

Collecting a Conversational Sample Through Play

What Makes a Great Play Sample Great?

- ✓ Aim for **50–100 utterances** (across routines)
- ✓ Combine **2–3 routines in 10–15 minutes**
- ✓ Prioritize: spontaneous language, reduced questioning, natural interaction

For Bilingual Children

- Accept responses across languages
- Look for total communication attempts, not just English output
- Note code-switching patterns
- Compare across contexts and tasks

1. Communication Temptations (Sabotage Play)

Creates a need to communicate instead of relying on questions.

Materials

Bubbles (closed), Snack in container, Toy with missing piece

What to Say

“Hmm...” (wait)
 “Oh no...”
 “It’s stuck.”

Expansion Prompts

“What should we do?”
 “Tell me what you need.”
 “Why isn’t it working?”

Clinical Note

Targets:

Initiation and Requesting
 Problem-solving language
 MLU under natural pressure

2. Play Scripts (Kitchen, Doctor, Animals)

Builds predictable structure that supports longer utterances.

Materials

Play kitchen, Doctor kit, Animal figures

What to Say

“The baby is sick!”
 “What should we do?”
 “Now it’s your turn.”

Expansion Prompts

“What happened next?”
 “Why is that happening?”
 “Tell me the whole story.”

Clinical Note

Targets:

Narrative structure
 Verb use
 Role language

3. Barrier Play (Hidden Object Game)

Forces descriptive precision.

Materials

Two matching sets (blocks, pictures)
 Barrier (folder/book)

What to Say

“Tell me where to put it.”
 “I can’t see yours.”

Expansion Prompts

“Which one?”
 “Where exactly?”
 “What does it look like?”

Clinical Note

Targets:

Prepositions
 Specific vocabulary
 Clarification strategies

4. Cause-and-Effect Toys

Naturally elicits expanded cause language.

Materials

Pop-up toys
 Wind-up toys
 Light-up toys

What to Say

“Watch this...”
 “Uh oh—it stopped!”

Expansion Prompts

















“Why did it stop?”
 “What made it go?”
 “What happens if...?”

Clinical Note

Targets:

Cause/effect
 Early complex sentences (because, so)

Collecting a Conversational Sample Through Play

<p>5. Construction Play (Blocks, Legos) Encourages planning + sequencing language</p> <p> Materials Blocks Legos</p> <p> What to Say “Let’s build something.” “What should we make?”</p> <p> Expansion Prompts “What goes first?” “Then what?” “What do we need next?”</p> <p> Clinical Note Targets: Sequencing Future language Multi-step discourse</p>	<p>6. Pretend Problem Scenarios Pushes narrative + flexible thinking</p> <p> Materials Dolls, figures, animals</p> <p> What to Say “Oh no! The car broke!” “They’re lost!”</p> <p> Expansion Prompts “What should they do?” “How will they fix it?” “What happens next?”</p> <p> Clinical Note Targets: Story grammar Problem/solution structure Causal language</p>
<p>7. Book Sharing (Interactive) Elicits language without relying on memory</p> <p> Materials Picture books (no need to read text)</p> <p> What to Say “What’s happening here?” “Look at this!”</p> <p> Expansion Prompts “Why is that happening?” “What will happen next?” “How do they feel?”</p> <p> Clinical Note Targets: Narrative language Inferencing Mental state language</p>	<p>8. Turn-Taking Games Creates structure for social + conversational language</p> <p> Materials Simple games (Pop-Up Pirate, Jenga)</p> <p> What to Say “My turn... your turn.” “Uh oh!”</p> <p> Expansion Prompts “What happened?” “Why did that happen?” “What should we do now?”</p> <p> Clinical Note Targets: Pragmatics Reaction language Spontaneous comments</p>

Great Resources for Evaluations!

Success with Speech
Sound Disorders

Difference or Disorder?

Developmental
Speech and Language
Norms for Spanish
and English E-book

Working with
Interpreters

Difference or
Disorder? Speech



Difference or Disorder?
Language

