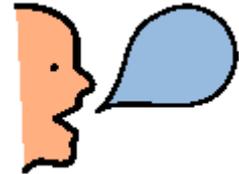


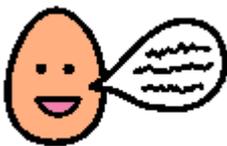
Identifying Children with Expressive Language Difficulties

Children with expressive language difficulties may:

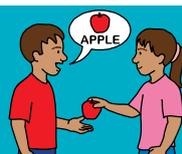


- Not talk at all or only in limited situations
- Not be able to string many words together
- Only use key words and miss out grammatical words such as 'he, it, a,
- Miss out or make errors with word endings such as -ing, plural 's', -ed
- Use incorrect vocabulary
- Have difficulty retrieving words from their memory resulting in frequent pauses or fillers such as 'erm', 'you know' and 'thingy'
- Have difficulties with word order
- Use lots of gestures to convey needs and information
- Physically take you to what they need or to show the problem
- Use another child to talk for them

Strategies for encouraging children to talk



- Give the child **extra time** to express themselves and try not to interrupt
- Create **opportunities** for the child to talk and try not to anticipate their needs before they have had chance to ask
- **Prompt** them with sequencing words such as *and.....*
because.....
- Use **visual aids** to help conversation with the child e.g. photos, picture books, objects
- A **home-school diary** will enable parents and school staff to record information that the child is likely to talk about, for example weekend activities
- **Repeat** the child's sentence back to them using the correct structure e.g. "him falled down them", "yes he's fallen down the steps"
- With older children, **explain word/word endings** and why they are important i.e. "when there is more than one object you add an 's' to the end"



- Occasionally make **deliberate mistakes** and obvious grammatical errors and encourage the child to correct them
- Ensure that the child's assessment results are not being impacted upon by their language difficulties. Where possible, plan to reduce language demands in assessments e.g. by using multiple choice questions, drawing, construction and practical demonstration
- **Sentence closure** may be used to elicit specific word/word endings e.g. "there is one pencil and here are 2(pencils)"

How to help....

- **Choices:** give the child 2 choices of what they would like to eat, play with etc. For example "do you want to play in the sand or with bricks?". This gives the child the vocabulary they need to respond and is easier than using an open ended question
- **Role reversal:** give the child instructions such as "colour the hat blue" or "where's the cat's tail?" then swap over and let the child be the "teacher"
- **Sabotage technique:** set up a situation which encourages the child to make some form of comment or request e.g. the adult keeps some of the pieces of a puzzle back or only gives the child a small amount of juice so that they will want more
- **Modeling:** model language appropriate to the child's ability e.g. with a younger child name objects and actions during everyday situations, for an older child model the use of connectives i.e. "and" "so" "because"
- **Adding language:** add words to the child's sentences to help develop their spoken language e.g. child says "kick ball", adult replies "the boy is kicking the ball". As the child's skills develop, start to model describing words and connectives.

