

# How to Support Parents With Children at Home During the Pandemic

## part three: Declarative Language

To embed within your patterned activities and anytime is Declarative Language. DL allows you to present a problem but not solve the problem by directing. For example, saying: the table is wet instead of wipe the table. In this way, the child learns to infer, to think, to take responsibility.

One of the most didactic uses of declarative language is the use of language to comment on conditions in the environment affording the child an opportunity to infer information. For example, stating that a table is wet with the expectation that your child will infer that it needs to be wiped and will do it! Given time to respond, the child is expected to: recognize the conditions stated, infer what needs to be done and finally, do it. Initially, a child may need extended time to respond to this type of declarative language. As the parent, you may have to wait as long as 25 to 45 seconds. You may have to expand the language input to further explain or spotlight the condition (e.g., initial statement: My arms are full. Second statement: I can't open the door.). You may have to add a visual reference towards the problem, e.g., looking at the door and then looking at your packages. The key is that you do not tell the child what to do so he has the opportunity to think, to infer information.

Typically, this basic inferring of information is seen in children as young as two years of age. On the other hand, special needs children do not infer the information because they are rarely given the opportunity to infer or if they are given the opportunity, they are not given the time to take advantage of the opportunity. They have learned that someone else will do the thinking for them!

Using declarative language to foster the child's ability to infer information helps the child in the following ways to:

- Assume responsibility in the environment;
- Initiate responses;
- Listen to language that is not imperative in nature;
- Listen to conversational language;
- Respond to incidental requests;
- Problem solve;
- Respond on behalf of someone else; and
- Become a more active participant in life.

**If your sentence starts with a question word or a verb, it is not declarative!!!**

**REMEMBER: IF YOU HAVE EXPECTATIONS, THEN YOU SHIFT THE RESPONSIBILITY TO THE CHILD.**

**WITH THE ASSUMPTION OF RESPONSIBILITY COMPETENCE IS DEVELOPED AND GREATER PARTICIPATION IS FACILITATED.**

**Comments? Questions?  
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