Developing the Use of Pronouns: he, she, they

Useful materials:

- Pictures of boys, girls, men, women
- Verb pictures – pictures of people doing different actions
- Toy people of different genders

- Sort pictures of boys/girls, men/women (e.g. cut from magazines) into two piles. Label the ‘he’ pile with a picture of a boy and the ‘she’ pile with a picture of a girl. Check understanding by asking the child to point to ‘He is jumping. She is smiling’. Try role reversal in this activity. Get the child to be the teacher and give you instructions of who to point to.

- Introduce the concepts first, e.g. ‘he is a boy/man (while pointing to a boy/man) and she is a girl (while pointing to a girl/woman). Repeat as many times throughout the games/activities as you think the child needs, in order to learn the concepts.

- Use pictures of people doing something and give choices, e.g. ‘Is it a girl or is it a boy? Is it he is swimming or she is swimming’.

- Model pronouns when looking at books and during everyday activities, e.g. ‘She is sleeping, he is running’.

- Play barrier games – where there is a screen between you and the child, so you can’t see which the picture the child is looking at. Give the child a mix of pictures of people doing things, and ask the child to choose a picture of a boy/girl and then ask them to describe the picture while you draw it. Model the type of sentences you want the child to use, e.g. ‘You could say… she is wearing a hat’.

- Make a short picture/photo story book together about the child. Then talk about the pictures, e.g. ‘I am boy/girl. I am ___ years old. This is my mum. She has long hair. This is my dad. He has brown eyes.

- Use these same activities to develop ‘they’ when the child is confident with using ‘he’ and ‘she’.