

Use of Language

For The Younger Child

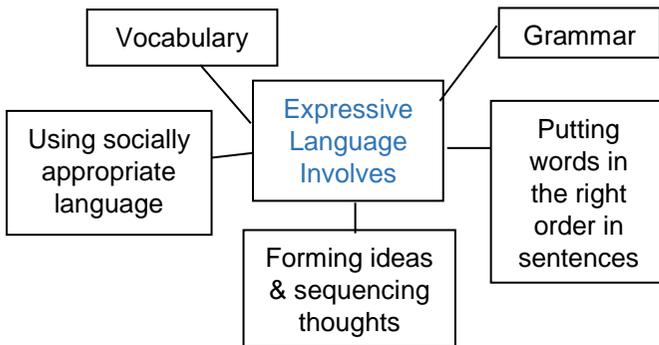


Tips to help your child at home

Information Leaflet

What is 'use of language'?

- The use of language is also known as **expressive language**.
- Expressive language is the ability to use spoken words and put them together meaningfully to say what we want and talk to others.
- This develops throughout a child's life but most quickly up to 6 years.
- Expressive language develops through play and social interaction.



- It will help your child to talk to others, play with others and in schoolwork.
- Children need to hear good language models, as this is how they learn to communicate.



How do I know if my child is having difficulties in using language?

Your child may:

- Use immature grammar e.g. 'her's running' instead of 'she is running'.
- Use very short, simple sentences and put words in the wrong order e.g. 'go home me'.

- Find it difficult to re-tell stories and ideas in sequence and get muddled up when telling you something.
- Have a limited range of vocabulary and have difficulty learning new words.
- Over use of 'filler words' e.g.:- 'thingy' 'you know' or name things incorrectly.

How can I support my child's ability to use language?

- Wait! - Give your child plenty of time to say what they mean.
- Model the grammatically correct structure of the sentence e.g. 'her's got my book' should be modelled 'she's got my book'.
- Expand on your child's short phrases by adding words and modelling the phrase back. Child say's 'shoe box'. Adult says 'yes, the shoe is in the box'.
- Avoid asking too many questions as this adds pressure. Try open-ended questions e.g. 'where was the dog lying?'
- Try prompting if your child is having difficulty thinking of a word e.g. 'book'
- What is it used for?
- What does it look like?
- Where would you find it?
- Who else has one?
- Turn taking is important during conversation and can be developed through play. Listen and give your child time to finish and take turns to speak.
- Give choices – This will help your child's vocabulary and encourage them to use words e.g. 'do you want to draw or play with dolly?'

Activities to develop your child's use of language.

Here are some activities you can try to help develop your child's expressive language skills: -

- Build up your child's vocabulary. Talk to your child about activities as you do them and when you are playing together e.g. when you are dressing your child say the name of each piece of clothing; when you are cooking dinner talk about what you are chopping, washing or stirring.
- Use storybooks and tell your child the names of things around the house, shops, park.
- Have fun with nursery rhymes and songs, especially those with actions.
- Model the noises of toys e.g. car, dog, clock. Children learn these sounds before moving onto words.
- Once sounds can be copied, early words can be focused on. Use familiar words or things your child sees often e.g. 'mummy, more, night, please'.
- Give choices to encourage your child to talk.
- Use pretend play to develop action words eg: 'sleeping, eating, washing, playing'. This helps to make sentences longer so 'teddy bed' becomes 'teddy sleeping bed'.
- Describing words help to encourage longer sentences e.g. big/small, clean/dirty, happy/sad, up/down. If your child says 'mummy shoe' you can expand by saying 'yes mummy's dirty shoe'.
- Story time: - read stories aloud and retell the story using toys your child enjoys.



If you have any queries about the information in this leaflet or would like further advice, please contact your local RISE NI team: