



Speech and Language Therapy

Early Years Resource Pack

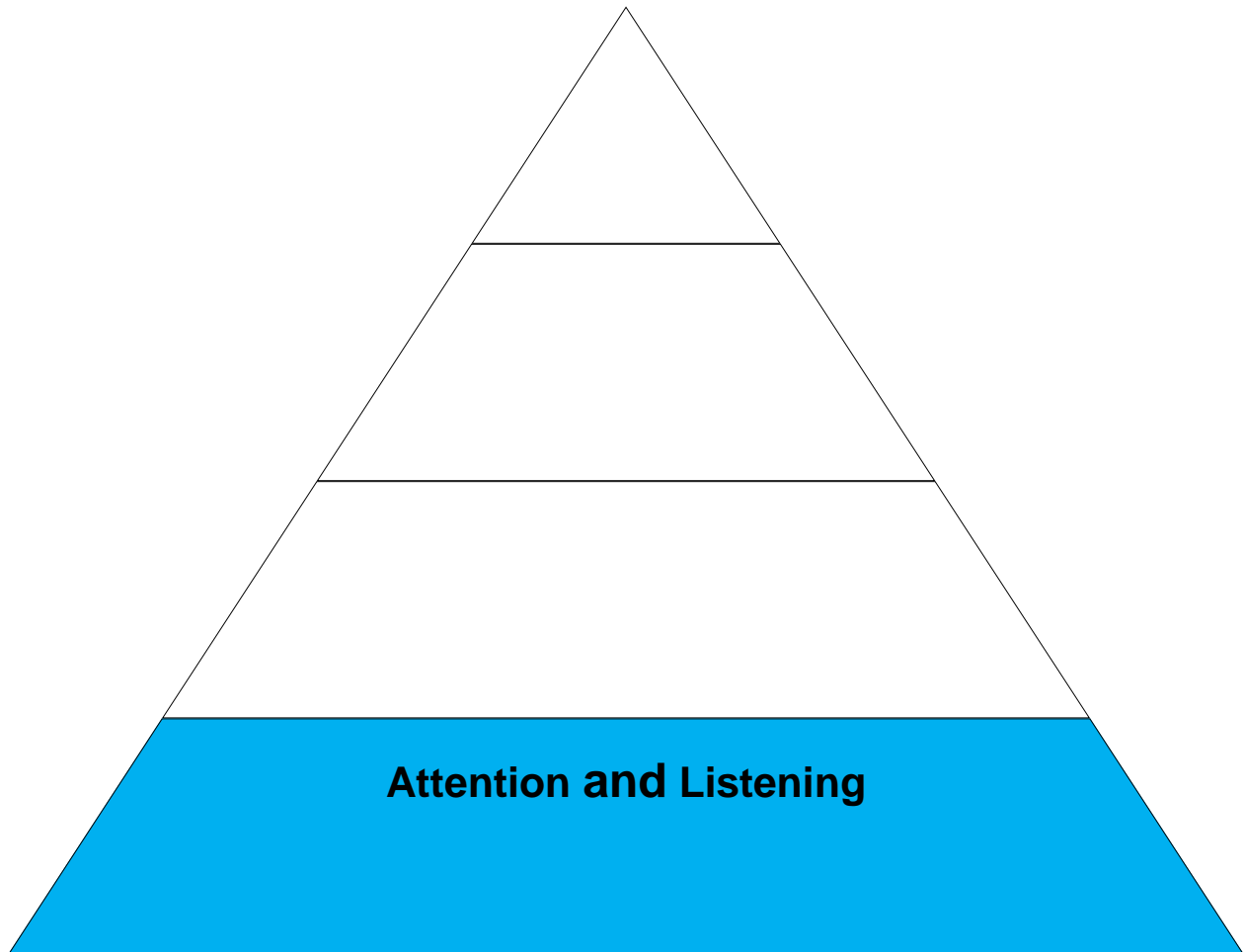
Part 2 – Advice Sheets

Contents





Early Years Resource Pack	1
Contents	2
Attention and Listening	4
Stages of Attention Development	5
Useful strategies for helping a child develop Attention	6
Now/ Next Boards	8
Visual Timetable	9
Shared Attention and Anticipation Games	10
Ready Steady Go Games (RSG)	11
Attention Bucket	12
Sustaining Attention	14
Play	16
Stages of Play Development	17
Useful Strategies for Play Development	18
Special Time	19
Exploratory play	20
Relational and Self-Pretend Play	21
Simple Pretend play	22
Sequences of pretend play	23
Imaginative Play	24
Social Interaction	25
Stages of Social Interaction Through Play	26
Useful Strategies for developing Social Interaction	27
Creating Opportunities	28
Intensive interaction	29
Joint Attention - Eye Contact	31
Ready Steady Go Games – Eye Contact	32
Gesture and Pointing	33
Facial Expression and Body Language	34
Turn Taking in Play	36
Turn Taking in Conversation	37

Understanding	38
Useful strategies to develop understanding	39
Objects of reference (OOR)	41
Key Words.....	42
One Key Word.....	45
Two Key Words	46
Three Key Words	47
Four Key Words	48
Concept Words.....	49
Use of Language.....	51
Useful Strategies to Develop Expressive Language	52
Encouraging Early Words.....	53
Makaton	54
Choosing Boards	55
Putting words together	56
Sentence Scaffolding	58
Speech	59
Stages of Speech Sound Development	60
Use of Dummies.....	63
Hearing Difficulties.....	64
Playing With Sounds	65
Sound Discrimination	66
Phonological Awareness for Pre-School Children.....	67
Reluctant speakers	68
Learning More Than One Language	69
Voice care	70
Stammering	71

Attention and Listening



Stages of Attention Development

Level of Attention	What this looks like	Strategies to help
Level 1: Fleeting	<p>The child is easily distracted; they are highly distracted by other sounds and movements within the environment.</p> <p>They may appear to 'ignore' the adult. They will flit from one toy or activity to another.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use highly motivating toys the child likes. Turn off and remove distractions in the environment e.g. TV, washing machine, unused toys. Increase enjoyment of joint attention to others through anticipation games. 
Level 2: Rigid	<p>The child can concentrate on a task of their own choice but cannot tolerate interruption by an adult.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gentle physical and verbal prompts such as calling the child's name and touching their hand, to gain attention and 'look' toward the adult. Use highly motivating activities such as 'Bucket time' 
Level 3: Single Channelled	<p>The child cannot cope doing one thing and listening to an instruction about something else at the same time. They have to do one or the other.</p> <p>If an adult wants to give an instruction, the child must be asked to stop their activity, listen to the adult and then return to the activity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Verbal prompts, such as: calling the child's name to gain attention and 'look' toward the adult. Use gesture and show excitement in your tone of voice to gain and maintain attention of the child. Extending time focused on a task by adding 'one more turn'. Use visual support to support understanding through 'Now/Next Boards' and 'Visual Timetables'. 
Level 4: Focusing	<p>The child is gradually able to shift their attention from one to the other themselves without the help of the adult.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tell the child it is time to listen. Give children explicit praise when they are showing active listening (e.g. 'You are looking at me, so I know you are listening'). 
Level 5: Two Channelled	<p>The child can now do a task and understand an instruction at the same time.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Praise the child for good 'listening'. Use reward systems/charts.

Adapted from Cooper, Moodley and Reynell (1978)

Useful strategies for helping a child develop Attention

Top Tips:

- ✓ If you have any concerns about a child's hearing levels make a referral for a hearing test to be completed (refer to page 64 for 'Hearing Difficulties').
- ✓ Make sure you carry out activities in **distraction free environment** – you need to be the most exciting thing in the room.
- ✓ Make sure your child is looking at you when you talk to them (e.g. by calling your child's name. Keep your sentences short and to the point.
- ✓ Use toys which you know will **motivate the child**. Highly motivating toys; these are toys that make noises or have flashing lights e.g. rainmakers; LED light spinners, mesh balls; or your child's special interest, such as: Paw Patrol toys.



- ✓ Initially, any activities should be really short. **Short 1-2 minutes, but frequently will be more successful**, gradually building up the time up to 2-3 minutes as the child's attention increases.
- ✓ Do not assume that the child knows what 'good listening' is. **Use LOTS of praise** and make it specific about what they are doing that is good i.e. looking at you, looking when you call the child's name. e.g. "Good looking".



- ✓ **Be consistent** and reinforce 'good listening' all the time.
- ✓ Use pictures/symbols to **provide visual support**, such as a now/next board, this will help the child remember and understand what is expected of them.



- ✓ **Teach active listening** strategies. For example, good sitting, good looking, good taking turns, good thinking about the words (for older children). Discuss what each of these points would look and feel like. Give children explicit praise when they are showing active listening (e.g. 'You are looking at me, so I know you are listening' or 'Good sitting'. (e.g. Your legs are crossed and you have still hands).



Some useful strategies for getting children to stop their activity and attend to you:

- ✓ Make it clear when the activity will finish e.g. “when sand timer is finished, the task is finished”; or “two turns, then finish”.



- ✓ Strategies such as counting down from 3-2-1-0 and reinforcing this with praise when achieved.



- ✓ For those children with extreme difficulty focusing on an activity, you may need to give them a separate space, or at least consider where they are seated and who they are seated next to.



- ✓ Have frequent breaks between tasks, so that the child has some time where they do not need to attend. This could be 1-5 minutes depending on the child; or it might include a movement break.





Suggested Individual Support Plan (ISP) Targets:

- The child will stop and listen when their name is called.
- The child will attend to an activity of their own choice for one/two/three/four/ five minutes.
- The child will attend to a less motivating adult led activity for one/two/three/four/ five minutes.
- The child will be able to listen to an instruction while engaging in an activity.

Now/ Next Boards

What is a 'Now and Next' board?

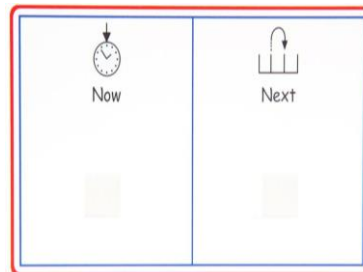
- 'Now/Next' boards are a way of helping the child to understand what is expected of them, at times of transition across the day.

Now	Next
<p style="text-align: center;">tidy up</p> 	<p style="text-align: center;">bubbles</p> 

Who might benefit from a 'Now and Next' board?

- A child who has difficulty finishing one activity and starting another.
- A child who is reluctant to participate in a particular activity.
- A child with limited attention skills.

What does it look like?



How to use a Now/Next board

1. Use a board which has two spaces-one which is labelled 'now' and one which is labelled 'next'.
2. Place one object/photo/symbol on each side of the board.
The 'now' section will often be something adult chosen (e.g. 'tidy up') and the next will often be a reward activity (e.g. 'bubbles').
3. Show the child the board, point to each section individually and support the child by saying "tidy up now....bubbles next". Reduce language by using key words only.
If the child attempts to move away or change activity the adult should prompt the child by bringing them back to the now/next board, point and name the activity and encourage the child to continue engaging with the set activity.
4. When the child finishes a task, reinforce this, again pointing to the board 'Tidy up finished, time for bubbles'.

Visual Timetable

What is a visual timetable?

- A visual timetable is a visual routine. You can use the timetable to show the activities that your child is going to complete as part of their routine.
- This may help their understanding of what is happening throughout the day and encourage them to anticipate and engage in routines.



How to use the visual timetable:

1. Place the timetable in a clear place that your child can easily see.
2. Place a small number of symbols down the strip which illustrates which activities your child is going to do.
3. Show them the symbol as you begin an activity.
4. When the activity is finished, remove it. You may need to do this for your child initially, but with time, they may begin to do this more independently.

Strategies to Ensure Success:

- It may be helpful to take the timetable and a bank of symbols out with you, so that you can always show your child what is coming next.
- It does not matter whether the timetable is **horizontal or vertical**.
- You may be tempted to take away the visual support as the child is now able to follow the routine. However the visual timetable **should grow with the child**, and increase in complexity as the child is expected to achieve more.
- As a child, we **start by** understanding pictures/photographs, then symbols, then words. Consider this when designing your child's visual timetable.

Shared Attention and Anticipation Games



What is shared attention?

- Some children may have difficulties seeking out others when playing, and do not appear to understand the pleasure that comes from sharing attention with another person.
- When children play people games, they aren't distracted by toys, they focus on the adult.

People Games

These activities aim to help your child develop a skill known as 'shared' or 'joint' attention. The aim is to make you (and your activity) the most exciting thing in the room, so your child cannot resist engaging and focusing on you.

Physical Play

- Bounce the child up and down on your lap or play swinging and rocking games on the floor.
- Play tickle games with the child.
- Play 'peek a boo' or hide and seek games.

Actions and Rhymes

Any games that have a song and actions e.g.

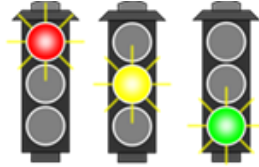
- Row row row your boat
- Round and round the garden
- Zoom zoom zoom we're going to the moon



Strategies to Ensure Success:

- Remember to wait for eye contact.
- Making the song and actions **lively and animated** is important because it will help to keep the child's attention and make the game interesting.
- **Pause and wait** for the child to indicate that they want you to keep going – they might do this with a movement, a look, a smile or a sound.
- It's okay to involve other family members – brothers, sisters, grandparents – they all help to show what it means to join in and enjoy a shared activity.

Ready Steady Go Games (RSG)



The aim of Ready Steady Go games is to do a single simple action.

Before doing the action, the adult says 'Ready, Steady, Go' and once 'Go' has been said the action is performed. Examples of RSG games are:

- Blowing bubbles
- Rolling a ball to one another
- Skittles
- Pushing a car or train along a track
- Jumping up from behind something
- Throwing bean bags in to a bucket
- Turn music on to dance to



How do you use a Ready Steady Go Game?

1. Decide on the activity that you are going to use with your Ready Steady Go sequence.
2. Say 'Ready...(pause)...Steady... (pause)... Go'. When you say 'go' the action is completed e.g. blow the bubbles. The game continues like this.
3. In this activity you can encourage your child to talk also. You say 'Ready ... (pause) ... Steady ... (Pause) ... encouraging your child to indicate 'Go'.
4. You can add variation to the game by increasing the length of the pause between Steady and Go to make your child wait longer and longer... remember to always follow through with the action if the child says 'go'.

Strategies to Ensure Success:

- Ensure the child is motivated by the activity/ game.
- Provide a variety of different opportunities to practice (different activities)
- Get down to the child's level and follow what they are interested in.
- Try to match your eye level to the child's

Attention Bucket



What is Attention Bucket?

- A small interesting box containing multi-sensory toys **not found in an everyday** nursery, which children wouldn't be allowed to access alone. The bucket belongs to the adult – the children should not be given any of the toys.
- It can be used to encourage a child to come to and focus on an adult led activity.

The Bucket Session:

1. Remove all possible distractions. Consider using a different room to the one your child usually 'plays' in. Show your child a picture of bucket/ bag/box and say 'bucket time'.

Now	Next
	

2. Sing an introduction song e.g. "I've got something in my bucket, I've got something in my bucket, I've got something in my bucket, I wonder what it is".
3. Show the first toy saying nothing, then show it again and add simple language e.g. 'ball', 'bounce'. Exaggerate your facial expressions; use a range of expressions (surprise, excitement, etc.) and use tone of voice. Initially aim to show one or two toys, with a maximum of three toys in the bucket.



















4. When the session has finished, draw a line through the bucket/ bag and say 'Bucket time is finished'.

Strategies to Ensure Success:

- Use the Now/Next Board to help the child understand what is expected of them.
- Avoid talking directly with your child during the activity e.g. asking questions. Keep language simple – single words and short phrases e.g. “jumping man”.
- If your child begins to get very excited, slow down the activity, the rate of speech and lower your voice
- Learn to anticipate if your child is going to try and get up – pre-empt this with an arm or leg placed to prevent this, or sit them on a lap.
- If your child does leave the area, DO NOT stop – continue with the session.
- Your child should not try and touch the toys.
- Avoid showing one toy for too long, as your child may become bored.

Toy ideas:

It is a good idea to have a range of toys that you can switch between at different sessions and make sure you have prepared different things you can do with each toy in order to hold attention for increasing lengths of time. e.g. rainmaker – can tilt up and down, can roll on the floor, can twist around, can shake and dance with it.

			
Bumble Ball	Pull-string animals	Flashing windmill	Balloon
			
Jack-in-the-Box toys	Giggle stick	Musical spinning top	Singing/Dancing toys
			
Light toy	bubbles	Jumping man	Noise maker
			
Mesh ball	Wind up toys	Maraca	Spring toy

Suggested Individual Support Plan (ISP) Targets:

- The child will take part in an adult led activity for X minutes (start with a small amount of time and then increase once successful).
- The child will share interest in an activity with an adult for X minutes (start with a small amount of time and then increase once successful).

Sustaining Attention

What does it mean to sustain attention?

- To attend to an activity that has a sequence of more than one step and leads to an exciting experience.
- For up to 5 minutes at a time.
- Activities must continue to be:-
 - Highly visual
 - Highly appealing and irresistible
 - Delivered by the adult

The Sustaining Session:

1. Remove all possible distractions. Organise everything in advance. Consider using a different room to the one your child usually 'plays' in.

Now	Next
	

2. Support the child's understanding of what will happen using the now/next board. Once the first activity is complete, introduce the next activity 'Bucket finished, now flour'.
3. Take out the items you need for the sequence: flour, tray, shapes. Take the opportunity to label these as you show each item 'tray', 'flour', 'shapes'.
4. **Step 1:** Demonstrate the task silently: e.g.
 (Place the tray on the floor)
 (Place the shape on the tray)
 (Lift the flour up high and sprinkle onto the tray)
 (Lift up the shape, show the children what you created!)
5. **Step 2:** Demonstrate again, this time using key words:-
 'Tray down'
 'Car cutter'
 'Uuuuup....Shake shake shake!'
 'Wow! Moon!'
6. When the session has finished, go to the Now/Next board and indicate that this activity has finished.



Strategies to Ensure Success:

- Make sure everyone gets a good view of the adult demonstrating.
- Exaggerate your facial expressions and tone of voice; use a range (surprise, excitement, etc.)
- Provide a 'model' adult, showing the expected behaviours e.g. sitting and watching.
- If a child starts talking or asking for a turn, adults should say "It is Lily's basket". TA should support saying "Yes, it is Lily's basket".

Activity ideas:

Hide Objects in the sand or flour or shaving foam then reveal them with water.

Build Flour castles and smash them down!



Foamy Flower Pot Worms: Place the flower pot on the play surface e.g. shower curtain. Add food colouring to water in some small squirty bottles. Squirt shaving foam over the flowerpots and then squirt with coloured water. Place the other flowerpot over the top and squish them down – watch the coloured worms wiggle through!



Glittery Snail Trails: Dribble glue onto a big sheet of paper and sprinkle coloured sand/glitter from high up.

Painty Names: Dribble bright paint onto black paper from high up then use a brush to write each child's name from drips

Shaving Foam Splat: Squirt dollops of foam onto the tray then smear all over a tray and draw big dots with finger teach counting.

Crazy Soap: throw it about, clap it into snow.



Tell a Story/rhyme with props.

Tiered Fountain: Stack shot glasses to form a tiered tower, then fill from the top with coloured water

Giant Painting: Do one side, and put another sheet on top to make two.

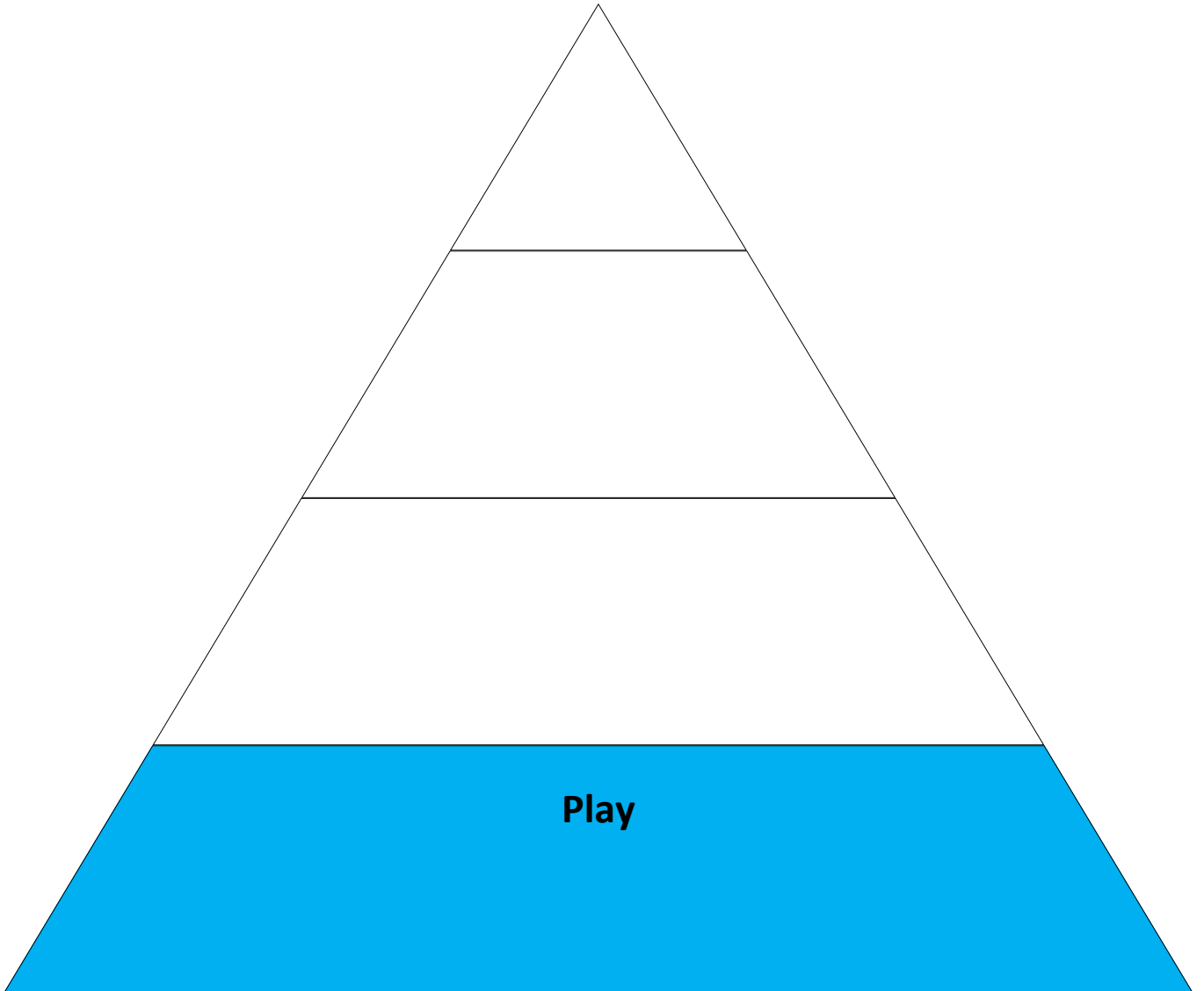
Volcanoes: add food colouring into lemonade, then add salt and it makes a volcano, or use just bicarb + vinegar

Shaky, Shaky Powder: Sprinkle cocoa powder onto a white surface, draw pictures in the flour.






Dominoes or Jenga run.



Play



Stages of Play Development

Level of Play	What this looks like	Strategies to help
Level 1: Exploratory play	The child will play through exploring their environment by looking, touching, feeling, and smelling.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement 'Special time' • Use the 'Useful strategies' • See activity ideas for exploratory play. 
Level 2: Relational and Self pretending	The child will show an understanding of everyday objects by using them for what they were designed for e.g. putting together the pieces of a puzzle, or using a pen on paper. They will also use simple pretend skills such as brushing their own hair, pretending to drink from a cup.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement 'Special time' • Use the 'Useful strategies' • See activity ideas for relational and self pretend play. 
Level 3: Simple pretend	The child will use two objects and relates them together e.g. will put teddy/action figure onto the pretend bed, brush the toy's hair, offer the toy a drink.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement 'Special time' • Use the 'Useful strategies' • See activity ideas for simple pretend play. 
Level 4: Sequences of pretend	The child will now link their pretend play actions into a sequence of 2 or more actions using a toy. They will demonstrate and carry out routines they are familiar with e.g. bath time, dinner time, getting dressed etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement 'Special time' • Use the 'Useful strategies' • See activity ideas for sequences of pretend play. 
Level 5: Imaginative	The child will be able to use one object as another e.g. they can pretend the banana is a telephone. They may also begin to pretend something is there when it is not. Play sequences start to become extended and more elaborate beyond the child's everyday experiences e.g. e.g. riding a flying unicorn.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement 'Special time' • Use the 'Useful strategies' • See activity ideas for imaginative play. 

Useful Strategies for Play Development



What is play and why is play important?

- Play is one of the foundation building blocks for language development.
- Play allows children to learn about the world and to make sense of it. Children learn through enjoyment, having fun and interacting with the world around them.
- Play enables children to learn about and experiment with speech, language and social skills as they learn to interact with their peers.

Strategies to try when playing with the child:

- The area you are playing in needs to be **as quiet as possible**. Try to limit the amount of distractions by reducing the amount of toys you have out at one time.
- Try and get down on the floor with the child or **to their level**, so that you can be face-to-face for the activity.
- **Watch what interests the child** and join in. Don't worry if the child doesn't want to do what you had planned.
- **Praise** and recognize all attempts on the child's part 'Good building'.
- **Don't ask too many questions**. Instead, **comment** on what the child is doing rather than interrupting their play by asking questions e.g. 'dolly's having a drink' NOT 'what is dolly doing?'
- **Play alongside the child**. Copy what they do, this will show the child that you are interested in what they are doing. Your child may start to include you in their play. Don't force your child to do something different.
- After some time copying your child, you can start to suggest new ideas to **extend their play further** e.g. the child is pushing a train up and down; the adult gets another train and makes this go through the tunnel. The child is more likely to copy if they don't feel forced to change what they are happy doing

Remember!

Toys are not essential for play. Play is a form of communication. Toys can be used to extend and develop this communication. Many types of play involve no toys; for example, action and finger rhymes, or hide and seek. A wooden spoon and saucepan lids make a great instrument.

Suggested Individual Support Plan (ISP) Targets:

- The child will access a range of interactive activities available in the setting
- The child will copy 10 new pretend play actions with the people figures.
- The child will copy a 3 part pretend play sequence e.g. bath teddy, dry teddy, dress teddy.
- The child will play with a wider variety of toys and demonstrate more complex play sequences

Special Time



'Special time' is a time for you and your child to play together in addition to the times you already have – not instead of. It is a time for you to help your child develop their speech and language skills through play.

How to have a 'special time':

Before you start:

- Explain to your child about having this time together and that it is their job to choose what to do e.g. "This is your 'special time' ... for the next 5 minutes, what shall we play?"
- Allow your child to select the activity, toy or game e.g. cars, dolls, puzzles. Note, this should not be reading a book, watching TV or playing a lively outdoor game as these types of activity can be difficult to practice language strategies.

During special time:

- 'Special time' lasts for 5 minutes only and should not be extended.
- When your child has chosen what to do, go to a room or space where you will not be disturbed.
- Remove any obvious distractions such as radio or TV.
- The adult should follow the child's lead, commenting on what they are doing with short simple sentences and adding ideas to their play where appropriate.
- Play with your child for five minutes, giving him your undivided attention.

When you have finished:

- At the end of the special time make it clear to the child that 'special time is finished'.
- Your child can carry on playing if they wish, however this is no longer 'special time'.
- If you have other children, it is important to give them their own regular 'special times' as well.

How often do I do 'special time'?

- Try to do at least four 'special times' a week. Don't do more than 6 in a week. Don't try doing more than one a day.
- It is important to keep to only 5 minutes because it makes it easier for you to have the 'special time' more often. If you spend a long time on it, you are more likely to miss a day when you are busy.

Exploratory play



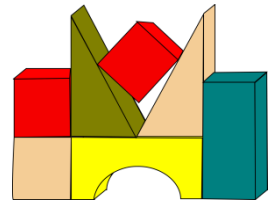
What is pretend play?

Early play is exploratory and is dependent on a varied and interesting environment. Through play with toys and objects, babies discover that they can make things happen e.g. shaking a rattle makes a noise.

Activity ideas to encourage exploratory play:

What's in The Bag?

Collect items such as: spoons, shiny paper, ribbons, bricks, empty pots. Put the materials in boxes or drawstring bags and take out one at a time to explore. Crumple up the bits of paper to make interesting noises.



Ball Games

Rolling back and forth, throwing/kicking the ball to another person.

Construction Toys

Stacking bricks, toys or beakers. Putting in and taking out of boxes – small objects and containers.

Noisy Toys

Introduce some interesting noisy toys such as mobiles, chime toys, rolling balls with bells in. Boxes, pans, and spoons make great drums.



Hiding Games

Wave a scarf up and down over the child, so that the child can feel the breeze. Lift it high and let it fall over your head. Encourage the child to pull it off your head. Cover a toy with the scarf and encourage the child to pull it off.

Beach Balls

Play games of throw and catch with soft balls. Blow up the beach balls and let the child feel the air coming out.

Sand Pits and Water Trays

Let the child explore the different textures with their hands. Introduce different containers, sieves and pouring jugs and encourage them to fill and empty them.

Messy Play

Painting with hands, fingers, and feet; or large wax crayons for mark making.



Pop up Books

Let the child enjoy pressing the buttons.

Relational and Self-Pretend Play



At this stage the child should begin to understand everyday objects and use them for what they were designed for, such as:-

- Putting together the pieces of a puzzle
- Placing blocks into a shape sorter
- Using a pen on paper
- Brushing their own hair
- Pretending to drink from a cup

Strategies to Ensure Success:

- **Encourage the child to help you** with the activities that you do around the home setting, e.g. washing up, putting shopping away, cleaning the house.
- **Show your child** an action and see if they will imitate you.
- **Hand over hand support** e.g. helping the child to pick up the toy themselves.
- **Backward chaining**; adult models all of the sequence and encourages the child to complete the last action, slowly encouraging the child to take on more and more of the sequence independently.
- **Repetition** of familiar actions in different places and with different toys.

Activity ideas to encourage relational play:

Toys

Encourage the child to use the toys for the purpose they are created;-

- Building a tower with blocks
- Rolling or kicking a ball with a bat
- Pushing cars around a track
- Using pretend hammers, saws, building toys

Everyday objects

Use everyday objects to pretend with e.g. an empty cup, brush or flannel. Carry out actions e.g. pretending to have a drink, brushing your hair, brushing teeth, drying hands. Encourage the child to copy you.



Telephone

Use toy telephones to have pretend conversations.

Miniatures

Using miniature toys e.g. animals, farms and dolls; children can learn to relate objects together. Put the animals on the trailer or the driver on the tractor, and then begin to act out a range of actions.

Simple Pretend play



What is pretend play?

When children are playing pretend they are **playing 'as if' something is real**. They are creating a situation where there is more going on than what is literally happening.

For example, a child might be placing a cup to the doll's mouth: the doll is 'alive' and really drinking; and when the doll is put in the bed: the doll is really sleeping.

Strategies to Ensure Success:

- **Provide new ideas** by modelling and adding new pretend play actions to the child.
- **Show your child** an action and see if they will copy you.
- **Hand over hand support** e.g. helping the child to pick up the toy themselves.
- Backward chaining; adult models all of the sequence and encourages the **child to complete the last action**, slowly encouraging the child to take on more and more of the sequence
- **Repetition** of familiar actions.

Activity Ideas to encourage pretend play



Everyday routines

Involve a doll, teddy or toy figure in everyday situations and provide appropriate matching objects; for example, the child can wash teddy's hands, brush hair, make teddy tidy up, or brush spider man's teeth.

Puppets

Use puppets in the same way. Stick to everyday routines that the child understands or has experienced e.g. shopping, washing, dressing.



Tea Party

Set up a teddy bear's or doll's tea party and encourage the child to hand out the plates, put the food on the plates, stir the drink with a spoon etc.

Animal Farm/Zoo

Set up a farm, encouraging the child to carry out actions, such as making the animal sounds, walk, eat, or run around the farm/zoo.



Car Town

Place people in the cars and make them drive around the town. Stop and get the figures out to play in the park, or eat an ice cream.

Sequences of pretend play



What are sequences of pretend play?

Once the child is using a wide range of pretend play actions, they are ready to be encouraged to extend their play sequences. A sequence is more than one pretend play action where the child will create a story in their play e.g. Teddy puts his shoes on, walks to the shop, buys some food, and brings it back home to make dinner.

Strategies to Ensure Success:

Adult to add ideas to create a longer sequence, e.g. the child hands the drink to the teddy, the adult models stirring the drink before offering this to the teddy.

Activity Ideas to encourage sequences of pretend play

Small world play;- animals/ farms.

The child can learn to act out a story e.g. the animals come out of the pen, the farmer brings them breakfast, they then play in the field, and then have a swim. At the end of the day, they all go to bed.



Small world play;- Happy Land sets/ Play Mobil sets

The child can learn to act out a story e.g. the children wake up, they get in the car to drive to the park, they buy an ice-cream, play on the swings, and then they go home.

Dinner time

Encourage the child to pretend to cut, cook and serve the food to teddy/dolly/action figure. Offer drinks, wash and tidy up afterward.

Dolls house

Provide the opportunity to act out a range of sequences; bath time, getting dressed, doing homework, bed time etc.



Substitute one object for another

Encourage the child to use one object as something else, e.g. the stick is a magic wand, the remote is a mobile phone, the cloth is a dress, a lolly pop stick as a spoon; the possibilities are endless.

Post Office/Shops

Use things from around your house to make a small pretend shop or post office. Pretend walking through the shop, taking orders, sending letters, or paying the shop keeper.

Doctors

Make your own doctor kit, so your child can use to play hospital or veterinarian. Clean the cut, give medicine, put on the bandage, lie teddy down, and give teddy a drink.



Imaginative Play



What is imaginative play?

Children at this stage begin to pretend something is there when it is not. Imaginative play helps children to practice adult roles, express their feelings and explore their ideas. It is also good for learning to cooperate and take turns with other children and adults. Typically roles are assigned to each child involved (a mum, dad, brother, sister, baby, etc.) and the children then get into character.

Strategies to Ensure Success:

Initially the adult can demonstrate what the items could be turned into e.g. the box could be a rocket or a car. The adult supports the child to take a role or a turn in the game.

Activity Ideas to encourage imagination

Cardboard boxes

Children enjoy playing with empty boxes, plastic pots, fabric and string, scissors and glue, to create new ideas e.g. making a rocket, oven, house, or castle.



Town creation

Using floor mats or boards to make roads for cars.

The adult can support the child with creating the roads and buildings for their town. The adult to support the child to take simple turns or discuss the rule of the game with their peers.

Dressing up

Adult may need to prompt child to take on the role initially by demonstrating how the character might talk or what role they might take in the story. Adult to support the children to share the dressing up clothes and take turns to choose an item to put on.

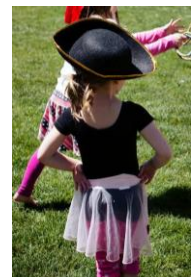


Role Play

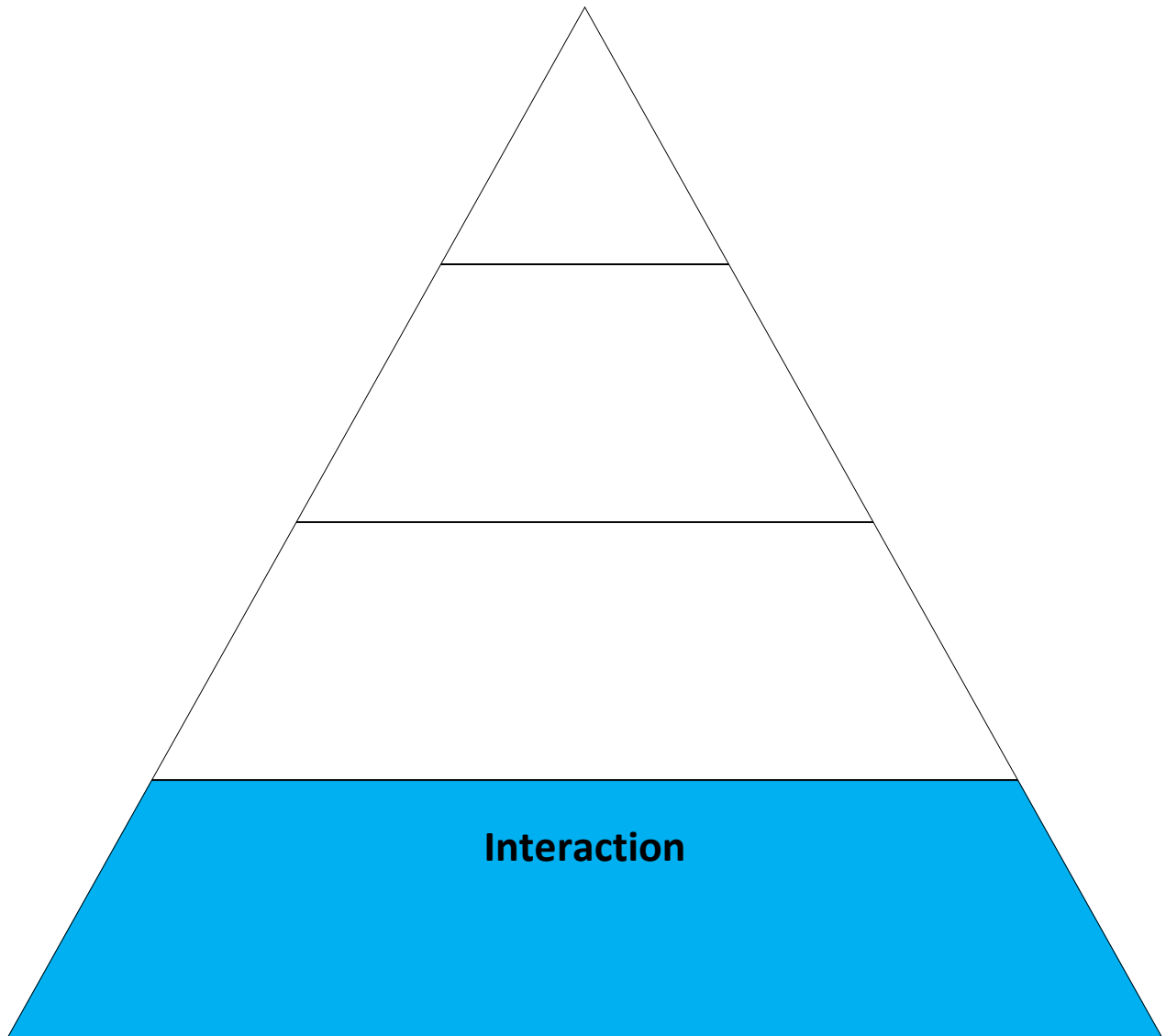
Play out a character in role play. For example, a child might pretend they are delivering the post, selling food at a shop, being a mother, being a policeman, being a doctor, and so on.

Pirates





Play out familiar characters, such as: 'pirates'. Cardboard boxes make great ships; sticks make great swords - act out scenes such as walking the plank, sailing the ship, seeking treasure, or finding an island.



Social Interaction



Stages of Social Interaction Through Play

Level of Social Interaction	What this looks like	Strategies to help
Level 1 Solitary	The child will be happy to play on their own, directing their own play without being concerned about others around them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the 'intensive interaction' strategies. 
Level 2 Parallel	The child will play beside other children rather than with them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use 'people games' to encourage interest in others. See 'Ready Steady Go' games. 
Level 3 Associative	The child may talk to another and share materials, but does not yet take on a role in a shared goal or work towards the same goal as another child.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See early turn taking strategies. 
Level 4 Cooperative	The child will now engage in formal game, social pretend story and work towards the same goal as another child e.g. building a model aeroplane together.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement 'eye contact', and 'body language' activities to develop understanding and awareness of others. 

During this time children also develop their awareness of social understanding including:-

- Using, gaining and following the **eye gaze** of others.
- Learning to **copy** other people.
- Using body language such as **gestures** to communicate their ideas and feelings.
- Taking **turns** and sharing with others.
- Changing **tone of voice**, pitch and loudness to understand others and communicate their own feelings.
- Knowing when and how to **start an interaction**/conversation.
- Sharing emotions.**
- Using verbal and non-verbal skills to **maintain a conversation** with others, **commenting** and using **questions**.
- Negotiating** with others.



Useful Strategies for developing Social Interaction



What is interaction and why is interaction important?

- Children do not have to have language in order to share experiences and interact with others, they use early **non-verbal interaction skills** e.g. eye contact.
- Interaction skills **develop from a very young age** e.g. making vocalisations in response to a care giver.
- Children **learn language and social rules by copying** what they see and hear.

Strategies to try when interacting with the child:

- Try and get down on the floor with the child or **to their level** so that you can be face-to-face with the child.
- Encourage the child to **look toward the speaker**.
- **Model the behaviour you are expecting** the child to copy such as phrases, waving good bye etc.
- **Explain the behaviours** of others, 'I am sad because my ice cream fell'.
- Encourage the child to take turns during **turn taking games**, make them aware they need to take a turn and offer others a turn.



Suggested Individual Support Plan (ISP) Targets:

- The child will look at the adult to indicate they want the game to continue.
- The child will make a sound to indicate they want the song to continue.
- The child will take a turn during an action song e.g. choose the next part of 'Wheels on the Bus'.
- The child will make a choice by reaching and labelling the item they want.
- The child will engage in a turn taking game with a peer for 5 turns.
- The child will develop early conversation skills within a small structured group setting. This will be demonstrated by:
 - Being able to share information about himself (e.g. his favourite food).
 - Being able to wait for his turn while others share information about themselves.
 - Being able to use non-verbal communication skills such as looking towards / facing in the direction of the person who is speaking.

Creating Opportunities



What are opportunities?

- This is the process of making situations for your child to need to communicate.
- Often as parents, we are prepared and able to interpret our child's every need. However, this takes away the need for our child to communicate.
- By creating opportunities you can create more need for your child to need to communicate and learn that communication is useful and enjoyable.

Activity ideas:

OWL

Observe: What is my child doing?

Wait: How does my child react?

Listen: What are they doing to communicate?



Sabotage

Choose an activity that the child **cannot do without your help** (i.e. toy in a container, wind-up toys, and then wait. Place a wanted piece of clothing somewhere where the child cannot reach it. See if the child comes to you to gain help.

Pause and wait

Complete a familiar activity, such as in a familiar song story or routine. **Pause and wait** for the child's reaction. Stop half way through singing their favourite nursery rhyme. See if the child completes the sound or indicates for you to continue.

Offer bits, not all

Offer the child **small pieces or part of an activity**, rather than all of a toy or snack, so they need to ask for 'more'. Instead of giving your child a big cup of juice, give them a little bit, then wait for your child to initiate that they would like more.



Choices

Offer a choice of two by asking 'orange or grapes'? Holding out each item, see if the child reaches or labels the one they want.

If the child reaches for both items, release and name the item you think they would prefer.

If the child persists with reaching for both, offer them one you think they would prefer and say 'First grapes and then banana'.

Intensive interaction



What is Intensive Interaction?

- Intensive Interaction is an approach that works on **early interaction abilities**; understanding eye contact, using facial expression, giving attention to another person, understanding physical contact and personal space.
- It focuses on interactions that happen **naturally throughout the day**.
- It is **individual** and focuses on the interaction that the child can already do.
- It aims to support understanding and **enjoyment in interacting** with others.

How do I carry out 'intensive interaction'?

1. **BE AVAILABLE:** - Make yourself available. Get down to the child's eye level. Position yourself at the level the child is at, if they are sitting sit opposite them, if they are lying down, lay down next to them. Capture the interest and attention of the child by ensuring you have face-to-face contact.
2. **LET THE CHILD LEAD:** - Be completely attentive to your child, waiting for them to start the interaction. Don't rush; make the experience relaxed and enjoyable.

What to look out for:

- Vocalisations
- Other noise made with the mouth (e.g. blowing, tongue wagging).
- Other noises (e.g. tapping parts of the body, slapping or tapping furniture or walls, foot tapping or stamping, clapping or hand rubbing).
- Movements (e.g. hand movements, rocking, swaying, movements of the legs and feet, head bobbing, reaching out).
- Facial expression changes.
- Physical contacts (e.g. pats, taps, reaching to hold you).

3. **RESPOND:**- Respond instantly to the things your child does. Start by doing a similar thing as them, perhaps copying their play, actions, sounds or movements.

If your child tries out new noises or movements or facial expressions, you respond by doing it again, imitating or joining in. Celebrate your child's responses and behaviours.



For example, they might flick their fingers in a certain way, but if you respond to this by imitating them then this has become a form of communication.

How to Respond

As imaginatively and creatively as you like, e.g.:

- Imitating
- Joining in
- Saying something, e.g. “yeah”, “that’s a good noise”.
- Being dramatic
- Non-verbal responses (e.g. smiling, widening eyes).
- Running commentary e.g. “Hey yeah, you’re pleased to see me, I know”

4. PAUSING :- Pause and wait for your child to interact with you before you join in again.

Look for any reaction. Your child’s face may change. They may stop what they are doing to watch you or listen. This will tell you if they are interested and enjoying what you are doing. Give them time to respond to you and see what they do next. Your child might indicate that they want you to react differently, or want you to repeat what you’re doing.

5. EXTENDING :- Build up a shared knowledge of things that you and your child do together – you may end up repeating these activities many times.

When repeating familiar interaction routines, new things happen. Your child may experiment, then you may extend the interaction, add faces and voices.

As you start to notice your child becoming more aware of you joining in with them, change the way you respond to extend the interaction and see if they respond to this e.g. you could vary your vocalisation, you could do something different with the toys you might have been playing with.

Strategies to ensuring success:

- Respond instantly to signals of negativity – If you feel your child is not enjoying what you are doing or moves away or reacts negatively, interpret this communication and respond to it appropriately. Perhaps you were too close to them, or they need a break from the Intensive Interaction.
- If your child doesn’t appear to respond- Try doing less of everything. Respond with less behaviour (reduce the noise, excitement or intensity). Go back to a ‘quiet’ period, spending time sharing space to help your child to become more comfortable.
- If your child is highly active- Join in with them and move around with them in order to create shared activities.
- If your child is interested for a short amount of time- Try doing less, you may be putting too much into the interaction.
- If your child keeps moving away. The child may not be ready to take part in interactions yet, may need to share space and time instead to build a sense of security. Increase the distance between you and your child.



Joint Attention - Eye Contact

Gaining eye contact with your child is helping them to develop a skill known as 'shared' or 'joint' attention. Eye contact is important for social interactions because your child will learn a lot about people by looking at their faces; and they will get more information about language through facial expression and gestures or signs.

Strategies to Ensure Success:

- Place items of interest to the child, near your face to encourage the child to look at you.
- Before giving the child an item from a shelf, bring it towards your eye level, to encourage the child to make eye contact with you.
- Never force the child to look at you, if your child shows distress at these games do not carry on.
- Get down to the child's level, face to face if possible, when playing with them.

Activity ideas to encourage eye contact:

Peek-a-Boo

Peek-a-boo games can be played from behind the furniture, the curtains, a scarf, or when getting dressed.



Rolling Games

Roll a ball/car slowly from left to right, so that the child can follow it with their eyes. Then make the ball/car disappear behind your back or behind your head and wait for eye contact before making it reappear.

Squeaky toys

Hold a squeaky toy near your face and press it to make a noise and wait for eye contact before you start again.



Bubbles

Blow some bubbles to attract the child's attention. Then hold the wand near your face and wait for them to look at you before blowing some more.

Funny Faces

Draw attention to your face by wearing flashing glasses, funny masks, or face paints.



Binoculars

Look through two old toilet roll tubes to encourage eye contact with the child.

Posting or Puzzles

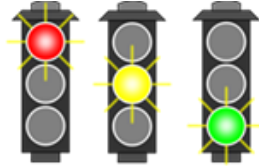
Hold the picture to be posted or the puzzle piece up near your face and wait until the child looks at you before you give them the picture / puzzle to post.



Finger Puppets

Draw faces on your fingers or make finger puppets and wiggle them near to your face and then hide them.

Ready Steady Go Games – Eye Contact



The aim of Ready Steady Go games is to gain eye contact.

Before doing the action, the adult says 'Ready, Steady', and waits for the child to make eye contact before they then say 'Go', and the action is performed.

Activity ideas to encourage eye contact:

- Blowing bubbles
- Rolling a ball to one another
- Skittles
- Pushing a car or train along a track
- Throwing bean bags in to a bucket
- Turn music on to dance to



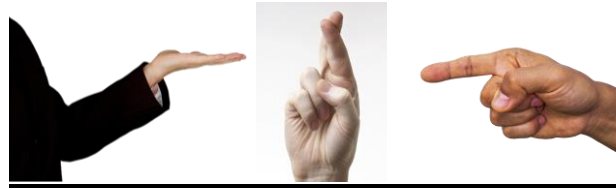
How do you use a Ready Steady Go Game?

- 1) Decide on the activity that you are going to use with your Ready Steady Go sequence.
- 2) Say 'Ready...Steady... (Pause and wait for eye contact)... Go'. When you say 'go' the action is completed e.g. blow the bubbles. The game continues like this.
- 3) In this activity you can also encourage your child to talk. You say 'Ready ... (pause) ... Steady ... (Pause) ... encouraging your child to indicate 'Go' by talking and making eye contact.
- 4) You can add variation to the game by increasing the length of the pause between Steady and Go to make your child wait longer and longer... remember to always follow through with the action if the child makes eye contact with you.

Strategies to Ensure Success:

- Ensure the child is motivated by the activity/ game.
- Provide a variety of different opportunities to practice (different activities), throughout the day.
- Get down to the child's level and follow what they are interested in.
- Bring the item of interest up to your eye level to encourage the child to make eye contact.

Gesture and Pointing



Some children find understanding non-verbal communication e.g. pointing and gesture difficult. They may not respond to an adult pointing at an object or picture in a book because they do not realise that the adult is trying to direct their attention to something. They may not wave 'goodbye' or 'hello' or use pointing as a means to support their communication skills.

Gestures and speech go hand-in-hand. By encouraging gestures, you promote your child's overall communication development. Gestures will provide a child with a way to express themselves before they are able to use verbal language.

Strategies to Ensure Success:

- **Make gestures part of your everyday interactions.** No special time or place is needed to use gestures. Using simple gestures when you talk with your child throughout the day will help to build their communication skills.
- Use a **range of gestures**, description e.g. acting out an action brushing teeth, information e.g. holding three fingers up to indicate '3', social e.g. thumbs up for 'good job', holding your hands in the shape of a ball while you say "ball" or doing a throwing action while you say "ball" are helpful gestures.
- Be sure to **use the gesture and the word** at the same time – This helps reinforce the meaning of the word for your child.
- When your child uses a gesture, **acknowledge it** by copying it and saying the word that matches the gesture.

Activity ideas to encourage use of pointing and gestures:

Out of reach

Put motivating items/ toys out of reach from your child (in a clear box for the child to see), to encourage them to point to it.



Nursery Rhymes

Sing nursery rhymes with your child, one's that have actions e.g. Wind the bobbin up; the wheels on the bus, twinkle twinkle little star, if your happy and you know it etc.



Hello/ Goodbye Songs

Support the child to wave 'goodbye' or 'hello' in a familiar song.



Facial Expression and Body Language



Some children may struggle to understand emotions and how to read them. We show emotions through:

- Changing our tone of voice
- Using facial expression
- Changing our body language
- Making guesses from the context of a situation

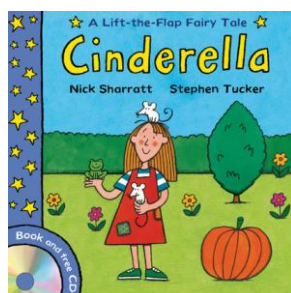
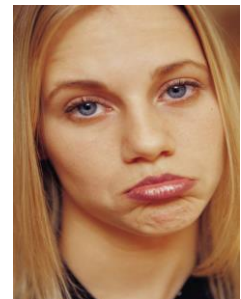
Strategies to Ensure Success:

- **Notice and label the emotions** of others e.g. show the child when another child is crying and talk about how he feels and why they may feel that way.
- **Talk about** your own emotions. Label your own emotions to the child throughout the day. Talk about why you feel that way. If you have negative emotions, talk about what would make you feel better.

Activity ideas to explore emotions:

Photo Albums

Create a photo album using family photos (more meaningful to the child). You can then look through the album together and looking closely at the people's faces in everyday situations and discuss how they may be feeling, and why they may be feeling that way. Start off with easier emotions, such as: happy, sad, or angry.



Story Books

Read books and talk about how the characters may be feeling in the book. Identify the emotions and then talk about why the character feels that way or how you know (he is smiling because he found his toy).

Scrap Books

Your child can cut out pictures of people from magazines/ newspapers, whom are expressing certain emotions (happy, sad, afraid, angry). Your child can also cut out pictures of things/ places/ events which make them feel a certain emotion, and stick them on the correct emotion page.



As the child develops their awareness you can try some more difficult activities such as:

Body sculpting/Drawing

Sculpt faces and body postures and talk about what emotion the character is displaying. Draw pictures of sad, happy, angry faces. Compare different pictures/sculptures about how they are different.

Videos

Present your child with 'situation pictures/ videos' e.g. a child that dropped their ice-cream, or a footballer that scored a goal. You can then discuss how these situations would make your child feel, if it happened to them.



Make guesses for why the characters did certain actions. Talk about the motivation behind behaviours by linking the behaviour or action to an emotion.



Role Play

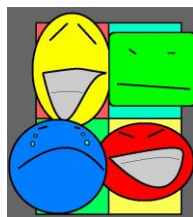
Use pictures of people expressing different emotions (happy, sad, etc). Your child can choose a picture at random, discuss what emotion the person is feeling, and then they can role-play a scenario where they would feel that same emotion.

Problem-Solving

Help the child problem-solve situations to help someone feel better. If another child is upset, ask the child what he could do to help that friend. Give him some ideas like going to get an ice pack, helping the other child up off the group, or finding something fun for the child to do.

Spot the tone

Try saying neutral phrases e.g. 'Tomorrow is Tuesday' with different tones and guess how the person is feeling. Start by using facial expression and gestures to support the child, and slowly fading these away so they can identify the tone alone.



Turn Taking in Play

Many young children find it difficult to learn to wait, share, and take turns. A child with a communication difficulty may find it particularly hard to accept the rules of turn-taking and sharing.

These skills should be encouraged early on, to help develop an understanding of the rules of conversational turn-taking as well as promoting good standards of behaviour.

Strategies to Ensure Success:

- Start by working on turn-taking when you **are 1 to 1 with the child**. It is much harder to learn to share with two or three other children.
- Make sure there are no **distractions**.
- **Be in control of the situation** by keeping hold of the equipment/toys being used.
- Demonstrate the activity first, so that the child understands what is required.
- Use **appropriate phrases** such as: “my turn/your turn/Katie’s turn”.
- If the child is reluctant to take turns, let them have two turns for every one that you have.
- If the child is still unwilling to take turns, remove the toy altogether and come back to it later when they are more likely to co-operate.



Activity Ideas to encourage turn taking:

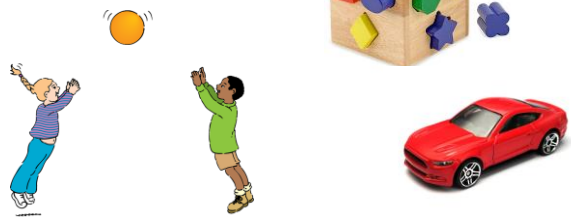
Swapping Toys

Have two motivating toys available. Give the child one toy and let them play with it for a while. Then offer the child the second toy, but only give them the second toy when the first one is returned.

Give and Take Games

The following toys can be used to encourage turn-taking and sharing:

- Throw balls and bean bags to each other
- Send wind up toys back and forth
- Roll cars towards each other
- Take turns to post a shape in the box
- Take turns to lift up the flap of books



Everyday Sharing

Encourage turn-taking and sharing during every day routines, such as: taking turns... on the swing, to water the garden, to clap hands, or taking a crisp from the packet.

Floor Play

Encourage turn-taking and sharing during floor play, such as: taking turns...to add another brick to the tower; adding pieces to a puzzle; banging a drum; rolling a ball and knock down the skittles; pushing a car down a ramp; or playing simple board games



Turn Taking in Conversation

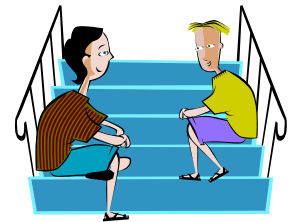


Some children need to be taught the 'rules' of conversation, as they don't pick them up automatically. They may have difficulties in one or several of the following areas:-

- Greeting people
- Starting a conversation
- Taking turns to respond to questions and make comments
- Identifying whether their communication partner is interested in what they are talking about
- Understanding how to hand over or end a conversation

How can we support children to understand the rules of turn taking in conversation?

- Conversation rules need to be **demonstrated**, and acted out with the child in structured familiar activities and then the child will need lots of encouragement to use the 'rules' in real life.
- In these situations it is essential that a **good role model** takes the first turn to show the child what to do.
- You will need to show the child **several times** and may need to use **visual and verbal prompts**.



Activities to support conversation skills

Role play with Toys

Role play with toys is a great way to demonstrate conversation skills. Encourage the child to find a toy and 'pretend' the toy is speaking, asking for a snack, wants to stop playing, wants a turn down the slide. Demonstrate and model conversational skills e.g. asking to play 'Can I have a go?'

Asking for help

Set up situations or activities with one thing missing, e.g. no pencils/crayons out on the colouring in table or no scissors / glue at the craft table. The child then has to directly ask for help. Model the language the child needs to ask e.g. 'Can I have a crayon please?'

Silence

Sit and say nothing – make the children start off a conversation with you. This will feel strange at first, but it is a good way to teach the child that they can start a conversation. If the child is struggling, model the language they could use to greet you and examples of questions they might ask.

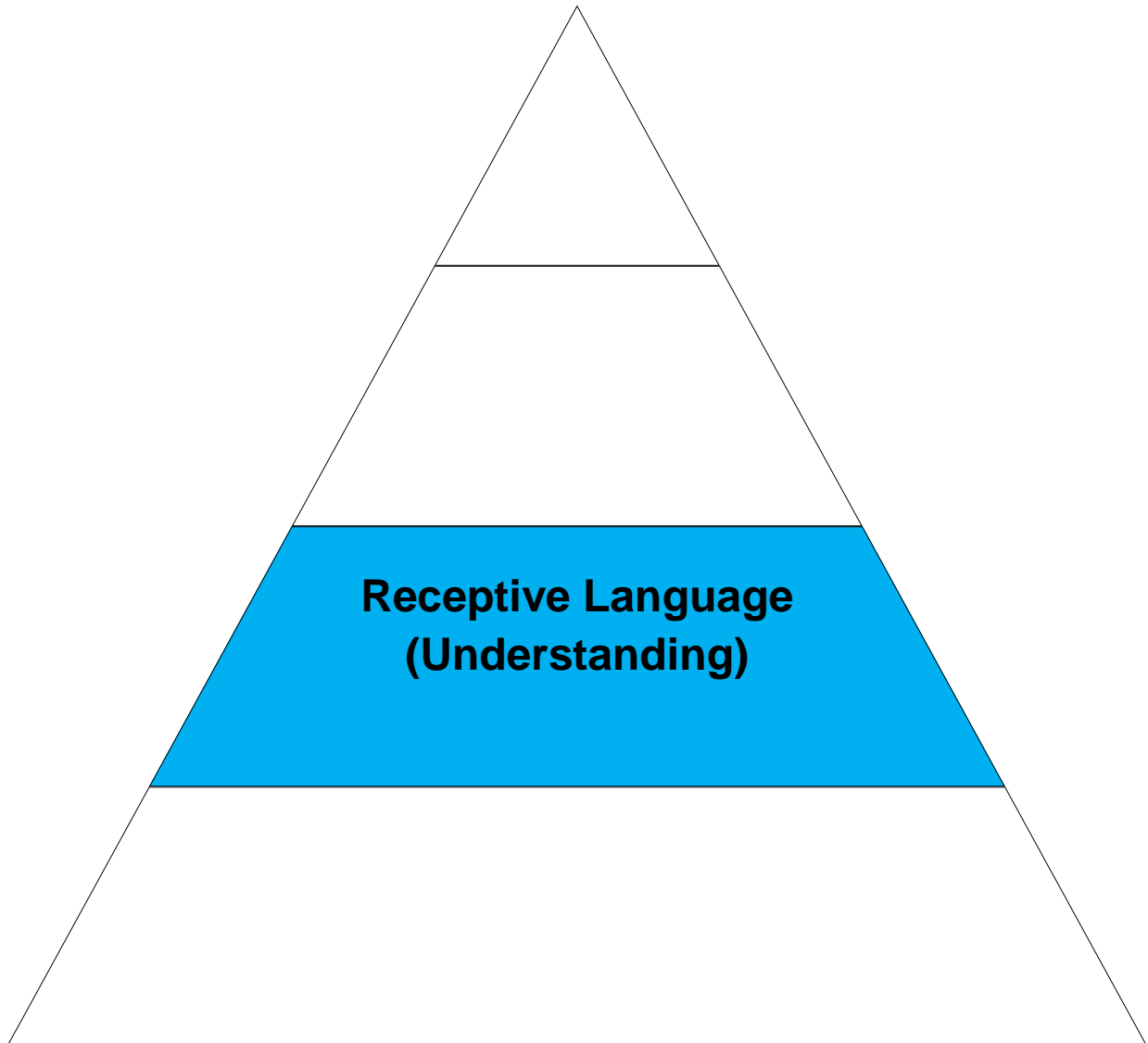
Barrier/Describing games

Barrier games are a great way to practice more subtle skills such as waiting, listening and responding to a speaker. Try using pens/paper or any other appropriate activity and a barrier in between the adult and child. The adult gives the instructions and the child has to listen and create the same picture without seeing. Look at each other pictures at the end and see if they are the same!

Who am I?/Describing games

Another great way to practice listening and asking questions. The main player chooses a toy and gives clues about what it could be. The rest of the group can ask questions and listen and make guesses.

Understanding



Useful strategies to develop understanding



What is 'understanding' and why is important?

- 'Understanding' is sometimes referred to as 'receptive language' or 'comprehension'. It is our ability to **listen** to what someone else is saying, **recognise** the words, and **respond** to this.
- Children with difficulty understanding instructions can **present in many different ways**. Some may miss out critical steps in a task, be last to carry out an instruction, or appear not to be listening.
- Many children will compensate and mask their lack of understanding by copying their peers or making guesses from the situation they are in.

General strategies to support a child that has difficulties following instructions:

- Check you have the child's **attention before** you start speaking e.g. by calling their name, touching their arm, or gaining eye contact.
- A child needs to **hear the name** of an object or the action word (doing word) associated with an object many times and in a range of contexts before they are able to understand the word.
- Tell your child what things are called and do it often! e.g. 'This is a cup', 'Your cup'.
- When using new words, **use a multi-sensory approach**, ensure you show the child what the word means using **visual support** such as objects, photos, pictures, symbols. Demonstrate what the word means in real life.

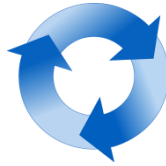


- **Slow down** your rate of speech, giving the child lots of time to think about what you have said.
- Remember to use **simple language**, reduce your sentences to 1-2 words at a time, the child is more likely to be successful if the instruction is short. Instead of 'Bobby go get the banana', say 'get banana'.

- **Emphasise key words**, placing slight stress on the important words with your tone of voice, this will highlight to the child what the important words are.

“Bobby look, **black cat**”

- Be prepared to **repeat words** or rephrase using simpler language. The more your child hears the word, the more likely they are to remember it.



- **Action words** (e.g. ‘eat’) are just as important as naming words (e.g. ‘apple’).
- Use additional **visual aids** such as objects of reference, first/then boards, visual timetables to support your verbal language.



Suggested Individual Support Plan (ISP) Targets:

- The child will understand routine based instructions; ‘Snack time’, ‘Home time’, ‘Carpet time’.
- The child will understand a range of instructions containing one information carrying word (ICW).
*Lay out up to six items in front of him. Ask him to find each item e.g. ‘where’s teddy?’
Give him a teddy and ask him to make them do different actions e.g. jump, sit, walk.*
- The child will understand a range of instructions containing two/three/four information carrying words (ICW).
- The child will understand the size concept ‘small’.

Objects of reference (OOR)



What are 'objects of reference' and why use them?

- OOR are objects that have particular meanings assigned to them. They can **represent anything**: a word, sign or symbol e.g. lunch is represented by a spoon, bath time represented by a sponge, home is represented by a key.
- They are **multi-sensory** e.g. they may be tactile, visual, or have a distinctive smell, sound or movement.
- They can help a child to **develop awareness and understanding of the environment**, e.g. signalling what is about to happen.
- OOR can reduce an individual's level of frustration and confusion about what is happening, as they can provide the child with a clear and consistent routine.

How do you use OOR?

- Present the OOR when you are moving to a new activity, place or event e.g. keys alongside your verbal communication saying 'Home time'.
- Encourage the child to look and explore the OOR with both hands.



- Allow and encourage the individual to hold the OOR whilst moving to the place/ activity.
- As soon as the OOR has been presented ensure that the child is taken to that place/ activity.

Strategies to Ensure Success:

- Use the OOR **regularly and consistently** - think about what activities the child does regularly.
- OOR's **should be individual** to the child. When choosing an OOR it is important to **observe the child** and note down how they interact with the environment and what things are important or meaningful to them.
- **Motivating**- It must be motivating to the child, e.g. if the child becomes animated during a regular game with a parachute then find an object to represent this.
- **Real objects are the most concrete** (easiest) to understand, such as swimming trunks for swimming. Miniatures of real objects, such as a toy bed are much harder to understand developmentally. The hardest of all to understand are words.

Key Words



What are key words and why do we use them?

- When we talk, **there are clues** around us that help the child understand what is being said. This is the way babies learn language; you point at the object and say its name. Then they can make the association between the item and the spoken word.
- Key words or Information Carrying Words (ICW's) enable us to find out how much language a child understands without the support of any visual clues (e.g. eye pointing, pointing and nodding).
- The key idea is that the information carrying words in a sentence are the words that the child **MUST** understand to be able to do what they have been asked. This is different to the number of words actually spoken.
- A key word is a word that carries meaning. Many instructions we can give young children involve words that carry no meaning, if we think about the situation.

For example, the child is in their room getting dressed and their parent is holding out the jumper and says 'put your jumper on'.



In this situation, the child does not need to understand any of the words because he can see what is needed from the clues in the situation.

Strategies to Ensure Success before working on ICW's

- Encourage the child to **look at you rather than the objects**, while you give the instruction. If they look at the objects, they may use their visual memory to remember which items.
- Ensure your child is **familiar with the names of all the items you will be using** – this way you can be sure that it is following the instruction rather than their vocabulary knowledge that is being tested.
- When giving instructions, if necessary, REMEMBER! SIT ON YOUR HANDS AND LOOK AT THE CHILD! This will help you to **stop yourself from pointing or looking at the object you're requesting**, as children can be very quick to use clues from the situation.
- Be careful **not to split longer instructions up** as this won't accurately test their understanding of it e.g. "can you find me the cat.... and the dog". If they really struggle with following the instructions however, you could try this afterwards to help them experience success.

- Always **check that your child has to make a choice** between objects for each ICW you're testing. These do not always need to be separate objects as there may be a natural choice e.g. actions/ body parts etc
- Use a range of types of words including:
 - Subject: person that can perform an action, be it an actual person or creature
 - Action/verb: doing word e.g. running, sitting, painting etc.
 - Object: any item that an action can be performed on
 - Preposition: position words like in, on, under, next to, behind etc.
 - Concept: e.g. big, little, colours, wet, dry etc.
 - Place: a location e.g. field, barn, garden

Typical Development

Number of ICW's understood	Age Equivalent
2	2 years
3	3 years
	Add concepts e.g. size, colour, number at 3 years or 3 ICW's
4	4 years



Activity ideas

Here are some examples of instructions for 1-4 ICW's. Each example shows you what items you would need to make it work and the ICW is underlined to show an available choice. Remember not to point or give other clues to the correct answer.



1 ICW instructions

- You need: a ball/ a car "find me the ball" (vs Car)
- You need: teddy "make teddy jump" (vs Sit)
- You need: teddy "Show me Teddy's eyes" (vs Nose)

2 ICW instructions:

You need: a ball, a car, a train, a teddy.

Ask: "find me the ball and train"
car teddy



You need: teddy, dog .

Say: "make teddy jump"
dog sit



You need: teddy.

Say: "show me teddy's nose and ears"
eyes head

3 ICW instructions:

You need: a rabbit, a cat, a table, a chair.

Say: "Put rabbit under the chair"
cat on table



You need: teddy, dolly, bed, chair .

Say: "make teddy jump on the bed"
dolly sit chair



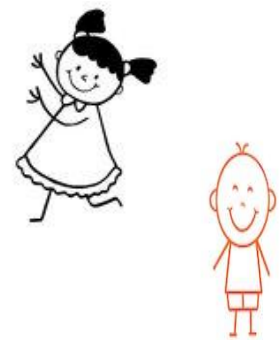
You need: pen, fork, doll & teddy (teddy & doll each with a box & a cup)

Say: "Put the pen in dolly's cup"
fork teddy's box

4 ICW instructions:

You need: pictures of a big/little girl & boy in clothes and colouring pens

Say: "Colour the big girl's trousers blue"
small boy's shoes red

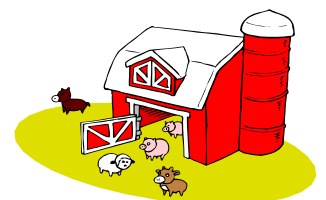


You need: animals and a choice of 2 places e.g. table and chair

Say: "Make the cow and horse jump on the "table"
pig sheep lay chair

You need: dolly and teddy with their own teaset; and big and little cutlery.

Say: "put the big spoon in dolly's owl"
small fork teddy's cup



One Key Word

Activity ideas to encourage one key word understanding:



Action Games

The simplest way for a child to learn new words is to hear the word and match it to the action the child does e.g. 'At the Park' you could say 'splash', 'jump', 'slide', the possibilities are endless!

Bath Time/ Getting Dressed

This is a great way to teach the names of body parts e.g. 'where's your nose/eyes'. You could also sing a nursery rhyme too, such as 'head, shoulders, knees, and toes. When getting dressed, name your child's body parts again e.g. 'arms up', 'foot in'.



Singing songs

Sing familiar songs routinely and gradually fade out the adult singing the words, add gestures that focus on actions such as 'clap', 'stamp' and 'jump'.

Meal Times

Talk about the food that your child is eating or the objects they are using e.g. 'banana', 'cup', 'eating', 'cutting', 'spoon'.

Small world play

For children 2 years and over, children should be encouraged to match actions with objects e.g. 'reading', 'sleeping', use your child's favourite characters to follow your child's interest.



Feely Bag

Fill a bag with approximately 5 everyday objects/toys e.g. brush, ball, banana, teddy, spoon, book etc. Pull out each of the objects one by one, labelling them as they are taken out of the bag. Allow your child to explore the objects and model what you do with each one for your child.

Tea party

Dolly and teddy sitting either side of the table and some pictures of food/ toy food. Give dolly an 'apple', 'drink', 'cake' etc.



Shopping game

Have a selection of objects, a bag, and a basket for your child to do some 'shopping'. Ask the child to find items of shopping and put it in either the bag or the basket.

Two Key Words

Activity ideas to encourage two key word understanding:



Modelling

The simplest way for a child to learn new words is to hear the word and match it to the action the child does. Think about what language your child can learn in everyday routines. Keep your comments to **two key words** e.g. 'Bath time' you could say 'mummy splash' vs 'daddy splash'

Find the item

Using a toy such as a Jigsaw, shape sorter etc. Lift out the pieces and encourage the child to **find two items** e.g. 'find ball and duck' etc.



Washing game

At bath-time, or when pretending to bath teddy or dolly, you could give instructions.

"Wash doll's nose"

"Wash duck's tail"



Colouring game

Ask your child to colour parts of the picture. "Colour the face blue" or "colour the eyes red".

Shopping game

Have a selection of objects a bag and a basket for your child to do some 'shopping'. Ask the child to find two items of shopping and put it in either the bag or the basket.

Transport

Have a car and a train and some places e.g. shops, the park, nursery, church, your house etc. your child has to push the car or the car/train to the place you name e.g. 'push the car to the shop'.



Tea party

Have dolly and teddy sitting either side of the table and some pictures of food or some toy food. Give 'dolly an apple', give 'teddy some cake' etc.

Animals

Have several animals and several items of food. Give the 'dog some biscuits', give the 'elephant a banana'.

Three Key Words

Activity ideas to encourage one key word understanding:

Shopping

Have a selection of pictures of common objects and a bag and a basket for the child to do some shopping. You ask the child to find you two items of shopping and put it in one of the containers e.g. “put the carrot and the apple in the basket”.

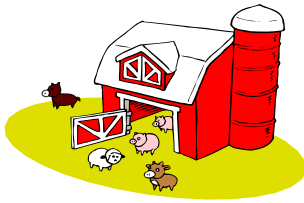
Cooking

Have a selection of food pictures, a pan and a bowl. Ask your child to find two pieces of food and put them in the pan or the bowl e.g. “put the potato and the pizza in the pan”.



Farms

Have a selection of pictures of animals, a picture of a big pond and a big barn. The animals you ask for has to go to either the pond or the barn e.g. “put the pig and the cow in the barn”.



Have a selection of toy animals a pond and a house. The animals are all going on an adventure: and some have to walk, some run and some jump to the pond or the house. E.g. “make the horse walk to the pond” or “make the cow jump to the house”.

More farms

Tea parties

Have dolly and teddy sitting either side of the table and some pictures of food. “Give dolly an apple and some cake”, or “give teddy some cake and a sausage”.



Animals

Have three animals and several pictures of food or toy food. “Give the dog some biscuits and a sweet” or “give the elephant a banana and a carrot”.



Naughty dog

Have a toy dog and a teddy and a large toy table, chair and bed. Ask your child to make the dog /teddy do an action on one of the pieces of furniture e.g. “Make the dog jump on the bed”, or “make the teddy sleep on the table”. Vary the teddy/ dog, the action and the piece of furniture in this game.

Four Key Words

Activity ideas to encourage one key word understanding:

Hide and Seek

This can be set up as a "hide and seek" game, or "tidy up time" with unusual instructions, not learnt ones of the usual routines.

You need:

- A choice of objects e.g. book, pen, ruler
- A choice of places to put them, e.g. box versus bag,
- Say: "put the **book** in the **bag** and the **pen** in the **box**"
- Say: "put the **ruler** in the **draw** and the **book** in the **cupboard**"



Actions and objects

You need:

- A choice of characters, e.g. cow, sheep, horse, dog or man, girl, boy.
- Say: "Make the **sheep run** and the **cow jump**"
- Say: "Make the **horse sleep** and the **dog walk**"

Colouring Games

You need

- Line drawings of e.g. big and little girl/ boys, dogs/ cats, buses/cars.
- Say: "Colour the **big girl's skirt blue**"
- Say: "Colour the **little boy's hair black**"



Giving presents

Choose big and little toys, or different coloured toys. Explain you are going to give presents to them, and suggest 2 presents at a time:

- Say: "Give **big teddy** a **red car**"
- Say: "Give **little dolly** a **blue brush**"
- Say: "Give **big dolly** a **green bus**"

Hiding places

Use your child's favourite toy and a chair, table, box and bed (these could be miniature or real!). Ask your child to:

- Say: "Make **teddy sleep under the bed**"
- Say: "Make **dolly jump in the box**"
- Say: "Make **teddy stand on the box**"

Concept Words

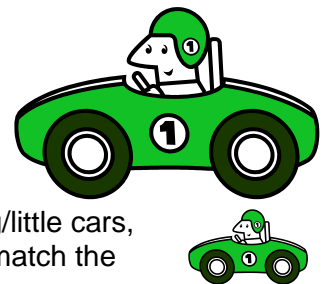


- It is important to remember when developing understanding of language (particularly concept development) that it is easier for all children to learn if the activities are **real and relevant** to them.
- If children do not relate to what you are talking about, then they are less likely to understand and remember what you have taught them.
- Pictures can be quite abstract and should be the 'last resort' as a method of teaching, whereas using the child themselves, **real objects or daily routines & activities are much more real and therefore more likely to result in change.**
- You can start immediately with the ideas given to develop understanding and then hopefully **be inspired with ideas of your own.**
- Keep your **language very simple.** If you use too many words the meaning and benefit of what you are saying can be lost completely.
- Try to teach **one concept at a time** e.g. 'Hot' and 'not hot'. Teaching pairs together may confuse the child as they are trying to learn two things at once.

Big (Large) and Small (Little)

Teach: Demonstrate a range of big and small objects. Spend time talking about the items and label them e.g. "Here's the big sock and this one is not big" etc. Use gestures to show the difference between big and little.

Show: You need 6 **big** objects and 6 **small** objects. E.g. big/little socks, big/little cars, big/little boxes, etc. Play sorting games, match the big items together and match the small items together.



Practice: See if the child can find the one you ask for e.g. "Where's the big book?" or "Where's the small car?" If the child gets it wrong, just say "that one's not big, here's the big book." If the child finds this difficult, go back to the steps above 'teach', then 'show'.

Prepositions: 'in'/'on'/'under' and 'in front'/'behind'/'next to'.

Teach: Demonstrate a range of positions. Spend time talking about the position of things in everyday activities e.g. 'food on the table', 'toys in the box', 'water in the bath'. Label the concepts and reinforce this visually using Makaton sign/ or gesture.

Show: Give the child a selection of toys. Show the child how to place the toy in a certain position e.g. 'teddy under chair'. Repeat the instruction and encourage the child to copy your actions.

At first children usually find it easier to learn prepositions if they actually try out the positions for themselves. So you could have an obstacle race with pieces of furniture (e.g. big box, table, chair).

Practice: Now the child should be encouraged to carry out actions on their own. Tell them where to hide teddy e.g. 'on the parachute', 'under the parachute'. Another activity idea is: use a teddy/play people/doll/Action Man and make them walk around an obstacle course and hide them in different places (e.g. behind the curtain, in the cupboard). Hide and seek is a very good game for learning prepositions. If the child finds this difficult, go back to the steps above 'teach', then 'show'.



Down / Up

Teach: Demonstrate what is 'up' and what is 'down' through everyday activities, label these as they happen e.g. when getting dressed: 'arms up' and 'legs down'.

Show: Give the child a selection of toys. Show the child how to place the toy in a certain position e.g. 'teddy up the ladder', 'teddy down the ladder'. Repeat the instruction and encourage the child to copy your actions. You can also show in everyday activities e.g. when an aeroplane is flying overhead, encourage them to look up at the sky to see the aeroplane or down at the floor to see what they have dropped. You could also talk about going up or down when you are going up & down steps / stairs or a slide.

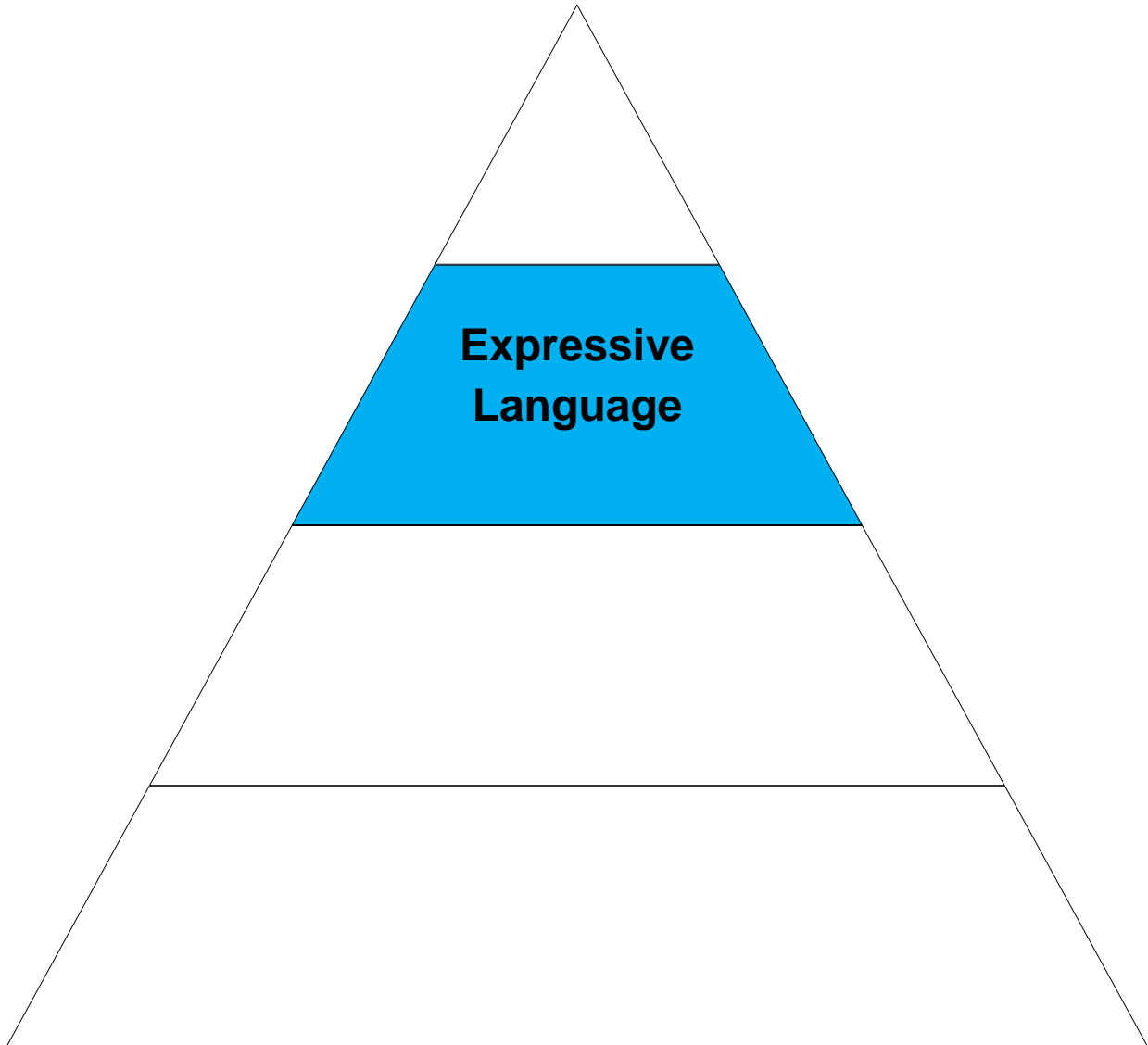


Practice: See if the child can follow the instructions without you showing them how to do it e.g. 'fly aeroplane up and down'. Action songs are a fun way to listen to instructions e.g. Hokey Cokey 'put your arms up, put your arms down, up, down, up, down, shake them all around...'

Other concepts include:

By 2 Years old	By 3 Years old	By 4 Years old
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In/ Out • On/ Under • Up/ Down 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Big/ Small • Inside/ Outside • Empty/ Full • Same/ Different • Long/ Short • Hot/ Cold • Slow/ Fast • Wet/ Dry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All/ Except • Closest/ Further • First/ Last • Either/ All • Before/ After • Top/ Bottom

Use of Language



Useful Strategies to Develop Expressive Language



What is 'expressive language' and why is it important?

- 'Expressive language' is sometimes referred to as 'vocabulary', 'use of language' or 'sentences'. It is our ability to comment and request using verbal language.
- Children with difficulty using expressive language can present in many different ways. Some may have difficulties using specific words (vocabulary), putting sentences together, or getting the words in the right order.

General strategies to support a child that has difficulties with using expressive language:

- A child needs to **understand** a word before they will attempt to use it themselves.



- **Use Makaton signs or simple gestures** to accompany your talking. The child is likely to copy these and use them themselves.
- Children often learn sounds that go with objects e.g. "moo" for cow before they learn the name of the word, so remember to **model these play sounds** alongside your words.

- Often as parents, we are prepared and able to interpret our child's every need. However, this takes away the need for your child to communicate. Remember to **create opportunities** for your child to need to communicate with you.
- **Follow the Child's Lead – Observe** your child's focus of attention and comment on what they are interested in. **Wait** to give your child time to express themselves. **Listen** carefully to your child's attempts to communicate.



Suggested Possible Individual Support Plan (ISP) targets at this level:

- The child will ask for a wanted item using a single word e.g. 'Juice'.
(Adults to model single words through play)
- The child will comment during play using a two word phrases. e.g. 'Teddy eat'.
(Adults to repeat back and expand on what the child says during play)
- The child will understand and use the size concept 'small'.
- The child will use a three word phrase to ask for a wanted action e.g. 'Amy roll ball'.

Encouraging Early Words

General strategies to support a child to use early words:



- **Comment** on what the child is doing, rather than asking questions. This will encourage the child to comment as well; don't force your child to repeat words.
- **Match your language** to the child's level, e.g. if they are using one word phrases, you use one word phrases. This helps them understand and also provides them with something achievable to copy.



- **Offer choices:** this encourages the child to use the words. To begin with, the child may do this by pointing, signing or vocalising. The adult should model the language 'apple'. As the child becomes more familiar, the adult can wait slightly longer before releasing the object, in order to encourage the child to also **label** the item they want e.g.



Child: (points at apple)

Adult: holds up two items 'Do you want apple or banana?'

Child: 'Apple' (while reaching for the apple)

- **Acknowledge any attempts** your child makes at using language. **Repeat back** to them what they have said to show you have understood them e.g.

Child: 'horse'

Adult: 'Yes, horse!'



Activity ideas to encourage early words:

'What's in the bag'/ picture lotto

Place a number of toys/items in a bag, take them out one by one and label these for the child.

'Ready Steady Go'

Play games such as bubbles or rolling a ball, say 'Ready steady...' and wait for the child to vocalise or say 'go'.

Books

Lift-the-flap books and stories with repetitive phrases - your child can be encouraged to complete the last word of the phrase after you have started it.



Nursery rhymes and action songs

Once your child is familiar with them, leave gaps at the end of a line for them to fill in.
e.g. "Old Mac Donald had a..."

Some useful early words to encourage:

Mummy, daddy, go, more, finished, drink, snack, up, down, bye bye, all gone, oh no!, no, stop, favourite toy names, favourite foods.

Makaton



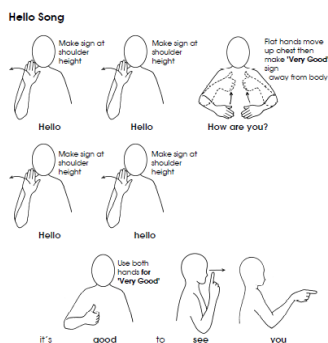
Mr Tumble from BBC's 'Something Special'

What is Makaton?

- Makaton is a unique language programme that uses symbols, signs and speech to enable your child to communicate.
- Using signs can help your child if they have limited spoken language or if their speech is unclear.

Benefits of Makaton

- It aids a child's **understanding** of language i.e. the signs add visual support to words.
- Signs encourage adults to **simplify** their language – especially important when working with children with language difficulties.
- With meaningful **repetition**, children copy the signs and communicate.



How do I use Makaton?

- Makaton signs and spoken language should be used together at all times.
- Use natural facial expression and body language with the signs.
- It makes no difference if you sign with the left or the right hand as long as the signer is consistent.
- Some signs are normally made with one hand. Two hands can be used to add emphasis e.g. good, bad.
- It is acceptable to adapt the signs to the needs of the child i.e. children with poor fine motor skills.

Let's talk
Makaton

The Makaton Charity
Westmead House
Pinnacoreagh
Hampshire GU14 7LP
01798 806760
info@makaton.org
makaton.org

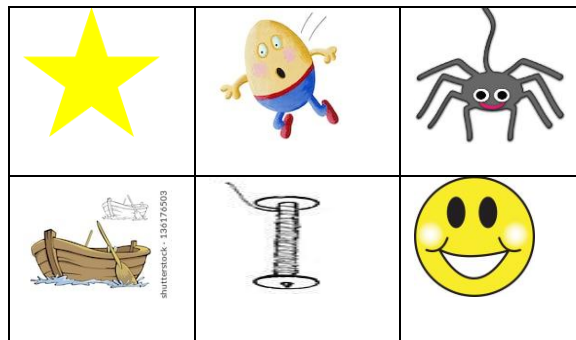
© The Makaton Charity 2016
A Charitable Company Limited by Guarantee Registered
in England and Wales. Registered Office: 68 Lincoln's Inn
Fields, London EC3A 3BB. Registered Charity No. 1229093
Registered Company No. 08262026

See below to find out more about Makaton:

<https://www.makaton.org/>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/shows/something-special>

Choosing Boards



Nursery Rhymes

- Choice can be incorporated into just about **every activity**. Offer choices rather than just handing the child what they need or anticipating what they want.
- Create as **many opportunities** to make choices and communicate across the day.

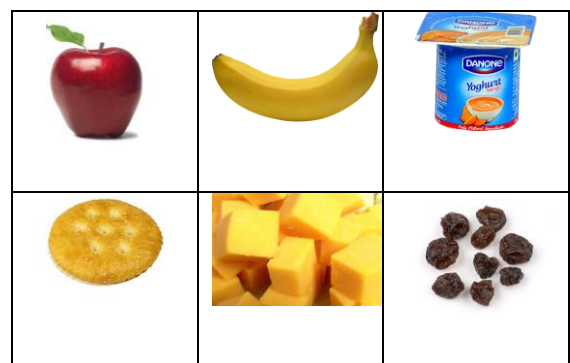
How to use a choice Board:

1. **Start off with just two choices:** one option you know the child will want, and one they definitely will not want- this makes it easier for you to see if they understand the pictures correctly.
2. **Hold the choice board** out to the child and **point** to each picture and **label** this for them. You may need show them the matching items e.g. hold out the banana when pointing to the banana picture. If the picture the child has chosen does not match what they want, offer the objects and see which they reach for.
3. **Encourage the child to make a choice** by pointing to the matching picture of what they would like.
4. When they make their choice, reinforce it by saying the word and **giving them the item they want**.
5. You can gradually increase the number of choices available to the child, if they appear to be coping well with the options on the board.
6. You can start to leave a pause of around 5 seconds- this will encourage the child to say the word or make a noise to ask for what they want.

Toys



Food



Putting words together

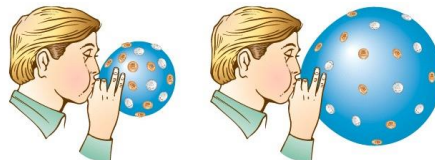


When your child can say many single words, you can encourage them to start making phrases. Children need to know around 50 words before they will be ready to start building short phrases.

General strategies to support a child to use phrases:

- Focus on encouraging lots of **action words** (verbs) e.g. 'drinking' and 'washing' as well as objects words (nouns) e.g. 'apple' and 'ball'.
- **Repeat back and expand.** This acknowledges what the child says as well as giving a model of the correct grammar and speech sounds e.g.

Child says: 'balloon'
Adult says: '...blow balloon'
Child spontaneously copies: 'Blow balloon!'



- **Emphasise key words** using your tone of voice. This draws attention to the important words in a phrase e.g. 'It's a big ELEPHANT' vs. 'It's a BIG elephant'.
- **Avoid asking closed questions** that stop conversations e.g. 'What's that?'' or 'Do you want a drink?' or which answer themselves 'You want a drink don't you?' Child: 'Yes'.



Instead **ask open questions**: This is where you ask an open-ended question to elicit as much information as possible e.g. Adult: 'What is happening in the playground?' Child: 'Boy climbing'.

- **Model what the child should say** using accurate grammar, this will help the child to learn how it should be said.

Child: 'horse eat'
Adult: 'Yes the horse is eating'

Activity ideas to encourage phrases:

Action picture lotto

Place a number of pictures in a bag, take them out one by one and label these, matching them to the lotto board.

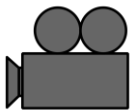


Books

Comment on the story; leave pauses and gaps for the child to comment on what they can see. Try a few open ended sentences 'And then the egg

Posting

Make a simple post box out of a cardboard box. Put some pictures face down on a table. Turn one over at a time and name the action for your child to listen to. Help him/her to post the picture in the box.



Video

Video the child doing different actions inside and outside; when you play the video back, label the action. Ask the child to label the actions too.

Small world play

By modelling language through play, you can model the verbs such as: sleeping, sitting, jumping and cooking, the possibilities are endless.



Simon Says

Following some adult modelling, the child can take turns at being the instructor e.g. 'Simon says.. smile'. Adults can provide extra language models while the child plays e.g. 'You are smiling'.



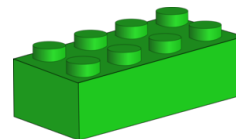
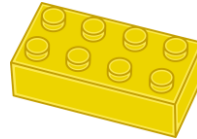
Action songs

Add more verses of your own. When you are singing it with the child, do lots of actions and gestures and encourage them to copy you e.g. 'When you're angry and you know it stamp your feet!'

Running commentary

Whenever you are playing with the child or they are watching you do things, make sure you give a running commentary and provide plenty of opportunity to emphasise action words e.g. 'Daddy brushing, brush brush brush'.

Sentence Scaffolding



'Who' +
'Lady'

'What doing' +
walking

'What'
dog'

What is scaffolding?

- Scaffolding is a way to **support** children's learning of expressive language. It helps a child move from simple to more complex sentences.
- Teaching them how to structure sentence using **visual scaffolding** can help them to organise their thoughts sufficiently and use new vocabulary.
- It can be used for any children who have difficulties with **sentence development, understanding questions, using vocabulary and narrative skills.**

How do you scaffold?

1. First identify how you are going to **visually depict** your sentence, this can be through colours, shapes, bricks, train carriages, anything the child finds motivating.
2. **Match the level** you are working at to what the child need to work on next e.g. If the child is able to use two words 'Boy eat' they can begin to create a three word sentence e.g. 'Boy eat apple'.
3. Start by **modelling how** to create the sentence. Use specific **questions** to elicit each element.

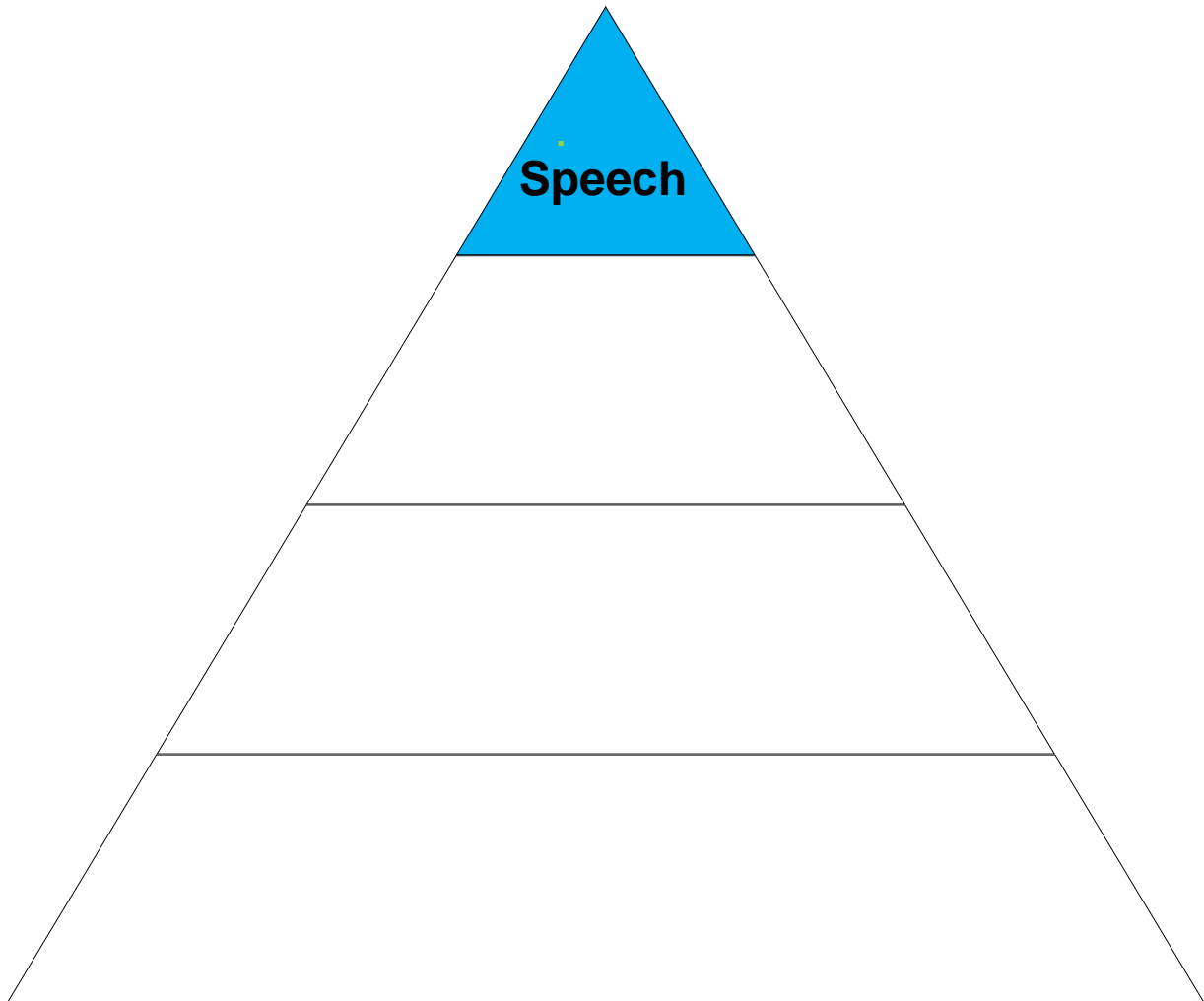
BRICK 1: WHO is in the picture?
BRICK 2: WHAT is the person doing?
BRICK 3: WHAT are doing it to?

Use the bricks as a prompt to remind yourself of all the parts of the sentence.
Encourage the child to copy you.



4. Once the child is familiar with what to do, you can encourage them to take a turn and answer each question and use the bricks as a prompt to elicit the full sentence.
5. As the child learns to use the full sentence, you can start to reduce the amount of visual support the child needs.

Speech



Stages of Speech Sound Development



What are speech sounds?

- Speech refers to how different speech sounds are made by the **lips, teeth and tongue**, these sounds are then put together to make up words.
- A child may have difficulty physically producing the sounds which is an **articulation difficulty** or they may have difficulty knowing when to use the sounds within words, this is a **phonological difficulty**.
- Different sounds are expected to **develop at different ages** and children will present with speech errors that are expected for a child of their age.

Stages of speech sound development:

Age	Your child will probably use these sounds	Your child may not use these sounds
By 2.5 years	p as in up b as in be m as in me n as in no w as in we	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The child may miss off the ends of words e.g. 'bed' is produced as 'be'. • The child may make the last sound in a word the same as the first e.g. 'cat' is produced as 'tat' or 'cak', 'dog' is produced as 'dod' or 'gog'.
By 3.5 years	h as in he ng as in sing t as in to d as in do y as in yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The child will delete weak syllables e.g. 'banana' is produced as 'nana'. • Some long sounds like 'f, v, s, z' may not have developed yet, e.g. 'fun' will be produced as 'bun'. • They child may not be able to produce 'k,g' yet and may use a 't' or 'd' instead e.g. 'cat' is produced as 'tat'.
By 4.5 years	k as in car g as in go f as in if v as in van s as in so z as in is	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The child may delete some sounds when there are two sounds clustered together e.g. 'spoon' is produced as 'boon' or 'soon', 'stick' is produced 'tick' or 'sick'.
By 5.5 years	l as in lay sh as in she ch as in chew j as in jam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The child may still delete some sounds when there are two-three sounds clustered together e.g. 'string' is produced as 'sting'.
By 6.5 years	r as in red th as in this th as in thing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The child may still have difficulties with producing these sounds for some time. • Many adults articulate 'th' as a 'f' and there are many variations of how people produce 'r'.

What can affect speech development?

- It is important to check the child can **hear** all the sounds for speech. If a child cannot hear the sounds, they cannot learn how to make the sounds.



- It is important that if your child has a **dummy** this is taken out when they are speaking, so they are able to move their lips, teeth and tongue correctly when learning how to speak.
- Sometimes the reason for the child's speech sound difficulties is **not always clear**.

There are several steps to acquiring a sound in everyday speech:



General strategies to support a child that has difficulties with speech sounds:



- **React to** what the **child** says, not how clearly they speak. Drawing too much attention to mispronunciations and making children repeat words is not helpful.
- **Wait** until your child has finished what they are saying 'fifi tat!' show them how to say it correctly by giving them a good model to copy; "yes, a friendly cat!"
- Saying '**Show me... ..**' and encouraging the use of **gesture** and **mime** as well as the child taking you to things.
- **Ask questions** to find out more information.
- **Build self-esteem.** If part of the child's conversation is understood, **repeat it back.** This shows them that they have been partially successful and this may encourage them to tell you more.
- Use strategies to **help anticipate what the child might say.** For example, a home-school book in which parents or nursery can record events or weekend activities.
- Sometimes, you may have to admit that you can't understand. **Be as reassuring as possible.** Change the subject and focus on something positive.
- **Don't make the child repeat the words.** Children need to feel relaxed and confident in order to experiment with sounds and change their speech patterns.
- Some children may be able to articulate a sound but not use it in a word. The best way to help is to **repeat the words correctly,** so they hear good models.



Suggested ISP Targets (Individual Support Plan)

- The child will use 5 new play sounds spontaneously.
(Adults to model the following sounds during play: 'vvrur', 'mmoo', 'weeee', 'rahhh', 'uho')
- For the child to correctly match an instrument / sound maker to the sound made.
(Adults to provide twice weekly opportunity for small group sound game, adult makes sound, child selects the correct instrument/toy)
- The child will be able to hear the difference between 't' and 'k' in words e.g. 'cap' and 'tap'.
(Adults to use the word set 'cap' and 'tap', name the word, ask the child to point to it)
- The child will copy the sound __f__ when an adult provides a model.
(Adults to model the new sound 'f' during play when making rocket take off)
- The child will mark syllables within words.
(Adults will support child in clapping out the syllables, adult to reduce hand over hand support once child is familiar)

Use of Dummies



The benefits:

Babies like to suck, so dummies **can help soothe at bedtime** or when your baby is tired or cross.

The drawbacks:

Regular and prolonged use of dummies can lead to a range of problems which can have a long term impact on speech development, including:

- **Delayed speech and language development** – dummies can stop your child experimenting with making sounds and using words which may mean they are late in learning to talk.
- **Tooth damage** – continuous sucking on a dummy can cause your child's teeth to grow differently (an 'open bite'). This can have an effect on their speech sound development.
- The baby is **unable to engage in normal babble** patterns as the dummy restricts tongue movements.
- **Increased dribbling** as the child is prevented from sealing their lips.
- The child becomes reliant on the dummy and it becomes **increasingly difficult to wean them off** as they get older. This can result in stress for both child and parent.
- **Increased risk of middle ear infections** (otitis media). This is because sucking opens the eustachian tube, which links the nose and middle ear.

Dummy recommendations:

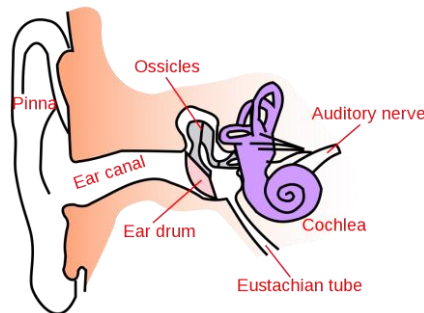
- ✓ Try to wean your child away from the dummy, preferably by 12 months.
- ✓ When your baby cries they are trying to tell you something, so try to find out what's upsetting them first, and use the dummy as the last resort.
- ✓ Whilst your child is using a dummy, use it as little as possible and try other means of comforting your child, such as cuddling or reading to your child at bed time.
- ✓ Dummies prevent babies from babbling – an important step in learning to talk, so only use them at set times, like bedtime.
- ✓ Don't allow your child to talk with a dummy in their mouth; it stops tongue and lip movement.
- ✓ Make a clean break – throw away the dummy at a time when you have support. Most babies and toddlers will fret for no more than two or three days.
- ✓ Once you have decided to give the dummy up, don't be tempted to give it back, and make sure there are none left around.

For advice on using dummies with very young babies please speak to your Midwife or Health Visitor.

Further advice and research findings can be found at:

- www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/pages/getting-baby-to-sleep.aspx
- <https://ican.org.uk/i-cans-talking-point/parents/do-dummies-affect-speech/>

Hearing Difficulties



If you think your child is having difficulties with hearing, they should be referred for a hearing test with the local audiology service.

Your child may be struggling to hear if they:

- Speak more loudly or quietly than usual
- Are not always responding to you
- Show difficulties learning new vocabulary
- Ask people to repeat what they say
- Ask for the TV or music to be turned up loud
- Struggle to hear people far away

General strategies to support a child that has difficulties with hearing:

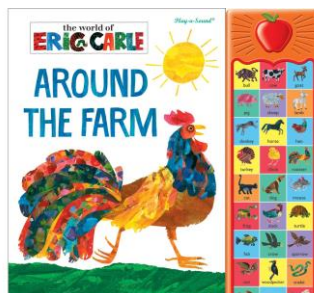


- Always **attract** your **child's attention first** before speaking to them, by calling their name or by touch.
- Try to **speak face to face**, sitting or bending to the same level as your child. Try to have light on your face and avoid standing in front of a window which makes lip reading more difficult.
- **Cut** any **background noise**. Turn off the television, radio and try to reduce any other background noise, such as washing machines, or open windows etc. Avoid speaking to your child against background chatter as this will make it more difficult for them to hear you.
- Speak up and **clearly**, but don't shout. Keeping requests **short and simple**. Try to give visual or spoken clues such as **gesture** to help the child understand what you are saying.
- **Check with the child** that they are listening and watching and have understood as you go along.
- Remember to **tell any adults** working with your child. Ask them to move your child to the front of the nursery during listening activities and reduce background noise.

More information about hearing tests can be found at:

- <https://childrenshealthsurrey.nhs.uk/services/audiology>

Playing With Sounds



- Although you may want to focus on the sounds a child **cannot do**, it will be important to give them opportunities to play with sounds they **can achieve**, so that they can feel some success.
- Typically, children start to **play with making sounds** and then go on to **learn that sounds can be used to communicate**.

Activity ideas for encouraging early sound making:

Always position yourself during sound activities so that you are at your **child's level** and they can **see your face**. They are more likely to copy you successfully if they can see how to make the sounds.

Environmental sounds

Point out and copy noises in your environment e.g. noisy books, phones ringing 'ring ring', sirens 'nee nor nee nor', cars 'vvrum'. Encourage the child to have a go.



Make sounds during play activities

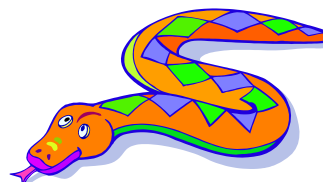
Play sounds are a sound that represents an action e.g. "Brum" for 'car'. Model play sounds to your child through play when they occur such as 'beep!', 'on no!', 'mmm!' Use these regularly to encourage the child to also use these.



Create opportunities

Make new opportunities within play to practice sounds e.g.

- 'b b b b' while bouncing a ball
- 'mmm' eating something yummy!
- saying "duhduhduh" as you bang a drum
- 'p p p' when popping bubbles
- tap dripping – 't..t..t..t'
- 'ffffff' to show the action of a rocket
- snake says "ssss"



Mirror games

Activities with copying facial expressions can be helpful in providing visual feedback for a child and can also be used to positively reinforce a child's attempt at the individual sounds. Make sounds such as blowing raspberries, lip smacking, hissing. Encourage your child to copy you.

Sound Discrimination



- Children learn to **hear the difference** between the two words **before they learn to say them**. As a child develops they learn **that sound changes create meaning differences** e.g. 'pin' vs 'bin'.
- Working on sound discrimination is important to **increase your child's awareness** of the differences between sounds.
- This is a very **important stage** as it is very hard for the child to move on if they can't hear the difference between the sounds.

Activity ideas for sound discrimination:



Animal Sounds

Set up a farm scene with some toy animals and make the child find the correct animal when you make the sound e.g. 'baa'.

Musical Instruments

You will need a set of instruments, let the child hear the different sounds they make. Create a screen and play one of the instruments, asks the child to listen and see if they can find the instrument they heard.



To make this harder you could make pairs of simple shakers with different items in (e.g. bottles with pasta, rice, and marbles in them) and ask your child to identify which one you are playing.



Environmental sounds:

Play listening games where your child has to identify an environmental sound. This could also be done with everyday sounds e.g. Hoover, car, aeroplane, phone ringing, play the sound and see if the child can choose what it is.

Speech sounds:

Use picture pairs that differ only by one sound e.g. 'tea-key'. Ensure your child can hear the difference between the two words by playing games where they have to indicate which word they have heard the adult say. If the child points to the wrong one, ask them to have another go. If they still find it difficult, let them know which one you have said, but praise them for trying hard. These are called minimal pairs e.g. 'bee-beep' or 'mouse-house'.



'Key'

vs



'Tea'

Phonological Awareness for Pre-School Children



- Phonological awareness is the ability to **identify and manipulate sounds** within words. Including; recognizing where words begin/end, hearing syllables in words, recognizing sounds in words, adding sounds, taking apart sounds, and moving sounds around.
- Phonological awareness **helps** both with **speech** sound development and **reading** ability.

Activity ideas to develop early phonological awareness skills:



Nursery Rhymes

Read or sing nursery rhymes to familiarise the children with the rhyming patterns. It helps to raise your voice and add emphasis to the rhyming word.

Read the rhyme and let the children fill in the word that completes the line. For example, 'Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall. Humpty Dumpty had a great _____', but leave off the end word and ask them to fill it in.

Rhythm games:

Children respond to a pattern of sounds made by instruments or just by clapping. Clap out a pattern of beats, and each child should imitate the exact sound pattern. Let the children take turns tapping out a pattern for the others to follow. A drum works well with this type of activity.



Syllable games:

Syllables are the beats in a word. For example, the word 'elephant' has three syllables: e-le-phant.

Practise clapping out words together with 1, 2 and 3 beats (e.g. ta - ble, tel - e - phone). Give the child words to clap out by themselves or to tap out on a drum. Help the child to count the number of sounds/syllables in a word using counters, bricks or cotton reels.

- 1 syllable words: chair, dog, kite, pan, bin, shoe, thumb, bike.
- 2 syllable words: table (tay-ble), rocket (ro-kit), apple (a-pull), jumper (jum-per).
- 3 syllable words: ambulance (am-bul-lance), dinosaur (di-no-saw).

Simple 'I spy'

When walking around with your child, point out what you can see and what sound it starts with e.g. 'I spy the sun, that starts with s' (remember to use sounds not the letter names).



What's in the bag

Collect some objects and place them in a bag. Pull them out one by one and ask the child to name them. You can then emphasise the sound the item starts with e.g. Child: pulls out a cup says 'cup', Adult: 'cup starts with 'k'.

Reluctant speakers



What is a reluctant speaker?

- It is not unusual for children to become shy in new environments or situations e.g. some will find it difficult to separate from their parents when they start nursery for the first time. Readjusting to a new nursery may take time; this is often a time when children are reluctant to talk.
- However, for a small group of children, reluctance to communicate becomes more persistent and difficult to overcome.

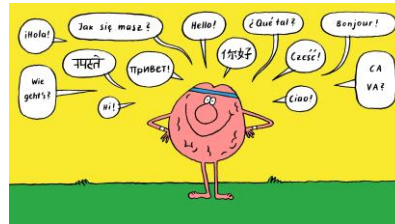
How can we help a reluctant speaker?

- Do not pressure the child to talk e.g. bribery, flattery, challenge, threats or gentle persuasion.
- Do not insist on eye contact initially.
- Do not avoid social gatherings, but consider what environmental changes can be made to make your child feel more comfortable.
- Educate family and friends about the nature of your child's difficulties.
- Build a rapport with the child by doing things they enjoy.
- Reassure your child. Let them know that you understand their difficulty and the feelings they experience when they try to speak e.g. "I know you find it tricky to talk at nursery at the moment, but it won't always be that way".
- Encourage the child to use non-verbal communication (e.g. nodding/shaking their head or pointing) by asking 'can you show me?'
- Make comments, such as "I wonder....", "It looks as though...." "I expect...." Which may provoke response, but do not require one.
- Try to make activities easier and more manageable for the child rather than removing the need to engage at all. For example, instead of answering for your child try to:
 - Repeat the question, so that your child can look at and answer you.
 - Rephrase it as a Yes/No question, so they can respond with a nod or shake of the head.
 - Deflect it e.g. saying 'I'll ask Peter that in a moment once he's settled in.'
- On the occasions where the child talks, the worst thing to do is make a fuss. The most helpful thing to do is to accept the child's contribution as totally normal and be as low key as possible.

For more information visit:

- www.selectivemutism.co.uk

Learning More Than One Language



- There is considerable evidence that learning to speak more than one language can **benefit** children's overall social, academic and intellectual progress.
- Bilingualism **does not cause** communication disorders.
- Mixing languages is a **typical** part of bilingual language development.
- You may be concerned if your child has not had much exposure to English; thinking he or she will be at a disadvantage when starting school; however, as long as your child has a **strong foundation** in the mother tongue, they should have no difficulty learning English.

Supporting a child learning more than one language:

- **Communicate with your child** in the mix of languages that is natural for you and your family.
- **Encourage** your child's attempts to communicate in any of the languages you use.
- Keep speaking **your own language**. Do not change your **natural pattern** of language use at home. Do not start speaking a language that you are not competent with, even though it's the child's new language (e.g. English).
- Keep words and gestures **consistent**. If both parents speak different languages to the child, it is natural to switch between the two languages. Some words feel more natural to use in one language than the other.



- Keep language **simple** and context bound: use short phrases when talking, use lots of repetition and keep modelling language to your child.
- Use gesture, facial expression, and body language to help show your child what you mean.

More information can be found at:

- https://research.reading.ac.uk/celm/bilingualism-matters_reading/for-parents/
 - <https://ican.org.uk/media/1294/english-as-an-additional-language.pdf>
- <http://www.hanen.org/Helpful-Info/Articles/Can-children-with-language-impairments-learn-two-1.aspx>

Voice care



Why is voice care important?

- The small muscles within the voice box (vocal cords) **vibrate** together every time a child talks, shouts, laughs, coughs and makes other noises.
- If the voice is **not rested**, or it has been **strained** or used for a long time, it becomes difficult for the redness and swelling to settle down. The sound of the **voice may also change**.

Ways to keep the vocal folds healthy:



Drink lots of water

- Water helps the body to produce healthy mucus. If your throat feels dry, then your vocal cords will also be dry.

Avoid shouting, whispering and using character voices

- Encourage your child to go to the person they wish to speak to instead of shouting from a distance. Aim to be face to face when you speak to each other.
- Encourage your child not to use throat noises and not to imitate characters with unhealthy voices.
- Whispering can also tire the voice and dry out the mucus that coats the vocal cords.



Avoid prolonged voice use and encourage periods of vocal rest



- Encourage quiet play activities. It is important for your child to have time in the day when his or her voice is able to rest and recover.
- This is a good time for you to use a soft, relaxed voice as an example for your child to follow.

Keep the air in your home healthy

- Central heating and closed windows encourage dehydration. Smoke, dust and chemical fumes are strong irritants to the vocal cords. Ventilate rooms where there are any potential irritants.



Avoid coughing and throat-clearing

- This may be a habit, but people sometimes do it because their vocal cords are dry and sticky. If your child coughs and clears his or her throat a lot, then try to encourage him or her to have a sip of water or to swallow the irritation away rather than coughing.

Wherever possible, try to make the recommended changes as a family and be a good role model for your child. This will make it easier for your child to understand what is expected of them.

Stammering (Stuttering/ Dysfluency)

STAMMA

What is stammering?

- Stammering often begins during early childhood (two to four years old), at which point a child's language and speech skills are rapidly developing.
- **No-one is 100% fluent** –many children and adults speak dysfluently at times, especially when they are under some pressure to communicate.
- It is normal for a child to repeat words and phrases, and to hesitate with "um"s and "er"s when a child is thinking of how to finish a sentence e.g. ' Well well well I went to the shops'. These may be more marked when the child is very tired, excited, upset or nervous.



Although the quantity and type of stammering differs for each child, the child may present with the following features:

- Repetition of single syllables e.g. "c-c-come b-b-back"
- Prolongation/ stretching sounds e.g. "sssssss-illy me"
- Blocking sounds e.g. the mouth is in position, but no sound comes out
- Facial tension around the eyes, nose, lips, or neck
- Body tension e.g. stamping feet, tapping fingers, or shifting body position
- Breathing patterns disrupted e.g. holding breath while speaking or taking a deep breath before speaking
- Adopting avoidance strategies e.g. avoiding or changing words; or not speaking in certain situations

If you have any concerns at all, you should refer your child to Speech & Language Therapy.

See below to find out more:

- Michael Palin Centre for Stammering Children www.michaelpalincenreforstammering.org
 - British Stammering Association www.stamma.org

Strategies to help a child experiencing dysfluency:

- Most of the recommendations can be **beneficial to all children**, even those without a stammer.
- There are a lot of suggestions here, and it would be impossible to try to do them all at once. Instead, **choose one idea** that you think would suit you and your child, and try that for a few weeks.
- Once you're doing that without having to think about it too much, add one other idea, should you need to.

1. **Have special time with the child.** Arrange a time in the day when the child can have your **undivided attention** in a calm, relaxed atmosphere for 5 minutes. Play with the child, but don't take charge, let them lead the activity and talk about what they want to talk about. Try not to use sentences and words that are too complicated for the child's age.



2. **Listen carefully to the child.** Give them plenty of time to speak so they do not feel the need to hurry. Concentrate on **WHAT** they are saying and not **HOW** they are saying it, don't ask them to repeat. Give them your full attention, keeping eye contact to show them you are listening and interested. If you can't do this, explain that you can talk about that thing later.

3. **Reduce the number of questions you ask.** **Commenting** e.g. 'that's a great tower,' rather than questioning e.g. 'what is that?' can open up the conversation without the pressure/demands of a question. However, if you do need to ask questions, **try to give alternatives** e.g. "Did it happen in class or in the playground?"



4. **Slow down your own rate of talking.** Asking your child to slow down may work for a few moments, but they won't be able to keep it up on their own. Children try to match their parents' rate of speech, so the slower you go, the slower they will go. Pausing before talking will help you slow down and will also model for them how to stop and think first before talking.

5. **Cut down on the number of times the child is interrupted or interrupts others.** The child is likely to talk more quickly and to feel more tense if they are trying to interrupt or if they are being interrupted. Make sure that everyone in your home takes turns to talk.



6. **Praise the child for the things they do well** and this will build confidence – **be specific** e.g. 'What a lovely picture, the colours you used are wonderful'.

7. **Treat the child in exactly the same way as any other children** regarding their behaviour. Discipline should be appropriate and consistent.

8. **If your child is not aware they stammer, do not draw attention to it.** If the child is unaware or not particularly bothered by the stammering it will not be necessary to say anything directly.

9. **If the child is aware they stammer, acknowledge it.** Try not to label the child's difficulty as 'stammering' or 'stuttering', instead use more descriptive terms e.g. 'I can see you're having a hard time getting your words out' and then you might add something like 'Everyone finds it hard to speak sometimes' or 'Well done for keeping going'.



10. **Avoid situations where the child has to 'perform' in speaking tasks** e.g. 'Show Grandma how you can say'



11. **Remain calm.** Try not to feel inadequate yourself when the child is having problems. If you can remain calm, this will help the child to be calm; if you are anxious this may fuel the child's anxiety, so making things harder for you both.

12. **Teasing should be dealt with before it becomes a problem.** This is always preferable than trying to deal with it after the child has suffered the humiliation of being victimised. Keep a close eye on whether other children (or anyone) is teasing/ mocking /imitating the child and deal with it straight away.