

Ideas to Support Child with Expressive Language Difficulties

- Advice to be sought from Speech and Language Therapist who may give recommendations for particular games to play with the child.etc. However, some activities will be helpful for all children who have difficulties with articulation.
- Build up the child's confidence by praising whatever attempts they make to communicate. Be careful not to knock confidence by constantly correcting articulation. Use the modelling technique described below.
- In conversation with the child, use a modelling technique in which you repeat what the child has said in a more adult form. For example, the child might say "Him play ball" and you say "yes, he's playing ball". Remember that the modelled sentence should stress the corrected elements but don't demand that the child repeats it – you are feeding the language, not telling them off.
- Take this process one stage further, by taking what the child has said and adding a little extra information. For example, the child says "Look, Daddy's new car!" and you reply "Yes, Daddy's new red car!".
- Encourage the child to respond with more than a simple yes or no by avoiding the use of closed questions. For example "Do you want to do a painting or play with the bricks?".
- Listen to what the child is trying to tell you and follow their lead, building on what he has just said. Remember to take turns in your conversation, leaving them enough time to respond. Talk **with** the child rather than **at** them.
- If possible send the child on little errands with simple messages.

Suitable games to play

- Any activity that encourages language - particularly imaginative and small world play. Encourage use of language using techniques described above to give practice in pronunciation and extend vocabulary.
- Table top games such as Lotto or Snap where child is asked to describe what is on their card. Play with peers if possible.
- Looking at books with adult – talking about pictures and reading story leaving 'gaps' for child to fill. For Example 'Who's been sleeping in my _____?' Books that are repetitive are particularly useful. Eg. 'We're going on a Bear Hunt' and 'Peace at Last'.
- Winslow Press (01869 – 244733) produce a variety of picture cards designed to develop language skills. Colour cards, action pictures; What's wrong cards etc.

- In a scrap book collect pictures belonging to groups – eg. Food, people, houses etc. Encourage child to look for pictures in magazines and talk about what is on the pictures.
- Kim's Game.

It may be useful to play games that will develop listening skills. For example:

- Sound Lotto
- Musical Instruments. Collect a group of instruments. Ask the children to close their eyes while you play one at a time. See if they can identify the instrument that was played.
- Simon Says. It may be helpful for young children to have a picture of 'Simon' that you can hold up as an additional clue.
- Take children outside and ask them to stand very still with eyes closed. Ask them 'What can you hear?'
- Mixed up stories. Read a well known story (Goldilocks and the three bears for example) and make deliberate mistakes for the children to correct. These can be very obvious or more subtle, depending on the ability of the children.
- Make up sentences, some that are serious and some that are silly. Ask the children to tell you which are sensible and which are silly.
- Collect a variety of objects and containers. Child to follow instructions – 'Put the pen in the basket' for example. Get progressively harder 'Put the big yellow pen in the little red box'.