



## Expressive Language

The term expressive language is used to describe the way we express ourselves. Detailed below are suggested strategies, interventions and games to support the development of expressive language skills.

### General Strategies: Helping a Child to Use Language

- **Expansion:** Add new words to what the child has said e.g.  
Child: *"Look! Fire engine"* Adult: *"Yes, it's a fire engine, a noisy fire engine"*
- **Linking:** Join the child's phrases together to make a longer sentence e.g.  
Child: *"He's sad. He's lost his teddy"* Adult: *"Yes. He's sad because he's lost his teddy"*
- Give '**sentence starters**'. They are often better than questions – they will take the pressure off the child and allow them to succeed. The child may not have succeeded if he'd had to produce the whole sentence for himself e.g.  
*"Kipper wanted to ....." "We put the key in the water and ....."*
- **Modelling:** Repeat a sentence back to the child to show you have understood, whilst modelling accurate sentence structure, e.g. Child: *"I play Luke"* Adult: *"Oh, you played with Luke"*
- **Praise:** Encourage expressive language within 1-to-1 and small group settings, and praise all attempts.
- **Time:** Give the child extra time to express themselves and try not to interrupt
- **Choices:** Offer the child choices of what they would like to do/eat/have etc. For example, "do you want to play in the water or with the car?". This gives the child the vocabulary they need to respond and is easier than using an open-ended question
- **Role reversal:** When engaging in games that involve providing instructions always swap over and let the child be the "teacher."
- **Sabotage technique:** set up a situation which encourages the child to make some form of comment or request e.g. the adult keeps some of the pieces of a puzzle back or only gives the child a small amount of juice so that they will want more.



## Suggested Games/Activities

### Picture Description Tasks

Maximise opportunities for the child to participate in picture description tasks as part of small group working. Draw their attention to the parts of the picture they have omitted.

### Sequencing Activities

Choose some everyday sequencing activities and encourage the child to carry them out e.g.:

- Making a cup of juice
- Making a sandwich
- Drawing a person
- Play sequences-making a railway track, making pretend meals in the home corner
- Dressing for P.E
- Or any other activity where a sequence of actions is required

Remember to Comment on what the child is doing as they are carrying out the activity. Give the child a turn at talking about what they are doing.

### Narrative

- Read stories regularly to provide exposure to stories and formal language
- After a TV show/movie, talk about the story using narrative structure
- Use computer software that encourages story writing and building
- Use choose your own adventure story books, story tapes and story picture books
- Keep a diary, draw a picture or write about family/school outings
- Encourage role play, charades, puppet shows
- Tell simple nursery rhymes and role play them afterwards
- Make your own story books

### Vocabulary

**Category Naming:** Give three or four items belonging to the same category (e.g. drum, flute, guitar and piano) and then ask the child to identify the category. You can then reverse this naming game and give the category first, then have the child name three or four items belonging to that category. To make this activity more challenging you ask the child to name as many items as possible in one minute. Write down their answers and try to beat their previous score each time you practice.

**Sorting games:** Cut up pictures relating to two different categories e.g. fruit and vegetables. The child then sorts the pictures into the correct category.

**Odd one out game:** The child is presented with three or four items and one of the pictures / object / written words is from a different category. The child must identify the odd one out and discuss why. Encourage the child to use category words e.g. banana, apple, cherry and carrots we would like the child to identify that the first three are types of fruit and carrots are a type of vegetable.

**Word association games:** The child is given a word and must think of an associated word. For example: pilot goes with....(plane), taxi goes with.....(driver).