

Strategies and Activities to Develop Verbs

These games can be used with a small group of children or with a child on their own. Verbs are action words like run, brush, sleep.



Action Songs

Sing action songs like The Wheels on the Bus or “This is the way we...” – sung to the tune of “Here we go round the Mulberry Bush”.

“This is the way we BRUSH our hair,
BRUSH our hair, BRUSH our hair.
This is the way we BRUSH our hair, on a cold and frosty morning.”

“This is the way we JUMP up and down,
JUMP up and down, JUMP up and down.
This is the way we JUMP up and down, on a cold and frosty morning.”

“This is the way we go to SLEEP,
Go to SLEEP, go to SLEEP.
This is the way we go to SLEEP, on a cold and frosty morning.”

Add more verses of your own. When you are singing it with the child, do lots of actions and gestures and encourage them to copy you.

Running Commentaries

Whenever you are playing with the child or they are watching you do things around the house, make sure you comment on what you are doing. Giving a running commentary will provide plenty of opportunity to emphasise ACTION WORDS.

e.g. “Mummy’s WASHING the dishes. WASH, WASH, WASH. I’m WASHING the dishes – they’ll be nice and clean. Oh, WASH, WASH, WASH.”



Let’s Make Teddy...

Use a teddy bear or the child’s favourite character toy and demonstrate different actions e.g. teddy kick, teddy sleep, teddy jump. Then ask the child to make the teddy do different things, e.g. “Lets make teddy fall”. Take turns to give the instructions so the child gets to practice using some action words.



Simon Says

Play a simplified version of Simon Says with the child. Give him/her instructions like: “Emma RUN”; “Emma HOP”; “Emma SWIM”; “Emma SIT”.

- Encourage them to act out what you say.
- Reverse the game so that the child becomes the teacher and has to tell you what to do – they’ll love bossing you around!
- This is a great game to play with a group of children – they will have to listen for their name and the action in order to do what you say.



Teddy Simon Says

Play the game but use a teddy and a dolly with moveable limbs. The child has to make the toys do the different actions.

What Did Teddy Do?

Make the child’s toy do different actions then ask the child “what’s it doing?” e.g. “sleeping”. To develop the child’s language, say the action in a sentence e.g. “teddy is sleeping” Carry on the game by using other action words. Modelling language in this way helps children understand and later use important words like verbs.

‘Getting ready for School’

You will need: a teddy or a doll (or the child’s favourite soft toy).
a flannel (for washing)
a hairbrush
a bowl
a spoon

Tell the child that you are going to get the toy ready to go to school. Give the child directions like:

FEED teddy
WASH teddy
BRUSH teddy



Reverse the game so that the child is the teacher again and tells you what to do to teddy.

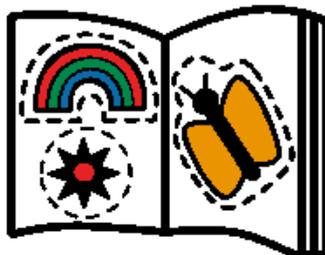
Outdoor Play / Obstacle Course

Name the actions the child is doing at the park, in the garden, playground e.g. swinging, throwing, kicking, climbing, running, crawling. Give them instructions “ready steady...run” “ready steady ...jump”.



Action Picture Scrapbook

Look through some old magazines with the child for pictures of people doing things. Tell the child what the people are doing. Cut them out together and make up an action picture scrapbook. The child will love flicking through the pages with you and telling you all about the pictures.



Posting Game

Create a fun posting box e.g. a shoe box with a monster picture stuck on the front. Cut a hole out of the monster's mouth for pictures to be posted in to. Have a selection of action cards in front of the child. Start off with a choice of 3 and then build this up to 6 as the child becomes more confident. Ask the child to find a picture e.g. 'who is sleeping?' then encourage the child to post the picture into the box. Let the child become the "teacher" by naming the action for the adult to find.



Charades

Have a selection of picture cards for different actions, look at the picture, say the word and mime the action. Once the child is familiar with the pictures, take turns to act out an action so the other person guesses the word.

Everyday strategies



- Talk about actions as they are happening around you, e.g. "look that dog's walking" "mummy's eating" "baby's sleeping" "you're jumping"
- Talk about what others are doing in real life situations or in story books
- Use actions during PE/dancing/songs or in playtime games, asking children to 'jump', 'turn', 'clap their hands' etc, then ask the children what they are doing.

