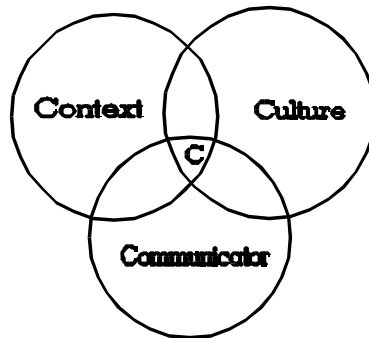


An Introduction to Language and Communication



General Information and Strategies

The child with delayed language development

Important points to remember:

- Limit the amount of verbal information given at one time. Use simple, short, clear sentences spoken at a relaxed speed. Keep commands or instructions short and simple. Emphasise the relevant parts of the instruction or explanation.
- Use repetition for teaching new words (eg “The grass is wet. Feel the grass. Your hand is wet. Don’t sit on the wet grass.”)
- Allow ample time for children to respond to instructions.
- Praise your child for attempting to communicate.

Practical ways to help your child:

- **Modelling:** Provide your child with opportunities to hear and imitate you as you introduce new words, phrases, and sentences.
- **Parallel talk:** Talk about what your child is doing as you do activities together (eg ‘Jessie is eating biscuits, mummy is drinking tea.’).
- **Self-talk:** Talk about what you are doing even when the child is not directly participating (eg ‘Mummy is putting away the groceries. I’ll put the cheese in the fridge. I’ll put the biscuits in the cupboard.’).
- **Expansion:** Expand the child’s utterances through the use of comments that add words or increase the complexity of the original utterance.
 - a) give more information (eg Jessie: ‘balloon’, Mother: ‘yes a red balloon’)
 - b) model a longer more complex utterance (eg Jessie: ‘I play sand’, Daddy: ‘Jessie plays in the sand with a bucket.’).
- Play games like ‘*I spy with my little eye*’, but give a clue other than the first letter of the word (eg colour, found in the kitchen etc) or ‘*What/Who am I?*’ (eg ‘It is furry, wags its tail and goes woof woof. What is it?’).



General Information and Strategies

The child with speech difficulties

Important points to remember:

- Children with speech difficulties should be seen by a Speech Language Pathologist, as specific management suggestions depend on the nature of the speech problem and type of intervention required.
- You can help your child to consistently remember new sounds in conversational speech by listening to and correcting errors on this sound in different activities.
- The child will likely have reduced speech intelligibility, which may vary from situation to situation and sound context to sound context.
- Children with speech difficulties may exhibit frustration from others having difficulties understanding them, and/or may be reluctant to speak in some situations.
- Often children with speech production difficulties also have difficulties with sound awareness skills, which links to reading and spelling development.

Practical ways to help your child:

- Praise your child for good speech.
- Encourage the child to look in the mirror and practise moving their tongue and lips into different positions, thus increasing their awareness of the mouth and mouth movements. This can be done when its time to brush teeth.
- 'Play with sounds' when playing with your child (eg for the young child, make 'mmmmm' sounds when playing with cars; make funny sounds through paper trumpets etc).
- Whenever your child speaks to you, listen for the target sound and give cues for any errors (eg "‘Ssss’ is a long sound. Let's say that word again with a long 'ssss' sound.>").
- Do some activities where a lot of talking and therefore practicing can occur. Example activities:
 - reading aloud and choosing particular words to practice saying
 - talking about the day's activities
 - talking in the car on the way to and from school
 - talking during play
 - talking at the dinner table.
- Decide on a special time that you will use for the practicing working on particular sounds. You could introduce a cue to prompt the child to say a particular sound, or increase their sound awareness by using that cue in your own speech. Tell your child that you will use the cue whenever you hear the sound error.

[NB *Cued Articulation* is a particular cueing system for speech sounds – Speak to your Speech Language Pathologist].