

## Talking with children through playing puppet roles

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Young children are fond of cuddly dolls or puppets. But they only play with the dolls/ puppets for a while and leave them at a corner. How about making use of the lovely dolls as a bridge for English communication between parents and children?

The time to have puppet role play may be after dinner. Switch off the television, sit with your child on the sofa, or a comfortable corner, each holding a puppet in hands. A parent and a child may choose to play different puppets: e.g. Barbie, Hello Kitty, Winnie the Pooh.

It may be more fun if you as a parent plays the role of Hello Kitty ask the child what he/she has eaten in school, or what they have played in the physical education lessons. The topics may also be on weather, foods, TV, homework.

Samples of conversation:

Roles: Parent- Hello Kitty; child- Snoopy

Steps:

- 1. The parent raises a topic and asks a question.
- 2. The child tries to reply and the parent supports the child by providing some missing words in the reply.
- 3. The parent develops the conversation by asking some follow-up questions.

Sample 1:

- ✧ Hi, Snoopy dear. What would you like for dinner?
- ✧ C: I like beef steak.
- ✧ P: How do you like it to be cooked?
- ✧ C: Hmmm
- ✧ P: Pan-fried or grilled?
- ✧ C: Pan-fried... and two pieces.
- ✧ P: Good. What other dishes do you like?

(and so on)

Sample 2:

- P: I am Mickey. Now Tell Mickey what happened in school today.
- C: Nothing special.
- P: Hmm. Is there any homework from teachers?
- C: Yes. I need to do exercises in Maths, and English. And I have a dictation tomorrow.
- P: O.K. So finish your homework, and I will help you revise for the dictation. And are you happy with your classmates today?
- C: Yes.

(and so on)

Sample 3:

- P: Do you want to have a new toy for your birthday, Ms Piggy?
- C: I want a robot.
- P: Good. What kind of robots do you like?
- C: One that can move, and make sounds.
- P: Do you know some robots can also speak and play tricks?
- C: Really! Which one?
- P: Let's me show you on the internet.

Variation:

You may let your child take an initiative to ask you questions.

During each conversation, you have provided an opportunity to the child to speak in English under your guidance and you also have learned more about her life at school.

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