Using a Different Voice

Change your voice when you speak to your child.

By varying your voice, you keep her attention and show your child ways to experiment with the tone and volume of her own voice.

Teddy Bear wants to push your car.
Why this is important

Language depends on intonation and rhythm as well as words. One word can have several meanings, depending on the way it is said: “Yes?” (I’m listening), or “Yes” (I agree), or “Yes!” (Hooray!). Your child needs to hear variety in order to create it in her own speech. When she plays whispering games with you, she learns how to control her voice.

What you do

- Speak to your child in a higher or lower voice or whisper in your child’s ear. She will pay closer attention to your words when you change your tone, and she may enjoy the novelty of the change.
- Get your child’s attention, make her feel special, and show your surprise or delight by changing the tone of your voice. For example, use your lowest bass voice to make her laugh, sing your words to help her relax, or, when she might expect you to call to her from across the room, instead, go to her and whisper.
- Respond to changes in your child’s voice by letting her know you understand what she is trying to say. What a high voice! You sound excited about your truck rolling on the floor!

Another idea

An easy way to try out new voices is to create a voice for each character in a book you read together. You can give her a chance to choose a voice, or make up new voices and use them each time a character speaks.

Let’s read together!

Quiet Loud
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