



The Late Talker Observation Journal

A gentle way to notice the learning happening before the words come.

PARENT / FAMILY NAME

DATE STARTED

A ONE-WEEK OBSERVATION COMPANION

What's Inside

A look at the pages before you begin.

VISUAL GUIDE The Invisible Learning Map WHAT THIS PAGE IS FOR <i>Eight quiet ways learning happens before words do.</i>	DAILY PAGES Seven Days of Noticing WHAT THIS PAGE IS FOR <i>A simple page per day. Five minutes. No scoring.</i>	KEEPSAKE A Moment I Never Want To Forget WHAT THIS PAGE IS FOR <i>One memory worth keeping, long after the week is over.</i>
TOTAL PAGES 18 Pages	DAILY JOURNAL PAGES 7 Days	FORMAT A4 / Letter Print
WHAT YOU'LL FIND INSIDE		
● The Invisible Learning Map	● What Counts As Communication	● Weekly Observation Dashboard
● 7 Daily Journal Pages	● Closing Reflection Page	● A Keepsake Memory Page
● Print-At-Home Format		

Start wherever feels easiest — there is no wrong day to begin noticing.

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The Late Talker Observation Journal

A gentle way to notice the learning happening before the words come.

A WEEK OF QUIET NOTICING

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MAP

Learning Before Words

GUIDE

What Counts As Talking

JOURNAL

Today I Noticed

REFLECT

What I See Now

Before We Count Words

Many toddlers learn quietly, long before they have the words to show it.

If you've found yourself counting words, comparing milestones, or quietly worrying whether your child is "on track" — you are not alone, and you are not doing anything wrong. Speech is only one part of communication, and it's often the last part to arrive, not the only one happening.

This journal exists to help you notice what's already there: the understanding behind your child's eyes when you ask them to get their shoes, the memory it takes to find the dog three rooms away, the small gestures that say more than a sentence could.

WHAT THIS JOURNAL IS NOT

- Not a test
- Not a milestone tracker
- Not a scorecard
- Not a comparison tool

WHAT THIS JOURNAL IS

- A place to notice
- A place to slow down
- A place to see your child more clearly

The goal was never to count words. It was always to see the child.

A simple rhythm. No system required.

There's no right way to start. Pick a day, spend a few quiet minutes noticing, and write down what you saw. That's the whole practice.

01

OBSERVE FOR ONE WEEK

Use the daily pages over seven days, in any order that fits your week.

02

SPEND FIVE MINUTES

A short pause at the end of the day is enough. This isn't meant to take long.

03

WRITE WHAT YOU NOTICE

A phrase or a few words is plenty. There's no need to write a full account.

04

RETURN TO IT LATER

Read back over your week on the closing reflection page, when it's done.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- A flicker of understanding before you finish a sentence
- A gesture, glance, or sound used on purpose
- A small moment of memory or recognition

WHAT NOT TO FOCUS ON

- Word counts or vocabulary lists
- Comparing this week to other children
- Whether anything here counts as "enough"

A GENTLE REMINDER

“There is no scoring here. Only noticing.”

Learning Before Words

Eight quiet kinds of learning are often happening long before speech arrives. Here's what to watch for.

01

Understanding

Following words, requests, and routines — even without repeating them back.

02

Watching

Studying faces, hands, and objects closely before attempting something new.

03

Listening

Tuning in to tone, rhythm, and the shape of language, even before using it.

04

Memory

Recalling where something belongs, what happens next, or who someone is.

05

Connection

Seeking out shared attention — pulling you in to notice something together.

06

Communication

Using gesture, sound, or expression on purpose, long before full sentences.

07

Pattern Recognition

Noticing what repeats — a song's chorus, a daily sequence, a familiar object.

08

Attention

Staying with one thing — a toy, a task, a sound — longer than expected.

What Counts As Communication?

Long before speech, children communicate in dozens of small, easy-to-miss ways. Here are eight to watch for this week.

Pointing	May be communicating: <i>I want that, or look at this with me.</i>
Eye Contact	May be communicating: <i>I'm checking with you, or I want your attention.</i>
Gestures	May be communicating: a request, a question, or an offer to share something.
Bringing Objects	May be communicating: <i>help me, look what I found</i> , or a wish to share a moment.
Leading Adults	May be communicating: <i>come with me</i> , or <i>I want to show you something</i> .
Facial Expressions	May be communicating: delight, uncertainty, frustration, or a need for reassurance.
Sounds	May be communicating: excitement, a question, or an early attempt at a word's shape.
Body Language	May be communicating: readiness, resistance, comfort, or a need for a pause.

None of these need to happen on cue. Notice what's already there, in whatever order it shows up.

What I Notice This Week

WHAT MY CHILD UNDERSTANDS

WHAT MY CHILD COMMUNICATES

WHAT MY CHILD WATCHES

WHAT MY CHILD REMEMBERS

Day One

NOTICE UNDERSTANDING

Today, pay attention to what your child understands before they respond.

TODAY MY CHILD UNDERSTOOD...

TODAY MY CHILD COMMUNICATED...

TODAY MY CHILD WATCHED...

TODAY MY CHILD REMEMBERED...

TODAY I NOTICED...

TODAY I WONDER...

Day Two

NOTICE COMMUNICATION

Today, watch for the small gestures, sounds, and looks your child uses on purpose.

TODAY MY CHILD UNDERSTOOD...

TODAY MY CHILD COMMUNICATED...

TODAY MY CHILD WATCHED...

TODAY MY CHILD REMEMBERED...

TODAY I NOTICED...

TODAY I WONDER...

Day Three

NOTICE WATCHING

Today, notice what your child studies closely before joining in.

TODAY MY CHILD UNDERSTOOD...

TODAY MY CHILD COMMUNICATED...

TODAY MY CHILD WATCHED...

TODAY MY CHILD REMEMBERED...

TODAY I NOTICED...

TODAY I WONDER...

Day Four

NOTICE MEMORY

Today, look for the small moments where your child remembers what comes next.

TODAY MY CHILD UNDERSTOOD...

TODAY MY CHILD COMMUNICATED...

TODAY MY CHILD WATCHED...

TODAY MY CHILD REMEMBERED...

TODAY I NOTICED...

TODAY I WONDER...

Day Five

NOTICE LISTENING

Today, pay attention to how your child tunes in to tone, rhythm, and sound.

TODAY MY CHILD UNDERSTOOD...

TODAY MY CHILD COMMUNICATED...

TODAY MY CHILD WATCHED...

TODAY MY CHILD REMEMBERED...

TODAY I NOTICED...

TODAY I WONDER...

Day Six

NOTICE CONNECTION

Today, notice the moments your child reaches out to share something with you.

TODAY MY CHILD UNDERSTOOD...

TODAY MY CHILD COMMUNICATED...

TODAY MY CHILD WATCHED...

TODAY MY CHILD REMEMBERED...

TODAY I NOTICED...

TODAY I WONDER...

Day Seven

NOTICE WHAT CHANGED

Today, look back gently — what feels different from where you started this week?

TODAY MY CHILD UNDERSTOOD...

TODAY MY CHILD COMMUNICATED...

TODAY MY CHILD WATCHED...

TODAY MY CHILD REMEMBERED...

TODAY I NOTICED...

TODAY I WONDER...

What I See Differently Now

A quiet space to gather what this week revealed.

There's no need to summarize the whole week. Just sit with what stands out, and let these questions guide what you write.

LOOKING BACK ON THIS WEEK

What surprised me most...

What does my child understand that I hadn't noticed before...

How does my child communicate without words...

WHAT I'LL KEEP NOTICING

A strength I see more clearly now...

Something I want to keep watching for...

What moment from this week do I want to remember a year from now...

A Moment I Never Want To Forget

Most parents keep a journal because of one memory, not the whole week.

DATE _____

THE MEMORY

WHAT HAPPENED

WHY I WANT TO REMEMBER IT

A LETTER TO THE PARENT

One Last Thing Before You Close This

The goal was never to count words. It was always to see the child — the one who is understanding more than they can say, remembering more than they can repeat, and reaching toward you in a hundred small ways every single day.

Many parents spend months waiting to hear something. Sometimes this journal reveals it was already there all along.

Whatever this week showed you, keep it close. It is part of the story your child is already telling — quietly, in their own time.

"You were not waiting for your child to speak. You were waiting to notice they already were."

THANK YOU FOR DOWNLOADING

A Gentle Way To See The Learning Already There.

We hope this week of noticing brought you a little more calm, and a little more clarity. Keep this journal somewhere you'll find it again — it's meant to be returned to, not finished once and put away. The noticing doesn't have to end here. Whatever you keep watching for, let it stay gentle.

A FEW QUIET NEXT STEPS

KEEP OBSERVING

The Invisible Learning Journal

For noticing the quiet learning already happening in everyday moments.

KEEP CONNECTING

Tiny Moments Conversation Cards

Gentle prompts for the small exchanges that already happen each day.

KEEP DESCRIBING

Everyday Language Prompts

Simple language invitations woven into the ordinary rhythm of the day.

KEEP NOTICING

Why This Object Matters

For the found objects your toddler can't seem to put down.

IF YOU'D LIKE TO READ MORE

→ What Late Talkers Are Trying To Tell Us

A closer look at the communication happening before the first words do.

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Years from now, your child may not remember these quiet pages. But they may remember how it felt to be watched closely, and loved without pressure. And perhaps that was the thing that mattered most.