

Parents Guide to At-home Speech Practice

Understanding Autism and Communication

Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) often experience challenges with:

- Expressing their thoughts or needs
- Understanding what others say
- Using language in social situations (like asking for help or playing with others)

Speech therapy can help—but you play a key role too! When parents practice communication skills at home, children make faster and longer-lasting progress.

Easy Strategies You Can Use Every Day

1. Talk About What You're Doing

Use short, clear sentences to describe what you or your child is doing.

- Example: “You’re brushing your teeth. Good job brushing!”

2. Imitate and Expand

Repeat what your child says or does—and add a little more.

- Child says: “Car!”
- You say: “Yes, red car! The car goes fast!”

3. Offer Choices

Give your child two options and say the names clearly.

- Example: “Do you want juice or milk?”

4. Use Visuals

Show pictures or use hand signs to support understanding.

- Print simple images (e.g., “eat,” “play,” “toilet”) and point to them during routines.

5. Play Together with Purpose

Use toys and games to practice language. Let your child lead, and describe what’s happening.

- Example: While playing with blocks, say: “Up! Stack the block. Crash!”

6. Repeat and Praise

Repetition helps your child learn. Celebrate even small efforts.

- Example: “You said ‘more’! Great talking!”

Resources You Can Try!

These tools are free or low-cost and have been shown to help!

Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS): Uses pictures to help children request items or express needs.

Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) apps: Try SoundingBoard (free on iOS) or LetMeTalk (free on Android).

Printable visuals: Websites like do2learn.com offer free communication visuals!

Speech apps: Endless Alphabet, Speech Blubs, and Articulation Station are helpful and engaging.

How Often Should I Practice?

- Daily is best, even just 10–15 minutes at a time.
- Fit speech practice into routines: during meals, bath time, play, or car rides.
- Be consistent and keep it positive. Progress takes time!

You Are Not Alone

Partner with your speech therapist! You can:

- Share videos of your home practice to get feedback
- Ask for help setting realistic goals
- Request simple handouts or tips for your routines

Sample Daily Practice Plan

Time of Day	Activity	Communication Focus/Example Words
Breakfast	Naming foods	“Juice” “Toast” “Eat” “More”
Playtime	Block building	“Up” “Stack” “Fall” “More blocks”
Bath time	Labeling actions	“Wash” “Bubbles” “All done”
Story time	Pointing to pictures	“Dog” “Run” “Where’s the cat?”

Encouragement for Parents

You are your child’s first and most important teacher. Every word, every smile, every little moment counts. With your support, your child can build the skills they need to connect, express themselves, and grow with confidence. You’re doing great!