

Fun Activities for Language Development

A Guide for Parents

Language and Communication Service

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Introduction

Why are Language and Communication skills so important?

Language and Communication skills are needed for thinking and learning.

If a child has difficulties mastering these skills, they might find it hard to;

- pay attention
- listen
- remember
- understand what somebody says
- think quickly about an appropriate response
- carry out instructions or
- make friends.

Purpose of this guide

Parents may wonder how to support their child if they have been found to have Language and Communication difficulties. A number of Language and Communication skills are outlined in the separate sections of this booklet, explaining what they mean and what fun activities and games can be done at home. With support from parents or carers, a child can be helped to develop these skills and feel more confident. Through regular playing of these games and activities, your child can also be helped to;

- show improved attention, listening and memory skills
- develop an understanding of the sounds in words that they hear
- develop an understanding of the meaning of a wider range of words that they hear
- use a greater range of words to pass on information
- respond with greater confidence, accuracy and fluency
- become more ready for reading, spelling and writing.

How can parents help

Work closely with your child's teacher, concentrating on just one or two Language and Communication skills each week. Remember that the best way to help your child develop language skills is to;

- talk to them
- read to them and
- listen to them.

Did you know?

Early language skills are the key to later success.





Spending just 10 minutes per day reading, talking and playing with your child helps develop their thinking skills, problem-solving skills, turn-taking skills, language and social skills.





Communication

Communication is about giving and receiving messages. For communication to be successful, we need;

- a speaker and a listener
- words that both understand
- speakers taking turns.



Conversations help develop friendships.

Language and conversation are essential for learning. Learning depends on;

- understanding what somebody says
- having to think about our response
- responding.

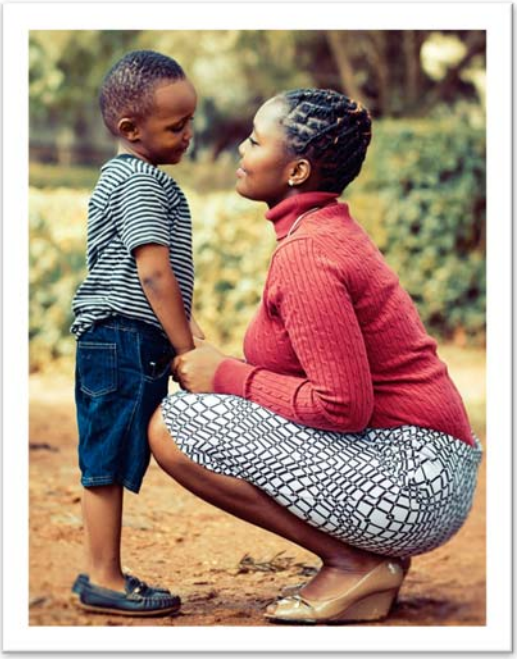


> *Reading and writing float on a sea of talk.*
>
> James Britton (1983)

Top Tips

When talking with your child

- Get down to your child's level — it is easier to talk face to face.



- Get their attention before you start to talk.



- Wait and allow your child time to start the conversation.



- Take turns in the conversation so that your child and you can talk.



- Join in your child's play and mirror their actions.



- Have fun together with song and rhymes.



- Build up your child's sentences by repeating what they say and adding words.



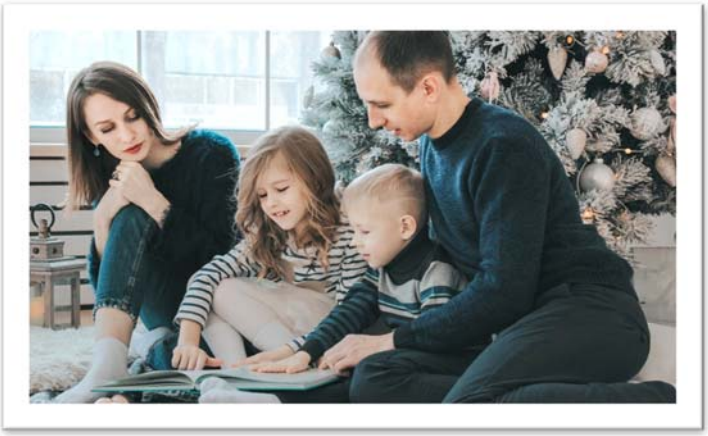
- Use daily routines to emphasise language.



- Give choices to increase vocabulary.



- Use lots of statements and use fewer questions.



Attention and Listening

Why is this so important?



Attention and listening are vital skills in the development of language, speech sounds and literacy. Good attention is the ability to focus the eyes and/or ears on something specific for a certain length of time.

On average a child will have one minute's attention for every one year of their life.

If we are given two different pieces of information at once, e.g. if we are expected to listen to music and look at the demonstration, we may find that:

- we cannot do both at once
- we are probably more attracted to visual information
- we have learnt the skills of blocking out one thing to concentrate on another.

Your child must be able to listen and be attentive to what is happening around them in order to understand it. If not, they may have difficulties;

- paying attention to the speaker
- remembering what they have been told
- listening to long sentences
- following instructions.

A good attention span is needed before a child can begin to understand language. Extending the time a child is able to concentrate on one activity will develop their attention and listening skills. Many young children have a short attention span and those with communication difficulties may have particular problems with concentration.



Attention is the basis of ALL learning

Children can be helped to **listen** and **look** appropriately and to control their own focus of attention.



How to help develop your child's Attention and Listening

Story Time

Choose a story to read to your child. Then choose a target word which is repeated often within the story. Before you begin, tell your child the word you have chosen and ask them to listen carefully for that word and when they hear it they can clap their hands.



Example;

Story: Goldilocks and the three Bears

Target word: Goldilocks

Action: Clap your hands

Remember that you can use other actions too, such as asking your child to put a pebble in a cup every time they hear the target word.

'Simon Says'

Play a game of 'Simon Says', with your child. This will encourage them to listen and respond to the instructions you have given.

Make sure that you are playing the game in an area which has few distractions, e.g. background noise, television, etc.

Play the Game

Ask your child to listen carefully for the instruction, e.g. '*Simon says, "put your hands on your head*".' Once your child is able to follow single instructions like this, you can see if they can listen for two instructions, e.g. '*Simon says, "clap your hands and stamp your feet".'*

Always remember to reinforce the Good Listening rules.

Listening for Sounds

Gather up a range of objects from around the house such as; keys, a ball, a cup and spoon, buttons in a jar, a squeaky toy, a shaker (can be made from a butter tub and rice), or any other noise making objects you have around your home.

Play the game

Put the objects in front of your child and then get them to close their eyes. You can then make a sound using one of the objects, e.g. shake the keys.

Ask your child to identify the object which made the sound.

Once they can do this, you can see if they can identify a sequence of two sounds.



Jelly Bean Game

This activity can be carried out when you are at home. It can involve a number of family or friends. The idea is that one person calls out the different jelly beans and the listeners pretend to be that type of bean. You should remind your child to stand still and listen for instructions;

'*Jelly bean*!' = move around like a jelly

'*Jumping bean*!' = jump on the spot

'*Runner bean*!' = run on the spot

'*Broad bean*!' = make your body as wide as possible

'*String bean*!' = make your body as long/tall as possible

'*Mexican bean*!' = shout '*Olé!*'.



Have fun thinking of new types of beans and the corresponding activities.

Auditory Discrimination

What is this and why is it so important?

When children learn language, they need to be able to tell the difference between the sounds they hear, i.e. spoken sounds, and everyday sounds.

Auditory means hearing sounds.

Auditory Discrimination means noticing the **difference** between the sounds that they hear.

The activities described below, will be helpful for younger children. Have fun with these games, as they can also help in the development of your child's reading skills.

Guess the sound

For this activity look around the home and find objects which make different noises, e.g.



- Whistle
- Bell
- Scrunched up paper
- Ripping paper
- Plastic bags
- Opening/closing of drawers/doors
- Dropping two coins
- Shaking bunches of keys, etc.





Once your child has had the opportunity to see the items and hear the different sounds, ask them to look away and listen carefully, then identify which item made the sound. Ask whether the sound was **loud** or **quiet**.

Guess the animal

Make the sounds of the animals in the pictures and see if your child can point to the correct animals.

Try a practice one first, so your child understands the rules of the game.

Reverse the roles, getting your child to make the noise while you point.



Music time

Ideas for home-made instruments



- To make a drum, use an empty biscuit tin, with a wooden spoon for the beater
- To make a shaker, put some beads, dried peas or pebbles into a plastic milk bottle
- To make a xylophone, fill glasses with different levels of water.

You will need to have two of each, one for you and one for your child.

How to use

Make a sound. Encourage your child to copy you. Draw their attention to the fact that the sounds from the same homemade instruments are the **same**. On another day, play different instruments to show them that the sounds are **different**.

Auditory Memory

What is this and why is it so important?

When children learn language, they need to be able to tell the difference between the sounds they hear, i.e. spoken sounds, and everyday sounds.

Auditory means hearing sounds.
Auditory Memory means remembering the important sounds that we hear.

Some children find it hard to remember what has been said to them. They may need help with;

- following multi-step directions
- recalling stories or songs
- remembering people's names
- memorising numbers.

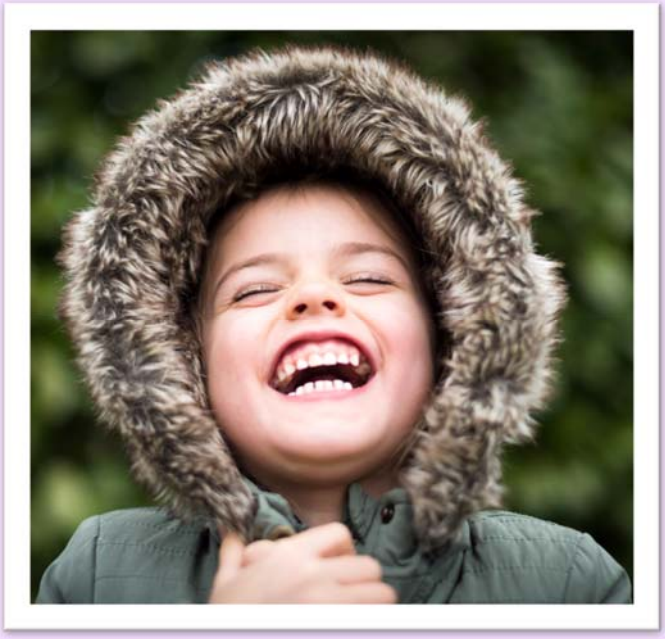
Your child may have been asked to complete tasks at home or in school. If they feel confused, they may have difficulty remembering the instructions. It is helpful to try the following activities with your child and develop their auditory memory.

Dressing-up Game

Collect a selection of clothes to use for this game. Use no more than 9 items . It may be fun to use an adult's clothes.

Discuss the clothes with your child and make sure that they know the name of each item.

Remind your child to listen carefully and give them a list of items to put on as quickly as they can, e.g. '*Put on the hat, a sock and the coat.*'



I went to the shop and I bought….



This fun game can be played while in the car, out for a walk or at home. Explain that, in turn, each person repeats what they have heard and adds on a new item to the list. It can be fun to make the list interesting, because then it will be more memorable. It gets harder as the list gets longer. The game ends when someone cannot recall the list correctly, e.g.;

- '*I went to the shop and I bought a carrot*'
- '*I went to the shop and I bought a carrot and a doll*'
- '*I went to the shop and I bought a carrot, a doll and a flower*'
- '*I went to the shop and I bought a carrot, a doll, a flower and a puppy*'
- '*I went to the shop and I bought a carrot, a doll, a flower, a puppy and a ……*'

Percy Parrot

Give your child the picture of Percy Parrot and tell them that Percy likes to repeat things that others say and that they are going to pretend to be Percy.

Percy's favourite things to repeat are numbers, so you are going to say a list of numbers and you want them to listen carefully and repeat them, e.g.;



Adult: '*four, seven*' Child: '*four, seven*'

Adult: '*three, nine, one*' Child: '*three, nine, one*'

Remember that you can swap roles with your child. Let them say a list of numbers and you pretend to be Percy Parrot, repeating the numbers.

Instead of always saying numbers, why not try listing any objects and get 'Percy' to repeat them, e.g. '*car, ball, house*'.

Concepts

What are they?

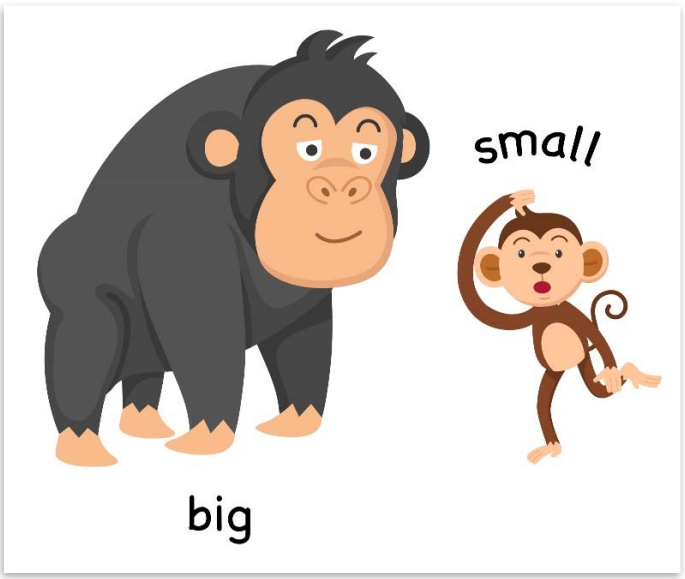
The best way to explain concepts, is that they are words which help us to understand;

- location - e.g. up/down, behind/in front of
- number - e.g. more/less
- size - e.g. big/little
- time - e.g. before/after, first/last
- feelings - e.g. happy/sad.

Why are they important?

Concepts are used to describe and compare things. Learning to recognise and understand concepts will strengthen your child's vocabulary and help to build up their pre-reading and early mathematical skills. Learning concepts can be great fun and you can help at home too!

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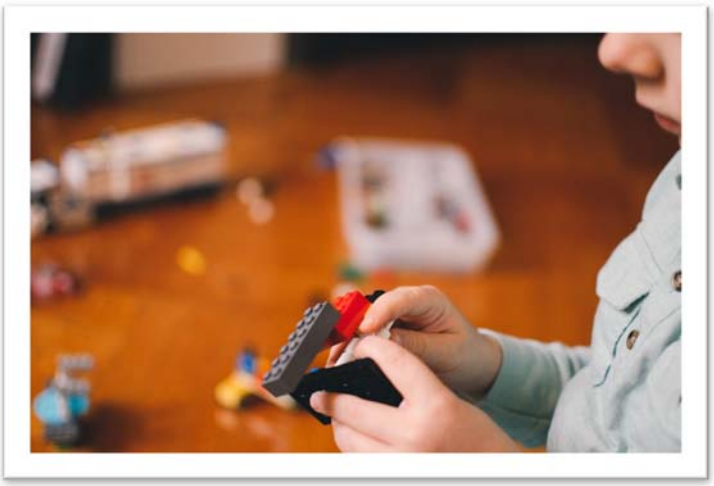






Understanding and using concepts

How you can help



- Ask your child's teacher for a list of concepts coming up in Numeracy, Language and Literacy, World Around Us, R.E., etc. This may include concepts that your child hasn't yet mastered or been taught, for example **few**. Try to have daily conversations that include new words, e.g. *'I have a **few** things to buy in the shop before we go home*'.
- If the topic is Goldilocks and the Three Bears, the child will need to understand the concepts **hard** and **soft** which relate to the beds and chairs, e.g. '*This bed is too **hard***', '*This bed is too **soft.***'
- Walk around and talk about different objects that are **hard** (cup, table, pen), and **soft** (teddy, towel, curtains). Encourage your child to feel the objects and notice that **hard** objects tend to feel cold, whereas **soft** objects are often warmer.

Easier activities

- Start by introducing one concept at a time, e.g. **big/not big**.
- Match items according to their colour, size, shape, feel, etc.
- Match pictures that are the same.

Advanced activities

- Talk about items not present, which draw upon your child's experience and knowledge of the world, e.g. '*What was that digger doing in the field yesterday?*
- Discuss the kind of describing words which might be used, e.g. '*Did you see the **big** wheels on the **back** and the **small** wheels on the **front**?*
- Discuss the properties of objects and how they can be related together, e.g. '*The ground is **soft** and the digger's bucket is **hard**, so it can dig deep holes in the ground.*'



Understanding first and last

Why is this important?

First and **last** are concepts of time and sequencing. They refer to something happening before or after something else. They are also significant order concepts when creating sequences in Numeracy. You can do these activities with your child and their friends or siblings.

How you can help

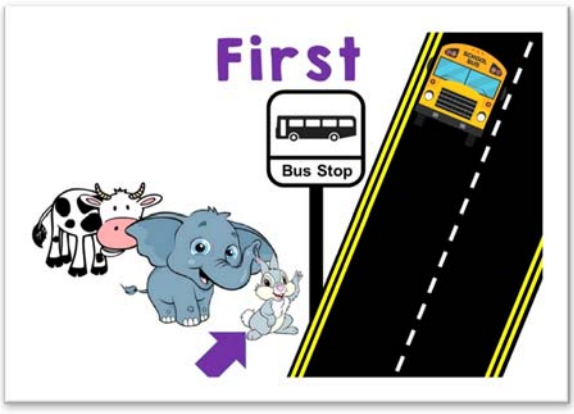
- Get the group to line up. Then ask your child to stand **first** or **last** in the line
- If they are unsure, show them where to stand
- Once you have given the instruction and your child has moved to the right place in the line, reinforce this by saying where they are, e.g. *'Yes, now you are first'*.

Easier activities

- Use visual cues e.g. signing or pointing to where you want your child to stand after you give the instruction
- Work on one concept only to begin with e.g. **first**. When this is established, introduce **last**
- Link the idea of **last** to **not first**. This is how your child initially learns opposites.

Advanced activities

- Reduce the number of visual or verbal cues, repetition or help given
- Use toys and photos, e.g. toy animals lined up, photo of sports day or Olympics of the winner crossing the line
- With any of these activities, you can encourage your child to use the words **first** and **last** by asking, '*Where's Jody in the queue?*', or, '*Where's the horse?* as the animals enter the field, etc.
- Link to time, e.g. '*What happened **first** in the story?*, '*What happened **last**?*.



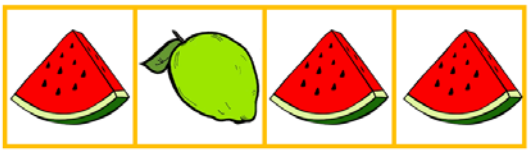


Understanding same and different

Why is this important?

Same and **different** are important concepts used to describe similarities and differences between objects. Sorting and matching are the first skills in early years Numeracy. Visual discrimination of letter shapes which are the same or different, is one of the first skills learned in early years Literacy.

How you can help

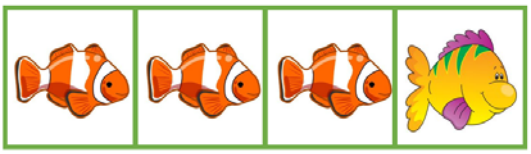


- Take two catalogues and have fun finding pictures of objects that are exactly the **same**. Ask your child to point to pictures that are the **same**, or those which are **different**
- Look at all the SNAP cards in a box and find matching pairs.

Easier activities

- Start by introducing the concept **same**
- Matching the socks into pairs that are the **same**, or two biscuits that are the **same**
- Ask your child to sort their toys and make a matching pair of any two toys that are the **same**
- Ask your child to sort the pegs, by colour, shape or by touch. They can tell you if any two items at random are the **same** or **different**.

Advanced activities

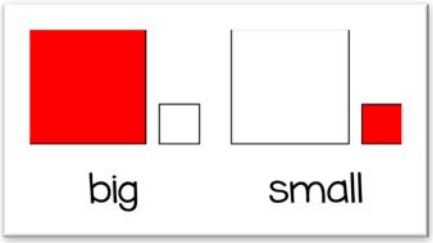


- Introduce items that are different but only slightly, e.g. a red pencil and a blue pencil
- Encourage your child to tell you whether items are the **same** or **different**
- Encourage them to sort items, identifying the properties of each item, e.g. '*This pencil is long and red, but this pencil is long and blue. Their colours are* ***different****.*'
- Play SNAP, slowly at first, then more quickly.



Understanding big and little/small

Why is this important?



It is important that children are able to describe objects. **Big** and **little/small** are often amongst the earliest adjectives (describing words) that children learn. Usually **big** is learned before **little/small**.

How you can help

- Gather together a selection of objects - one **big** and one **little/small,** e.g. **big** cup, **little/small** cup, **big** pencil and **little/small** pencil.
- Explain that you are going to take it in turns to put the things away into a box/bag.
- Take out a pair of items e.g. two cups, one **big** and one **little/small**. Tell your child to find the **big** cup. and put it in the box.
  - Adult: '*What did you put in the box*?'
  - Child: '*Big cup*'
  - Point to the remaining cup;
  - Adult: '*What shall I put in the box?*
  - Child: '*Little cup.*'

Easier activities

- During outdoor play, ask your child to jump into a **big/little** hoop. Then ask, '*Which hoop are you in?*
- There are numerous opportunities throughout the day for reinforcing **big** and **little/small**, e.g. laying the table (**big** spoon, **little** spoon), or reading Goldilocks and the Three Bears.

Advanced activities

- Increase the selection of **big/little** items so your child has to use a two word phrase, **big/little/small** + object name. Use pictures as well as real objects.
- Say '**Bye-bye**' or '**gone'** as you hide the item;
  - '*Bye-bye big cup!'*
  - *'Small cup is gone!'*
- Encourage the use of **big** or **little/small** items and where they're going;
  - Adult: '*Where is the **big** cup?*
  - Child: '*In (the) box).*'
  - Adult: '*Yes, the **big** cup is in the box.*'
- Extend the ideas into other play or daily routines, e.g. as you fill the **big** jug with water or use the **little** bucket to make a sandcastle.

Understanding many and few

Why is this important?

It is important that children are able to understand and describe amounts. These concepts can be tricky to learn e.g. a **few** leaves on a tree may relate to a hundred leaves, whereas a **few** biscuits left on a plate may only be three.

How you can help

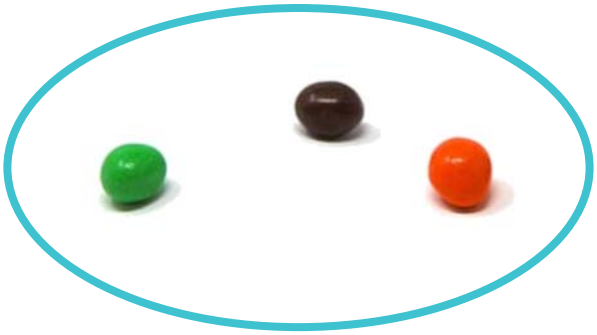
The best way to help your child recognise and understand these concepts is to use the words **many** and **few** in everyday conversation. Your child will copy your use of these words and will become confident at using them in the correct context.

Easier activities.

- Hold a bag of sweets in your hand. Say, '*I have **many** sweets in this bag, would you like to take a **few**?*'
- Collect together objects in the home and sort them into groups of **many** and **few**, e.g. '*Oh, there are **many** pegs in the basket.',* or '*I see there are only a **few** biscuits in the tin.*'
- Talk about **many** and **few** during everyday routines, e.g. '*There are **many** peas/beans on your plate, but only a **few** fish fingers.'*

Advanced activities

Encourage your child to continue using these words in everyday conversations, thereby increasing their understanding and use of new vocabulary. Praise their use of new vocabulary.



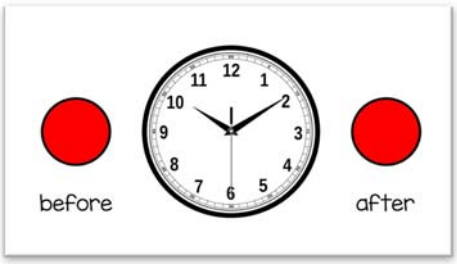
few



many

Learning the meaning of before and after

Why is this important?



It is important that children can understand and talk about concepts of time. **Before** and **after** are important concepts in a child's daily routine. The word **after** relates to something happening later than something else, e.g. '*Put your shoes on **after** your coat*', or '*The number ten comes **after** the number nine.*' This is a key concept when learning ordering and sequencing skills and also in relation to time, number and counting.

How you can help

- Ask your child to put the daily activities in order. Link two activities, e.g. '*You can ride your bike **after** you have eaten your dinner.*'
- Ask what they have to do first. This requires your child to understand that the second part of the instruction (eating the dinner) has to be performed first.

Easier activity

- Introduce the word after by putting it at the beginning of the sentence, e.g. '***After** going to the toilet, you should wash your hands*'. This is easier as the sentences are in the some order as the tasks to be done.



Advanced activities

- Introduce the word **before** as a contrast
- Link your child's daily activities;

  '*You can watch television **after** you have tidied away your toys.*'

  '*We have to tidy away your toys **before** you can watch television.*'

Encourage your child to use the words **before** and **after** to describe simple sentences.

Prepositions

What are they?

A preposition is a word that describes the position of an object, e.g. **in**, **on**, **under, beside, between, behind,** and **in front of**.

How you can help

The following tips can help to develop your child's understanding of prepositions.

- Give your child instructions to follow during play and everyday routines
- Describe where things are around the house, e.g. '*The plate is **on** the table*', or '*The toys are **under** the table*'
- Lots of repetition will help your child to learn.

Everyday Prepositions



We use prepositions in our everyday conversation without being aware that we are using them. As you go through your daily routines emphasise the prepositions you use in your conversation and point out to your child when they are using a preposition in their actions, e.g.

'*Put your shoes **in** the wardrobe*'

'*That book goes **on** the shelf*'

'*Dad's paper is **under** the sofa.*'

Comment on your child's actions, e.g.

'*Well done, you put your coat **on** the hook*!'

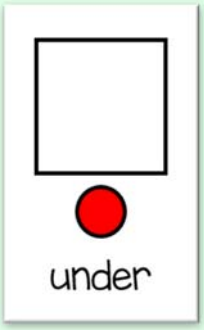
'*Look, your car is **in** the box!*'

'*Oh, you found your shoe **under** the table!*'



Understanding under

Why is this important?



It is important that your child understands and uses the word **under.** Some children find that **under** is the easiest preposition to learn because it has two syllables which you can emphasise as you speak , '*un—der*'.

How you can help

- Gather together some toys and place them under things in the room. When your child finds something, they must say where it was, using the preposition, e.g. '*It was **under** the cup*', or '*It was hidden **under** my bed*'
- If your child uses the wrong preposition, or doesn't respond, offer a choice, e.g. '*Was the car **in** the box or was it **under** the bed*?'
- When everything has been found, play the game again, but this time, ask your child to put the toys **under** things and tell you where to find them.

Easier activities

- Use signs/gestures for **under**
- Hide some objects **on** things to begin with. Then move onto **in** when your child is using **on** consistently
- Give your child a choice of where the object is hidden, e.g. '*Is it **on** the table or **under** the table?*'
- Reduce the pressure by taking turns to say where things are hidden.

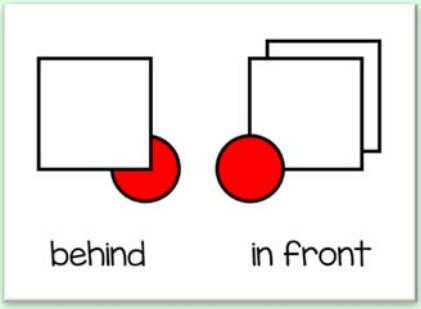
Advanced activities



- When your child is using **under** consistently, reintroduce **in** and **on** and work towards identifying the difference between all three prepositions
- Share books, encouraging your child to say what or where things are, e.g. '*The ducks are **under** the tree*', or '*The river goes **under** the bridge*'.

Understanding behind and in front

Why is this important?



It is important that your child understands and uses the words **behind** and **in front** to describe the location of objects or people.

How you can help

- Gather together a few favourite character toys
- Explain that the toys are going to play a game and your child is going to put them in different places. Say to your child;
  *'Put Spiderman **behind** the curtain'*
  *'Put Barbie **in front** of the chair'*
  *'Put teddy **in front** of the fridge'.*
- You can use things around the room or move items on the table, e.g. cup, car, book. Ask your child to, '*Put Spiderman **behind** the cup!*'

Remember to sit next to your child for this activity so that you are both looking at things from the same perspective.



Other activities

- Vary the prepositions and include ones targeted earlier, e.g. **in**, **on**, **under**
- Introduce other prepositions, e.g. **next to** and **between**
- Vary the toys used. You could play with the farm or the garage
- Play a 'Hide and Seek game - with real people hiding or hide toys and describe where they were found.

Categories and Word Finding

What is this?

Sorting items into categories develops your child's vocabulary skills by allowing them to compare how objects are similar, how they belong within certain groups, and also compare the function of the groups, e.g. food we eat, clothes we wear, vehicles you drive. It also helps your child learn, store, and retrieve new vocabulary.

How you can help

Sorting objects into groups is something that we do every day without realising. Many daily chores around the house can be used to help your child develop their understanding of categories. Involve them in the activities listed below and use these as opportunities to talk about where things belong and why.

- Sorting shopping. When putting away groceries. Ask your child to help you decide where each item belongs, e.g. that goes in the fridge/fruit bowl/ cleaning cupboard/freezer/vegetable box/bathroom cupboard, etc.
- Tidy-up time. As you put things away around the home, talk to your child about where they belong in the house or in a particular room, e.g. '*Towels go in the hot-press*', '*your shoes go in your room*', '*books go in the bookcase*', '*toys go in the toy box*', or '*clothes go in the wardrobe*'.
- Doing dishes. While putting the dishes away, ask your child to tell you in which cupboard each item belongs, e.g. *'Cups belong in the cup cupboard', 'plates belong in the big cupboard', 'saucepans go in the pots cupboard', or 'knives, forks, and spoons go in the cutlery drawer.'*



Washing Day

Involve your child in the job of sorting laundry. Ask them to help you to sort out the clothes in your laundry basket in a number of different ways.

Sort by;

- colour
- name, e.g. trousers t-shirts, socks, etc.
- fabric
- clothes you hang up/fold.



As you take each item from the basket talk about its name, colour and which group it belongs to.

Sort It Out

On the sort boards provided overleaf help your child to match each item to the correct category.

Name and talk about each item with your child and help them decide in which group the item belongs.

When you have decided where the item belongs, use a marker to match it to the correct group.







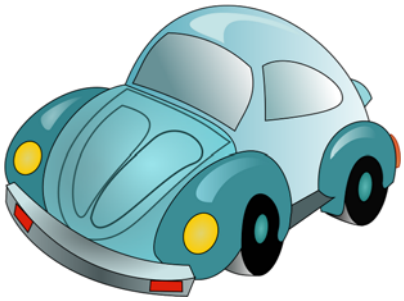






Sort it out





















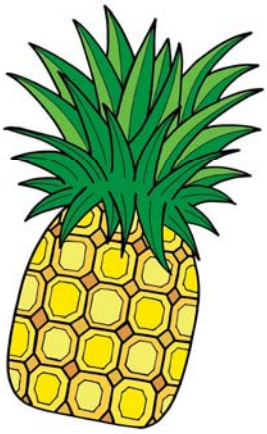




Sort it out

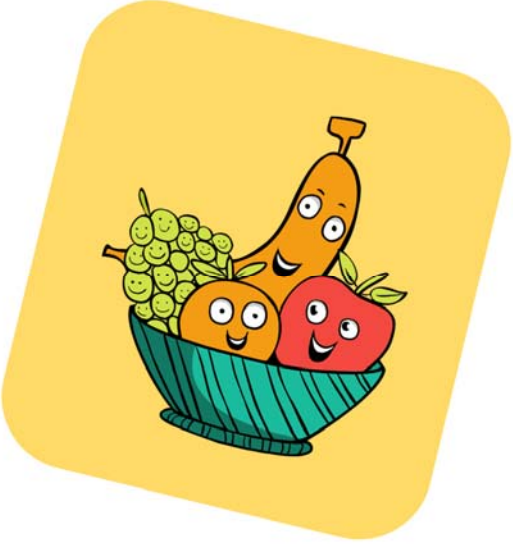














Cheeky Monkey mix-up

Show your child the picture of Cheeky Monkey and explain that he likes playing tricks.

Mummy Monkey has been tidying up and sorting out the things that go together. Cheeky Monkey is playing a trick on his mummy and has mixed some of the things up.

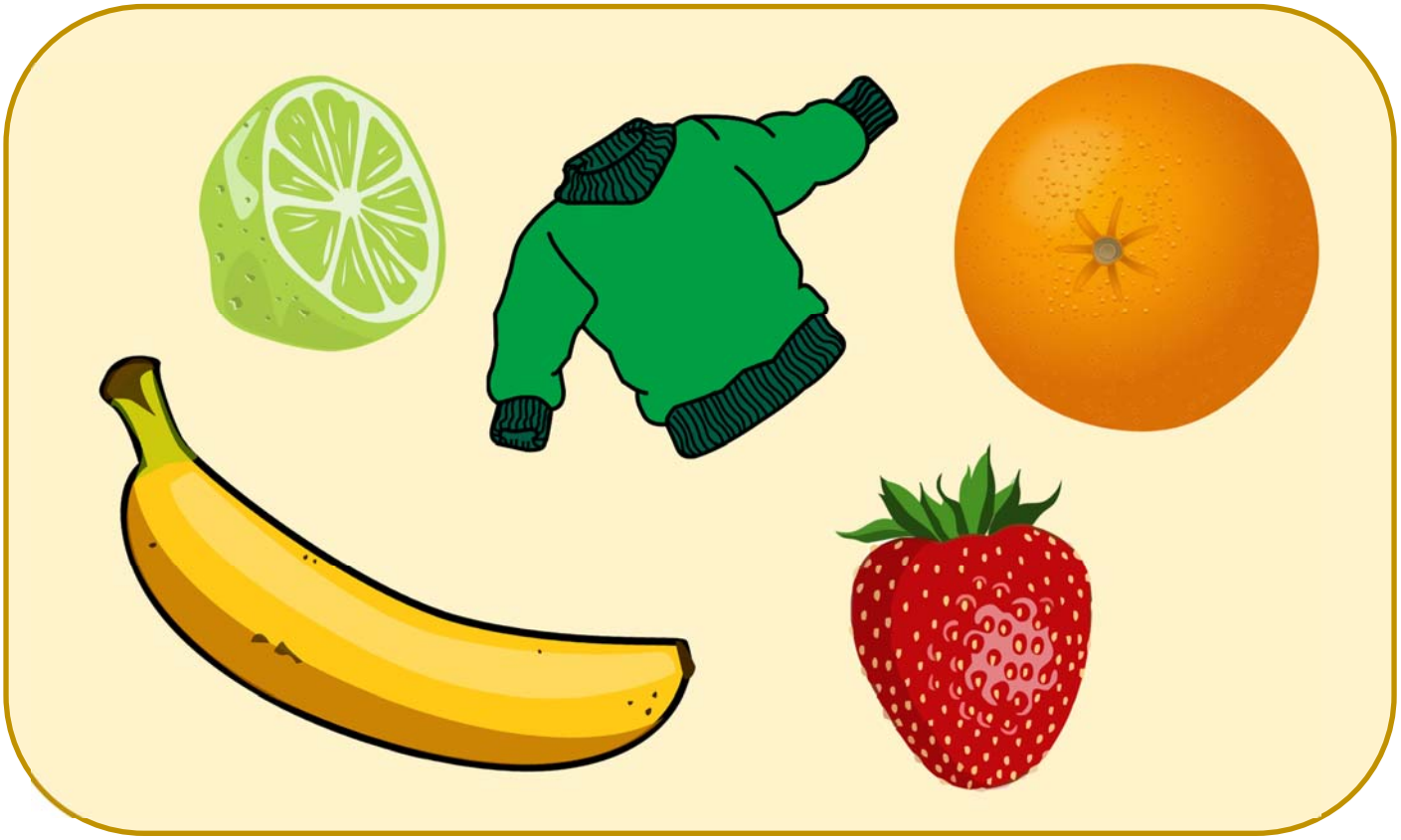
Look at the items on the next three pages.

Show your child each item in turn, name and talk about the thing in each picture and ask them to tell you which things belong together and why.



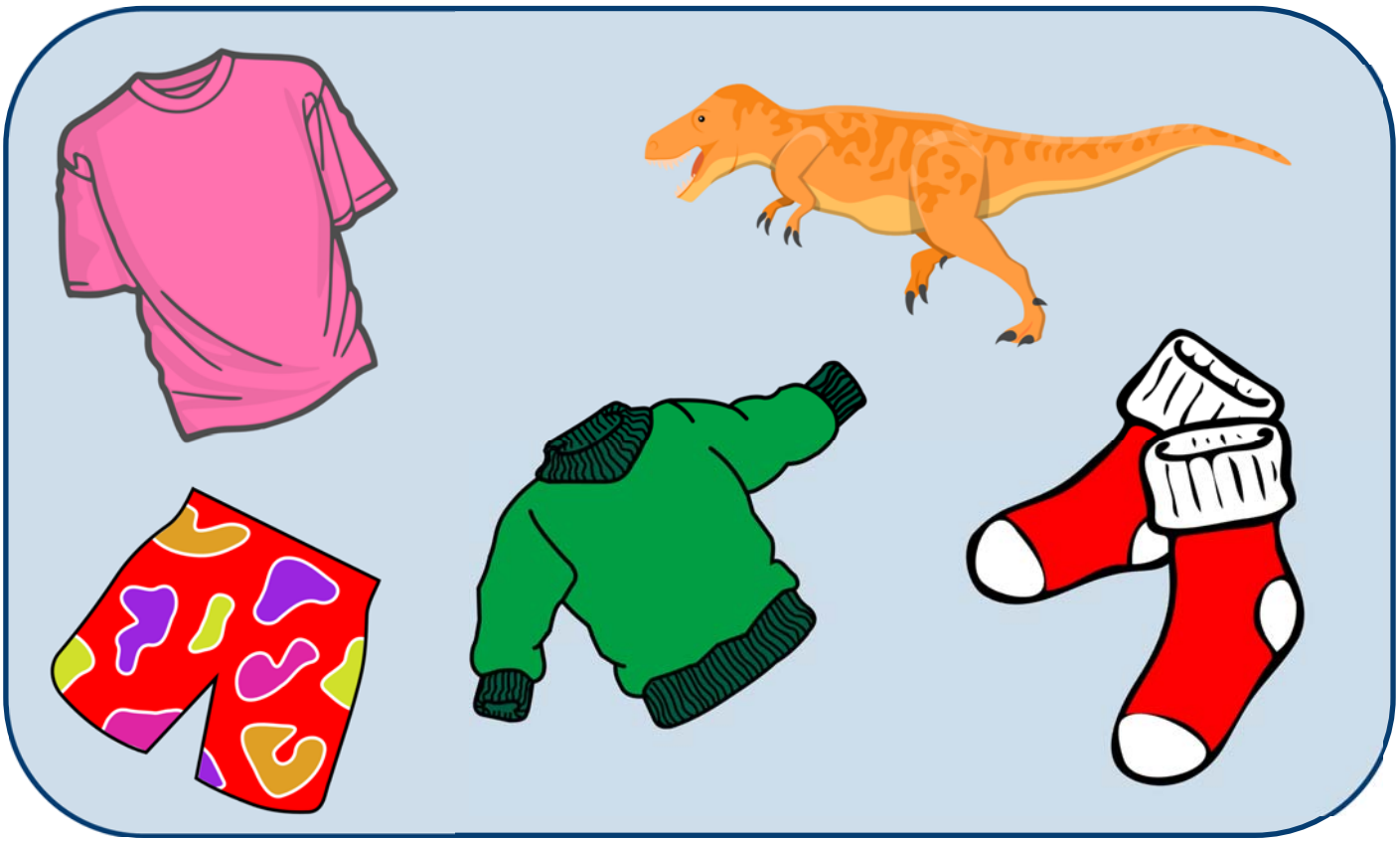
Cheeky Monkey mix-up



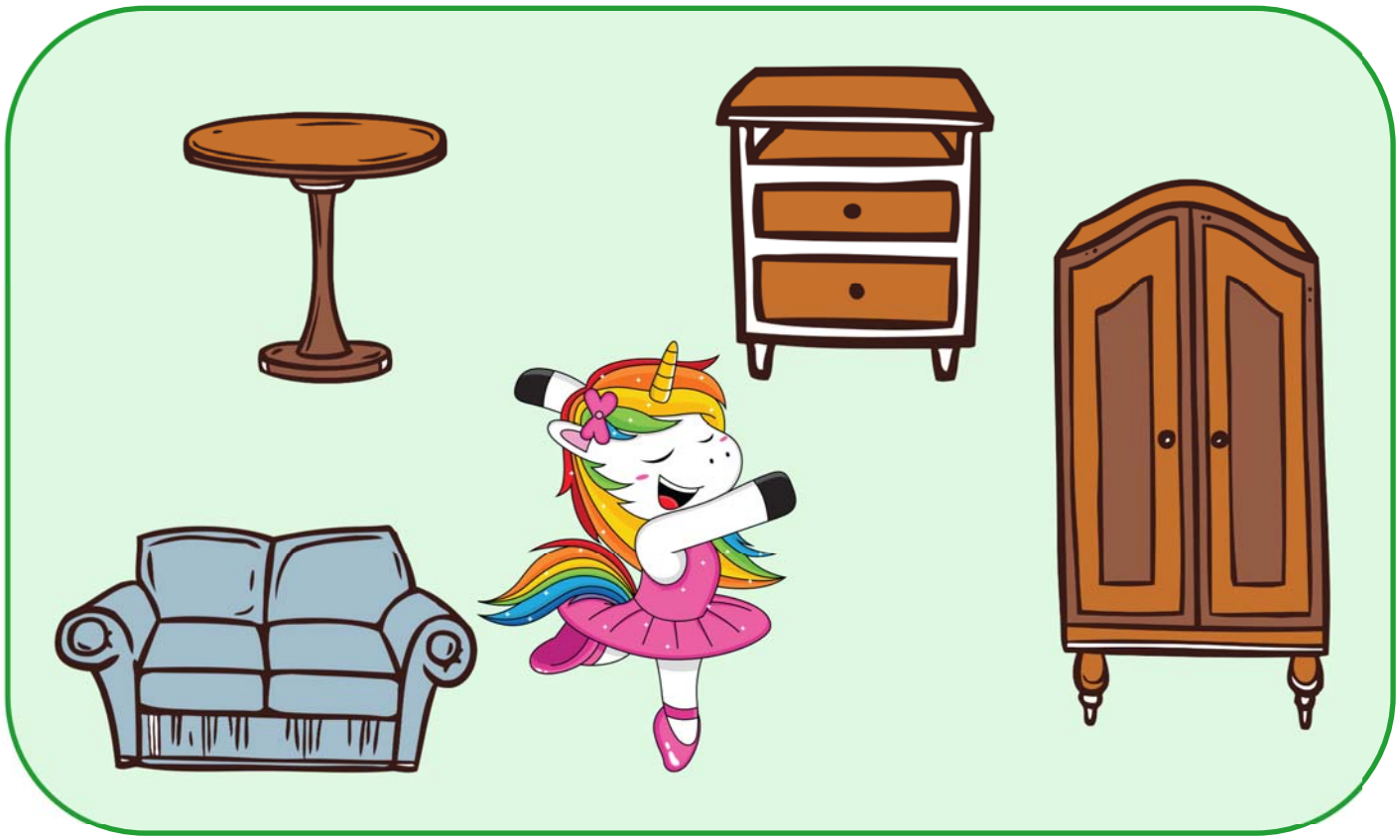


Cheeky Monkey mix-up





Cheeky Monkey mix-up





Pronouns

What are they?

Pronouns are words used in place of naming words. For instances, when we talk about a person, instead of repeating their name, we can use the pronoun instead, e.g.

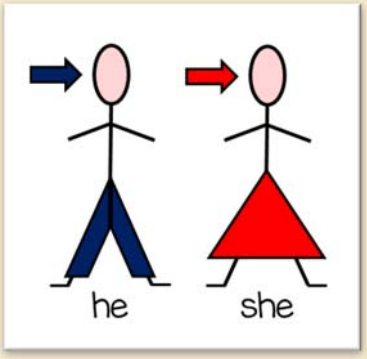
A younger child may say, *'My daddy took me to the park. My daddy pushed me on the swing and my daddy said I was a good boy'.*

An older child may say, *'My daddy took me to the park.* ***He*** *pushed me on the swing and* ***he*** *said I was a good boy'*.

Other pronouns your child will be learning include she, **I**, **you**, **we** and **they**.

Understanding and using pronouns: He and She

How you can help



Find two character toys, one a girl, e.g. Barbie, and the other a boy, e.g. Buzz Lightyear.

Demonstrate that the toys doing lots of different things, e.g. brush hair, wash face. Say to your child, *'Look* ***he's*** *washing his face'*, or *'Wow,* ***she's*** *jumping over that wall!'*

Share books and use pronouns to talk about what's happening, e.g. *'Oh look,* ***he's*** *running and* ***she*** *looks happy when* ***she's*** *skipping'*.

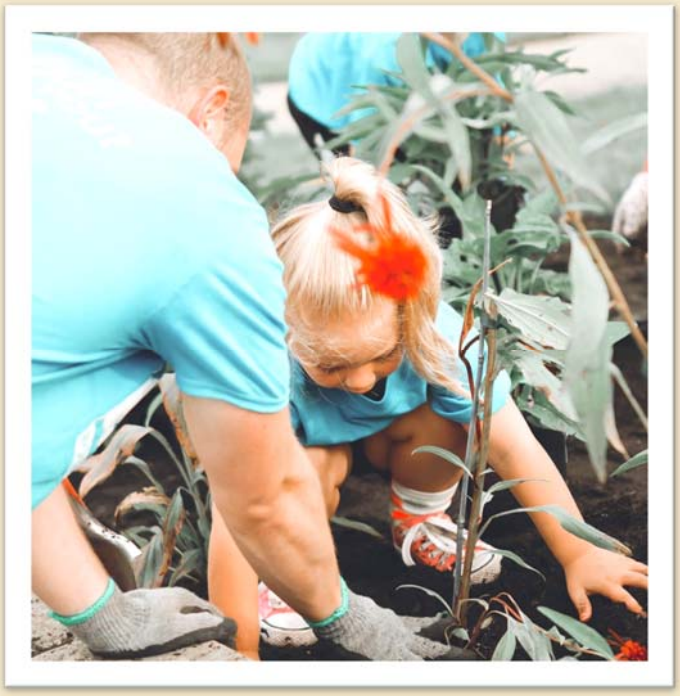
Talk about what children are doing in the park when you are out for a walk, or in town. Use a lead-in phrase to help your child relate the pronoun to the male or female, e.g. *'Look at that boy,* ***he's*** *playing hopscotch on the pavement'* or *'Can you see that lady?* ***She's*** *eating Tayto crisps'.*

Activities

During play try including two other members of the family or friends, a male and a female. This will give opportunities for them to use **he** or **she**.

Read simple fairy tales where a boy and a girl are involved, e.g. Hansel and Gretel and emphasise the **he** and **she**. Can your child fill in the correct pronoun if you pause and point to the boy or girl?

Understanding and using pronouns: I and you



How you can help

Tell your child that when we talk about ourselves we use the word **I** and when we are talking to other people we say the word **you**.

Daily routines and play provide excellent learning opportunities. Use them to reinforce the target pronouns. Some suggestions are listed below;

Activities

Tea Party



Have a tea party and encourage your child to chat about the pretend food, e.g. '*I would like some juice.* Would **you** like some juice too?' or '*Oh, **I** see **you** are having orange juice right now, but **I** would like some water please.*'

Hide and Go Seek



'*Where are **you**?'*
*'Are **you** in here?'*
*'I can see **you**'.*
***'I** found **you**'.*

Understanding and using pronouns: I, You and We

We know that pronouns are words that replace the name of a person. The word **we** is used to replace the name of a group of people, including the speaker, e.g.
'*We wish you a happy birthday*!', or
'*We are all tired now after skipping*'.

How you can help

- Set up a pretend tea party
- Gather together cups, plates, plastic cutlery, foods, pretend kettle and teapot, etc.
- Play house, e.g. '***We*** *want to go to the party now.* ***We*** *want some cake*'
- Set up situations where you can use **I**, **you** and **we**. Then ask a question, e.g.

  Adult: '*I am putting on my coat. What are* ***you*** *and Mary doing, Paul*?'

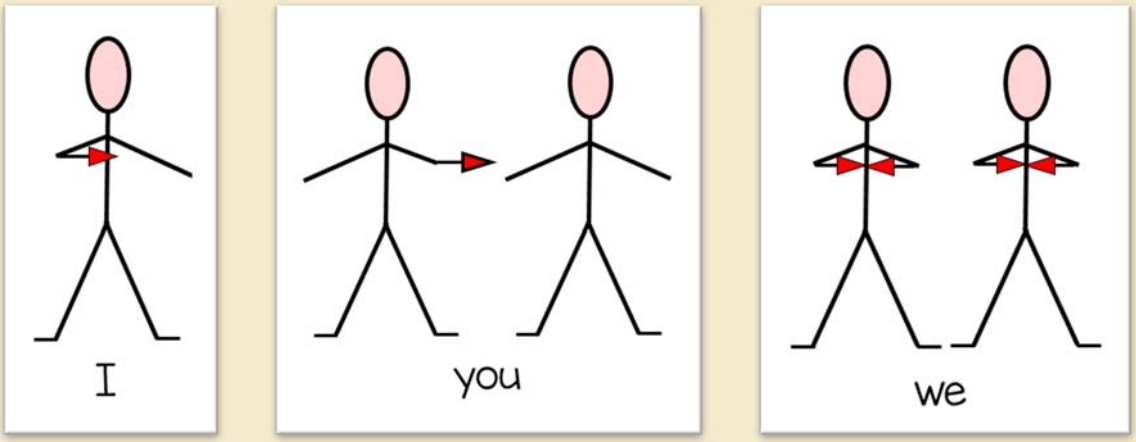
  Child: '***We*** *are putting on our coats.*'

Activities

Use gestures as necessary, e.g. point to yourself when saying **I**, Point to your child when saying **you**. Point to both of you, when saying **we**.

Take photos of your child enjoying familiar activities, such as riding a bike, shopping, eating dinner. Encourage your child to describe the pictures, using **I**, or **we**.

Encourage role-play using the pronouns. Try including teddy or another toy. You can both ask questions: '*Barney, what do* ***you*** *want to eat*?', Monkey says, '***We*** *would like bananas*!'



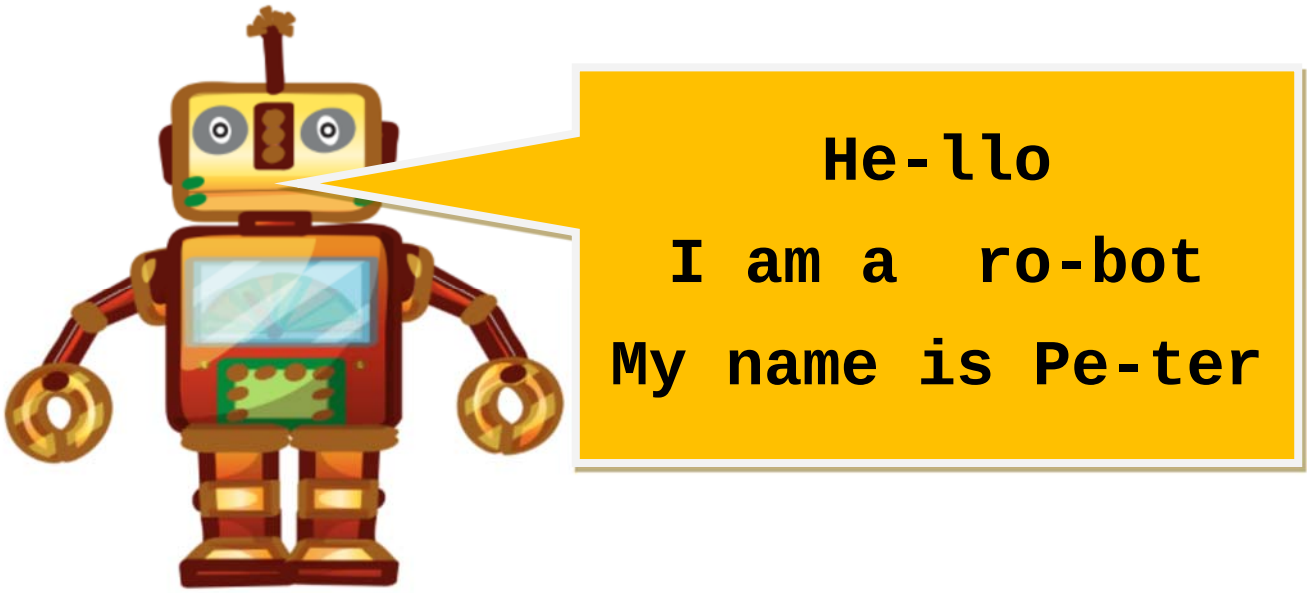
Syllables

Making spelling and reading easier

Spelling and reading can be made easier for your child, when they can break the word into parts. These parts are called syllables. Some words have just one syllable. Many words have two syllables, but very few words have five syllables.

How do we count syllables

The easiest way to count syllables is to pretend to be a robot.



If a robot were naming animals, he would say;

Cow = **cow** = one syllable
Giraffe = **gi**—**raffe** = two syllables
Elephant = **e**—**le**—**phant** = three syllables
Alligator = **all**—**i**—**gat**—**or** = four syllables
Hippopotamus = **hi**—**ppo**—**pot**—**a**—**mus** = five syllables

Another good method for teaching how to count syllables is to put your hand under your chin. Say the word and count the number of times your chin bumps, e.g. Bob = one drop of the jaw, Chris—to—pher = three bumps of the chin.

Try saying these names with you hand under your chin;

Bob = **Bob** = One syllable
Tony = **To**—**ny** = two syllables
Christopher = **Chris**—**to**—**pher** = three syllables
Alexander = **Al**—**ex**—**an**—**der** = four syllables
Alexandria = **Al**—**ex**—**an**—**dri**—**a** = five syllables.

I would like a ...

To do this you can sing with your child the words, '*I would like a ... do—nut*'.

Your child should be able to repeat what you have said and tell you the number of syllables in the food item. If they are unsure, get them to say it as a robot.

Get your child to then state what they would like and tell you the number of syllables in that food item. Have fun asking for food with three of four syllables.

The pictures below can be used as visual cues, if required.



Guess what?

Another method used to count the parts of a word is to clap out each syllable as a beat while you say the word slowly.

In this game the child must listen as you clap out the beats and then find a picture that has the same number of syllables from the selection below

Extend this then to include items around the home.



Nursery Rhymes

It can be great fun to say nursery rhymes, sing songs and make music with your child. You can do this when you are walking, shopping, driving or at home. This helps to develop your child's language skills in many ways, including;

- Attention and Listening skills
- Turn Taking skills
- Awareness of sounds in words.

Songs and rhymes can also be helpful during everyday situations to;

- Calm or energise
- Distract when upset, e.g. '*I hear thunder, I hear thunder. Hark don't you?'*
- Help through routines, e g '*This is the way we wash our hands, wash our hands, wash our hands. This is the way we wash our hands, wash our hands, wash our hands. Early in the morning"*.

Nursery Rhyme Activity

Nursery Rhymes can be short, repetitive and action packed. Read rhymes to your child, such old favourites like Humpty Dumpty or Jack and Jill.

Remember to repeat the rhyme many times before you expect your child to join in with you.

When your child is familiar with the rhyme, you can say it, and stop just before a rhyming word, praising your child when they fill in the blank.

Adult: '*Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall. Humpty Dumpty had a great …'*

Child: '… f*all*'

Adult: *'Well done, All the king's horses …'*

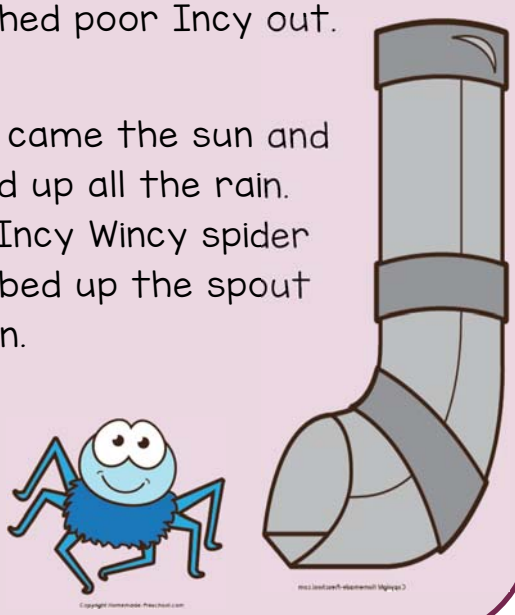


Remember that rhyming activities are a great way to pass the time on journeys.

Incy Wincy spider

Incy Wincy spider climbed the water spout.
Down came the rain and washed poor Incy out.

Out came the sun and dried up all the rain.
So, Incy Wincy spider climbed up the spout again.



Two Little Dickie Birds

Two little dickie birds
sitting on a wall.

One named Peter,
one named Paul.

Fly away Peter!
Fly away Paul!

Come back Peter!
Come back Paul!



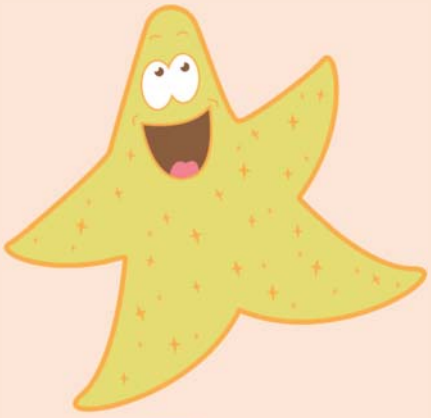
Baa Baa Black Sheep

Baa, baa, black sheep,
have you any wool?
Yes, sir, yes, sir,
three bags full;
One for the master,
and one for the dame,
and one for the little boy
who lives down the lane.



Twinkle, twinkle, little star

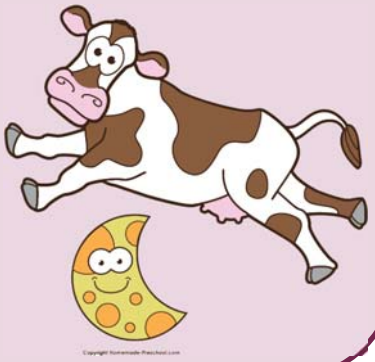
Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
how I wonder what you are!
Up above the world so high,
like a diamond in the sky.
Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
how I wonder what you are!



Hey diddle diddle

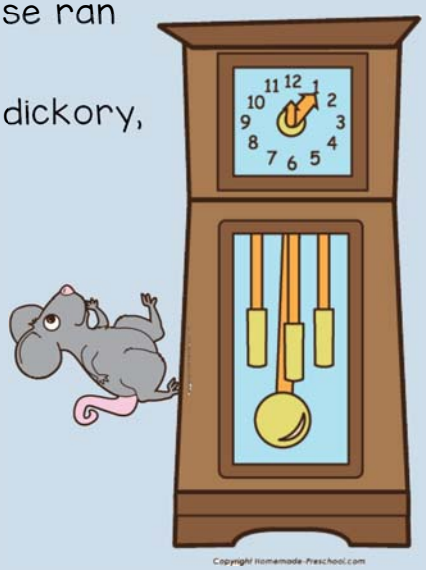
Hey Diddle Diddle,
The cat and the fiddle,
The cow jumped over the moon.

The little dog laughed,
To see such sport,
And the dish ran away with the spoon.



Hickory dickory dock

Hickory, dickory, dock.
The mouse ran up the clock.
The clock struck one,
The mouse ran down,
Hickory, dickory, dock.



Little Miss Muffet

Little Miss Muffet
sat on a tuffet,
eating her curds and whey.
Along came a spider,
who sat down beside her,
and frightened Miss Muffet away.



Little Bo Peep

Little Bo-Peep has lost her sheep,
and doesn't know where to find them.
Leave them alone,
and they'll come home,
wagging their tails behind them.



Listening for a rhyme

Parents should note that when doing these rhyme activities the child should concentrate on the sound of the word and not on reading the word. These rhyme activities can be done while the child has their eyes closed or has their back to you while you read.

Rhyme Time Activity 1

Tell your child to listen carefully as you read 3 words and encourage them to tell you which word that does not have the same final sound, e.g. you say, '*Dog, Log, Bed*' then ask, '*Which one does not rhyme*?' Your child should be able to answer, '*Bed*.' Say these words slowly emphasising the final sound, e.g. 'd-**og**, l-**og**, b-**ed**'. Here are some examples for you to read aloud slowly...

Pen	Ten	Pencil
Car	Bar	Van
Key	Tree	Bird
Blue	Broom	Glue
Man	Vet	Van
Red	Bed	Sheep
Chair	Bear	Table
House	Horse	Mouse

Rhyme Time Activity 2

Tell your child to listen carefully as you read 3 words and encourage them to tell you which two of those words have the same final sound, e.g. Say '*D-og, L-og, H-ouse*'

Your child should be able to tell you that **d-og** and **l-og** have the same final sound or **rhyme**. Here are some examples for you to read aloud slowly…

Red	Bed	Shoe
Car	Sweets	Jar
Bed	Chair	Bear
Pig	Jig	Cow
Pen	Mouse	Hen
Moon	Shoe	Spoon
Brush	Mop	Top
Pin	Hair	Chin
Sock	Shoe	Rock

Rhyme Time Activity 3

Choose an object from around the house and name it, e.g. a **hat**

Ask your child to say a word that has the same final sound as **hat**, e.g. **bat, cat, mat, splat**. Words which have the same final sound are said to rhyme.

Now try to say a word which rhymes with these...







Hat	Bat	Cat	.....
Pot	Tot	Rot	.....
Bed	Fed	Red	.....
Pen	Ten	Hen	.....
Pin	Bin	Win	.....
Bun	Fun	Sun	.....
Tan	Fan	Can	.....
Tall	Fall	Wall	.....

You can try this activity with a variety of words a few times throughout the weeks.

Following Instructions



As your child's language develops they are able to understand more information in an instruction or sentence. Young children may only be able to follow one or two key words and they can get confused and anxious if they do not understand.

As adults, we need to carefully consider the number of information carrying words we use when giving our children instructions. The information carrying words are the ones that your child **really** needs to understand in order to follow the instruction, *e.g. 'Do you see that red coat over there, would you ever hang it on the chair?'*

This sentence has 16 words, but it has <u>three</u> information carrying words which carry the meaning of the sentence.

*'Get the **red coat** and put it on the **chair**.'*

Have a go at the following activities to help develop your child's ability to follow instructions.



Following Instructions—2 Word Level

Collect a dolly and a teddy from your child's toy box. Gather a range of household objects such as a; brush, spoon, keys, book, shoe, ball, cup, etc.





Activity

Sit down with your child and place the dolly and the teddy in front of you both. Give your child instructions with 2 key words, e.g.

'*Give* ***dolly*** *the* ***keys***'

'*Give* ***teddy*** *the* ***ball***'

'*Give* ***dolly*** *the* ***book***'.









Following Instructions - 3 word level

Gather a range of items from around your home.

They can be household items or toys; car, book, spoon, teddy, box, etc.

Activity

Play a game where you get your child to follow your instructions. Give your child instructions with 3 key words, e.g.

'*Put the* ***book on*** *the* ***table***'

'*Put the* ***car under*** *the* ***chair***'

'*Put the* ***spoon in*** *the* ***box***'.







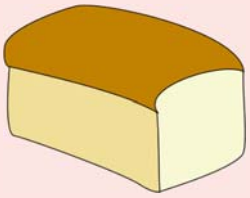




Following Instructions - 4 word level

This is a practical activity which you can practise with your child when you are putting away the shopping.











Activity

- Place all the shopping on the table.
- Talk to your child about all the things which you have bought, e.g. bread, milk, juice, bananas, cereal etc.

Give your child a 4 word level instruction, e.g.

*'Put the **milk** in the **fridge** and the **bananas** in the **bowl**'*

*'Put the **bread** in the **cupboard** and the **juice** in the **fridge**'.*



Wh Questions

What are they?

As parents of a young child, no doubt you already know that **What** is the earliest question mastered! Then your child will ask and answer **Who** and **Where** questions. Later, they will be able to ask and answer **When** and **Why** questions.

Understanding and using **wh** questions enables your child to ask and answer questions about the world around them.

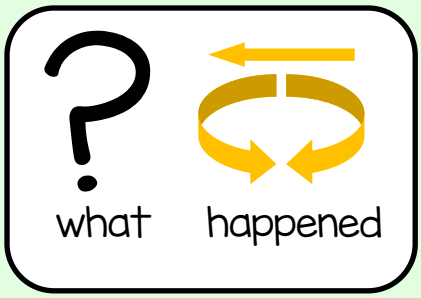
Every day you have many opportunities to give your child practice in questioning and answering techniques. Try to work it into everyday routines or conversations to make it more natural for your child. Use everyday activities, look at others, looking at photographs or storybook, or pictures in schoolbooks.

It is important to only work on only **one** type of **wh** question at a time, so as not to confuse your child.

What? Questions

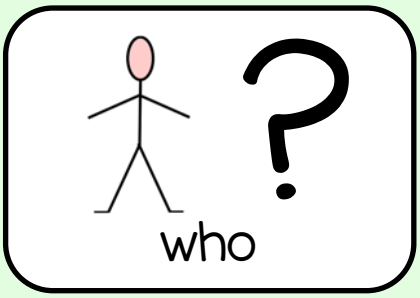
Example questions

- *'What is that?'*
- *'What is her name?'*
- *'What is Spot doing?'*
- *'What does he want?'*
- *'What did Goldilocks eat?'*
- *'What are they looking for?'*
- *'What time it?'*
- *'What colour is Noddy's car?'*
- *'What do you like on your pizza?'*
- *'What happened next?'*
- *'What do you think will happen next?'*



Who? Questions

Example questions



- *'Who is that?'*
- *'Who sits beside you?'*
- *'Who are the children on your team?'*
- *'Who scored the winning goal?'*
- *'Who lives in the castle?'*
- *'Who wants ice-cream?'*
- *Who is going to help me wash the dishes?'*
- *'Who would like to sing and dance?'*

Where? Questions

Example questions

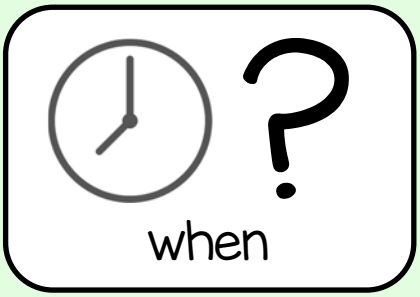


- *'Where does he live?'*
- *'Where did Harry hide the ball?'*
- *'Where are we going tomorrow?'*
- *'Where do you wear your shoes?'*
- *'Where did Jack and Jill fall down?'*
- *'Where do we put the milk?'*
- *'Where do Pandas live?'*
- *'Where were the Three Billy Goats Gruff going?'*
- *'Where will they find Goldilocks asleep?'*

When? Questions

Example questions

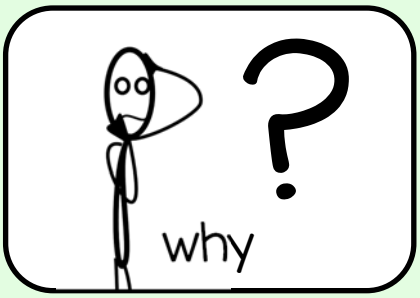
- *When do you wear your boots?'*
- *'When do you brush your teeth?'*
- *'When did we go to the seaside?'*
- *'When will Santa come?'*
- *'When it is raining, do you play outside?'*
- *'When you are happy, do you smile?'*
- *When do owls fly about in the sky?'*
- *'When do you have to go to bed?'*



Why? Questions

Example questions

- *'Why is the boy happy?'*
- *'Why did the lady shout?'*
- *'Why will the man be sad?'*
- *'Why did Spot hide in the box?'*
- *'Why do we have to show kind hands?'*
- *'Why was Baby Bear crying?*
- *'Why do you feed the fish every day?'*



Sequencing

What does sequencing mean?

Sequencing means putting things in order. It is needed for thinking, understanding, speaking, reading, writing, and counting.

How you can help

You can help your child develop sequencing skills through play using language associated with familiar routines such as;

- Waking up in the morning
- Getting dressed
- Eating breakfast
- Brushing teeth
- Going to school

To the tune of 'Here we go round the Mulberry bush', sing;

'This is the way we brush our teeth, brush our teeth, brush our teeth,
This is the way we brush our teeth, early in the morning.
This is the way we wash our face, wash our face, wash our face,
This is the way we wash our face, early in the morning.'

You do the actions as you sing each line, e.g. brush teeth, wash face, brush hair, put on my shirt, shoes, eat breakfast, say goodbye, etc. Your child has to copy the sequence of actions with you.

Advanced activities

Instead of singing about morning activities, you can ask your child what they do when you know it's bedtime, e.g.

'This *is the way we brush our teeth, brush our teeth, brush our teeth,*
This is the way we brush our teeth, when we know it's bedtime,
This is the way we say our prayers, say our prayers, say our prayers,
This is the way we say our prayers, when we know it's bedtime'.



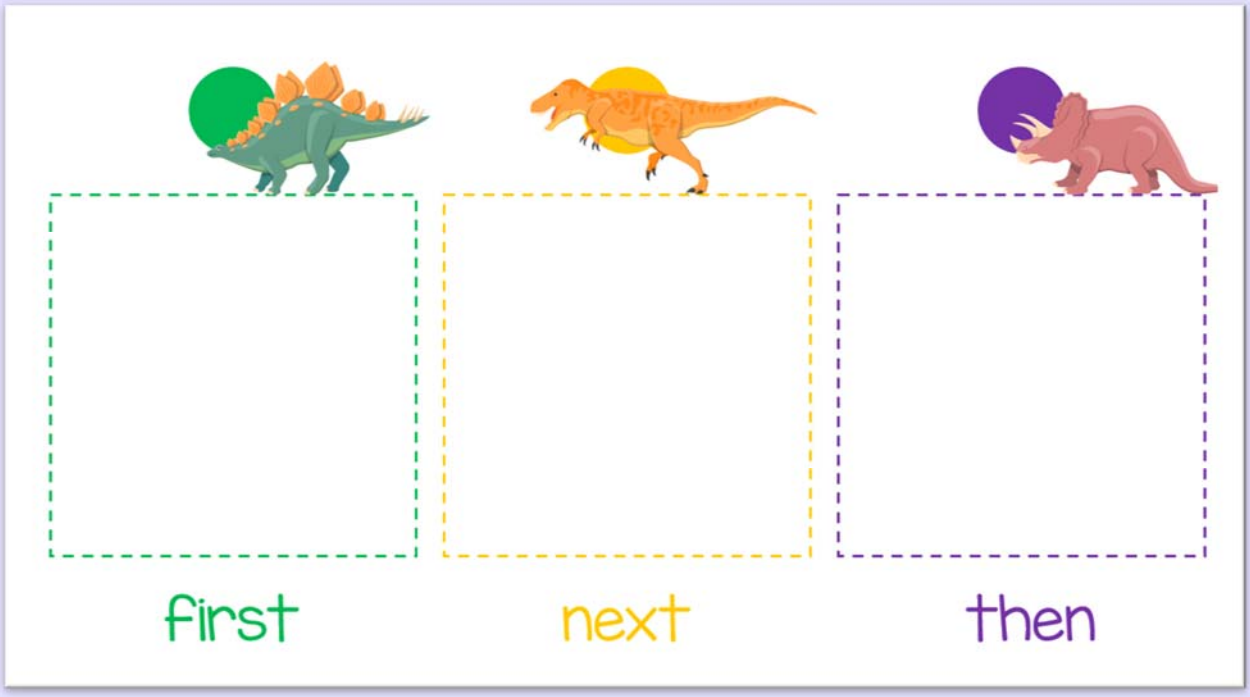
It can also be great fun to say a sequence of actions and your child has to do them in the correct order, e.g. 'c*lap, jump, stamp, hop, hands on head, tap knees!'*

Daily Routines

It helps to talk through the daily routine, with your child. Use the words, '***first***'. '***next***'. and '***then***' to put activities in order.

When you have talked about a routine a number of times, your child will be able to tell you what comes **next**, e.g. Adult: *'You have brushed your teeth, so what do we do **next**?'*

Eventually your child may be able to talk you through the steps of the sequence independently.



Sequencing Routines

- Getting ready for bed
- After school routine
- Making breakfast
- Bath time
- Brushing teeth
- Making a sandwich
- Getting ready for school.

During your daily routines and activities, e.g. bathroom routine, talk about the steps in the sequence of actions as you do them, e.g. '***First*** *you wash your face…* ***next*** *dry it with the towel….* ***then*** *brush your teeth*'.

References and Resources

Useful telephone contact:

Language and Communication Service Contact telephone: 028 8241 1360

Useful web-links:

ICAN - The Children's Communication Charity

www.ican.org.uk

Talking Point

www.ican.org.uk/i-cans-talking-point

The Communication Trust

www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk

AFASIC

www.afasic.org.uk

Talk for Meaning

www.talk4meaning.co.uk

General Language and Communication information website

www.royalwolverhampton.nhs.uk/services/service-directory-a-z/speech-and-language-therapy-children/activities-and-advice/understanding-of-language/

Useful Educational Apps:



Splingo's Language universe

Download on the App Store | Available at amazon | GET IT ON Google Play



Speech with Milo

Download on the App Store

Super Duper Inc Publications

Download on the App Store | Available at amazon | GET IT ON Google Play



Smarty Ears

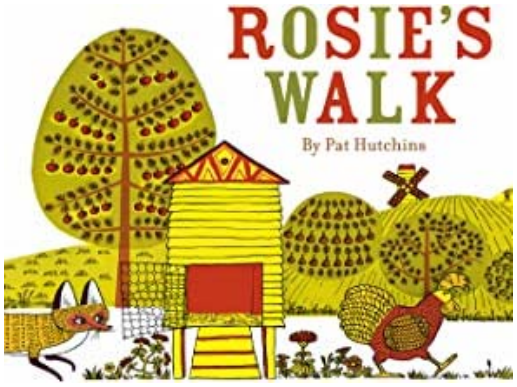
Download on the App Store

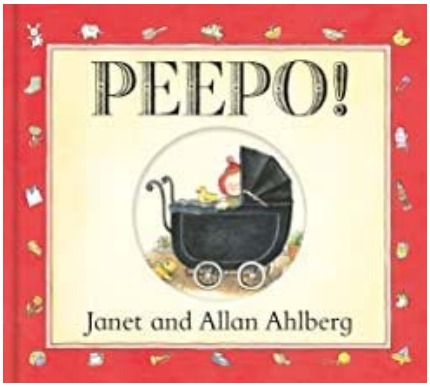
Suggested Books

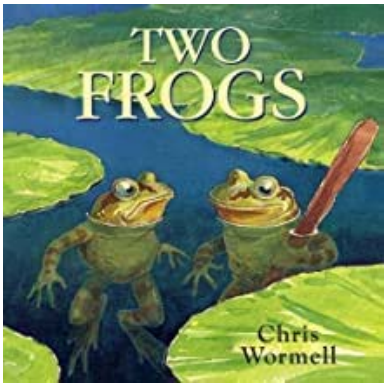
A great number and range of children's books are available today. No doubt you and your child have many favourites, but here are some suggestions about others which you might like to use to support talking and language learning. The following books are available on request from your local library. Have fun with them!

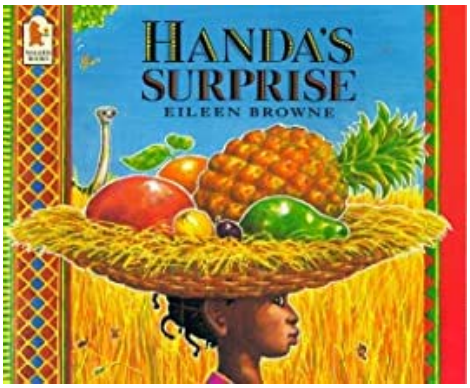
Picture books

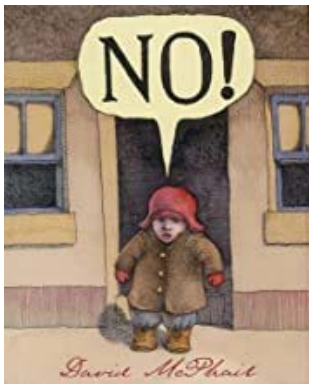
Picture books can be used to support conversation between you and your child.



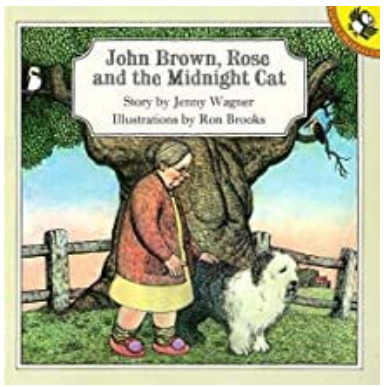


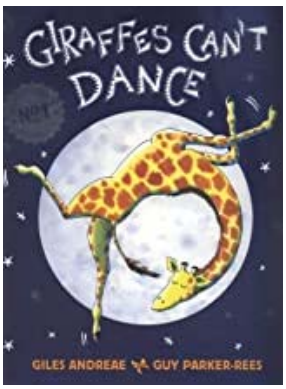


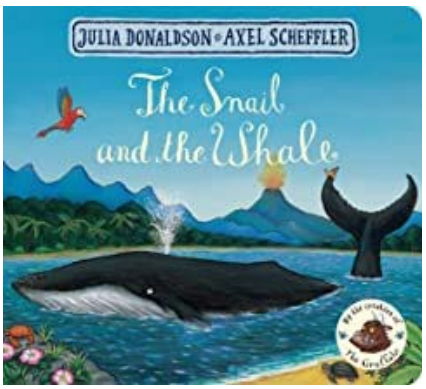


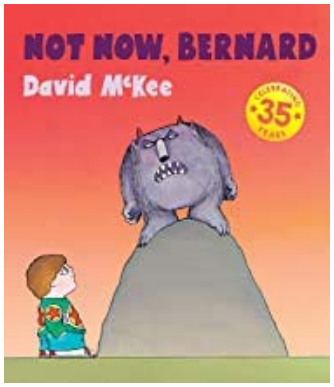




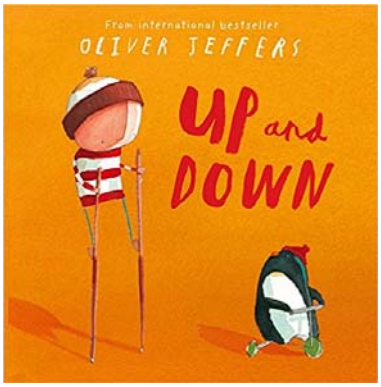


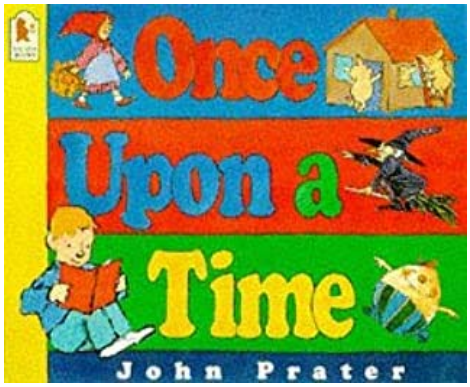


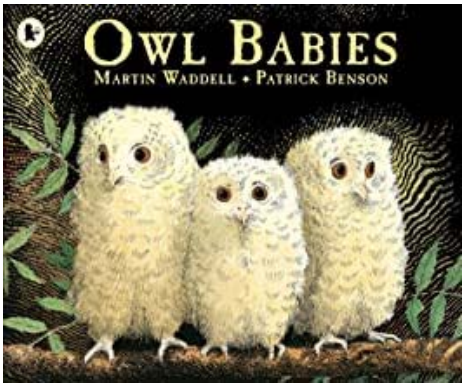


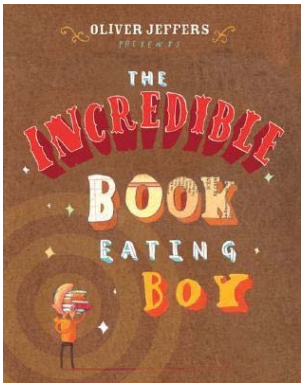

NOT NOW, BERNARD
David McKee
35

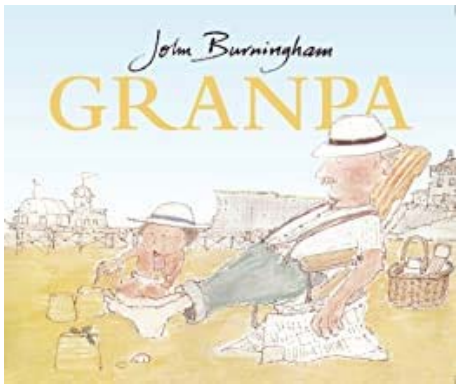

LOES RIPHAGEN
Animals Home Alone

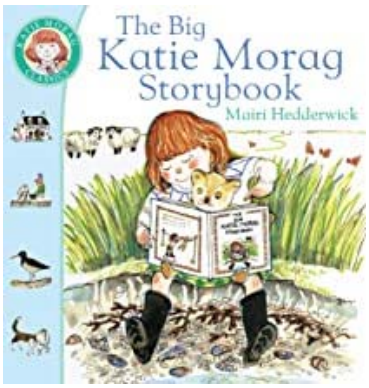

From international bestseller
OLIVER JEFFERS
Up and Down

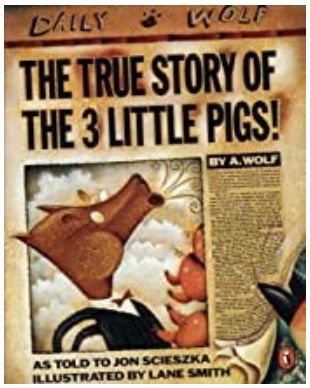

Once Upon a Time
John Prater

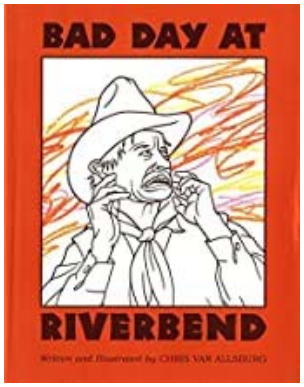

OWL BABIES
MARTIN WADDELL • PATRICK BENSON


OLIVER JEFFERS
THE INCREDIBLE BOOK EATING BOY


John Burningham
GRANPA

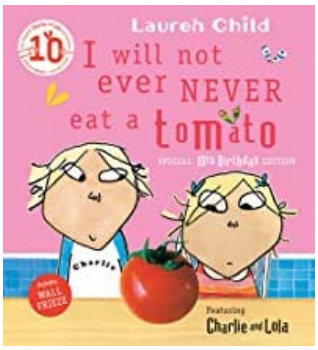

The Big
Katie Morag
Storybook
Mairi Hedderwick

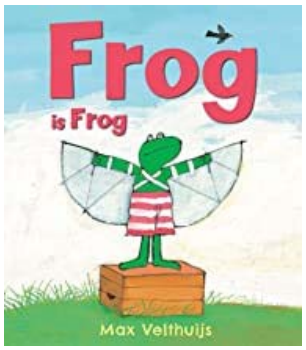

DAILY WOLF
THE TRUE STORY OF THE 3 LITTLE PIGS!
BY A. WOLF
AS TOLD TO JON SCIESZKA
ILLUSTRATED BY LANE SMITH

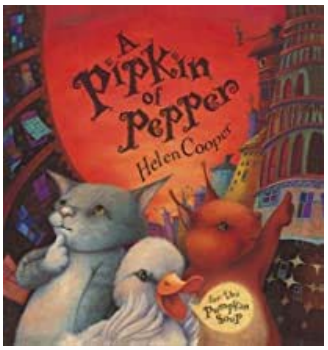

BAD DAY AT
RIVERBEND

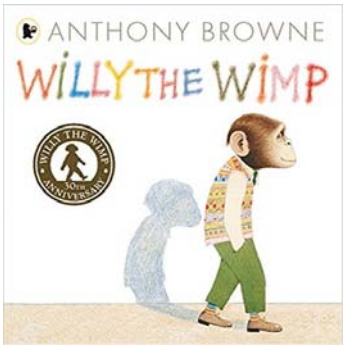

THE LONG MARCH


LITTLE MOUSE'S
Big Book
of Fears

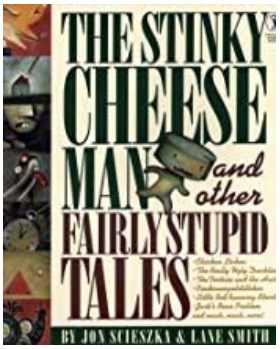

Lauren Child
I will not ever NEVER eat a tomato
Charlie and Lola

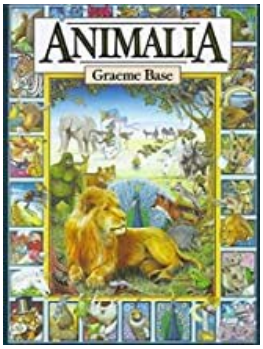

Frog is Frog
Max Velthuijs


A Pipkin of Pepper
Helen Cooper

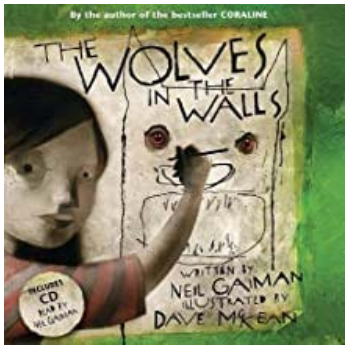

ANTHONY BROWNE
WILLY THE WIMP


ZOO
ANTHONY BROWNE

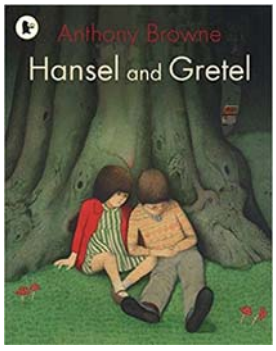

THE STINKY CHEESE MAN and other FAIRLY STUPID TALES
BY JON SCIESZKA & LANE SMITH

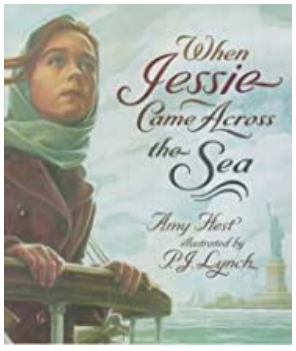

ANIMALIA
Graeme Base


The ARRIVAL
SHAUN TAN


By the author of the bestseller CORALINE
THE WOLVES IN THE WALLS
NEIL GAIMAN
DAVE McKEAN

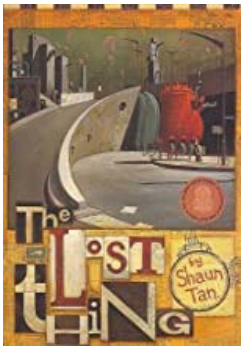

THE Paper Bag Princess
Robert Munsch
Michael Martchenko


Anthony Browne
Hansel and Gretel


When Jessie Came Across the Sea
Amy Hest
illustrated by P.J. Lynch


Eugene Trivizas
Helen Oxenbury
THE THREE LITTLE WOLVES AND THE BIG BAD PIG


THE RABBITS


The LOST thing
by Shaun Tan

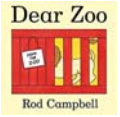
Books to support Language and Communication



The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle
To support sequencing, concepts, categories, and word-finding.



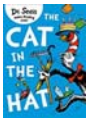
Where's Spot by Eric Hill
To support prepositions .



Dear Zoo (A Lift-The-Flap Book) by Rod Campbell
To support concepts, categories and word-finding



The Tiger Who Came To Tea by Judith Kerr
To support concepts, categories, word-finding and sequencing



The Cat In The Hat by Dr Seuss
To support rhyme



The Gruffalo by Julia Donaldson
To support rhyme



Goldilocks And The Three Bears by Robert Southey
To support concepts



We're Going On A Bear Hunt by Michael Rosen
To support sequencing and prepositions

Acknowledgements:

WellComm Screener Activities - GL Assessment

Images from; unsplash.com, vecteezy.com, pixabay.com, amazon.co.uk, piqsels.com, 1001freedownloads.com, morguefile.com, stockvault.net, gratisography.com, twinkl.co.uk, Communicate in Print, Black Sheep Press and Top Tips for Talking Leaflets.

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Pauline Duggan, Senior Teacher, Manager of Language and Communication Service, SELB

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