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PHYSICIAN SUGGESTIONS
PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH MIDDLE EAR PROBLEMS

The Importance of Talking

Talking with your child is necessary for his/her language development. Since children usually imitate what they hear, how much you talk to your child, what you say, and how you say it will affect how much and how well your child talks.

Look

Look directly at your child's face and wait until you have his/her attention before you begin talking.

Control Distance

Be sure that you are close to your child when you talk (no further than 5 feet). The younger the child, the more important distance control.

Loudness

Talk slightly louder than you normally do. Turn off the radio, TV, dishwasher, etc. to remove background noise.

Be a Good Speech Model

1. Describe to your child daily activities as they occur.
2. Expand what your child says. For example, if your child points and says "car", try saying: "Oh, you want the car?"
3. Add new information. You might add, "That car is little".
4. Build vocabulary. Make teaching new words and concepts a natural part of every day's activities. Use new words while shopping, taking a walk, washing dishes, etc.
5. Repeat your child's words using adult pronunciation.

Play and Talk

Set aside some time throughout the day for "play time" for just you and your child. Play can include: looking at books, exploring toys, singing songs, coloring etc. Talk to your child during these activities, keeping the conversation at his/her level.

Read

Begin reading to your child at a young age (under 12 months). Ask a librarian for books that are right for your child's age. Reading can be a calming-down activity that promotes closeness between you and your child. Reading provides another opportunity to teach and review words and ideas. Some children enjoy looking at pictures in magazines and catalogs.