

# OOPS!



Using well timed “mistakes” can help your child learn about various objects and their functions.

## THINK ABOUT...

A lot of language happens incidentally, meaning children experience language growth simply by hearing words in context and matching them to meaning. However, children with hearing loss may miss out on a lot of incidental learning because they cannot hear the key language in context. An area of language that often needs more careful and planned exposure is object function, or being able to express what an object is used for. Use this simple activity during daily routines to give more natural exposure to these concepts.



## MATERIALS NEEDED:

- None – this activity can be implemented throughout the day during typical, routine activities or discussions.

## PREPARATION

- 1- Think ahead of a few items you normally use during your daily routine. For example, brushes, utensils, vacuum, pans, dishes, shoes, boots, etc .

## ACTIVITY

- 1- Daily routines can be an effective time to use the sabotage strategy for teaching object function. Sabotage is a way of pretending not to understand something so your child has an opportunity to recognize the error and correct it.
- 2- Using the objects you thought about ahead of time, or whenever the opportunity might naturally arise, make an object function “mistake”. For example, “My hair is really messy. I need to fix it. I know! I will use a spoon!” Wait for your child to correct you to indicate that what you said doesn’t make sense. Then say, “You are right, we don’t use a spoon to brush our hair! How silly – we use a spoon to eat our food. We use a brush to fix our hair! Let’s go get the brush and we can brush our hair.”
- 3- If your child does not catch the error or try to correct your mistake, proceed with what you described. For example, go get a spoon from the drawer and try to use it to brush your hair. If your child still doesn’t appear to be concerned about this, utilize a sibling or another family member to provide the model for describing what is wrong with what is happening.
- 4- Consider other natural opportunities that occur throughout the day. For example, when getting ready for bed. “My teeth need to be cleaned so they can stay healthy. I am going to brush them with my shoe!” If your child doesn’t correct you, try another prompt like, “No that would be silly! We wear our shoes, and we brush our teeth with our toothbrush.”

## HELPFUL TIPS

- Be careful that you DO NOT OVERUSE this strategy. We want children to have plenty of accurate language modeling throughout the day. If you overuse sabotage, it may lead to confusion for your child. Be sure to watch your child’s cues and make sure the sabotage activities promote your child’s language and complex thinking skills. Sabotage can be a fun strategy when used correctly, so always be mindful of your child’s responses to make sure it results in language learning opportunities and not added confusion.

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