**(The Speechie Show Ep.25)**

Welcome to the Speechie Show! Being a speech-language pathologist often means having too much work and not enough planning time. To beat the overwhelm, we’re bringing you the tricks and tools that will make your job a little bit easier.

**Carrie**: Welcome to the Speechie Show. I am your host Carrie Clark from [SpeechandLanguagekids.com](https://www.speechandlanguagekids.com/) and I'm here today with Ayelet. Ayelet is from [strengthinwords.com](http://www.strengthinwords.com/welcome) and we are here today to talk to you about parent training and early intervention and how you can get families on board with that therapy. Which is so critical for that age because that's where you're going to make the progress. So welcome to the show we're glad to have you today.

**Ayelet**: Thanks for having me.

**Carrie**: if you guys are new to the show this is the Speechie Show. We do this once a week and this is our chance to hop on and share some tips with you on a specific topic. We have a new speech language pathologist come on with me every week and we do this on Monday afternoons on Facebook Live. So welcome if you're here on Facebook Live with us right now. If you are just joining us we are talking about parent training for early intervention. So, if you are on here with us live right now go ahead and type in what ages you're working with so we can make sure we are getting the right information to you today. And while they are doing that will you go ahead and give us a little bit of information about you and your background.

**Ayelet**: Sure. So, I am currently in private practice and I work primarily with infants and toddlers and preschool-aged kiddos. And I have worked in the past in the schools, contracting with the schools, and doing lots of AAC, and doing lots of intervention with non-profits, clinic-based and home-based. And I love that, those early communicators. It's so fun. And then I also run [strengthinwords.com](http://www.strengthinwords.com/welcome), which is a podcast and a Blog and a whole number of online-based resources. Including courses and curriculum for parents, caregivers and Speech & Language Pathologists, and just other professionals who work with infants and toddlers.

**Carrie**: Excellent. So, when we put this recording up on the website over at [speechandlanguagekids.com](https://www.speechandlanguagekids.com/), we will have links to all the resources mentioned today and the [strengthinwords.com](http://www.strengthinwords.com/welcome) website that you are running. So, we will have all that for you and try to put those in the comments section of this Facebook Live, as well, so you have them. Alright Jenny said she's working with Age 3. If you were on Facebook Live go ahead and type in what ages you are working with right now so we know what kind of spread we have here today here on Facebook Live with us. Okay while you're doing that we're going to go ahead and get started with our Five Points. So, we have five tips to share with you today that are going to help you on your journey of having parents help with this therapy process and create that real meaningful change that we need to see in our early intervention students. So, our first tip today is to use useful distilled bite-sized pieces of knowledge for our families. Ayelet tell us how that looks in practice.

**Ayelet**: Sure. So just to say, parents and caregivers of any infant or toddler, whether they are having any kind of developmental delay or not, we are all feeling vulnerable, undervalued, and we often lack confidence for them. We live in this super crazy digital world where we have access to all kinds of information and it's way too overwhelming. So again, parents want that distilled bite-sized nuggets that they can just digest. So, they want to learn about the ways that they can interact with and their little ones. So, we especially have to teach them about basic terminology and basic Child Development information. So, you know what joint attention and scaffolding are. What object permanence is. And then how do they relate to how their child learns in a meaningful way. I think we often go straight to that work or play therapy without taking the time to help parents understand what on Earth we are doing, and why. Which is of course, why it looks like we are just playing with our children. But when we take the time to really look at and give those terms and show them examples of what we're doing, we are doing a great, great service to our therapy.

**Carrie**: Yes absolutely. So, you are working with these parents, you are sitting down, and instead of just sitting down and starting to do your joint attention activity, talk about what joint attention is and give them some information about what that means and why it's important to work on it. I feel like a lot of times parents just see, like you said, just playing, and they think well that's no different than what I do and so they kind of tune out and don't see it as something meaningful that they should try to do. But if you can explain kind of what's going on behind the scenes and what you're really targeting that can really help parents get on board with the process.

**Ayelet**: Yes

**Carrie**: Wonderful. So that's our first tip. The next one then is going to be to earn trust. And that is so huge with this. A lot of times you're coming into these family’s homes, you're telling them that they're doing it all wrong. I know that's not the way we try to approach it but that's how it can feel for a parent. So how do we build trust with these families that we are working with?

**Ayelet**: By simply having that credential and walking into a home or a clinic is just not enough exactly. So, we have to earn that trust by number one, recognizing and labeling their fears and concerns. So, spell out what you're doing and let them try it. I think we tend to go straight to building repertoire with the child, which is huge but we also forget to build a repertoire with a caregiver. So, when you are doing an activity give them a turn and then talk about it. Talk about how it felt, what they noticed, what felt good, and what didn't feel good. And then brainstorm with them how they can adjust that plan into the rest of their day. And then another piece is, always find a resource that they read through or learn from. Whether it's a journal article or a therapy blogger post that you found. A photocopied page from a textbook or a handout that you've made or a podcast episode. Position yourself as not only a source of knowledge in your sessions, but also as a great resource. so also, you know when you attend a conference or a webinar, save the handouts or resources that they share. One of the things that I like to do is to have sort of a running document on my phone or notebook or whatever you use when you write down your favorite sort of phrases or tips or resources. And I love Evernote's for this because it syncs from my phone to my computer and then I can organize my thoughts later.

**Carrie**: That's wonderful, yeah. So, we're having a little bit of sound quality issues so if you guys miss any of that, what she is saying is to build that trust you want to address their concerns and their fears. Make sure they feel validated. And then make sure that you're giving and sharing information that's going to help them through this process and establish yourself as a resource. So, I really like the idea of sharing with them blog posts or information and writing. Even if you are explaining the same thing face to face I know as a parent if I walk into learning something new about my child, they can tell it to me face to face and I'm like yeah that makes total sense and they're like do you understand and I'm like yes, I totally do and then I get home and I'm like what was I supposed to do. I do this with my son's own therapy. He has therapy for sensory processing. And so, I'm even in the niche or the field and I still will get home and be like okay, I understood it when he said it but now I'm not sure what part of this I'm supposed to be doing or you know, I missed a piece. So, if you can send them with something that they can read and review and go back over, you're going to get way better compliance with whatever you're trying to get.

**Ayelet**: Yes, it's less like you're telling them what to do and more like you're giving them the food that they need write the resources that they need.

**Carrie**: Absolutely, absolutely. Alright if you guys are having any questions or if you're missing pieces because of the audio cutting out please go ahead and type in your questions and comments and we will address those as we go along. And if you're on Facebook Live with us right now please hang on. We're going to be doing some giveaways here in just a minute. You don't want to miss those. Alright, so the third tip we have for you today is to show by doing. This is supercritical for this age, especially when you are working with parents who may not be familiar with speech therapy and these processes. So, talk about how show by doing looks for you.

**Ayelet**: So if you were going to tell a mom or a grandma or a dad to be "silly" with their child, that's something that you're going to need to model each time you see them and also pull the grown up in to take their own turn to be creative and to be silly. You're going to need to simulate the grown-up’s ability to play. So as grown-ups and adults we come to think of play as actually a linear process like we look at most things. So, blocks are for building, books are for reading, A + B = C and it's our job to model and show that books are also for mouthing. For making animal and other environmental sounds from the pictures, for singing. And blocks are for knocking down. For hiding things under and for sorting. We have to show them, reteach grownups how to play because we forget. I think so many people that I've talked to, even speech therapists, who for instance work with older children or with grown-ups and they're like, oh I feel great when it comes to you knowing how to work with someone who's had a stroke. But if you want me to work or play with my child who's 2, I have no idea what to do. So, everybody needs to relearn how to play. It's basic stuff, but it's hard.

**Carrie**: Yeah absolutely. And I think sometimes if you just make a fool of yourself first then they feel more comfortable making a fool of themselves. Which is, you know, kind of what it feels like when you're asking a grown up to get down on the floor and play. If you get down and you're doing all kinds of silly things and like clearly making a fool of yourself that parent is going to feel so much more comfortable trying to do some of those playthings then if you're like okay now I want you to do this. Go do that. Hahaha.

**Ayelet**: Right hahaha.

**Carrie**: Absolutely. Alright we have a question here, let's see. I would like to get advice about helping a toddler who was a shaken baby at 3 months whose expressive language progress is really, really inconsistent. Yeah that can be so hard. I would say if you're working with somebody who has really inconsistent expressive language, I imagine that child is probably functioning at a much younger level, then play therapy is going to be the way to do it. Just like we are talking about getting down and teaching those parents how to play and work the therapy and through play.

**Ayelet**: Yes. I also think that... it's funny, I think when we talk about or use the words and terminology to describe the child, it's going to give us information about what we need to do for the parent. So, the child's expressive language is inconsistent. So, what you want to make sure to work on is to build consistency with the parent. Show the parent that the more consistent they are, the more ways every day and their caregiving routine that they can build in these strategies and these tools, the more consistent their child is. What they do translates into their child's skills.

**Carrie**: Yeah. One thing that jumps out to me, I mean we don't know this child obviously, but one thing that I usually recommend is having the parents talk at a level that is right at or right above their child's level. So, if this child is inconsistently using one or two-word utterances then the parent can consistently use one or two-word utterances and provide those good models that are going to help him understand how he can communicate with the world around him.

**Ayelet**: Yeah great point.

**Carrie**: Alright we're going to jump back into our tips, but if you guys have any other questions go ahead and shoot those at us. So, the next tip is keep it simple. Talk to me about how it looks to keep it simple in these therapy sessions.

**Ayelet**: So if you are bringing in fancy equipment and attractive and beautiful tons of looking play materials into your therapy, even if they weren't expensive but they look super fancy or complicated, those families that you work with are going to assume that that is what's necessary to play with their children. And they're going to miss the point. This is important because so many of us work with a whole gamut of socio economic status brackets of families. So, what we want is to make sure that everyone has access to play. Everyone has access to therapy. And that it doesn't mean that they need to be shopping all the time for new toys and to be getting these fancy looking things. And so whenever possible show them how to create play materials out of objects that already exist in their home. Whether you're bringing your own version of it or whether you're grabbing stuff from their house you know from the kitchen or the bathroom or the bedroom, whatever it is. Whether those things are repurposed or homemade or just simply something that is hanging out on the floor.

**Carrie**: Absolutely. I can tell you from my own children that they love novelty. If they are going to behave better for you then they will never behave with our boring old toys that they already played with. Coming to my house show me how to do something with the materials I already have then I'm going to get some buy in.

**Ayelet**: Yep

**Carrie**: Wonderful, I love it. Okay the last we have for you today is to repeat and vary. How does this look?

**Ayelet**: So this really relates to the last point about how if you have things in your house that you know maybe a child has played with even before. I always have a lot of parents who tell me, gosh I need to go to the store ‘cuz he's bored with all of his toys. He never plays with them. Okay well, show them a new way to play with the same materials and same toys that they have. Again, there’s probably kind of a lot of parents tend to do the same thing with play material because that's what they think it's for. Write a book is for reading. But show them a whole different way that they maybe have never thought about it. So of course, repetition with variation is a concept you have got to drill on home. Because we know the children learn through repetition, interaction and practice, but so do their parents, right? So, in your therapy, you're going to want to do this, as well. Model lots of different activities you can do with the same materials. So, whether that is integrating music into it with songs or whether that's integrating some new social routine or finger play or whatever it is. Try something new with it.

**Carrie**: Absolutely. One of the things I love to do is use the same tune to like a common song. Like you can do the ABC tune or whatever you want and then just switch the words for whatever activity we're doing. Because with my own kids and the children that I work with, I've noticed that if you can add a tune to it or a song to it, it seems to go a little better. Especially transitions. So, you can just use the same tune. You don't have to be coming up with new songs all the time. Same way like you're talking about you don't have to have a new toy all the time. You can use the same toy for multiple different activities. Or use something that's not even a toy. Use some measuring cups and spoons and do something with those.

**Ayelet**: Yep

**Carrie**: Wonderful awesome. So, we have let's see, Carrie says, I agree using their toys or materials is so important. Absolutely. Okay so those are our five tips. We're going to share some resources for you now and we're going to do a giveaway. So, stay tuned if you're with us on Facebook Live and type in those questions if you have them. But let's talk about some of your favorite resources for working with parents in this age group. What do you have for us?

**Ayelet**: So first of all [The Strengths in Words podcast](http://www.strengthinwords.com/podcast-index/) is actually a great resource for us SLP's. For DIY material ideas, for ways to explain and breakdown concepts, for ideas to use music as a framework for learning like you were talking about, Carrie. It's also a great place to point the parents of infants to. It's a great way to point parents of infants and toddlers or parent-friendly developmental information and for simple ideas. And again, when you share resources that you recommend you are trusted and you earned buy in. I've had a few other specific free resources on my site. So, for instance there is a free eBook about simple DIY activities to support development with a whole host of different things for supporting not only communication but motor and sensory and cognitive development, which of course we know that infants and toddlers learn holistically. So, if you have an activity that is you know, primarily geared towards motor development in a very real way it's going to be very easy to integrate ways to support communication development, as well. And then I also have a [free email course](https://app.convertkit.com/landing_pages/178276?v=6) about building language opportunities into caregiving routines. So again, supporting ways for generalization. So, if you're showing a parent how to do something during a diaper routine because that's what you're there for, show them another way you can do it into a different caregiving routine. So, I have a whole [free five-day email course](https://app.convertkit.com/landing_pages/178276?v=6) that can help you show you or show parents how to do that. These are obviously great resources to share with clients and then great places to find ideas and new ways of explaining things to your clients. I love also the [free monthly calendar from speech and language at home](http://speechandlanguageathome.com/speech-and-language-calendars/). They are such awesome printable resources to share with families. She has, she releases a new one each month. And it's every single day there's a different super simple therapy and play activity that you can do with a child whose either and early communicator. She breaks it down between preverbal and first words and then sort of expanding utterances, I think. Those are great and those are free, as well. And then there is an amazing newish site called [The Informed SLP](http://www.theinformedslp.com/). Which does a beautiful literature review of published research each month. And then she separates the research by age group and by work setting. And currently they have primarily Pediatric and school-aged articles, but you can sign up to get notified when they start to release article specific to early intervention. and this is going to be just a great place to find evidence based practice articles that support your therapy. And a fantastic resource to easily find any information that you relate to the parent about early communication development. So, a great place to go to find info to share with families. And then lastly, I run a Facebook group with Lia Kurtin of Speech and Language at Home called [Let's Talk Infants and Toddlers](https://www.facebook.com/groups/letstalkinfantsandtoddlers/) and it's a really wonderful safe space for parents, caregivers and all kinds professionals to work with infants and toddlers of all developmental levels. And I encourage you to check it out. There are some great resources and ideas being shared all the time in there and lots of parents asking questions and lots of professionals weighing in. So, it's a great place to sort of get a good idea of like, oh that's another way I could explain that to a parent.

**Carrie**: Perfect. All right so that was a ton of resources. A lot of those I think are over at [strengthinwords.com](http://www.strengthinwords.com/welcome), correct?

**Ayelet**: Yes

**Carrie**: And then we have the monthly calendars, Speech & Language at home, Informed SLP, and the Facebook group Let's Talk Infants and Toddlers. So, would you mind after this would you go into the comment section of Facebook and add the links to those things so people can find them?

**Ayelet**: Yes

**Carrie**: Perfect. Alright so now we're going to do a giveaway. We're going to actually do two giveaways. If you are new to the show we do this every week, as well. Our guest is going to give away one thing and I'm going to give away one thing. So why don't you tell us what your giveaway is first.

**Ayelet**: So I have an album that is great for families and for therapists. It's called Strength in Words Music for Families. And it's an album that has lots of fingerplays and lots of songs and rhythms and just great things to show how to... sort of a very different kind of music experience for kids. And show parents and caregivers how to do that. So, I have a digital copy of that for you guys today. Well for one of you.

**Carrie**: Yes, perfect. So, the first person to answer the question on Facebook Live is going to get that giveaway, the album. And the second person to answer on Facebook Live is going to get my giveaway which is 2 months in the [Speech Therapy Solution](https://www.speechandlanguagekids.com/become-a-member/). That's my premium membership site for SLP's. We have a whole bunch of prep or no prep materials ready to go for you. We answer questions you have about 10 cases. We got a whole group of SLP's answering questions. And then we just got approved to do CEU's. So, we will be offering all of your CEU's starting hopefully fingers crossed, in September of this year 2017. So that's coming down the line. You'll definitely want to get into the membership before September because the price will go up. But you can lock in your lower rate if you sign up by the end of August. So, you can find that over at [speechandlanguagekids.com/join](https://www.speechandlanguagekids.com/become-a-member/). But one lucky winner today is going to get two free months in that membership from me. Alright Fiona says, will you have a list on your websites of the web sites you just mentioned for resources? Yes, we will have the links on the show notes of this at [speechandlanguagekids.com](https://www.speechandlanguagekids.com/) in about a week or two when that goes up. Or you're going to put the links into the Facebook comment section.

**Ayelet**: Yep

**Carrie**: So we'll have that after we finish here. We'll go in and get all that taken care of. Okay so let's do the giveaway. I'm going to ask a question. Let me get my question up. I'm going to ask a question. The first two people are going to win. Okay here's the question. Name something in a child home that can be repurposed for therapy. So, we were talking about how it's important to use the child's materials that are already there and not to bring in all these flashy new exciting toys and then leave the parents with nothing to do. So, what is something that you have repurposed from a child’s home to use for therapy? Alright, Rosemary Morgan says blocks. Wonderful. And Rosemary is going to win the album of music. How do you want her to contact you to get that?

**Ayelet**: I think the best way is to send me an email, Rosemary, at Ayelet@strengthinwords.com.

**Carrie**: Perfect. Congratulations Rosemary. Let's see who's next I'm going to have to scroll back down ‘cuz we're getting a bunch. Hahaha. All right Maria Cristina says, socks. I'm laughing because the first two answers were blocks and socks. Hahaha.

**Ayelet**: I love it! We can make a song out of it!

**Carrie**: Oh we could! And yes, socks would be great. Hahaha. You're already going hahaha. Alright, congratulations Maria, you win the two free months in the [Speech Therapy Solution](https://www.speechandlanguagekids.com/become-a-member/). You can email me at carrie@speechandlanguagekids.com and my assistant, Kena, will get you all set up with your two free months. We've got more blocks, toilet paper roll and pots. Legos, bath time toys, clothes. Awesome! We got all kinds of responses. Thank you everyone. Alright that's our show today. Thank you all for participating and for hanging out and thank you for joining us and sharing your tips on parent caregivers.

**Ayelet**: My pleasure. Thanks for having me, Carrie.

**Carrie**: Absolutely. And where can people find more about you if they want to find more of your stuff?

**Ayelet**: [Strengthinwords.com](http://www.strengthinwords.com/welcome)

**Carrie**: Perfect. And you can find me over at [speechandlanguagekids.com](https://www.speechandlanguagekids.com/). And don't forget to check out the [Speech Therapy Solution](https://www.speechandlanguagekids.com/become-a-member/) and hop in there if you are interested in next school year because we will be raising the price when those CEUs go into place. So, you can head on over to [speechandlanguagekids.com/join](https://www.speechandlanguagekids.com/become-a-member/). And don't forget to join us next week on the Speechie Show. We are going to be talking about interview tips for school-based CFY's. So, if you're looking to get into the schools and have some interviews coming up you'll want to get tuned to that so you can get some tips for your interviews. All right, thank you all so much for joining us today and we'll see you next week. Bye for now.

Thanks for joining us today Speechie Show. We hope today's tips have helped you feel a little less stressed and a little more confident about your work. If you’re looking for more stress busters and confidence boosters, we’d love to have you join us in The Speech Therapy Solution, where you’ll get access to a huge library of premium training videos and another library of print and go therapy materials. You can also get help with your tough cases by joining Carrie on the weekly Q&A calls, or by posting in the exclusive Facebook group. Plus, group members can join us for a monthly webinar that can be used for a continuing education credit. Head on over to SpeechandLanguageKids.com/join to check out all the amazing benefits of the speech therapy solution membership. Bye for now.