like saying, “Hey, back off, Ma! Gimme a break.”

The next section is on saying “Hello” and “Goodbye.” You can work on these new words at the same time you work on answering simple questions.

**FS5. SAYING “HELLO” AND “GOODBYE.”**

Saying “Hello” and “Goodbye” is important social behavior. When the child imitates “Hello,” “Goodbye,” “Hi,” or “Bye,” teach her to use these words at the right time and place. We can do this using natural consequences.

Greeting People

One way to teach the child to greet people with “Hello” or “Hi” is for you to stand by the front door of the home or classroom before the child enters. If she comes to the door and does not say anything, greet her by saying, “Hello (or “Hi”), Nancy.” Wait a few seconds for her to return or repeat your greeting. If she does, praise her, tell her how glad you are to see her, and let her in the door. If she does not return or repeat your greeting, prompt by saying, “I said ‘HELLO.’ Now YOU say ‘HELLO.’” If she imitates all or part of the prompt, praise and verify (“Yes, Hello!”) and let her in the door. If she can imitate or say “Hello” or “Hi’ pretty well, do not let her in the door until she tries to return or imitate your greeting.

Repeat this routine whenever it is natural for the child to greet you. When she learns to return (or imitate) your greeting, teach her to greet you on her own (without a prompt). Wait by the door as before. When she comes to the door, wait to see if she will greet you. If she does, praise and verify (“Yes, Hi!”) and let her in. If not, say, “What do you say?” If she does not answer by saying “Hello” or “Hi,” prompt by saying “HELLO” or “HI.’’ Let her in when she imitates the prompt. As the days go by, fade the prompt (“What do you say? ... HELLO”) to a whisper, and still later, all the way out.

After about a week, use positive practice. If the child comes to the door and does not greet you on her own or return your greeting, have her back up about ten steps and come to the door again, so that her signal for greeting you is seeing you, and not your prompt.

Once the child is pretty regular about greeting you on her own, teach her to say “Hello” or “Hi” to others when she enters their house or room. While the child is coming to the door, coach her to say “Hello.” For example, tell her, “When you see Mrs. Rogers, say ‘HELLO.’” As the child walks in the door, prompt her again, if she needs it, by telling her, “What do you say?” or “Say ‘HELLO.’” Reward if she says “Hello.’’ If she does not say “Hello,” have the other person in the room greet the child---“Hello, Nancy.” Prompt the child to repeat the greeting, and reward when he does.

Use positive practice to teach the child to greet others more on her own. Have her back up and come into the room again, until she greets the other person with less prompting from you. Finally, teach the child to greet people who come into the room where she is. For instance, if she is sitting in a chair and someone comes into the room and walks over to her, prompt the child to say “Hello” or “Hi.” At first, it is enough if she imitates your prompt. Slowly fade out the prompt by giving less and less of it ( “HEL’’) and by whispering it.

Saying “Goodbye”

As the child gets better at saying “Hello,” start teaching her to say “Goodbye” or “Bye-bye.” When it is time to leave a place, prompt her to say “Goodbye” and to wave “Bye-bye.” As soon as she imitates your prompt, let her out the door and reward. After many tries, start fading out your prompts. Instead of telling her, “SAY ‘GOODBYE,’” prompt by saying “What do you say when you leave?” or by whispering “Goodbye.” Start making sure she leaves the room only when she says “Goodbye” a little more on her own.

Also teach her to say “Goodbye” when people are leaving the room she is in. Prompt by saying, “What do you say when people **leave**? You say ‘GOODBYE.’” Reward for imitating your prompt. Also reward imitating other people when they wave or tell her “Goodbye.” Slowly fade out your prompts, and reward when she says or waves “Goodbye” more on her own.

So far, the child has been using one or two words to name, ask for, and describe things, to answer questions, and to say “Hello” and “Good­ bye.” The next section tells how to expand his use of one word into phrases and sentences.

**FS6. PHRASES AND SIMPLE SENTENCES.**

So far, we have talked about five kinds of Functional Speech: naming, asking, identifying and describing, answering simple questions, and saying “Hello” and “Goodbye.” In each, the child learned to say only one word. For example, he answers the question “What is this?” with “Block.” And he asks for a cookie with “Cookie.” Sometimes, one word is enough. If a person asks how we feel, you can say, “Fine,” But sometimes one word does not tell enough. If a child comes to you and says, “Car,” what does she mean? Does she want a ride? Does she want to play with her toy car? Is she telling you that she saw or heard a car? The child needs more than one word to tell what he means. She needs a phrase or sentence: “See car” or “I see a car.”

When the child is using words in any of the five ways we have worked on, teach him to say them in phrases and simple sentences. For example, when he names things with one word, start teaching him to name the same things (and new things) in a phrase or simple sentence. Instead of saying “Block,” teach him to say, “That’s a block.” Instead of “Sandwich,” teach him to say, “I want a (“Wanna”) sandwich” or “Give me (“Gimme”) a sandwich.” Instead of “Dog,” teach him to describe with “See dog” or “I see (a) dog.” Words like “wanna” and “gimme” are not “good” English, but are a start, and are better than not talking at all. Besides, “Gimme” and “Wanna” are easier to say than “I want a” and “Give me.” Do not wait for the child to say a phrase or sentence perfectly. Reward coming close. In fact, *it is a good idea to teach him to say “I wanna” and “Gimme” at first*. It is more important for the child to use what he can say than to say everything perfectly. Later, you can use tag-reinforce to shape saying phrases and sentences better and better.

Phrases and Sentences to Start With

Start with phrases and simple sentences with words the child already uses or at least imitates, and that the child can use often. Here are good ones for starters.

I want (Wanna) \_\_\_\_\_ . Give (Gimme) me\_\_\_\_\_. That’s a \_\_\_\_\_\_.   
 It’s a \_\_\_\_ . This (is) a \_\_\_\_\_. I want to (Wanna) go \_\_\_\_\_.  
 I see a \_\_\_\_\_. I see a \_\_\_\_\_ and a (an a) \_\_\_\_\_ and a (an a) \_\_\_\_.

Basic Method for Teaching Phrases and Simple Sentences

1. Make a list of phrases and sentences to start with. Pick one or two of the different kinds; for example, the “I want…” or “I wanna…” sentence and “That’s a…” sentence. Also list words the child will use to fill in the sentences. Your list might look like this.

I wanna (eat, go out, cookie, play, ride).

That’s a (dog, horse, cookie, car, tree, cup, block).

*Start with words the child already uses.*  
2. Next, make sure the child imitates the phrase or sentence, or can imitate all the words in it. See the book on Verbal Imitation for how to teach a child to imitate phases and sentences. Use the phrase or sentence for a few days or a week during sessions to practice imitating the words. For instance, practice saying the words by themselves: “eat,” “ride,” “that’s,” “wanna,” “dog.” Also practice putting the words into phrases and sentences: “Wanna eat,” “Wanna ride,” “That’s a dog.”  
 When the child imitates a phrase or simple sentence fairly well, start *teaching him to use it*. *Do not wait until he imitates it perfectly!*  
3. A good way to teach using phrases and simple sentences is to shape them backwards. At first it is enough if he says just the last word in the sentence. Later, he says the last two words. Still later, he says the last three, and so on. For example, at first it is enough if he answers the question, “What do you want?” by saying “Out.” Slowly, shape answering by saying, “Go out,” “Wanna go out,” and “I wanna go out,” by tag-reinforce-verify improved speech. This may take a few weeks. Tag-reinforce saying a little more of the phrase or sentence.

4. Here is how to teach common phrases and simple sentences.

Asking for Things. “I want ...,” “I wanna ...,” or “Gimme a ...”

When teaching a phrase or sentence to ask for something,   
a. Make sure that the child sees or is near what to ask for.   
b. When she is looking at it, tell her (model) how to ask a few times. For example, say, “I WANNA COOKIE,” and maybe eat the cookie yourself to show that after you ask for a cookie you can eat one. Praise and give her the cookie if she imitates all or part of “I WANNA COOKIE.”  
c. If she does not imitate what you just said, say, “ASK me for cookie” or “TELL ME what you want,” and then quickly prompt by saying, “I WANNA COOKIE.” Quickly reward if she imitates all or most of the prompt.

Parent or Teacher Child

”What do you want? ... Imitates “Wanna cookie” or “I wanna cookie.”  
I wanna COOKIE.”

Do not reward if she just imitates “Cookie.” She already knows how to ask with one word. Now she has to at least say, “Wanna cookie.” So, if she just says “Cookie,” say something like, “That was close,” wait a few seconds, and tell her, “Say, ‘WANNA COOKIE.’” If she now imitates “Wanna cookie,” reward—tag-treat-verify.

d. Many times during the day, have the child ask for what he wants (eat, ride, out, play) by at least saying “Wanna .” When he is pretty good at saying “Wanna…” teach him to add the “I.” All you have to do is to  
 (1) Have him imitate “I” a few times to get rolling.   
 (2) Then, the next time he asks by saying, “Wanna (ride),” tell him, “Yes, wanna ride. Say, ‘I WANNA (ride).’” Reward if he comes close to adding “I” to the sentence.   
 (3) Repeat often during the day. If possible, do this at meals or snack time, when the child has lots of chances to use the phrase or sentence.   
e. As he starts to imitate the prompt (‘Wanna COOKIE” or “I wanna COOKIE”), start fading out the prompt. Just say, “What do you want?” and wait longer until you give the prompt, say less of the prompt (“I WAAA”), and say the prompt in a whisper.

f. When the child is answering the question, “What do you want?” with the phrase or sentence “Wanna” “I wanna ,” *start fading out the question*. This is to teach him to ask with phrases or sentences on his own. Fade out the question by whispering it or by saying less of it (“What....?”) .

e. Use another child as a model for asking with phrases and sentences. Have the model child come to you and the first child. Then have the model child use a phrase or sentence to ask for something the first child wants. Reward him. If the child imitates what the model child said, reward him, too. Slowly fade out using the model child. At first, reward the child if he only says “Wanna” on his own. Later, shape saying “I wanna” on his own. That is, *reinforce only when he says a little more on his own*. Prompt a little more if he needs it.

Now let’s teach a child to describe using phrases and sentences.

Naming and Describing. “I see ...” or “That’s a ...”

When the child uses “I wanna,” “Gimme,” or “I want a” sentences to ask for many things, start teaching him to name and describe things with “That’s a…” and “I see…” sentences.

We can use the same method as with “I wanna” sentences.   
a. Hold up an object.   
b. When the child is looking at it, tell him what it is called; for example, “That’s a BALL.” Then ask the question, “What is **that**?” Wait a few seconds. If he answers, “That’s a ball” or “A ball,” quickly tag-reinforce-verify. If he does not answer, or only says “Ball,” prompt again by saying, “That’s a BALL,” and reward if he imitates more of the prompt.  
c. Repeat a few times with the same object. Slowly fade the prompt (“That’s a BALL”) until he answers the question “What is that?” with the sentence, “That’s a ball.”   
d. Once he is using the basic sentence (“That’s a…”), have him use it with other objects and in many places; for example, “That’s a (car, tree, dog).”   
e. If the child keeps having trouble saying the whole phrase or sentence, give more practice imitating the words he is leaving out, such as “That’s,” “I,” or “Want.” Also, when he starts to say a phrase or sentence, *chorus it along with him* to help him say what he has been leaving out. You might prompt him by moving his mouth into the right position for the word he has been leaving out.

Using “And”

When the child names or describes some things he sees, hears, smells, or touches using a simple sentence (“I see a dog” or “That’s a dog” “Hear a truck”), teach him to say “and” to name and describe more than one thing.

a. Teach him to imitate “and” and “and a.”   
b. Then put a few objects he can already name in front of him on the table. Have him name each one while you point to it. Go through this a few times, with the child naming the objects as you point to them.   
c. Next, prompt the child to say, “and a” between each two objects he names. For example, after you point to the dog and he says “Dog,” prompt him to say, “and a” *as* you point to the second object and have him name it. When he does, prompt him to say “and a” before you point to the third object.  
 At first, prompt the child to say “and a” by having him imitate this. In other words, you say “AND A,” and he imitates the words. Later, say less of the prompt (“AAN”) and start whispering it. Keep moving the objects around and adding new ones.  
d. The next step is to teach the child to use “and a” to describe things without you pointing to them. Show the objects on the table; for instance, people, dogs, and furniture in a toy house, or pieces of a toy farm set. Say the name of each piece and have him repeat each name. Then say, “What is in the farm?” or “Tell me what you see.” If he does not name any of the objects, point to one and name it. When he repeats the name, reward and prompt him to say “and a” by whispering it. When he says “and a,” point to another object for him to name.

Here is what it might look like.

Parent: Says, “Tell me what you SEE.” Prompts child to say, “I SEE. ...” Parent points to one of the objects (dog).

Child: Says, “I see (Parent points) dog.” Says “Good” and whispers “and a....” Child says “and a....”

Parent: Points to another object (house).

Child: Says “House.”

As the days go by, have the child say longer strings of names, and fade out your prompts---pointing to the next object, whispering “and a.”

Keeping Track of the Child’s Progress on Phrases and Sentences

Write down phrases or sentences you are working on in the column for that week on your Functional Speech Table. When the child starts to use (not just imitate) a phrase or sentence without prompts, write it down. This means that she is using the phrase or sentence to name, ask for, or describe things.

The next section is on teaching the child to identify and describe the difference between one and more than one object.

**FS7. IDENTIFIES AND DESCRIBES ONE AND MORE THAN ONE.**

The end of a word usually tells whether we are talking about one thing (“cup”) or more than one thing (“cups”). But there are three different endings: (1) ssss (“cups”); (2) zzz (“cubs”); and (3) ez (“glasses”). All three endings (a, z, and ez) “mean” the same thing---“more than one.”

How do you know which ending to tack onto a word? It depends on the sound at the end of the word. Here are some rules that apply most of the time. Check the book on Verbal Imitation to help you remember how the sounds are made.

IF A WORD ENDS WITH THE P, T, K, F, OR TH SOUND, TACK ON THE SSSS SOUND TO MAKE THE WORD MEAN “MORE THAN ONE.”

Examples are cup/ cups, cat/ cats, block/blocks, cliff/ cliffs, faith/faiths.

IF A WORD ENDS WITH THE CONSONANT SOUND B, D, G, V, M, N, NG, R, L, W, Y, OR H, OR WITH ONE OF MANY OF THE VOWEL SOUNDS, LIKE Ee, U, Iy, Uh, Oh, Ay, OR Aw, TACK ON A ZZZZ SOUND TO MAKE IT MEAN “MORE THAN ONE.”

Examples are tub/tubs (tubZ), bud/buds, dog/dogs, glove/gloves, ham/hams, pan/pans, fang/fangs, ear/ears, bell/bells, cow/cows, high/highs, tree/trees, shoe/shoes, pie/pies, soda/sodas, saw/saws, tray/trays.

IF A WORD ENDS WITH THE S, Z, SH, ZH, CH, OR J SOUND, TACK ON AN EZ SOUND TO MAKE IT MEAN “MORE THAN ONE.”

Examples are glass/glasses (glassEZ), nose/noses, flash/ flashes, watch/ watches, judge/judges.

When a child names, asks for, describes, and identifies some single objects well, it is time to teach him to understand and use plural words (words ending in sss, zzz, and ez). Teach the child to use the right ending, depending on whether he is talking about one or more objects (cup/ cups) and depending on the ending of the word (which tells him whether to add sss, zzz, or ez). Also, the child should learn to identify whether you are talking about a single object or more than one object according to the endings that *you put* on the words you say (“Point to the cup”/”Point to the cups”). Here are some steps to follow.

1. Make a list of words. Write each word as it is used with single objects and with more than one object. Start with common words the child already understands and uses to name, ask for, identify, and describe. Make sure to have words with the three different endings on your list. For example:

SSS Endings ZZZ Endings EZ Endings

cup/cups tub/tubs face/faces   
cap/caps dog/dogs nose/noses   
cat/cats pie/pies rose/roses  
hat/hats bell/bells match/ matches   
plate/plates tree/trees watch/ watches   
block/blocks pan/pans glass/ glasses   
sock/socks can/cans dish/ dishes

Along with your list, you need pairs of objects and pictures (for example, a few cups, blocks, pictures of trees, faces, a few nails).

2. Give the child practice imitating the names, naming the objects, and saying the S, Z, and EZ sounds. For instance, work on the S and Z sounds with him; have him imitate the words “shoe” and “shoes,” “cat” and “cats”; and have him name the picture of a cat and of a shoe. Make sure the child looks at and points to things on request. He does not have to identify the correct one---just point to something when you tell him to.

3. Start with one set of pictures or objects. Put a picture of a single object on one side of the table in front of the child and a picture of a pair of the same objects on the other side. For instance, put a picture of one cat on the left and a picture of a pair of the same two cats on the right. When the child is sitting quietly and looking at the pictures, point to each one and name it. “This is a CAT. **These** are CATSSS.” Then say, “Point to the CAT.” If necessary, prompt him by moving his hand all or part of the way, or by pointing to the right picture. Tag-treat- verify (“Yes. CAT.”) when he points to the right picture more on his own.

4. When the child has pointed to the single one (the cat) a few times in a row without prompting, tell him, “Now point to the CATSSS.” and stress the S sound in “CATSSS.” Again, prompt if he needs it (before he points to the wrong one), and tag-reinforce-verify for correctly pointing on his own.

When he has pointed to the picture of the pair of cats a few times in a row without a prompt, switch between the two pictures, and move the pictures around the table. This way, he learns to point by what he sees and by the name, and not by where the pictures are on the table.

When the child goes back and forth between the two pictures and points correctly without a prompt a few times in a row, it is time for the next step.

5. So far, the child is identifying pictures according to the ending you put on the word. He points to one of the pictures when you say “CAT,” and to the other picture when you say “CATS.” But can he describe the pictures---tell their features? Teach the child to describe them in the same way as you taught him to name or describe anything else.

a. Make sure that he says the names (“CAT,” “CATS”). Then hold up one of the pictures and ask, “What is this?” or “What do you see?” Wait a few seconds. If he answers correctly on his own, tag-reinforce-verify. If he does not answer in a few seconds, prompt by saying, “What do you see? (2 seconds) CATS.” (Stress the S sound.) Reward imitating your prompt. Repeat a few times, until he answers “Cats” without a prompt when you say, “What do you see?” Then start on the other picture. Hold it up. When he is looking at it, ask, “What do you see? ... CAT.” Reward for imitating “Cat.” Repeat several times and fade out the prompt until he answers the question by himself.  
b. When he describes or names each picture, switch back and forth between the two and have him name them. Start on the next set (for example, plate/plates) when he goes back and forth between the first two and names them correctly several times without a prompt.  
  
*Remember to work on all three endings.* After you have worked on a few of the S endings (cat/cats, plate/ plates),   
a. Work on a few of the Z endings (dog/ dogs, tree/ trees) and then a few of the EZ endings (glass/ glasses, nose/noses).   
b. Also, go back and forth between having the child i*dentify* (point to) the pictures or objects and *name* or *describe* them.   
c. Finally, have the child name and identify one and more than one object in other places and with other people. Have him tell you when he sees one car and when he sees cars; have him point to one rock and to rocks, to one boy and to boys.

The next section is on prepositions. Make sure that the child names, describes, and identifies many things before you work very much on prepositions.

**FS8. PREPOSITIONS, SUCH AS ON, IN, UNDER.**

Prepositions are words like “on,” “in,” “under,” “over,” and “next to.” The idea is to teach a child to use prepositions to *tell* where objects are and to *move and place* objects the way you tell her. “Put the book UNDER the table.” For this we need *small* objects that the child *uses*, like blocks, toys, spoon, comb, toothbrush, and a box.

When the child is looking, show her how to move the objects around. For instance, 1. Put a block in the box several times and then on the box several times.  
2. Tell what you are doing. “Put IN the box.”  
3. When the block is placed, tell where it is. “IN the box. IN…IN… Now ON the box…ON…ON.”  
3. Also prompt the child to move the objects around, and tell her where she is moving them: ‘‘You put the block IN the box. Yes, IN the box!” If she imitates what you say, reinforce and verify. “Yes, *put* IN the box.”

Then pick one preposition; for instance, “on.” Put the block on the box a few more times, while saying, “ON the box.” Then hand the block to the child and tell her, “Put the block ON the box.” Wait a few seconds. If she puts it on the box, tag-treat-verify. If she does not, prompt by taking her hand and putting the block on the box, as you say ON. Repeat several times. Slowly fade out your prompts until she puts the block on the box by herself when you tell her to.

4. Once she does this correctly several times in a row (not too many times!), start on another preposition. It might be a good to *use different objects at first to teach different prepositions*. Instead of using the block and box to teach both “on” and “under,” use a book and table to teach “under.” Teach “under” in the same way you taught “on.” Show the child what “under” means by putting the book under the table while she is watching, and say, “UNDER. The book is UNDER the table,” as you put it under. Then tell her, “Put the book UNDER the table WITH me.” Prompt if needed. Finally, say, “YOU put the book UNDER the table.” and big reinforcement and verification for doing it more on her own.

5. When the child moves objects according to two prepositions, *use different objects for the same two prepositions*. For instance, have him put blocks, forks, paper, pencils, balls, and books on and under the table, boxes, chairs, bed, and so on. Then start working on a third preposition. After he learns to move objects according to a few prepositions, teach him to *say* prepositions to describe where objects are. For example, have him put the block in the box. Then say, “The block is IN the box,” several times. Reward if he imitates “in.” Then say, “WHERE is the block?” Wait 2 seconds. If he says “In” or “In the box,” quickly verify and reward. If he does not say “In” or “In the box,” prompt by saying, “IN the box.” Reward and verify for imitating you. Do this several times. Slowly fade out the prompt until he answers “In” or “In the box” by himself.

6. Then start working on another preposition, using different objects. For example, have the child say, “NEXT TO the table,” to describe where the book is. Each time she learns to say a new preposition, start working on another one. *Review them all during sessions and in ordinary places and activities*. “Fork IN the drawer.” “Pillow ON the bed.” Make sure to have her use prepositions to describe where many different kinds of things are; for example, “The car is IN the garage,” “The chair is ON the floor,” “The shoe is UNDER the chair.”

The next skill to work on is using pronouns. Before you work on it, the child should be imitating and using a few simple phrases and sentences to describe things.

**FS9. PRONOUNS, SUCH AS I, YOU, HE, SHE, WE.**

Pronouns are words like “I,” “me,” “you,” “he,” “she,” “we,” and “it.” Teach a child to use pronouns to answer questions (“Who is Betty?” “I am” or “How are you?” “I am fine”). And teach her to use pronouns to describe things (“What is the dog DOing?” “IT is RUNning,” or “What are WE DOing?” “WE are SITting”). You can see that the child must already use some words and phrases to describe things---walking, running, sitting, pointing, and so on.

1. Pick a few pronouns to teach the child, for example, “I” and “me.”

2. Then make a short list of sentences she can use these pronouns in; for instance, “I am eating, “I am sitting,” “Give (it to) me.” Use words she already says.   
  
3. Before you start, have her imitate the words you are going to teach her to use in a phrase or sentence. In other words, make sure she imitates her name, “I,” and “me,” as well as other words like “running,” “eating” or “eat,””cookie,” and “sitting.”

Teaching “I.”

“I” is another way for the child to say her own name.   
a. Start some activity with the child, like walking, sitting, or eating. Then tell her, “Nancy (point to the child) is eating. What are YOU (point), Nancy (say her name softly) doing? Say, ‘I (help child to point to herself) I…I…am eating.’”   
b. Wait a few seconds. If she says, “I am eating” or “I ... eating,” tag-reinforce- verify. Try to have her point to herself as she answers. If all she says is “Eating,” or if she does not say anything, ask her “What are you (point-touch) Nancy (softly) doing? Say, ‘I (help her point to herself) am eating.’” Then, if she imitates “I” or “I am eating,” tag-reinforce-verify.

If she still does not say “I” or “I am eating,” prompt her to imitate “I” or “I am eating.” Keep working on imitations of “I” and “I am eating.” Then go back to the question, “What are YOU (point to her) doing? ... I AM EATING.” And prompt her to point to herself and say, “I am eating.” Slowly fade out your prompt until she answers, “I am eating,” or, at least, “I ... eating,” by herself when you say, “What are **you** doing?”  
c. Begin to teach her to use the “I am” sentence to describe other things she is doing; for example, “I am sitting,” “I am pointing,” “I am walking.” When she is easily using “I am….” for several activities, start teaching “It” sentences.

Teaching “It.”

a. Show the child objects or activities that he can describe using “it.” For example, show a picture of a dog and say, “The dog is running. IT is running. IT is running. What is the dog DOING?” Wait a few seconds. If he says, “It is running,” big reinforcement and verification. “Yes, IT is running!”   
 If he says “Running,” tell him, “Yes, IT is running,” and have him imitate “IT” a few times. Then repeat the whole thing: “What is the dog DOING?... IT IS RUNNING.” Prompt him to imitate the word “it.” When he imitates “it,” prompt him to finish the sentence “It is running.” Then reward.  
b. Keep working on this sentence several times (maybe over several days) until he answers “It is running” (or at least “It ... running”) without a prompt. Then teach him to use the “It is……” sentence to describe other objects or activities; for example, “IT is sitting,” “IT is eating,” “IT is walking.” Go back and forth between the different objects or activities to make sure he uses the correct word in the sentence (“eating,” “sitting,” “walking,” “running”).  
c. When he uses both “I” and “It” sentences well, start on a new pronoun.  
d. To teach the child to use the pronouns “he,” “she,” and “they,” use pictures of **people** doing things. Use pictures of boys and men to teach the pronoun “he,” pictures of girls and women to teach “she,” and pictures of many people to teach “they.” Have her use the sentences “He is,” “She is,” and “They are” to describe what she sees in the pictures. Also, have her use those phrases to describe things happening in and outside of the house or school. Make sure that you go back and forth between pictures and activities for “he,” “she,” and “they.” And keep giving her practice on “it” and “I.”

One of the hardest pronouns to learn is “you,” because when you ask the child the question “What am I doing?” his answer is “YOU are…..” At first, this will mix her up, so prompt her. For example, have her point to you and say “You” several times. Then have her point to herself while she says “I.” Later, reverse this by pointing to yourself while saying “I,” and pointing to her while saying “You.”Then point to yourself and say, “Who am I?” Quickly take her hand and point it to you. Prompt her say, ‘‘YOU are (Daddy, Mommy, Mrs. Webster).” Repeat this several times to show her that when you point to yourself you say “I,” and when you point to someone else you say ‘‘You.”  
 It is all right if she does not learn to say ‘‘You” correctly right away. Just make sure to give her many chances to say “I am…..” to describe her behavior, and “You are….,” “He is …..,” “She is….,” and “They are….” to describe what other people are doing.

After the child learns to use a few pronouns you can start working on the next section, using opposites.

**FS10. OPPOSITES**

Opposites are words like “yes” and “no,” or answers to questions like, “Daddy is a MAN; Mommy is a….” Opposites are harder to learn than naming or describing things. Using opposites means that the child can really tell the difference between things. So do not expect him to learn opposites all at once. A little at a time is fine.  
1. First, make sure the child names or describes the objects you want him to learn the difference between. For example, make sure he says “dresser” when you say, “What is this?” and “red” when you say, “What color is this?” Also make sure that he says words like “yes” and “no.”   
  
2. Then have him name the objects a few times: “This is a table ... What is this?”... *table* Then ask, “Is this a TABLE?” … *Yes.* If needed, prompt him to imitate “Yes.” And reward and verify (“Yes, table!”) for imitating your prompt. Repeat the question several times and prompt him to say “Yes.” Slowly fade out your prompt by saying “YES” in a softer voice, by waiting longer before you say “YES,” and by saying only part of “YES” (“YE”).  
3. Have him answer the “Is this…?” question with other objects. For example, “Is that a spoon?” “Is that a BED?” “Is that a BOOK?”   
  
4. When he says ‘‘Yes” correctly to many questions, start teaching him to answer “No.” Use the objects he can already name, like table, bed, or book. Have him name the object a few times; for example, “TABLE.” Then ask him, “Is this a BED? ... NO!” Prompt him to imitate “No.” Repeat this several times until he answers “No” correctly on his own. Do the same thing with other objects.  
5. Once he says “No” and “Yes,” go back and forth between different objects; for example, “Is this a TABLE?” ...... “Yes”; “Is this a CHAIR?” ...... “No”; “Is this a BOOK?” ...... “Yes.”

6. Next, you can teach him to answer *questions with opposites in them;* for example, “Fire is HOT and ice is COLD.” You do not have to work on this full time. Just give the child some practice every few days.a. First make sure that he knows the right answer. For example, tell him “Ice is COLD,” and let him feel some ice. And make sure he knows that the right word to describe fire is “HOT.” Then ask him the question, “Ice is cold and fire is ...?” If he answers “Hot,” tag-reinforce-verify. “Yes, fire is HOT!” If he does not answer “Hot,” repeat the question and prompt him a few times.

b. Spread around the words “hot” and “cold” by having him point to or touch other things that are hot and cold. Have him tell you which things are hot and which things are cold. Once he can do this with three or four hot and cold objects, start working on another pair of opposites, such as big/little,” up/down, or boy/girl. Use the same method as above.

The last kind of Functional Speech this chapter talks about is using “before” and “after.” Make sure that the child can already name and describe many objects before you work on the next section.

**FS11. WORDS ABOUT TIMES, SUCH AS FIRST AND NEXT**

This section will help you to teach the child how to understand and use some basic words about time; for instance, first and next. These are hard ideas to learn, so do not worry if it takes several weeks before the child even starts to use the words correctly. The method for teaching first and next, or first and second, or first and then is just about the same as the methods for teaching the other kinds of functional speech.

One way to teach first and (next, then, second) is to have the child perform a small chain of simple tasks with clear steps; for example, first touch (or pick up) a red block and next touch a blue block.   
1. While she is performing the tasks you just asked her to do, tell her what she is doing: “FIRST you are touching to the RED block.” Then ask/test, “What block are you touching FIRST?” If needed, prompt her to say, “First, red block.” Verify. “Yes, FIRST you are touching the RED block.” You could ask again to firm. “What block are you touching FIRST?” Verify. “Yes, touching red block first.”  
2. Then go to the blue block. “NEXT touch the BLUE block.” When she does, ask, “What block are you touching NEXT?” If needed, prompt her to say, “NEXT touch(ing) blue block.” Firm by asking (as you point to the blue block), “What block are you touching (or What block touch) next?” Verify with, “Yes, next touching BLUE block.”   
3. Repeat the same little sequence a few times. Use different objects so she generalizes first and next.  
4. You can teach first and (second, third, last) the same way. Just replace “next” with “second” or “third,” or “last.”

5. Make sure to generalize this behavior to other times, places, and activities, such as making a sandwich (“First we get bread…. Next, we get cheese….”), getting dressed, playing (“First we pick up the ball…. Then we throw the ball….”). This will help a child to learn chores and self-help skills, which we work on in the next book.

The last section is on handling special problems. Please read it carefully.

**HANDLING SPECIAL PROBLEMS**

If the child starts to pay less and less attention, becomes fussy, leaves the table, or makes the same errors over and over, go to Chapter Nineteen, Handling Common Difficulties of Teaching, in the book on Learning Readiness to find out what to do. Maybe the reward is not strong enough. Maybe the reward is being given too slowly. Maybe the child is sick of the same reward or bored with the task. Maybe she is being prompted too much or not enough. This section talks about a few special problems and what you can do about them. The problems are (1) the child does not use the speech she knows how to use (in other words, she does not say what she knows how to say); (2) the child parrots or echoes what she hears instead of using Functional Speech (answering questions, asking for things, and so forth); and (3) the child does not use her Functional Speech in many places and with many people. We evaluated these items earlier. Maybe things are different now.

**FS12. USES FUNCTIONAL SPEECH THAT SHE KNOWS HOW TO USE**

Sometimes, even though you have worked with the child on a certain kind of Functional Speech (for instance, asking for things) and he has learned it well, when it comes time to ask for things around the house or school, he does not. Instead, he waves his arms, points, takes you by the hand, or waits until you tell him what to say---even though you just taught him how to ask. There are a few things you can do to handle this.

First, if the child uses gestures a great deal (waving, pointing, hand signals), do not reward these gestures by doing what the child is pointing for you to do. If you have just taught the child how to ask to go outside, do not open the door if he points to the door for you to open it. Prompt him to ask you in the right way: “Don’t point. TELL me what you want.... Say, ‘OPEN THE DOOR’ (or ‘OUT’).” If the child imitates the prompt, reward him with praise, verify (“Yes, open the door!”), and by opening the door. As the days go by, prompt less and less, and open the door only when he asks more ON HIS OWN.

But do this only when the child has already learned enough Functional Speech that he can ask for what he wants (or at least try). Gestures are better than nothing; at least the child is not screaming and throwing tantrums to get what he wants. So, start not responding to gestures that the child no longer needs to use, because he has already learned how to say what he wants. *But you must reinforce every time the child USES functional speech!*

Second, give the child extra practice saying the right words during sessions, so that, when you start ignoring pointing and waving, he will be more likely to talk.

Third, use another child as a model. When a child starts pointing, waving, pushing, or pulling on you for something, have the model child come to you and say the right words (for example, “I wanna apple”). Praise the model child and give him an apple. If the first child imitates what the model said, reward him too. If he does not, prompt by saying, “Okay, Jimmy, it’s YOUR turn to ask. ASK for an APPLE.” If Jimmy now asks, even a little bit, reward him. If he still does not ask, tell him what to say: “ASK or an APPLE. ... Say, ‘I WANNA APPLE (or ‘AAAPLE’).” If the child imitates all or part of this prompt, reward him. As the days go by, hold out on the rewards until he asks more on his own or with less of a prompt.

Fourth, give the child many chances to use the speech he has learned. As soon as he can use a word, phrase, or sentence, have him use it at the right time and place to answer questions (“How are you?”), to name things (“What is this called?”), to describe things (“What is the boy doing?”), and to ask for things (“What do you want?”) . Use Grandma’s Law to teach him to use words like “go,” “come,” “ride,” “eat,” and “out” before you let him do these things. If you see him looking at something, have him describe what he sees (“What is the dog doing? . . . SITTING”); and when he answers (even if you have to prompt him), keep talking to him about it or let him go over to it or touch what he talked about.

In other words, make sure that his speech is followed by things he likes. He has to find out that his speech will have an effect on the behavior of other people, and that people will do things for him when he uses speech. Also, any time he uses speech on his own, be sure to reward him, and not just with food. Reward naturally by talking to him, showing how happy you are, letting him do what he wanted, or repeating what he said.

THE MORE CHANCES YOU GIVE A CHILD TO USE FUNCTIONAL SPEECH, AND THE MORE HE HAS TO USE FUNCTIONAL SPEECH, THE FASTER HE WILL LEARN AND THE MORE HE WILL TALK.

**FS13. USES SPEECH INSTEAD OF PARROTING**

Some children parrot or echo what you say instead of using speech in a functional way. If you ask the child, “What is your name?” she echoes, “What is your name?” or “Name,” instead of saying her name. Or if you ask, “What is this?” she parrots, “What is this?” Sometimes a child parrots so much that she memorizes television commercials, nursery rhymes, and songs. But, when it is time to answer a question, she just imitates the question; and when it is time to ask for something on her own, she either says nothing or says something that does not make much sense. For example, if the child drops her ice cream cone, instead of saying, “I dropped my ice cream cone” in a sad voice, she might say, “Judy hurt knee.” Why would a child say, “Judy hurt knee?” The answer might be that someone once said that to her when she fell and hurt her knee. So, she is parroting what she heard months ago, and is using it to talk about what is happening to now---feeling sad because she dropped her ice cream.

There are a few reasons why a child parrots instead of using speech in a functional way: (1) she has been accidentally rewarded for parroting; (2) she does not know what to say at certain times (for instance, she does not know how to say, “I feel sad because I dropped my ice cream”); or (3) she does not know when to use her speech in a functional way. Here are some ways to replace parroting with Functional Speech.

First, teach the child how to use his speech. In other words, teach him when it is his tum to say something in a conversation. One way to do this is to work on simple naming and describing tasks. Make sure that the child knows how to say the right words. Then ask, “What is this?” or “What do you see?” Tell him the answer before he gets a chance to imitate the question: “What is this? BALL.” Tag-treat-verify imitating “Ball.” If he starts to imitate the question, interrupt before he gets very far:

Parent or Teacher: “What is this?”

Child: “What is ...”

Parent or Teacher: “Say, BALL” (or “What is this? BALL”).

Then tag-treat-verify imitating “Yes, ball.” Make sure to use strong rewards. If the child can read, the job is even easier. You can use story books with pictures or other materials that let the child read the answer to questions. For example, show her a picture in a story book and talk about what you see. Then ask her a question: “What is the boy DOING?” and point to the lines to read to answer the question: “The boy is swimming.” When she reads the lines (and answers the question), tag-treat-verify. Work on the same story for a few days. Then ask the child the same questions, but now prompt her to answer without reading, by telling her part of the answer: “The boy is....” Reward finishing the answer: “Swimming.” Do this with many stories and other activities to teach the child how to answer questions.

Modeling is another way to teach the child how to use speech in a functional way. Have the first child and the model child sit with you during snack time. Have a few different snacks in small pieces on a plate in your lap. Turn to the first child and ask, “Do you want a cookie?” If he starts to imitate the question, have the model child answer, “Yes!” Then make a big show and reward the model child. If the first child imitates what the model child said (“Yes”), hug him and give him a cookie, too.

Repeat many times. The idea is to teach the child that parroting the question gets nothing, while answering the question is rewarded. After a while, do not reward the child for just imitating the model child’s answer. Reward only if he answers when it is his turn. If he imitates the question when it is his turn, have the model child answer and reward the model child. Then give the first child another chance to answer.

Use this method in different settings. Instead of working with snacks, use pictures and story books. As before, ask the children a question. If the child does not answer or imitates the question, have the model child say the right answer. Reward the model child, and then give the first child another chance to answer the same question.

It is also important to teach the child what to say at certain times and places. If he does not know what to say, he may parrot something he said or heard months or years ago. For example, if the child does not know how to say “Hello” when his Daddy comes home, instead of saying, “Hello, Daddy,” he may say, “Daddy’s car. Daddy’s car,” because that is what he heard someone say years ago when Pop drove up. So, if the child says things that do not make much sense at certain times, if he parrots certain things he said or heard months or years before, it is a good bet that he does not know the right thing to say at those times. So, teach him the right thing to say. This means spending time during sessions teaching him to say the right words and sentences. And it means prompting the child to use the right words and sentences when those certain times come up. For example, teach him how to say, “Hello, Daddy” during sessions. When his father comes home, prompt him to say or imitate, “Hello, Daddy” when his father walks in the door. And make sure his father gives him a big hug for this.

Of course, you cannot do this all at once. Pick a few times and places when the child needs to learn the right speech: how to say “Hello,” how to ask questions (“What is this called?”), how to say “No.” When the child learns these, go on to others.

To sum up, the trick to replacing parroting is to (1) quickly stop the child as soon as he starts to parrot and (2) teach him the right way to talk by telling him what to say, having a model child say the right thing, and by teaching him what to say beforehand.

**FS14. USES FUNCTIONAL SPEECH IN MANY PLACES AND WITH MANY PERSONS**

As we have said many times, a child’s speech will not do her much good if she uses it only with you in the home or school. Nor will the child’s speech spread out to other places and people by itself. You have to help her to spread out her speech. Here’s how.

First of all, when the child is fairly good at a certain kind of Functional Speech, start having new people work with her on it in the same place. At first, have a new person just sit in the same room with you and the child. Later, have the new person praise and verify. “Yes, you asked for a hug!” Still later, have the new person give the child more chances to talk, by asking questions or making statements. “This is a BIG cookie.” If the child becomes fussy or inattentive, or stops talking, go back to you working with her for a while and slowly fade the new person back in. Also, work on speech in new places. Have the child name, ask for, describe, and identify things on the sidewalk, on the playground, in the store, and in a friend’s house. Have her say “Hello” and “Goodbye” in other places. Make sure to reward and verify often, at first, when you are doing this.

Second, it is important to teach the child what speech to use in different settings. If the child’s problem behaviors have kept him from going many places, he is not likely to know the words to describe them. He will not even know what to look for. So, it is a good idea to prepare the child for new experiences by acting them out. Before a trip to the supermarket, show pictures of supermarkets in magazines. Have him describe and identify what he sees in the pictures. Also, have him describe and identify grocery store items found around the home or school. Then, when you get to the supermarket, point the items out to him and have him name them. Let him take part in the activities by putting items in the shopping cart and carrying packages. See the section on shopping in Chapter Eighteen in the book on Learning Readiness.

The same goes for trips to the doctor’s or dentist’s office. Show pictures of what he is likely to see: people in white coats, examining tables, chairs, and instruments. Better yet, let him handle toy or real instruments (stethoscope, tongue depressors, and so on). In this way, the child will be more likely to follow directions and to take part in new settings.

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