

LSL STRATEGY: BEYOND THE HERE AND NOW

As parents, we want our children to grow up to be good listeners, confident communicators, independent thinkers, and have strong relationships. What's the secret to supporting those goals? It's all in how you talk with your little one every day. An excellent listening and spoken language or LSL strategy you can use is beyond the here and now. This is sometimes called expansion and extension. Use this strategy to help your child develop their vocabulary, grammar, and expressive language skills. In this video, I'll explain how you can use beyond the here and now.

I'm Dr. Teresa Caraway with Hearing First. We're here to help and support families just like yours who have a child with hearing loss. We want to empower you as your child learns to listen, talk, read, and thrive, just like kids with typical hearing.

Beyond the here and now helps your child move from using single words to express their needs and thoughts, to simple sentences, to complete and even complex sentences.

First, expand your child's utterance. This simply means turning your child's single word or phrase into a complete sentence by adding more words. If they say drink, you would expand your child's utterance. Oh, you want a drink?

Then you could encourage them to use more words to make a complete sentence by saying, you could say, I want a drink. Then after you expand what they said into a complete sentence, you'll extend the thought and add new information. Oh, you want a drink? You could say, I want a drink. You're drinking your apple juice. You're so thirsty. You love apple juice.

When you expand and extend your child's utterances by using different words and vocabulary, sharing new information, connecting the unfamiliar with the familiar, talking about the past or the future, and incorporating words to express thoughts and feelings, you're taking them beyond the here and now.

It's a powerful way to take your child's language to another level. You're not only building their listening and talking skills, you're also growing their confidence and independence. Important skills for them to thrive as they grow up. So how do you use this strategy as parents? Well, here are four easy ways, and I'm sure you'll think of even more.

1. Model or demonstrate the complete sentence or question. This will help you child graduate from short phrases to complete sentences. It will also improve how they ask questions. For example, if your child says, mommy, snack. You reply in a way that expands into the complete sentence for them. Oh, you could say, momma, I want a snack.
2. Use different and new words in response to what your child says. This will extend their vocabulary by introducing new words and phrases that mean the same thing. For example, if your child says, look, big bug. You could say in response, oh, I see that big bug. It's an enormous grasshopper. He's gigantic. Whoa, he is so big.

3. Third, provide new information related to what they're talking about. You can connect something less familiar to something that's more familiar to boost your child's understanding. This will stimulate their thinking and expand their knowledge of their world. For example, if your child says, I want to go outside. You could reply, uh-oh, it's raining outside. We can't play outside in the rain. We would get all wet. But the rain is helping our tomatoes grow in the garden. Our tomatoes need water. What else needs water?
4. Share your thought and feeling words. This will help them learn how to talk about their own thoughts and feelings. It also builds their understanding of emotions and how others might think and feel.

For example, if you're reading the book, "The Very Hungry Caterpillar," you could say, wow, that caterpillar ate so much. Do you think his tummy hurt after all that? Have you ever had a tummy ache before? What did your daddy do to help you feel better?

As your child changes and gets older, how you use this strategy will evolve based on their age and their language skill level. Your early interventionist will be your guide. And remember, this is just one LSL strategy to support your child with hearing loss as they learn to listen and talk. Download the free handout in the link below with more LSL strategies and ways you can use them. We also have a whole playlist of videos with different LSL strategies.

Wherever you are on this journey, and however you may be feeling you are not alone. Hearing First is here to help you every step of the way. Join the Facebook group to meet other families of children with hearing loss and subscribe to the YouTube channel for the latest videos. Visit hearingfirst.org to find more resources and support on this journey.