Orthophonie
VoxLingue
Speech and Language

Printable sheet

Quiet parent: five small moves to connect without narrating, and when to check

A quiet parent does not, on their own, cause language difficulties. What matters most is the back-and-forth: answering, waiting and leaving room for your child. These moves take few words.

Five moves, one example per routine

THE MOVE	AN EXAMPLE
1 **Copy their sounds and gestures**	**Diaper change.** They say “ah”: you say “ah” back, then wait.
2 **Wait, without talking**	**Bath time.** Hold the duck and count slowly in your head, 10 to 20 seconds, with an expectant look.
3 **One short comment**	**In the stroller.** They stare at a bus: “A bus!” Then silence.
4 **Ready-made words**	**With a book.** A nursery rhyme like “Row, Row, Row Your Boat” or a book gives you the script. Add pauses.
5 **Same words, same routines**	**Bedtime.** Every night: “Goodnight, teddy.” Bath time: “Water on your toes.”

No need to ~~count your words~~ ~~narrate all day~~ ~~ask your child to repeat~~

In your language

Speak to your child in the language you're most comfortable in. Naître et grandir says it is much better to talk to your baby in your mother tongue than to talk to them very little. Read, talk and sing in the language or languages you know best.

A conversational turn, without words

They make a sound, you answer, they answer back. A look, a smile or a gesture already counts. Leave silences: they are invitations.

When to ask, whatever the amount of talk at home

Few words around 18 months (OOAQ marker: about 14 words) · no two words together yet around 24 months · seems to understand little · doesn't point · loses words · doubts about hearing · language difficulties in the family · **your own concern**.

In Québec, contact the CLSC or ask the doctor (Agir tôt, free, under 7). At the same time, you can see a speech-language pathologist privately, no referral needed. In Ontario: Preschool Speech and Language, no referral needed.

Sources: INSPQ (2023, in French); INSPQ, Mieux vivre avec notre enfant (2026, in French); Naître et grandir (2021, 2024); Montreal Children's Hospital (2019); The Hanen Centre (2024); Mimeau et al. (2020); OOAQ (2021, 2022); Québec.ca, Agir tôt program. **General information: this sheet does not replace an assessment.**