

# Tip Sheet: Support Language by Expanding Child's Responses

## FOR PRESCHOOL PARENTS

For additional support on this topic, visit <https://bit.ly/QTEExpand> to view a short video.

### WHY?

Young children often answer questions with simple, one-word responses. Because they are still developing their oral language, they may not yet have the words to answer in a complete sentence. You can support your child's oral language development by **expanding** on your child's answers. This provides language modeling and exposure to advanced language. It also builds their confidence and encourages them to make more complete responses in the future.

### WHAT?

When you expand on your child's responses, you accept their answer as correct and add a little more to make it a complete thought or sentence. Here is an example of a parent expanding on a child's response:

- Parent: **"What is the girl doing?"**
- Child: **"Splashing."**
- Parent: **"Yes, she's splashing in the puddle."**

The parent repeated back what the child said, while adding words to form a complete thought or sentence.

### HOW?

When your child answers you with one word or a short phrase, take time to repeat what they said, while adding words to make a complete sentence. It is important not to change the main idea of your child's message. Pay attention to the context and where the child is focusing their attention when they speak. This ensures that your expansion still matches the original purpose of their message. Over time, expanding your child's responses helps them develop conversational skills that they will use in kindergarten and throughout life!