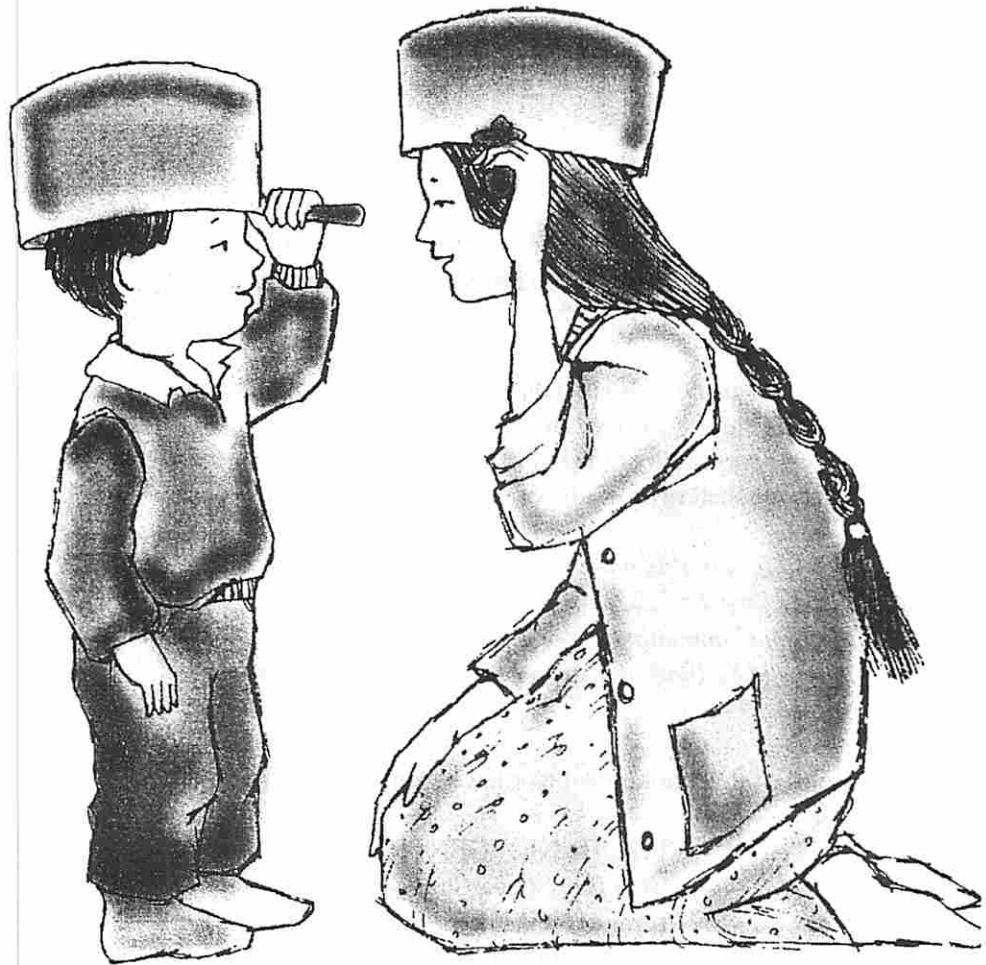


MAKING THE CONNECTIONS...



THAT HELP CHILDREN  
COMMUNICATE

 The  
Hanen  
Program,

# Making the Connections . . . That Help Children Communicate

By Ayala Manolson, Helen Buck and Claire Watson  
Illustrations: Ruth Ohi, Illana Manolson



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# IT TAKES TWO TO TALK

The greatest gift you can give your child is help in learning to communicate and connect with his world. This gift is given so easily and naturally within the frequent and natural interactions of daily living. Helping your child reach his full potential, whether he is learning to communicate with ease, or is experiencing some difficulty, requires time, effort and a '3A' approach.

To help guide you through the intricate maze of 'how to' books and 'what to do' articles on language learning, The Hanen Centre developed a natural, intuitive approach, based on universal principals of language learning. Simply outlined, the concepts are:



OWL -  
Observe,  
Wait,  
and  
Listen to your child

*and*



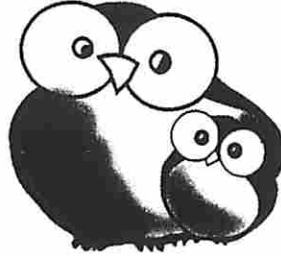
THE 3A WAY -

- Allow your child to lead
- Adapt to "share the moment"
- Add language and experience

A child does not learn to talk by himself. His capacities develop only through involvement with his world. You, the parent, are the largest part of his world, and what you do with your side of the interaction will make all the difference to your child. It really does *TAKE TWO TO TALK*.

We hope this information will provide the foundation needed to help you give your child the gift of language.

# TAKE THE TIME TO GET TO KNOW YOUR CHILD



OBSERVE

WAIT

LISTEN

The most important and perhaps the most difficult first step in encouraging your child to talk is taking the time to:

“OWL”

*Observe, Wait and Listen*

It often takes real skill to decipher a child's message. Each child uses his own unique combination of body language and sounds to communicate.

You will get to know your child when you take the time to really -

*Observe* your child, then

*Wait to* give him the chance to communicate in his own way, and

*Listen* to him sensitively.

Your child will feel your attunement to his interest and effort. He will be encouraged to communicate, knowing his effort will be acknowledged.

Remembering to 'OWL' will help you become aware of the opportunities that abound for sharing, learning and loving together.



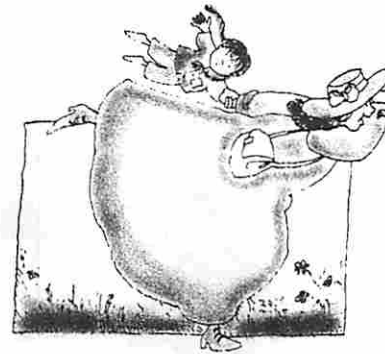
## ALLOW

### YOUR CHILD TO LEAD

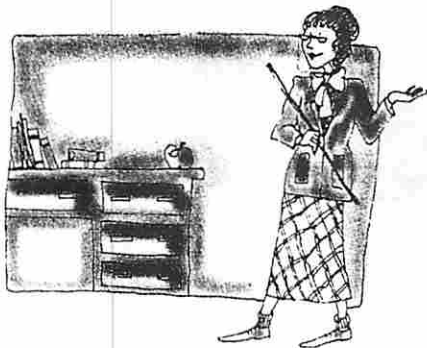
The first step in helping your child learn is to become aware of how you relate to and talk to your child. How do you respond? What kind of partner are you?



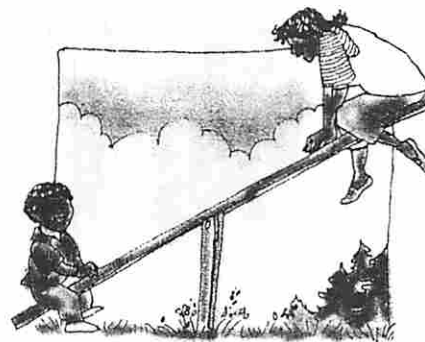
*The "HELPER" partner*  
who indulges in 'natural loving sabotage', instead of giving the child a chance to do it or say it for himself.



*The "MOVER" partner*  
who misses opportunities to communicate with her child by insisting on her own agenda instead of following the child's lead.



*The "TEACHER" partner*  
who does most of the talking and forgets that children learn best by doing rather than by watching or following directions.



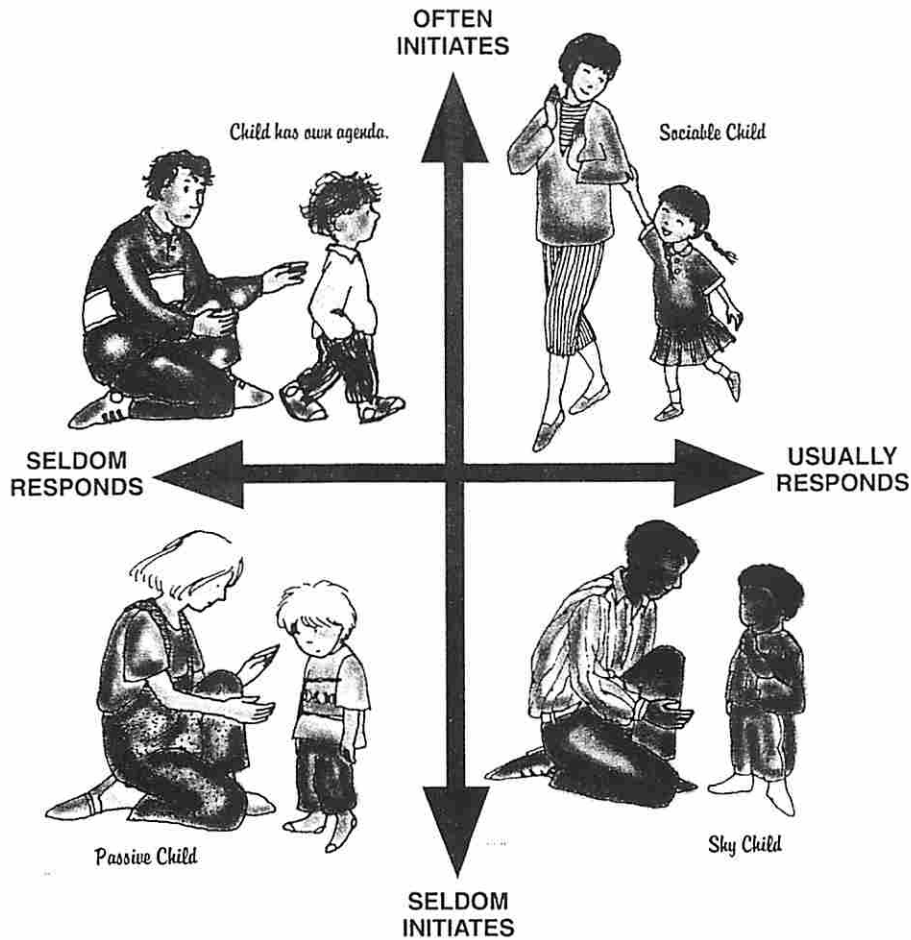
*The "RESPONSIVE" partner*  
who encourages communication by following the child's initiations with sensitive, appropriate responses.

You must *reach* your child so that you can *teach* him.

# SOUNDS EASY BUT ...

- Each child differs in their interest and ability to communicate.
- Some children often *initiate* conversations - some children do not.
- Some children usually *respond* - some do not.

Looking at the degree to which a child initiates and responds in the chart below, we find that four communication styles emerge.



Recognizing the special uniqueness of your child's way of communicating is the first step in discovering how you can adapt your behaviour in ways that will help and encourage him to learn.



## ADAPT

### TO "SHARE THE MOMENT"

Being sensitive to your child's repertoire of changing moods and behaviours will help you *adapt* your own behaviour, so you can share experiences that will help your child learn. It is a real challenge to adapt your behaviour when -



Your child is **PASSIVE**, seldom initiates, appears unable to understand, and shows little interest in connecting with others;

or



Your child is **SHY**, speaks only when spoken to, and doesn't use the communication skills he has.

# WHAT TO DO

## When your child is passive or shy:

Instead of taking over for your child and being afraid of those silent moments, you can set up and *create opportunities* for your child to communicate.

- Remember to take the time to *OWL* - Observe, Wait and Listen to your child.
- *Adapt* your position to *be face to face* with your child.
- *Repeat pleasurable routines* until your child is able to anticipate what comes next, then wait for your child to respond in his way.
- *Arouse your child's curiosity* by setting up new high interest opportunities for him to explore.
- *Tempt your child* with activities that have a special interest for him.
- *Imitate and interpret* any subtle attempt to communicate.

When in doubt as to what to do,

**DON'T HESITATE - IMITATE!**





A child who has his own agenda  
is not interested in yours.

Sharing experiences with a child who has his own agenda is indeed a challenge. It may be because he doesn't yet know how to share his interests. He appears to be totally focused on what he chooses to do himself, and unwilling to share his experience with you. Similarly, it may be hard to entice him into sharing an activity you have chosen. His behaviour seems to say - "I'd rather play my game alone" or "I don't want to play your game".

## WHAT TO DO

### When your child has his own agenda:

- Discover ways to *share familiar routines*.
- *Set up new, high-interest activities*, e.g., ball, water play, wind-up toys, balloons, bubbles, rough 'n tumble games.
- You may need to adapt the activity or the position of your body, in order to *be face to face* with your child.
- Watch for and *accept any subtle attempts to communicate* e.g., a quick look, a change in body position, a change in facial expression or voice.
- *Respond immediately*.
- *Imitate and interpret* your child's behaviour to let him know that you accept and respect what he is doing or saying.

**FIND A WAY OF SHARING WITH YOUR  
CHILD ANY ACTIVITY OR ROUTINE  
THAT HE ENJOYS.**



When your child is **SOCIABLE**, enjoys interacting with others, but has difficulty expressing himself clearly, help him learn better ways of communicating.

How able and enthusiastic your child will become as a conversational partner depends largely on how you respond to his efforts to communicate.

## WHAT TO DO

### When your child is *sociable*:

- *Listen carefully*, and acknowledge your child's attempts to communicate.
- *Interpret* your child's message - Say it as he would if he could - say it correctly.
- *Continue the conversation* by making statements and comments on your child's topic.
- *Include* him in your daily routines, and take the time to *wait* for your child to participate with you.
- *Save questions* for times when you genuinely want to know what your child is thinking.

The pleasure your child feels and the success he experiences when the two of you "talk" together, will make all the difference!

**NOTHING SUCCEEDS LIKE  
SUCCESS!**

REMEMBER



**ADAPT YOUR BEHAVIOUR**

*So you can share experiences with your child*

To encourage my child to *share* experiences with me I can \_\_\_\_\_

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To encourage my child to *respond and take* turns I can \_\_\_\_\_

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To encourage my child to *take another* turn and *stay* in the interaction longer I can \_

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ADD

LANGUAGE AND EXPERIENCE

Children communicate from the moment they are born. As they mature and are given opportunities to learn, they gradually develop clearer, more conventional ways of communicating.

Knowing your child's development level will help you **ALLOW** your child to lead, **ADAPT** to "share the moment", and **ADD** language and experience- all with realistic expectations.

In the beginning, at **Stage I**, you may intuitively interpret your child's sounds and body language as meaningful. His smiles, cries, screams, and wiggles, are in fact, primarily reflexive at this early stage and are not deliberate behaviors, or efforts to communicate.

Then at **Stage II**, although your child still does not consciously communicate with you, it is easier for you to interpret his facial expressions, body language, and sounds as he begins to reach out and explore his environment.

At these early stages, you play the critical role in helping your child become aware of the power and pleasure of communication.

## WHAT TO DO:

- **Imitate** your child's sounds or actions, then add something new.
- Use **gestures** when you talk.
- **Name** people and **label** things in which your child shows interest.
- **Emphasize key words** and exaggerate facial expressions.
- Talk in short, **simple sentences** about what's happening.
- **Slow down** your rate of speech.
- **Show the objects** you are talking about to your child.

STAGE I (example)

INSTEAD OF



ADD INFORMATION



STAGE II (example)

INSTEAD OF



ADD INFORMATION



Now at **Stage III** your child develops that all-important interest in connecting with those around him. He has taken the giant step towards learning to communicate.

At **Stage III** his attempts to interact confirm to you his emerging communication skills. He looks to make sure you are paying attention to what interests him. Speech is emerging and he points, uses gestures, acts out and makes sounds that stand for words.

## WHAT TO DO:

- Continue to use **STAGE I** and **II** strategies.
- Emphasize **short words** your child may be able to imitate and express.
- Add **slightly longer phrases** which he can understand but not yet say.
- Vary what you talk about, e.g. people, events, objects, location of things, actions which you or your child are doing, feelings, descriptive qualities (hot, cold, soft, hard, Mommy's, yours, Daddy's, big, happy, sleepy, etc.).

## STAGE III (example)

INSTEAD OF



ADD INFORMATION



Finally, your child moves into *Stage IV*, and he begins to use words and phrases consistently even though he may be hard to understand. You now continue to help your child learn to understand and say more.

## WHAT TO DO:

- *Emphasize key words* in short sentences which he can imitate.
- *Add longer comments* on the topic, which he can understand.
- *Link your child's comment to a past experience.*
- *Talk about what will happen next.*
- *Pretend with your child when you play.*
- *Imagine or wonder about what might happen if...*

## STAGE IV (example)

INSTEAD OF



ADD INFORMATION



REMEMBER



**ADD LANGUAGE AND  
EXPERIENCE**

*At your child's level*

To help my child *understand more* I can \_\_\_\_\_

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To help my child *begin to use words* I can \_\_\_\_\_

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To help my child *improve his ability to express himself* I can \_\_\_\_\_

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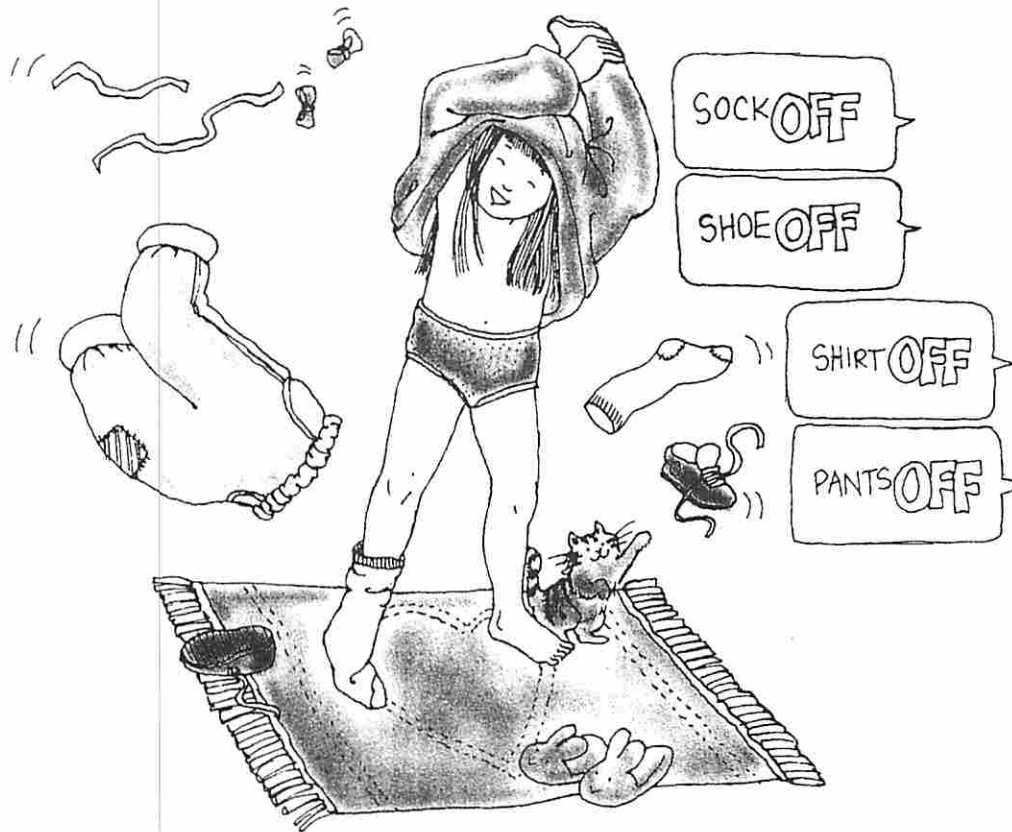
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# REPETITION IS CRUCIAL

Some children need 10 repetitions of an action, word or phrase before they will attempt it, while others need 200 repetitions. Do not expect your child to use words that are not very familiar to him. Change occurs gradually. Realistic expectations are the key to success.



Language is learned within the natural conversations of daily living, and life is full of opportunities for interaction. There's always another chance - later in the hour, day or week. Remember S.O.S. Keep it Short, Often and Simple,...and most important - enjoy sharing this fulfilling adventure in communication!



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