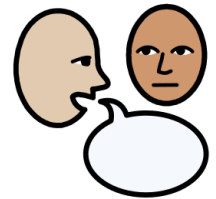


Help Sheet

0 – 25 Specialist Teaching And Support Service

How to develop vocabulary in early years.



Why?

- This help sheets provides strategies to support a child to develop vocabulary.

You will need:

- Time for staff to follow the child's interests.
- To plan and provide activities which stimulate vocabulary development.

How?

- Start with the child's interests. A child is more likely to remember and use vocabulary based on their own interests.
- Talk about what the child is doing so that they link your words to what they are focussed on.
- Name items that they use or see regularly e.g. 'ball' 'plate'.
- Think about how words are linked and start with the easier words e.g. start with 'coat' before moving onto 'jacket', 'cagoule', 'waterproof'.
- Use a multisensory approach – look, touch, listen, smell, taste. This will help the child to form links and make words more memorable.
- Have a 'topic table' to provide opportunities for experiencing new vocabulary. This supports children with delayed language by helping them to form links. It can be a theme like animals or a collection of related objects e.g. brushes – brush, nailbrush, toothbrush, washing up brush, sweeping brush.
- Sort objects into two sets to help the child to name objects, form links and learn category names e.g. fruit, vehicles. This can be built into tidying up.
- Name actions as the child does them e.g. 'jumping', 'painting'.
- Repeat the same key words regularly - children need to hear words several times before they remember them.



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- Use less words – if a child uses one or two words model single words or short phrases.
- Say words slowly and clearly.
- Move away from asking questions such as 'What's that?'. Instead use comments like 'Look, a train'.
- Avoid questions with a 'yes' or 'no' answer.
- Give prompts or forced choices e.g. 'Peel the ____' / 'Do you want an apple or banana?'

Things to note:

- This resource sheet is part of the Developing Vocabulary in Early Years Toolkit.

Reference / Evidence base – informed by:

Early Years Professional Development Programme 2020

Liz Elks & Henrietta McLachlan 'ELKLAN Language Builders' 2013