

Easy Confidence-Building Strategy for Preschoolers with Hearing Loss

What's an easy way to build your child's independence, confidence, and conversation skills? Well, by letting them practice. It's tempting for a parent to fill in the gaps or give them the right answer. Unfortunately, this doesn't help them as much as we think it does. In this video, let's talk about a strategy called "Help Me But Don't Tell Me." It's a strategy that you can use with your child who is deaf or hard of hearing to grow important critical thinking, problem solving, and conversation skills.

Hi, 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.

If your child is deaf or hard of hearing and you want them to listen and talk, Listening and Spoken Language, or LSL, uses strategies and techniques based on research about what little brains need to learn to listen and talk. These strategies align with child development milestones, and you'll learn them in early intervention.

"Help Me But Don't Tell Me" is a strategy better suited for preschoolers and maybe early school aged children. This means around three to seven years of age. It's not quite developmentally appropriate for little babies or toddlers.

So, if your child is one of those younger ages, check out the playlist of videos linked below. Let's talk about what do we mean when we say "Help Me But Don't Tell Me." Instead of telling your child all the answers, give them clues to help them think and problem solve, to discover the answer on their own. If your child is struggling to find the right word, you'll help them think of the answer instead of just jumping into tell them the answer or the word.

So, if you're getting your child dressed and you're on the very last piece of clothing to put on, you could tell them, "Oh, you're almost dressed. "Now would be a great time to use this strategy." So you could start to offer them clues and hints about what comes next. "Oh, listen, we need one more thing "to finish getting dressed."

- Then you could label the category. This is an item of clothing, it's something you wear.
- Use a description that explains the function or how we use this item. "You wear them on your feet and they keep your toes warm."
- Share the attributes or start to explain the item. "They can be colorful and soft, "and yours are blue and red."
- Suggest an opposite or say what it's not. "It's not your shoes."
- Provide a rhyming word as a hint, "It rhymes with rocks."

"That's right, we're talking about your socks."

The goal is to promote your child's listening and thinking skills to help them connect pieces of information that they know, which expands and enhances their knowledge of language.

This strategy is important for building their independence. Parents, you need to hold high expectations for your child's Listening and Spoken Language. As hard as it can be for a parent to admit, you won't always be at your child's side.

This strategy encourages them to use context and clues to solve problems and find answers. If you're telling a story, you can build the conversation using this strategy. So, you could say, "Oh, my goodness, you won't believe what I saw on the way home today." And instead of telling them, you can stimulate their language reasoning skills by turning it into a guessing game for them to figure out what you saw. "It was an animal. He was on the sidewalk, and it was slithering along. He was long, and it had scales. He wasn't a worm, and it rhymes with rake." Wait and see if your child can guess that you saw a snake.

Depending on your child's age, you can invite them to play and describe something for you to guess. This works well with the game of "I Spy." So, the more you use this strategy, you'll soon discover your child knows a lot more than you first thought. When you use "Help Me But Don't Tell Me," you're building your child's confidence in their Listening and Language Skills and stimulating independent thinking.

If you want to learn more about LSL strategies and techniques, click the link below and discover all kinds of helpful information and free resources.

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. Subscribe to the YouTube channel for the latest videos and more ways to help your child learn to listen and talk and visit hearingfirst.org to learn more.