



NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

# Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic

## Statements versus Questions

**Description:** When we talk to our children it is very natural to ask many questions. When the child reaches or points to something, we habitually ask “What do you want?” But, when a child does not have any words or minimal words, keep in mind he/she more than likely cannot answer your question. So, to help your child learn words provide a short and simple statement that matches his/her gesture. This way he/she will hear the word and eventually begin to imitate that word. This does not mean to never ask a question. Instead, balance your questions with statements!

### Tips!

1. Use short phrases (2 to 3 words)
2. Talk about what your child is doing.
3. Focus on what your child is doing or requesting. This is motivating!
4. Used a reduced rate of speech
5. Enunciate your words

### Example #1 – Use short statements; talk about what your child is doing

Your child is coloring a dog with a purple crayon. **You say**, “Nose is purple,” “Pretty dog,” “I like your drawing.” **Refrain from saying**, “What color is his nose?” “What are you coloring?”

You child is playing with cars. **You say**, “Car goes up,” “Car is fast,” “Cool car.” **Refrain from saying**, “Where is your car going?” “What color is your car?”

Your child points to a desired item out of reach (e.g. blocks, Sippy, blanket). **You say**, “Blanket,” “You want Sippy.” **Refrain from saying**, “What do you want?”

## Example #2 – Use statements to talk about what you are doing

You are making a snack with grapes and crackers. **You say,** “I’m making a snack,” “Grapes and crackers,” “Yummy snack.” **Refrain from saying,** “What am I doing?” “Is this yummy?”

You are folding laundry. **You say,** “I’m folding socks,” “Your shirt,” “Daddy’s socks.” **Refrain from saying,** “Who’s is this?” “What are these?”

## Example #3 – Refrain from saying words like “Can,” “Should,” and/or “Do.” These words will form a question!

Your child is pointing & vocalizing at the refrigerator. **You say,** “Open,” “Hungry,” or “Thirsty.” **Refrain from saying,** “Do you want to eat?” “Do you want a drink?”

It’s bath time. **You say,** “It’s bath time!”, “It’s time to take a bath,” “Let’s play in the tub!” **Refrain from saying,** “Should we take a bath?”

It’s time to get dressed. **You say,** “Let’s take jammies off,” “Shirt on,” “Socks on” “One leg in.”