

## **\*Refer to the 'Language Development Pyramid Poster'**

Attention and listening, play and understanding of language all need to be in place before a child can be expected to use language and pronounce words correctly. Children need support at these early levels. Consider the following strategies and ideas at home and at nursery:

### **Attention and Listening**

- Engage the child in 'ready steady go' activities where the child needs to look at you/ make a noise before you carry out an action e.g. blowing bubbles, rolling a ball down a marble run, pushing a ball down a slide etc.
- Sing nursery rhymes with the child. Once the child is familiar with one you could stop and wait for them to look at you/make a noise before carrying on
- Play quick and simple turn taking games with the child e.g. sitting opposite each other and rolling a ball.

### **Play**

- It is very important to get involved in the child's play.
- Play alongside the child.
- Make a commentary using simple language about what the child is doing e.g. talk about the different objects... 'car', 'pushing', 'big wheels', 'red car', 'big car'.
- Let the child take the lead - don't interrupt the child or tell them to do different things; the child will involve you as they want to.

### **Understanding**

- Carefully consider your language and the environment.
- Keep your own language simple; break down instructions into short phrases containing only one piece of information and repeat instructions if needed.
- Give instructions in the order in which they should be completed, e.g. instead of saying 'Before you go out to play, put on your coat' you could say 'Put your coat on. Then go out to play'.
- Keep equipment at nursery in the same place, clearly labelled with words, pictures or symbols.
- Help understanding by giving visual cues to support verbal instructions, e.g. books, pictures, modelling, gestures etc.



## Talking

- Children need to hear new words from others before they will use them by themselves. Name objects and talk about what is happening around the child, e.g.
  - At mealtimes talk about what the child is eating. Name everything they have to eat. If they can choose then hold them up and give them a choice - “Do you want milk or juice?” If they point to an option, say it yourself - “You want juice? Here’s your juice”.
  - When shopping talk about what you are buying. Talk about the items as you put them away.
  - Point out things you see when you are out - cars, birds, animals etc.
  - If the child requests something, e.g. says ‘more’ then give them what they have asked for and model the words back, e.g. ‘More bubbles’. **Remember** it is not important for the child to be saying ‘please’ and ‘thank you’ at this stage.

