



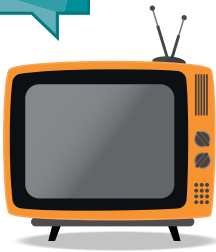
## Strategies to Support Understanding of Language

Although they may have **normal hearing**, some children may still have **difficulty working out** what words actually mean. They may have **poor attention** and **express themselves** or their **lack of understanding** with **behaviour**. Similarly, if you were in a foreign country where you **didn't know the language**, you would still be able to hear the words but not be able to **assign meaning**, so after a while you **might not listen so attentively** and you may get very **frustrated** when you didn't get what you expected!

### WAYS TO HELP:

- Reduce the language and questions
- Re-enforce the link between the word and the object
- Reduce the pace
- Repeat

"George,  
TV off"



**Reduce the language;** When talking to your child use short simple sentences so that your child can hear the important words e.g. instead of 'George, I think you have watched enough TV today' say 'George, TV off'. Also we want your child to develop towards using these words so providing them with that clear single word at the right time models to them what that word relates to and what they can get if they use it.



"Breakfast"

**Re-enforce the link between word and object:** make sure that what you are talking about is in front of you, for example when its bed time, say 'bedtime' and show their pyjamas or breakfast say 'breakfast' and show their bowl and cup.

"Up"



**Reduce the Pace:** If we rush through language then we give the child very little opportunity to hear the words and associate them with what we are talking about. Go slow and pause between words and phrases.

**Repeat:** A child needs to hear a word hundreds of times before they will use it. This means saying words for them lots of times. They also need to hear it within different situations so they can generalise that word for example: they have learnt 'up' in a regular play routine with you, now start saying it when you go up the stairs, when you blow bubbles and play with a toy car 'up' the ramp, or on the trampoline etc. Try to get all the family to agree on the same words for the same object e.g always drink not sometimes juice and sometimes cup.

# Strategies to Support Understanding of Language

## GENERAL IDEAS

- 🚩 Simplify and chunk instructions – it may feel unnatural but will support children in processing one piece of information at a time e.g. 'get your book [pause] and sit on the carpet'.
  - 🚩 Don't change what you say – this can be confusing and won't allow children to understand the initial instruction. Keep language the same and use strategies to support e.g. showing them what you want them to do.
  - 🚩 Use visual information and cues wherever possible.
  - 🚩 Give longer than you think to allow time to process – repeat more slowly if needed.
  - 🚩 Use facial expressions.
  - 🚩 Avoid idioms and sarcasm.
  - 🚩 Explain what is obvious.
  - 🚩 Use 'show me', or 'point to' rather than 'can you see?'
  - 🚩 If talking specifically to a child, use their name before giving the instruction.
  - 🚩 Put the key word vocabulary on the board (school age) or as pictures alongside activities (play activities).
  - 🚩 Use task boards – what do I need, where do I have to go?
  - 🚩 Ask someone to repeat to an adult or peer what they have to do.
  - 🚩 Encourage children as part of day to day situations to be able to say 'I don't understand' or ask for help – you can use visuals as well e.g. red/amber/green, thumbs up/thumbs down.
  - 🚩 Praise children for asking questions – use reward systems such as team points.
  - 🚩 Don't assume vocabulary and concepts are understood particularly when they are part of another topic or other topics e.g. first and last, beginning and end, prepositions.
  - 🚩 Be aware of concepts and vocab out of context e.g. bigger than/smaller than in maths.
  - 🚩 Be aware of misinterpretations e.g. light = not dark, light = not heavy.
  - 🚩 Be careful of negatives – they are later to develop. It is more helpful to say what should be done rather than what shouldn't.
  - 🚩 Don't teach opposites together – teach one concept at a time. When the child is secure with a particular concept, you can begin to teach the opposite in relation to it.
  - 🚩 What can you use to support new vocabulary e.g. what does it do, where do you find it etc.
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