



## Everyday Ideas to Support Children with Language Delay

1. Use the 'whole language' approach – this approach uses all means of communication i.e. spoken and gestural communication to support understanding and use of language. So, use gestures, facial expressions, body language and pictures as well as spoken messages to get your message across. Encourage your child to do the same!
2. During specific times of practising language or learning at home, limit the length of your utterances to match the average length of your child's utterances + one extra word. This approach is known as 'scaffolding' and helps your child bridge the gap between their own simple sentences and an adult's complex sentence structure. It can be tiring and certainly cannot, nor should it be maintained all day – so choose the most appropriate time and enjoy the 1:1 focus with your child.
3. Talk about the here and now – if your child is already focussed on a toy or game make use of that good attention to develop his/her vocabulary. We all remember best the things that are *relevant* to us, so talking about what your child is doing right now will be both of interest and relevant!
4. Name real objects and pictures for your child. Talk about what they do, and where we find them – this is how children initially make sense of objects and 'categorise' them in their minds i.e. by function then location
5. Help your child understand pronouns (e.g. he, she, they) by pointing to the relevant person.
6. Get your child's attention before talking to him /her by calling their name. Some children's attention and listening skills will still be developing and so they will need to stop what they are doing and look at you *before* they will be able to pay attention to what you are saying.
7. Repeat messages before you rephrase them – this gives your child a second chance to decode your message before having to start all over again if you rephrase it!
8. If your child appears 'stuck' you can help him/her structure a sentence by starting it off and letting them finish it e.g. "Today your teacher said..."