

ECHOLALIA

- A term that describes the repetition of other people's words. May also be called echolalic speech and is typically used without understanding.
- By repeating words and phrases, a child may be trying to calm him/herself, focus his/her attention on an activity, practice talking and/or show he/she does not understand what is being asked.
- ECHOLALIA IS A GOOD SIGN!
- It shows communication is developing.
- May lead to repeated words and phrases being used to communicate something to another person.
- The words a child learns from echolalia open the door to meaningful communication.
- There are different kinds of echolalia:
 - 1) Immediate echolalia – instant repetition of words and phrases, usually the last part of what was said
 - 2) Delayed echolalia – when a child memorizes words or phrases and uses them days, weeks, months or even a year later
 - 3) Mitigated echolalia – occurs when a child changes the tone or some of the words in an effort to adapt them to different situations (e.g. movie scripts)
- HOWEVER, ECHOLALIA DOESN'T GO AWAY WITHOUT INTERVENTION.
 - 1) Teach "I Don't Understand" - when a child echoes the question back to you
 - 2) Reword the Question –
 - a) use words a child understands and then pair the new word along with words understood by the child (e.g. say both "where and what place" instead of just "where" – "where, what place did we go today?")
 - b) vary the sentence structure so preferred item/activity is not always at the end of your question/statement (e.g. say "if you want juice, tell me" versus "do you want juice?")
 - 3) Add Another Question – e.g. "Do you want candy?" "What do you want?"
 - 4) Give Choices That Pair Undesirable and Desirable Items (e.g. say "do you want pudding," a desired food, "or applesauce," an unpreferred food)
 - 5) Jump into your child's scripts – you say a line, he/she says a line; progress with changing the words to encourage making your child's vocabulary bigger (for more information on this strategy go to <http://momnos.blogspot.com/2006/03/dr-strangetalk-or-how-i-learned-to.html>)
- By turning echoed words into spontaneous words and echoed phrases into social conversation, you're helping a child to acquire language and to engage in social dialogue.