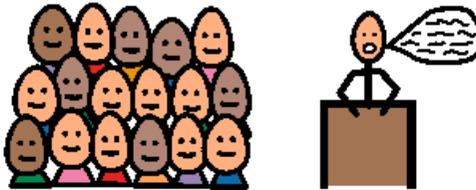


How to develop your child's...

Use of Language

For The Older Child



Information Leaflet

What Is the 'use of language'?

- Use of spoken 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 old.
- Expressive language develops through play and social interaction
- It will help your child to talk to others, play with others and in school work.
- Children need to hear good language models, as this is how they learn to communicate.

Expressive Language Involves:

- Vocabulary
- Using socially appropriate language
- Grammar
- Putting words in the right order in sentences
- Forming ideas & sequencing thoughts

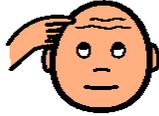


How do I know if my child is having difficulties in using language?

Your child may:-

- Use immature grammar e.g. 'she falled' instead of 'she fell'.
- Use short, simple sentences such as 'go outside?' instead of 'can I go outside?' or put words in the wrong order e.g. 'we tomorrow go on holidays on plane' instead of 'Tomorrow we go on holidays on the plane'.
- Find it difficult to re-tell stories and ideas in sequence and/or get muddled up when telling you something.

- Have a limited range of vocabulary and have difficulty learning new words.
- Over use 'filler words' e.g. 'thingy' 'you know', describe rather than label an object or name things incorrectly.



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

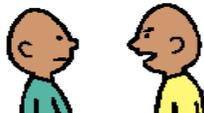
- Ensure your child has given you their full attention before speaking with them.
- **Wait!** Give your child plenty of time to say what they mean.
- **Model** the **grammatically correct** structure of the sentence e.g. 'The cat caught the mouses' should be modelled '**The cat caught the mice**'.
- **Expand** on your child's short phrases by **adding words** and modelling the phrase back to help them use longer sentences.
- **Avoid** asking questions that require a yes/no answer.
- **Questioning.** This is a vital skill required for your child to gain information from others. It is important they learn how to use different types of questions e.g.
 - What? – to name things
 - Who? – to refer to a person
 - Why? – to encourage reasoning
- 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?

- **Read books together.** This will provide lots of opportunities to use language e.g. talk about what the story is about, who is in the story, name objects, use describing words etc. Encourage your child's story re-telling skills.

Activities and games to develop the use of language

Here are some activities you can try which will help develop your child's ability to use language –

- **Story Telling:** When telling a story point out the important points e.g. the characters, setting, timing, what happened in the story and the ending.
Encourage your child to act out a story prompting them to tell the story as they do so. You could use visual cues e.g. pictures to encourage the sequence of the story or demonstrate different question words. You could use a puppet to re-tell the story to others.
- **Categorisation:** Allow your child to help with finding food to buy in the shops and when putting the foods away at home talk about foods e.g. Is it's a fruit/vegetable/meat? does it stay in the fridge/cupboard? etc.
Likewise when looking through catalogues, cut out various pictures and group together items that belong in the same category e.g. bedroom furniture, clothing, toys. Encourage your child to explain the relationship between the words.
- **Charades:** This game can be played by 2 or more people. Your child should ask questions to guess what you are acting out. Develop conversation around each 'charade'.



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