

# The Speech Starter Kit

A 7-day talk-more plan + a one-page communication-stage checker. For parents of late talkers — any age, any diagnosis. We meet your child where they are, not where a chart says they should be.

## How to use this kit:

1. Print pages 2–3 (the 7-day plan) and stick them on the fridge.
2. Print page 4 (the milestone checker) and circle what fits your child today.
3. Try one tiny thing per day. Small reps beat big lessons — every time.

## What's inside

- ✓ **The 7-Day Talk-More Plan** — One tiny win per day. 5 minutes or less.
- ✓ **Communication-Stage Checker** — Stage-based, not age-based. Works for toddlers, big kids, and teens with developmental delays.
- ✓ **Scripts you can say tonight** — Real words, not theory.
- ✓ **When to call an SLP** — A short, kind checklist — no scare tactics.

**A word from us:** Late talking is not a parenting failure. Brains build language at different speeds. Your job isn't to drill — it's to make talking feel safe and fun. This kit shows you how, one small step at a time.

Bright Steps provides parent support and educational planning tools only and does not replace professional speech-language, educational, or medical advice.

# The 7-Day Talk-More Plan

One tiny thing per day. 5 minutes or less. Repeat the ones that click.

## Day 1 - The 10-second wait

Ask a question, then count silently to 10 before helping. Their brain is still loading.

*Try: "Want milk or water?" ... (wait, eyebrows up, smile) ... wait some more.*

## Day 2 - Narrate your day

Talk out loud about what YOU are doing. No questions, no pressure. Just words landing in their ears.

*Try: "Mama's washing the cup. Cup is wet. Now — dry cup."*

## Day 3 - Choice of two

Replace yes/no questions with two real choices. Easier to answer, builds words fast.

*Try: "Banana or apple?" ... (hold both up). Wait. Repeat their word back, bigger.*

## Day 4 - Sabotage play (the giggle trick)

Pretend to mess up. Put the shoe on your hand. Give them a fork for cereal. Wait for them to react.

*Try: "Uh-oh — shoe on hand?!" Most kids will laugh, point, or say a word to fix it.*

# 7-Day Plan (continued)

## Day 5 - Read without quizzing

Skip “what’s that?” Just point and label. Pressure shuts mouths; warmth opens them.

*Try: Point. “Big dog. Brown dog. Dog is running. Wow.” Pause. Let them join in if they want.*

## Day 6 - Car-ride talk

Same sentence frame every ride. Repetition = anchoring.

*Try: “I see a ... truck!” “I see a ... tree!” Soon they’ll fill it in.*

## Day 7 - Bedtime recap

Three short sentences about their day. End with a feeling word.

*Try: “We went to the park. You climbed the slide. You were brave.”*

## Quick weekly tracker

Check the box on days you tried it. Three checks = a win.

Day	Tried it?	One word/sound I noticed today
Mon	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Tue	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Wed	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Thu	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Fri	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Sat	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Sun	<input type="checkbox"/>	

# Communication-Stage Checker

**Forget chronological age.** A 13-year-old with a developmental disability may communicate at the same stage as a typically-developing 2-year-old — and that's okay. Circle the stage that sounds most like your child *today*. Meet them there. Move at their pace, not a chart's.

## Stage 1 - Pre-words

- Mostly sounds, babbling, or crying to communicate
- May or may not point / reach / gesture
- Responds to their name some of the time
- Understands a few familiar words (bottle, no, bye)

## Stage 2 - First words

- Says a handful of real words (even if unclear)
- Uses gestures + sounds together to ask for things
- Follows simple 1-step directions (“give me the cup”)
- Tries to copy sounds, words, or facial expressions

## Stage 3 - Two-word combos

- Puts 2 words together (“more milk,” “mama go”)
- Uses 50+ words across the week
- Names familiar people, foods, or body parts
- Close family understands about half of what they say

## Stage 4 - Short sentences & beyond

- Uses 3–5 word sentences or scripted phrases
- Asks simple questions (“what that?” “where mama?”)
- Can tell you something that happened earlier
- Most familiar adults understand them clearly

## When it's worth talking to a professional

- Your child has been stuck at the same stage for 6+ months with no new words
- They're losing words, signs, or skills they used to have
- They have no consistent way to ask for what they want (words, signs, pictures, or device)
- Frustration meltdowns are getting worse because they can't be understood
- You feel something is off — parent gut counts at every age

### Indiana parents — your free options:

- **Under age 3: First Steps** (Indiana's early intervention program) — free evaluation, in-home services on a sliding fee scale. Apply at [FirstSteps.IN.gov](https://www.firststeps.in.gov) or call 1-800-441-7837.
- **Age 3 through 22:** Request a special education evaluation in writing from your school district. It's your right under **Indiana Article 7** (511 IAC 7) and IDEA — free, regardless of age, through your child's 22nd birthday.
- **Free parent help: INSOURCE** (Indiana's Parent Training & Information Center) — free 1-on-1 support understanding evaluations, IEPs, and your rights. [insource.org](https://www.insource.org) · 1-800-332-4433.

Want personalized scripts? The Brain & Voice Helper at [brightstepsbehavior.lovable.app](https://brightstepsbehavior.lovable.app) turns your child's exact struggle into a 60-second I-Do / We-Do / You-Do plan — 2 free tries per tool. Bright Steps is parent support, not professional speech, medical, or legal advice.