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**AN RCT AND ECONOMIC EVALUATION OF DIRECT VERSUS INDIRECT AND INDIVIDUAL VERSUS GROUP MODES OF SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPY FOR CHILDREN WITH PRIMARY LANGUAGE IMPAIRMENT.**

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**THE LANGUAGE THERAPY MANUAL**

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# **1 THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MANUAL**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This therapy manual was written as part of the research project '*An RCT And Economic Evaluation Of Direct Versus Indirect and Individual Versus Group Modes of Speech and Language Therapy for Children with Primary Language Impairment*'. This project compared methods of SLT service delivery for children in mainstream primary schools, measuring the effectiveness of direct therapy delivered by SLTs compared with indirect therapy delivered by SLT assistants, and both modes delivered to children individually and in groups. This manual was constructed to guide the therapy offered, and was designed to be used both by the research SLTs and their SLT assistants. The process through which the manual was constructed and the therapy programmes adapted are described in McCartney, Boyle et al. (2004) to which readers are directed for further discussion of its rationale and theoretical basis.

The manual is not designed as a 'do it yourself' therapy kit, nor as a 'cookbook' of therapy activities. It was designed to support assistants who had undergone training, and who worked under the close direction of SLTs. In the research project assistants were mostly new to this role (McCartney, Boyle et al. 2005) and needed explicit information. Assistants delivered therapy, but did not have a decision-making role: the research SLTs decided upon the therapy activities to be used with each child, and when to move on to new activities.

Nor is the manual intended to be a complete therapy programme – it does not spell out each step of the therapeutic process, and there is considerable room for therapists' judgement to be used. It was intended as a guiding protocol, to ensure that the therapy received by the research children could be planned coherently. To measure therapy effectiveness, which was an aim of the research study, it was necessary to know what therapy was carried out, and to record and document the process. Careful records were made of the activities carried out during intervention and why children moved on to new activities. The manual proved helpful in facilitating therapy planning, language target setting, explanation to assistants and record keeping during the research intervention period.

The manual made use of the available, but limited, research literature on therapy interventions for children with primary language impairment and the more extensive range of materials and ideas developed in the professional therapy domain, to provide guidance on implementing therapy useful for assistants. Activities are based on published materials and resources freely available for reproduction. Such published therapy materials and approaches are developed by practitioner authors and refined by publishers because they are considered sufficiently useful to share with colleagues. By using them we hoped to offer the research children therapy approaches that represent good practice having been validated 'in the field'. A list of materials used appears at the end of the manual. Other therapy materials have appeared since the research intervention and future users of the manual can incorporate any materials they find useful.

The manual as presented here has been edited from the informal format used by the research team, to be interpretable to other readers.

## **THE AIMS OF THE MANUAL**

The children in the research project had primary impairments in receptive and/or expressive language. They were aged 6 – 11 years in mainstream schools in Glasgow and Edinburgh. Intervention took place within the child’s school three times per week in sessions of 30 – 40 minutes throughout a 15-week period. Some children had individual education plans (IEPs) that recorded the decisions of teachers and others about language development, and the actions needed to foster this. Some, in addition or alternatively, had speech and language therapy (SLT) aims and plans serving a similar purpose. Other children did not have such plans in place.

This manual provided a set of guidelines for decision making that could incorporate existing plans and be augmented by observation and further language analysis. The manual aimed for guidance, not constraint, in what was done, and allowed flexibility in choosing amongst materials and activities to deal with specific child impairment factors and to take account of child interests. This is a ‘broad brush’ approach to choosing activities, focusing on relevant areas for each child as they move through therapy.

## **THE LANGUAGE AREAS**

‘Therapy’ in the manual includes both specified therapy interactions with a child and adaptations to the child’s environment to improve their communication opportunities. This includes, for example, teachers adapting their own language and providing a ‘communication friendly’ classroom environment, and adults accepting and encouraging a child’s attempts to ‘repair’ communication breakdown. Each child’s teacher was given information on how to develop an optimal communication environment, tailored to the child’s needs, irrespective of the specific language activities undertaken by research staff.

Four language areas with specific activities were specified:

- Facilitating and monitoring comprehension and attention. Attention and good listening skills are needed to cope with comprehension difficulties and to access the school curriculum, much of which is delivered orally. This area is therefore a priority for many children. It was developed particularly using the work of Maggie Johnson (Johnson 2000).
- Vocabulary development. Many school children will have difficulties in learning words, and in ‘finding’ words when they need to use them. This can also cause problems in the school curriculum, when new topics are introduced and new vocabulary needed. Such children will need vocabulary development therapy.
- The comprehension and use of grammar. By school entry the development of spoken grammar should be almost complete, and children making errors may sound immature. For children who show obvious grammar problems, grammar therapy may be a priority over vocabulary development.
- The comprehension and use of narrative. Understanding and telling stories or narratives is important for understanding talk in school. This ability normally develops throughout the primary school years and interacts with grammar and vocabulary knowledge. The fourth intervention area was therefore narrative therapy, where children learned to understand and use the structure of stories. It was developed using the work of Shanks and Rippon (please see Section Nine, No. 41).

For school-age children these language areas are not independent but interact. For example, a child who is habitually inattentive might not learn new words as they are presented in class, and grammar skill affects

children as they construct narratives. Individual children may have needs in more than one area and some children will have needs in all of them. Published materials are available in these language areas.

## **CHOOSING LANGUAGE AREAS FOR INTERVENTION**

The following information was collected for research project children by the start of the intervention period:

- results from all age-appropriate sub-tests of the CELF-3<sup>UK</sup> (Semel, Wiig and Secord 2000), including supplementary tests;
- results from the BPVS-2 (Dunn, Dunn et al. 1997);
- a short tape-recorded language sample, to give information on grammar and narrative organisation;
- teacher and parent responses to CELF Observational Rating Scales (Semel, Wiig and Secord 1996);
- school IEP and SLT therapy plans as available.

As a ‘rule of thumb’ a child was considered eligible for work on Comprehension Monitoring if:

- he or she had a standard score of 6 or less on any CELF-3<sup>UK</sup> receptive sub-test, including Listening to Paragraphs; or
- he or she had a BPVS-2 score of 80 or below; or
- he or she had a comment on a CELF Observational Rating Scale relating to listening, or
- he or she had an IEP or therapy target concerning comprehension or listening.

A child was considered eligible for work on Vocabulary Development if:

- he or she had a standard score of 6 or less on any CELF-3<sup>UK</sup> expressive sub-test, including Word Associations; or
- he or she had a standard score of 6 or less on receptive sub-tests Concepts and Directions, Word Classes or Semantic Relationships; or
- he or she had a BPVS-2 score of 80 or below; or
- he or she had a comment on a CELF Observational Rating Scale relating to words or vocabulary, or
- he or she had an IEP or therapy target concerning words or vocabulary.

A child was considered eligible for work on Grammar if:

- he or she had a standard score of 6 or less on CELF-3<sup>UK</sup> sub-tests Word Structure, Formulated Sentences, Recalling Sentences, or Sentence Assembly; or
- grammar errors were noted in the taped language sample; or
- he or she had a comment on a CELF Observational Rating Scale relating to grammar or sentence construction, or
- he or she had an IEP or therapy target concerning grammar or sentence construction.

A child was considered eligible for work on Narrative if:

- he or she had a standard score of 6 or less on CELF-3<sup>UK</sup> sub-tests Listening to Paragraphs, or
- if narrative organisation errors were noted in the taped sample; or
- if there was a comment on a CELF Observational Rating Scale relating to organising talk, or
- he or she had an IEP or therapy target about narrative or story telling.

## PRIORITISING LANGUAGE AREAS

Where a child had more than one eligible area (as was common), a sequence of intervention areas was suggested as follows.

- It was assumed that comprehension monitoring was a fundamental coping strategy, important for classroom success. It was therefore anticipated that this would be the first area of therapy tackled for the majority of eligible intervention children. Work in this area at the start of therapy would also to ‘set the scene’ and introduce children to working with their SLT or assistant.
- Vocabulary development is an area of growth throughout the primary school years, and most language-impaired children require strategies for learning and retrieving new words. It was considered probable that vocabulary development would be important for most of the research children, and would be sequenced in intervention just after comprehension monitoring. However, its importance relative to grammar would vary from child to child.
- Spoken grammatical errors were considered important for several reasons: they were developmentally inappropriate, they were noticeable and might serve to particularise a child, and they were unlikely to be dealt with other than by direct grammar therapy. This meant that grammar would normally be a priority for children showing marked difficulties, to be dealt with in parallel with, or instead of, vocabulary development.
- Narrative development depends upon the use of relevant vocabulary and grammatical markers, and is also tackled, to some extent, in the Scottish 5-14 Literacy curriculum. It was expected that narrative would be tackled if grammar was sufficiently well developed and, for many children, word knowledge would take precedence.

Once priorities were established CELF-3<sup>UK</sup> item analysis was undertaken and the information available was used by research SLTs to set measurable intervention targets for each child. These were updated as the intervention period progressed.

## CHOOSING LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES

There has been little research on the use of specific language materials and activities for children, and any research carried out has involved small numbers of children with limited language goals. There is therefore little evidence as to which activities or patterns of activity are effective in developing children’s language skills. In this context, therapists made the best assumptions they could as to what language activity would be useful, using their own experience and inviting their colleagues’ opinions. Published materials were used where possible, and general games developed, but children enjoy different things and selection from the list was a matter of personal choice.

Around half of the research intervention children were randomly allocated to groups which took into consideration the child’s age, so that the range in any group was not too extreme, and also geography, so that children did not spend too much time travelling. Groups were of three to five children. It was therefore unlikely that each child in a group would have identical language needs.

Research SLTs therefore choose activities specially relevant for each child across the 15-week therapy period, adjusting the language areas worked on over time. They also differentiated tasks within the group to suit individual children.

## **MOVING ON**

SLTs made preliminary judgements towards the start of the intervention period as to how much therapy time to spend on each language area, and planned an outline sequence. However, task-specific probes were also developed to monitor children's progress and to suggest when to move on to new therapy targets. These were examples of the language target presented to the child unaided and without cues, to see how they managed without help. Decisions about changing therapy aims were made by the relevant SLT. Examples of probes appear in the manual at the end of each section.

## **2 ‘GOLDEN RULES’ FOR THERAPY – SETTING THE SCENE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

There are factors that can be applied across a wide range of therapy contexts and language targets. They relate to having fun, using language that will help the child to understand and talk, and having a supply of adaptable games that can be set up quickly and used flexibly with a wide range of children. These aspects are discussed in this section as an introduction to therapy activities. They include ‘Golden Rules’ about varying the therapy context and using appropriate language, and some generally useful games that can be adapted for many children.

### **SEVEN GOLDEN RULES**

There are some ‘Golden Rules’ that apply to all therapy contexts, and help to make activities useful and fun for children. Seven rules are outlined here, with examples and suggestions.

#### **RULE ONE: EXPLAIN**

Try and explain to the child what you are going to do in the session and why, even if this is at a very simple level, so that the child develops a clear idea about what his or her goals are. This can help a child to become more self-reflective about his or her learning, which in turn, can make learning more effective.

#### **RULE TWO: MAKE IT FUN**

There are several ways of making therapy tasks motivating. You can build rewards into the task, so that an activity is *intrinsically* rewarding, or the child can get something nice for trying or succeeding on an activity – an *extrinsic* reward.

##### ***Intrinsic rewards***

In many games the game and the therapy goal are not distinguishable to the child. The reward of completing (and perhaps winning) the game is built into the activity. For example, when the child plays a lotto game classifying words into categories, they are both collecting pictures to be first to complete their lotto board, and fulfilling the language aim of naming the pictures and deciding which category they belong to.

##### ***Extrinsic rewards***

Intrinsic reward is seen as the ideal method of making therapy fun, but it can be difficult to organise if you do not have highly rewarding games for the therapy target you are working on. Therefore many SLTs use *extrinsic* rewards, sometimes called *motivators*. This is when something extra is used as a reward for ‘having a go’ at the task. For example, after making up a sentence with a past tense the child can have a turn on a board game, or be given a counter, for trying.

One difficulty with using extrinsic rewards is that the child can get too excited by the reward and not concentrate on the language target. It is therefore advisable to use motivators that are not *too* exciting for

the child. They must also be used consistently either for trying or for succeeding – and the child must be told just what will be rewarded.

### ***Role reversal***

Role reversal is another useful way of making therapy fun. This happens when the child takes turns with the adult or another child at giving instructions within a game.

## **RULE THREE: CORRECT ‘MISTAKES’ SYSTEMATICALLY**

In general, SLTs do not endorse overt correction of the kind: ‘*Say it properly. It’s not runned, it’s ran. You say it.*’. This is because getting a child to repeat something is not proof that he or she understands what they are saying, or are linguistically ready to say it. Furthermore, correction can be frustrating for the child and can damage confidence.

SLTs usually recommend the use of less direct approaches. In particular, *recasting* is useful. This is where the child says something ‘wrongly’ and the adult agrees with their meaning, but uses the correct version of the child’s utterance. For example, if the child says ‘*I runned.*’ the adult says ‘*Yes, you ran.*’ or ‘*Yes, you ran fast.*’

However, we are in the business of trying to modify children’s language, so some element of correction may well be necessary. We can determine when to ask for change on the basis of how important it is for the child to get their meaning across at that moment. Within therapy tasks set up for the child to attempt to use a correct language target, and where the child knows this is the aim, correction may be useful if the child can succeed in making the required change. However, if it is important for the child to get a particular meaning across, then correction is probably not helpful.

Always bear in mind the aim of the therapy task when considering whether to use correction. We are not working on speech sounds in this manual, and it is best to either ignore pronunciation errors, or to subtly model the correct version. For example: if the child says ‘*Look at the fower.*’ say ‘*Yes, that is a big flower.*’ In general, if the language feature targeted by the therapy activity is achieved, then ‘errors’ in other parts of the child’s response may be acceptable. The following scenarios illustrate this.

### ***Scenario 1***

The aim of a language activity is to practise using the pronouns ‘he’ and ‘she’ in a sentence and the child makes a mistake in another part of the sentence, saying: ‘*She goed* (meaning ‘went’) *to work*’. Since the target is the use of ‘he’ and ‘she’, and the child has attained this target regardless of the use of ‘goed’, you would not correct ‘goed’. You can, however, use the technique of recasting to respond, saying: ‘*Well done. She went to work.*’

### ***Scenario 2***

The aim has been to practise using ‘the’ in front of a noun. The child has made good progress and has been able to use ‘the’ in phrases such as ‘the book’. The aim is then changed to putting ‘the’ into a sentence, but the child omits ‘the’, saying ‘*Ball is red.*’. Merely recasting the utterance to ‘*The ball is red.*’ may not be enough to move the child up to the harder task of using ‘the’ within sentences. Instead, some subtle challenge to what the child said may be needed; for example by saying : ‘*Oh, ball is red, is it? Do we need to put a little word in there?*’, with the aim of encouraging the child to self correct. If they do not, a recast can be made for the child to copy.

### **Scenario 3**

In conversation with the child, you notice that he or she makes an error on a structure that you have been working on. For example they say: '*I working hard*' when a current therapy target is use of auxiliary verbs, in this case, '*I'm working hard*'. We need to remember that it is a very large step between using a target correctly in a therapy activity and remembering to use it in everyday conversation. The response of the adult would therefore usually be to recast with emphasis, saying: '*Yes, I hear you are working very hard*'.

## **RULE FOUR: MAKE TASKS EASIER OR HARDER**

There are different ways to change the level of difficulty of a task. These include varying the amount of visual support given, and the language levels used. It is important to decide upon the level of difficulty when planning the activity, and upon what responses from the child might make you raise or lower the difficulty level during the activity.

### ***Picture support***

Where the activity is aimed at generating lots of words it will usually be easier for the child if they have a selection of pictures to choose from. For example, if the child is thinking of a category such as 'sea creatures', give them pictures including both sea creatures and other kind of animals. If you later want to make the activity harder of course, take away the pictures.

### ***Language support: comprehension***

Activities can be made harder by giving the child a longer/more complex instruction. If the target is a preposition, such as 'between', initial levels can focus on the child following short instructions such as, '*Put the pencil between the cup and the box*'. Contrasting instructions would include other prepositions the child already understood, such as 'in front', for example: '*Put the dog in front of the car*'.

To make the task harder, you can increase the length of instructions, saying: '*Put the pencil between the cup and the box, and put the brick between the knife and the spoon*'.

Another way of increasing difficulty is to use 'between' in an instruction with another preposition, for example: '*Put the pencil between the cup and the box and put the wee lorry in front of the book*'.

### ***Language support: expression***

Asking the child to put a target word into utterances of increasing length and complexity is the most common way of raising difficulty level in expressive language tasks. For example, if the target is to use the word 'because', ask '*Why is the boy eating the cake?*', and expect the child to say '*Because he is hungry*' (a clause level response). A harder level is to ask '*What happened?*', and expect the child to say '*I went home because I was poorly*' (a sentence level response).

Levels longer than this are harder to elicit within a specific activity, but the child can be encouraged to use the target within their everyday speech.

## **RULE FIVE: BE PREPARED TO CHANGE THE ACTIVITY**

An activity may not work for a number of reasons. The child may not be motivated, may be tired, or may just be ‘playing up’. The activity may not be suited to the child: apart from being too easy or too difficult it may just not appeal to that child on that particular day. It is always worth trying to modify an activity by making it more fun or less demanding, but if you are not getting anywhere, it is all right to stop the activity and try another one. Just because you have planned a session with certain activities does not mean you have to stick rigidly to your plan. If things are not working out in the session you could try either changing the aim, finding a more motivating activity, or changing the target itself.

It is worth remembering that even the most experienced SLT will have sessions when they feel that little has been achieved. This can lead to reflection on how to improve therapy.

## **RULE SIX: HELP THE CHILD TO UNDERSTAND**

How you present information to a child affects how well he or she can understand it. Short, clear sentences with pauses between them often work well. The sections of the Manual on organising a Communication Friendly classroom and on Comprehension Monitoring have ideas on how to help children comprehend.

## **RULE SEVEN: USE TALK WITHIN THE THERAPY SESSION THAT GETS THE RESPONSE YOU WANT**

It is important to use language in therapy sessions that will help the child focus on relevant language features in their response. Sometimes we just give good examples; at other times we use language that expects a response from a child. Forms of adult language use are discussed next.

### ***Adult language that does not require a verbal response from the child***

The following types of adult talk do not *require* the child to speak in response, although this is of course encouraged. The aim of these approaches is two-fold: to give the child a chance to contribute successfully by non-verbal means, and to let the child hear examples of appropriate language forms. Adult language is manipulated to allow the child the opportunity both to hear and to copy language structures in the least threatening way.

#### ***Modelling***

Modelling is when the adult comments on what the child is doing, or on the current activity, using utterances at an appropriate language level for the child. The assumption is that a child will be more likely to use language features if they are exposed to good examples at the right time. This approach is often used interactively with the child, with an adult following the child’s lead when looking at a game or book with the child. The adult gives a commentary on ongoing events, using language pitched at, or just above the linguistic and developmental level of the child. This kind of approach is used frequently with young language-delayed children and is sometimes called general language stimulation. However, giving a good model can also be helpful for school-aged children.

Adults often repeat their models frequently so that the child is exposed to many good examples of sentence types and structures at the right level.

### **Focussed stimulation**

When a particular language structure needs to be demonstrated because it is the next target in therapy, the adult may focus quite specifically on that structure by modelling it as often as possible. For example, if the target was the regular past tense, the adult could choose to look at a story picture-card sequence with the child. They adult would comment on as many events in the past tense as possible, saying '*I think that girl walked very quickly to her friend's house. They played in the garden and they talked a lot. Then they helped make the tea.*' Repetition is then used to maximise the number of times the structure is heard and bring it to the child's attention.

### **Recasting**

Recasting (outlined above) is a useful technique for times when a child makes an error or says something ungrammatically. The adult then gives the 'good' version, what the child 'should' have said. For example, if a child said '*I not like that.*' the adult would rephrase the utterance by saying something like '*I see. You don't like it.*' or '*Oh, you don't like it?*' Recasting often turns the child's statement into a question in order to sound more conversational and natural rather than overtly corrective.

### **Expansion**

Expansion involves using the meaning of what the child has said but demonstrating slightly more complex language, to help move the child's own language along. It often concentrates on adding to or developing the child's meaning. For example, if the child commented on a picture of a castle by saying '*That's a big castle.*' the adult could expand by replying, '*Yes, it's an enormous castle.*' or '*I think it's a big castle, with lots of monsters inside.*' The adult has therefore slightly altered the meaning of the child's utterance to make it more complex.

### **Adult language that does expect a verbal response from the child: questioning**

The following types of adult talk are useful for eliciting responses from a child as they require, or strongly expect, that the child will respond. These approaches therefore allow the child opportunities to practise talking. One of the main language forms which anticipates a response is the question.

On the whole, speech and language therapists recommend that questions are used with discretion, so that conversations with the child do not become inquisitions! Modelling (as described above) and indirect questions (discussed below) are thought to be more effective in encouraging children to talk than drilling with direct demands for response.

Questions can be divided into *indirect* and *direct* questions. Indirect questions invite an answer but do not require one, so place less pressure on the child. Direct questions, which require an answer, place more pressure on the child.

### **Indirect questions**

Indirect questions are subtle attempts on the part of the adult to get the child to talk. They are usually introduced by a phrase such as '*I wonder what ...?*', for example: '*I wonder what you did on your holiday?*'; '*I wonder what's happened here?*'. Other structures the adult can use to similar effect are phrases such as '*I bet you ....*' and '*I don't know ....*', as in the following examples: '*I bet you had a nice time at the beach today*'; '*I don't know what you did today, but I went to the cinema*'.

### ***Direct questions: open questions***

An open question is a question form that asks for some details and not just a yes/no response. Examples are: ‘*What did you do at the party?*’; ‘*What is your favourite toy?*’; ‘*What’s happening here?*’. Open questions can elicit a lot of information from a child. For example, a possible response to the first question could relate in detail the games played and food eaten at a birthday party. On the other hand, open questions may only elicit a one-word answer. In response to the first question, a child may just reply ‘*Play*’.

Open questions do give the child a greater opportunity to talk than closed questions but if the child is not forthcoming then a different approach is required.

### ***Direct questions: closed questions***

Direct closed questions require only a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ response, for example: ‘*Do you want to choose a toy?*’. They are useful for encouraging responses in children who, for reasons such as shyness or difficulty understanding or using particular language structures, find it difficult to answer a more open question. This is not to say that only closed questions should be used with shy or language-impaired children. However, they are a useful ‘last resort’ if you do need to ask the child a question and other types of questions are proving difficult.

### ***Direct questions: forced alternatives***

A forced alternative is similar to a closed question in that the child is presented with a limited choice of response. However, alternatives are given, for example: ‘*Would you like the book or the game?*’. Forced alternatives can be a useful strategy if the child is not coping with open questions, and allow more information to be given than a closed question. The child still has a model of what to say, but is not just repeating what the adult has said.

Forced alternatives can also be used when working on aspects of grammar, for example asking: ‘*Is the man eating or is he drinking?*’ where the target is the ‘ing’ form in ‘eating’. They can be used to elicit whole sentences as well, for example: ‘*Is the girl jumping or is the boy skipping?*’, where the target is the ‘subject + verb’ sentence ‘the boy is skipping’.

### ***Direct questions relating to what the child has said***

Here the direct question asked of the child is relevant to what they have just said. For example, the child says ‘*I’ve got a new tractor*’ and the adult asks ‘*Who gave it to you?*’. Asking a relevant question after the child has said something is more likely to encourage conversation than if the adult asks a less related question, such as ‘*What toys do you like playing with?*’

### ***Completion questions***

Here a question is asked using ‘question’ intonation and the child has to know this means they are expected to complete the adult’s utterance. The adult says, for example: ‘*This girl is riding her bike, these girls are riding .....*’. The aim is for the child to use ‘their’, saying ‘*Theirs.*’ or ‘*Their bikes.*’

### ***False assertions***

Here the adult says something that is deliberately false, so that the child will correct it. For example, the adult looks at the child's cup and says '*That's not your cup!*' to get the child's response of '*Yes, it is*'.

Verbal absurdity is a variation of this, when the adult makes a deliberate error that the child is encouraged to correct. For example, the adult points to a picture of a lorry and says '*This is a big bus.*' or, when talking about a giraffe, says '*Giraffes have short necks, don't they?*'.

### ***Cueing***

Cueing is mainly used in vocabulary work or in a situation where the child is having difficulty finding a word. The adult gives the child a prompt to help the child retrieve the word. This is often the first sound of the word. The child is expected to say the word.

## **3 USEFUL GAMES FOR THERAPY**

### **INTRODUCTION**

There are a number of games that can be used to carry out many therapy activities, and can be tailored to suit particular language targets. This section gives a brief description of some of the more adaptable therapy games that are quick to set up and can be used with home-made pictures and materials. Most can be used as group or individual activities, with more than one child taking turns or the child taking turns with the adult. Where games are more suitable for groups or individual work this is noted.

### **GAMES**

#### ***Hide and seek***

Hide various pictures or objects around the room and have the/a child look for them. When they find one, encourage them to name what they found and, if appropriate, make up a sentence using the word.

#### ***Lotto***

Prepare large cards for each player with four to six pictures stuck on each, and matching individual little cards. Place the little cards face down on the table. Take turns at turning over a little card and finding where it matches on the large card. If the picture is not on the player's large card it is placed face down again, and the next person has a turn. Each little card turned over is named and/or described.

#### ***Pairs***

Have pairs of pictures turned face down on a table. Players take turns to turn over two cards, trying to find a pair. If a pair is turned over then the player keeps the pair and has another turn. If not, the cards are replaced face down and the next player has a turn. Each card turned over is named and/or described.

#### ***Odd-one-out***

Give the/a child a choice of three objects or pictures, for example: 'bed', 'apple', 'table'. They have to guess which word is the odd one out, and say why.

#### ***I went to the market and I bought a .....***

One speaker says one item within a specific category, for example: 'carrot' within 'fruit'. The next remembers 'carrot' and adds another item, for example: '*I went to the market and I bought a carrot and a cabbage*', and so on. Other topics include '*I went to the seaside and I saw a .....*'; '*I went into the garden and I saw a .....*'

#### ***Pass the blink (group game)***

Choose a category such as *fruit*. One person starts, names a word and blinks at someone else. It is then that person's turn to say another word within the category and blink at someone else. The group can discuss whether each word fits the category.

### ***Chinese Whispers (group game)***

One person whispers a word or phrase to another person, who whispers to another, and so on. The last person finds the right picture for the word or phrases, or gives the meaning. ‘Mistakes’ can be discussed with the original speaker.

### ***Pirates***

Choose several different word categories with a picture to symbolise each category. The/a child or the adult says a word and the/each child runs to the right category. In a group, the last child or a child who is wrong becomes the caller. For individual work the child and adult take turns running and calling.

### ***Make a sentence***

The/a child makes up a sentence that includes one of the words being learnt.

### ***Make a story***

The/a child makes up a story or continues a story from an adult’s or another child’s sentence, incorporating one or several of the words being learnt.

### ***Twenty Questions***

The/a child selects a picture from a choice presented face down or in a bag. The adult or other children then have to ask questions that require a *yes/no* answer to find out what the picture is. Roles are then changed around.

### ***Think of three***

The adult presents a topic or category and asks the/each child to name a specified number of that category, for example: ‘*Fruit - name six*'; ‘*Things you cut with – name three*.’

### ***Skittles***

Place pictures underneath skittles. When the/a child knocks the skittles over the pictures are named, and the word put into a sentence if appropriate.

### ***Hoops***

Place pictures inside hoops. The/a child either throws a beanbag into one hoop and names the picture, or throws a beanbag into the appropriate hoop after answering a question relating to one of the pictures.

### ***Give me a clue***

Put an object or picture into a bag. Give clues, and the/a child must guess what it is, for example: ‘*I’m a fruit, I’m soft and I’m red*’ for ‘strawberry’. The child checks by pulling out the object or picture.

### ***Simon says***

Give instructions for the/a child to carry out, but only if they are preceded by a pre-determined verbal signal, usually ‘*Simon says*’.

### ***Grandmother’s footsteps (group game).***

A child is designated as ‘grandmother’ and stands away from the group, with their back turned to the rest of the group. The other children line up and as they successfully complete a task they have to sneak up on ‘grandmother’. ‘Grandmother’ can turn around at any time, and when they do everyone has to freeze on the spot. If they move they are ‘out’ and go back to the start.

### ***Mother may I?***

The/a child is given a direction, and checks if they are allowed to follow it, saying ‘*Mother may I .....?*’ and inserting the direction. Other request forms may be substituted if more appropriate.

### ***Barrier games***

These games develop the child’s ability to give relevant and accurate information. The/a child sits behind a small screen facing the adult or another child. The child is given a simple picture or model to describe in sufficient detail for the person on the other side of the screen to reproduce exactly. They might have to say, for example: ‘*Draw a house. Put a red roof on it. Make three windows.*’ At the end both drawings should look the same: any differences can be discussed.

## 4 THE COMMUNICATION - FRIENDLY CLASSROOM

### INTRODUCTION

It can be hard for some children to cope with the language of the classroom. This section was prepared as a handout for teachers, giving advice on how to adapt the language and communication context of the classroom in a helpful manner.

Children may have difficulty listening and understanding in the classroom for several reasons:

- they may find it hard to attend over background noise
- the information they hear may be too long or too complex for them
- they may not understand new vocabulary
- they may not understand that words can have more than one meaning
- they may not understand questions.

Children may also have difficulty talking and using their language in the classroom. For example:

- they may use immature word forms or simplified sentence structure
- they may have difficulty finding the words they want to use
- they may have difficulty sequencing their ideas.

There are several ways classroom language, particularly adult language, can be adapted to ensure it is communication-friendly.

A list of points useful for teachers is given in *Support for Learning Part Three No. 7: Developing the 5 - 14 Curriculum for Pupils with Language and Communication Disorders* (p. 23; Scottish Office Education and Industry Department; 2000) published by Learning and Teaching Scotland, giving guidance on managing the curriculum and on setting the learning context. This text is reproduced here.

‘Ensuring quality provision of an enabling learning environment for the pupil with language and communication difficulties is important.

Classroom organisation planning should provide appropriate contexts for talking and listening and for interaction.

- The focus should be on naturalistic settings.
- Classroom organisation should ensure and support interaction between pupils and with the environment.
- Good listening conditions should be established in acoustically treated classrooms with soft furnishings and carpets and good lighting which is bright and evenly distributed.
- Teaching and learning contexts should enable the child to engage in exchanges sensitive to the child's perspective on topics of interest to him or her.
- There should be opportunities for sensitive supporting and encouraging of the child's talk by partners responsive to the child's learning style, extending their knowledge and encouraging them to express their thoughts and feelings in words.
- Peer conversational partners should be sensitively matched to the child's language strengths and learning needs.

Careful management of the language demands in the classroom context is helpful for all children but particularly for the child with language and communication difficulties. In the classroom, try to:

- ensure good quality lighting in all teaching and learning contexts as children with articulation difficulties may use lip-reading in addition to listening to learn speech sounds
- make eye contact and ensure own positive body language and positioning
- provide natural spoken language for the child to hear and experience - do not speak louder or more slowly or use exaggerated speech and lip patterns
- maximise your use of natural gesture, pointing, facial expression, body language and other visual clues
- demonstrate what is expected of the child or use pictorial representations
- use experiential learning, role play and games
- talk through everything you do using statements which give the child examples of language they might use
- use simple sentence constructions with fewest words - there may be auditory memory difficulties where the child will not remember other speakers' utterances
- simplify instructions - if necessary, give instructions one at a time
- provide clear advance warning of a change of topic
- talk only when not facing and writing on the blackboard
- limit your own movement around the classroom when talking to the whole group or class
- plan class discussions - allow only one pupil to talk at the one time to promote optimum talking and listening for each child (the circle-time approach promotes this).'

## PRINCIPLES AND STRATEGIES FOR LISTENING AND TALKING: FOR ALL CHILDREN RECEIVING RESEARCH INTERVENTION.

Child's area of difficulty	Examples of difficulties in the classroom	Possible strategies - it can help to:
<u>Attending and listening</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The child has difficulty listening to instructions in a noisy classroom.</li> <li>▪ The child is easily distracted (disruptive or 'tuned out').</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Make sure you have the child's attention before telling them something (for example by saying their name).</li> <li>▪ Remind the child to use good listening skills (Good listening!) and praise them when they do.</li> <li>▪ Use visual support (gesture and pictures) when giving information.</li> </ul>
<u>Understanding spoken language</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The child has difficulty following longer or more complex language.</li> <li>▪ The child has difficulty acquiring topic vocabulary.</li> <li>▪ The child may not understand ambiguous sentences, and take them literally.</li> <li>▪ The child may not understand questions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use short, simple sentences.</li> <li>▪ Encourage the child to repeat back instructions.</li> <li>▪ Encourage the child to be aware of their difficulty with understanding and praise them for asking you to repeat.</li> <li>▪ Speak slowly and use pauses between key words or phrases.</li> <li>▪ Revise and summarise stories, for example in the literacy hour.</li> <li>▪ Encourage the child to retell what has happened in a story to check their understanding.</li> <li>▪ Introduce new vocabulary as soon as possible, and reinforce it.</li> <li>▪ Use visual support when introducing new vocabulary.</li> <li>▪ Try to be aware of how classroom language can have more than one meaning and so be misinterpreted.</li> <li>▪ Try to ask questions that give alternatives or use 'closed' questions rather than 'open' questions.</li> </ul>

<p><b><u>Using spoken language</u></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The child makes grammatical errors.</li>   <li>▪ The child has difficulty retrieving the right word and may use the wrong word or a related word in a sentence. This can make the sentence sound unusual, or ‘not make sense’.</li>   <li>▪ The child shows reluctance or difficulty when joining in with group discussions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Repeat the child’s sentence back correctly so the child can hear the correct version. Do not ask the child to repeat the sentence however.</li> <li>▪ Emphasise target grammatical words as appropriate, for example say '<i>There’s Lucy, she is sitting</i>'.</li>   <li>▪ If you know what the word is give choices or prompts: e.g. say '<i>Is it an apple or an orange?</i>'.</li> <li>▪ Encourage the child to describe the word: for example, ask '<i>What does it look like/feel like?</i>'; '<i>What it is used for?</i>' and so on.</li>   <li>▪ To encourage participation in a group, ask questions which give alternative answers, such as '<i>Was Tom happy or sad?</i>'.</li> </ul>
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## **DETAILED STRATEGIES FOR CHILDREN WITH SERIOUS DIFFICULTIES UNDERSTANDING SPOKEN LANGUAGE IN THE CLASSROOM**

These more detailed strategies are for use with children who have considerable difficulty in listening. The research SLT will highlight strategies specifically relevant to the particular child in the classroom.

- It might help to speak fairly slowly to this particular child, but keep it natural.
- Try to ensure you have the child's attention before you give information. To do this call the child's name, and check s/he is looking and listening.
- Keep sentences short and simple. Split up information into small chunks.
- Give directions before an activity, not during it.
- Emphasise the key words when giving information.
- Use visual aids and gesture to support spoken language.
- Leave a pause if the child does not respond. They may need extra time to process what you have said. Try repeating what you've said once rather than re-phrasing. Re-phrasing can increase the language load for the child.
- Check for understanding by asking the child to explain what they were asked to do.
- Explain to the child that it is 'OK' if they have not understood and that it is a good idea to ask for help.
- Encourage the child to indicate when they have not understood and praise them for doing this. Suggesting they say '*Can you say that again please?*' or '*Sorry, I didn't understand that.*' may be useful.

## **DETAILED STRATEGIES FOR CHILDREN WITH SERIOUS DIFFICULTIES USING SPOKEN LANGUAGE IN THE CLASSROOM**

These more detailed strategies are for use with children who have considerable difficulty in talking. The research SLT will highlight strategies specifically relevant to the particular child in the classroom.

- Encourage and accept all the child's attempts at verbal communication, even if errors are made in their utterances.
- Provide a good model for the child: repeat what they have said back to them with the correct word order and grammar. Do not correct the child or ask them to repeat what you have said.
- In group discussion give the child time to formulate their answer. If they are having difficulty, prompt them as necessary.
- Once the child is starting to use a grammatical marker introduced in therapy in their speech, use questions containing alternatives to correct any errors e.g. ask '*Is it runned or ran?*'.
- Reinforce language targets in practical everyday activities. For example, if the child is learning to use pronouns, say '*There's Gail, she is running.*' or for prepositions say '*Where are you standing? Behind Tom?*'
- To help the child sequence ideas, encourage them to describe everyday sequences. For example, describe what you do when you brush your teeth, saying '*First you go into the bathroom, then you get your toothbrush*' and so on.
- Provide many opportunities for language use. Encourage the child to retell stories or describe activities that have just been completed as they will be fresh in memory. For example, encourage the child to list three things that happened in a story.

## **DETAILED STRATEGIES TO HELP WORD - FINDING**

These more detailed strategies are for use with children who have considerable difficulty in finding words. The research SLT will highlight strategies specifically relevant to the particular child in the classroom.

Children who experience difficulties in 'finding' words at the right moment may produce several different kinds of errors:

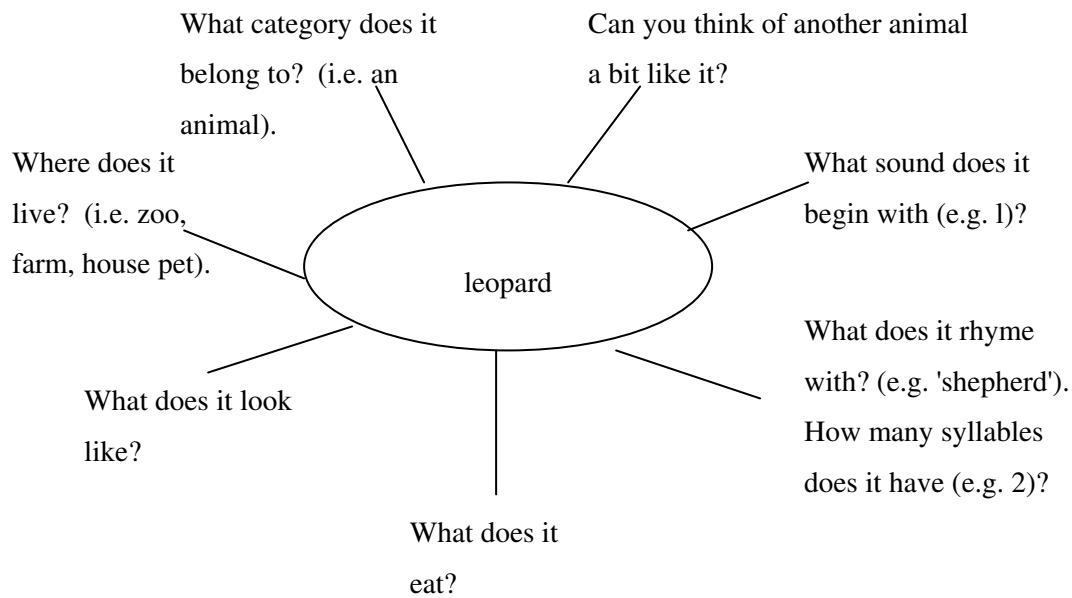
- Errors of meaning e.g. call a 'tiger' a 'lion'.
- Errors of sound e.g. call a 'caterpillar' a 'caterpillow'.
- Circumlocution e.g. describe the word: '*It's that thing you eat, it's red.*'.
- Use of 'fillers' e.g. um, er, hesitation.
- Use of 'empty' words e.g. 'that thing', 'whatsit'.
- Use of non-words e.g. say 'gluble' for 'dog'.

Children may also abandon attempts to explain something and may change the topic.

Such children can benefit from help with learning vocabulary AND from the use of cues and strategies when they get stuck or use an incorrect word.

## **STRATEGIES TO HELP THE CHILD LEARN NEW VOCABULARY**

- When learning new vocabulary (e.g. in topic work) try to make as many associations with the new word as possible. Teach related words, and group new words into categories.
- For example: LEOPARD



## **STRATEGIES TO HELP THE CHILD RECALL THE APPROPRIATE WORD**

If you know what the word is, provide alternatives to help the child find it: for example, ask '*Is it a giraffe or a leopard?*' Or cue the child by giving them the beginning sound of the word: for example, say '*It's a lll...*' for 'leopard'.

If you do not know the word the child wants to say, ask the child questions about the word, for example:

- '*What big group does it belong to?*' (e.g. transport, animal.)
- '*What does it look like, feel like, smell like...?*'
- '*What do you do with it/what does it do?*'
- '*Where do you find it?*'
- '*What does it go with?*' (e.g. 'bucket' with 'spade'.)
- '*What sound does it start with?*'.

Once the word has been found by the child it may be useful to reinforce the word by asking the following:

- '*How many syllables does it have?*
- '*What does it rhyme with?*
- '*Can you think of three other things in the same group?*

## **5 COMPREHENSION MONITORING**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Many children will have difficulty in ‘keeping on track’ when listening in classrooms. There can be many reasons for this, but we can help the children to recognise when they have not understood completely and to ‘repair’ the lack of understanding. This section is based on the work of Dollaghan and Kaston (1986) as adapted by Johnson (2000).

### **RATIONALE FOR COMPREHENSION MONITORING**

There are times when children do not fully understand what they have been told. This can occur for a number of reasons, either relating to the speaker or the child listener.

Speaker problems can include the following:

- The message may be too long or too complex.
- The speaker may use vocabulary unknown to the child.
- The speaker may speak unclearly (too quietly, too loudly, and so on).
- Background noise may have been present, causing a distraction.
- The speaker may not give the child enough information to understand what they have said.

Child listener problems can include the following:

- The child may not look at the speaker.
- The child may not listen to the speaker.
- The child may not be able to process the length or complexity of the adult talk. This is hard to alter, and it may be easier to reduce the complexity of the talk.

Since the children will not understand everything they hear, it is important that they are able to recognise when they do not understand, and learn how to do something about it. Most children learn to do this naturally, but language impaired children can find it difficult. Much of what they hear may not make sense to them and they may feel it is their fault that they do not understand. They will not want to appear foolish in front of their peers and so do not say anything. This does not let the speaker know they have to repeat or give more information to help the situation.

There are two aims in working on comprehension monitoring:

- for the child to learn to recognise when they have not understood.
- for children to learn to act upon this recognition by indicating to the speaker that they have not understood, and seek clarification.

## **OVERVIEW OF COMPREHENSION MONITORING THERAPY**

Specific plans and activities are provided to help shape comprehension monitoring, divided into group and individual work. There are also differences according to the age of the children. Younger children (aged below eight years) receive a slightly different approach to older children.

Plans are therefore presented for:

Younger children -	individual work
Younger children	group work
Older children -	individual work
Older children -	group work

Each of these is presented as ‘sessions’ with a particular script. A ‘session’ in the research project lasted around 30 - 40 minutes. However, some children will need to go over points from previous sessions rather than moving on to the next, and flexibility is required.

# **COMPREHENSION MONITORING THERAPY: YOUNGER CHILDREN – BELOW EIGHT YEARS, INDIVIDUAL**

## **SESSION ONE**

### **AIMS**

The aims of the first session are to:

- 1 introduce yourself to the child
- 2 play some general ‘warm up’ games to establish rapport with the child
- 3 explain to the child why he or she is being seen by you and what will happen
- 4 explain to the child about ‘good listening’ skills
- 5 summarise.

### **MATERIALS**

Sticky labels, coloured pens, a small teddy bear, Boardmaker™ pictures ('good sitting'; 'good looking'; 'not looking'; 'good listening'; 'talking'; 'keep quiet'; 'fidgeting'), Blu-tack™.

### **METHOD**

#### ***1 Get to know each other***

Give the child a sticky label and coloured pens and get them to design a name badge, drawing a picture of his or her favourite hobby or class. You are to design a badge as well.

Following this, ask the child a number of closed questions about what is on their badge, such as '*What is your name?*'; '*What have you drawn on your badge?*', then follow up with a question about their drawing, for example '*When do you go swimming?*'. You will also explain about your own badge, and tell the child your name and how to address you.

#### ***2 Establish rapport***

Play an ‘ice breaker’ game (‘Hide the Teddy’) in order to build rapport and explain to the child that to play this game they need to be good at looking.

To play ‘Hide the teddy’, the child closes their eyes and you hide the teddy around the room, under tables, in bags and so on. The child must find the teddy. Then use role reversal and get the child to hide the teddy. You can model being good or bad at looking, to contrast successful looking with unsuccessful.

#### ***3 Discuss why we are here***

Talk about why you both are here, asking the child '*Do you know why we are here?*' and explaining '*We are here because .....*'

Explain by using this ‘script’.

*‘I am going to come to see you three times a week. Sometimes I might see you in your classroom and sometimes in another room. We are going to think about listening and talking and play lots of games to help us to become even better at doing these things. First of all we are going to think about listening and the things we need to do to be a good listener’.*

#### **4     Discuss becoming a good listener**

Ask ‘*Why do you think we need to be a good listener?*’ Try to elicit the following points from the child.

- So that we can understand people.
- Because it is not nice for other people if you don’t listen to what they say.
- The child does not like to be ignored when he or she is talking.

Then ask, ‘*What do you think we need to do to be a good listener?*’ Try to elicit the following points from the child.

- We need to do good sitting.
- We need to do good looking.
- We need to stop talking.
- We need to do good listening.

Explain ‘good’ and ‘bad’ behaviour. Illustrate these points with relevant Boardmaker™ pictures. Move through each one and model them. Discuss each, asking, for example, ‘*What do you think this one is?*’; ‘*Do you think it will help us to be good at listening?*’ Also model ‘bad’ sitting, looking and listening and discuss how each has a negative effect on listening. Be specific.

Chart ‘good’ and ‘bad’ behaviour. Once all the points on the list above have been discussed, put ‘good’ Boardmaker™ pictures on the wall as a chart to remind the child of the ‘rules’.

Practise ‘good’ and ‘bad’ behaviour. Practice ‘good’ and ‘bad’ sitting, looking, talking and listening. Use a guessing game about ‘good’ and ‘bad’ sitting, looking, talking and listening where the child picks a Boardmaker™ picture that is not shown to you. He or she then acts out what is seen on the card. You guess what the child is demonstrating. Role reversal can be used with the adult acting and the child guessing what they are doing and if it is ‘good’ or ‘bad’.

Use the pictures of behaviours that are ‘good’ and ‘bad’ for listening, throw a beanbag onto a face-down picture, turn it over and model or discuss whether it shows ‘good’ or ‘bad’ listening behaviours. Explain why each behaviour helps you listen or makes it hard to listen.

#### **5     Summarise**

Wind up the session, saying: ‘*That’s all for today, but remember the things we’ve talked about to help us be good listeners. Try to practise when you’re in the classroom or the playground, or anywhere*’.

Remind the child when and where you will see them again.

## SESSION TWO

### AIMS

The aims of this session are to:

- 1 recap on the first session
- 2 introduce the idea of communication breakdown due to speaker problems, and encourage identification of times when communication breaks down
- 3 summarise.

### MATERIALS

Red pen, long red pencil, short red pencil, red beanbag, blue beanbag, Boardmaker™ pictures as in Session One, Blu-tack™, wall chart from Session One, taped music or other noise-maker.

### METHOD

#### ***1 Recap on Session One***

Recap on good listening skills.

- Use Boardmaker™ pictures from the first session
- Take turns to turn over a picture and model what is on the picture ('sitting still'; 'fidgeting'; 'not looking', 'looking') with the other guessing if it is 'good' or 'bad'.
- Summarise the rules using the wall chart from Session One.

#### ***2 Discuss speaker problems.***

Explain talking too fast or too quietly. Introduce the idea of communication breakdown, saying:

*'You might be doing all the things we have talked about to help you to listen, but sometimes the person who is talking to you – it might be your friend or the teacher or another grown up – might do something that makes it hard to understand what has been said. Let's think about some of the things that can go wrong and make it hard to understand. For example, I might talk really really fast so you don't know what I'm saying. (Model this). Or, I might talk so quietly that you can't hear me, or there might be lots of noise in the room so you can't hear me.'* (Demonstrate this, talking against the noise maker).

Practise talking too fast or too quietly. Play a 'Mother may I?' game to practise this. Here the adult makes requests relating to the child or objects to be moved, but speaks too fast, too quietly, or coughs during an instruction. The child is to identify what the adult did wrongly.

Explain not giving enough information. Introduce the need to give sufficient information, saying: *'I am going to give you instructions, but some of them won't make any sense. Listen carefully and see if you can do what I ask you to.'* The child is to say whether or not they can do what is asked. Encourage the child to explain rather than guessing and to say what the adult did wrongly.

Practise giving ‘good’ and ‘bad’ information. Use the session object materials to practise. Lay them out on the table. Give ‘good’ and ‘bad’ instructions, for example: ‘*Give me the red one*'; ‘*Give me the pencil*'; ‘*Give me the red beanbag*.’ Discuss why we can or can not carry out the instructions.

### **3      *Summarise***

At the end of the session, say ‘*This is the end of the session for today. Keep practising good listening. Remember to think about whether you have enough information to do something. Don't just guess because you might be listening very well but not get enough information*

Remind the child of where and when you will see him or her again.

## **SESSION THREE**

### **AIMS**

The aims of this session are to:

1. recap on the previous two sessions
2. extend the child's knowledge of communication breakdown due to speaker problems and practise identifying reasons for communication breakdown
3. summarise.

### **MATERIALS**

Red pen, long red pencil, short red pencil, red beanbag, blue beanbag, Boardmaker™ pictures as in Session One, Blu-tack™ wall chart from Session One, two or more boxes.

### **METHOD**

#### ***1 Recap on Session Two***

Ask: '*Can you remember what we talked about last time?*'. Remind the child: '*Last time we talked about how it can be hard to understand what people say, even if we are listening well and practising all the things you need to be a good listener.*' Ask: '*Can you remember why that is?*'. Aim to elicit information from the child, for example that the speaker might talk too fast/slowly/quietly, and that the speaker might not give enough information.

#### ***2 Consider more reasons for not understanding people***

Explain 'hard' words and 'saying too much'. Introduce the idea of complex talk to the child, saying:; '*There is another reason we might not understand what is said. The person talking might use a word we do not know, or might use a really long sentence. For example, if I asked you to draw me a picture of a 'herbivore', would you be able to do it? Or what if I asked you to tell me what an 'ophthalmologist' does? Those might be words that not everyone knows, so not everyone would be able to do what I asked. For example, I might say: 'Can you tell the teacher in room six that you won't be in tomorrow after two o'clock because your mum says you have to go to your gran's house after coming to see me?' That was a really long message. Long messages can be hard to understand because there is so much to remember'.*

Practise spotting 'hard' words and 'saying too much'. Play an 'Instructions' game to practise spotting messages that are too long, and messages with hard words in them. Here the adult gives instructions with a mix of 'easy' and 'hard' sentences. 'Hard' sentences are to be over-long or use unfamiliar vocabulary. The child is to indicate that the message was too long or had 'hard words', and say whether or not they could carry out the instruction. It is not necessary for the child to seek repetition or clarification at this stage, just to indicate a communication breakdown.

An example of a 'too long' instruction is '*Pass me the short red pencil that is beside the long, blunt yellow pencil and put it inside the box that has the funny face on the front of it, behind the blue box*'.

Play any board game to practise identifying speaker problems. Here the adult reminds the child of the point of the game, saying: '*We are going to practise all the things we've found out about messages. Some are too fast, too quiet, too long or have too hard words*'. Then give the child an instruction to complete. If the child completes the instruction correctly they get to move on one space. If the child can identify why they cannot complete the instruction, for example, because they couldn't hear, or didn't understand a word, the child also gets to move on a space. You should use some instructions that are too fast, too quiet, have background noise, are too complex, have hard vocabulary or are very long or inexplicit. The child should be asked: '*Can you do it? Why not?*'

### **3      *Summarise***

Summarise what you have done, and remind the child of when and where you will see them again.

## **SESSION FOUR**

### **AIMS**

The aims of this session are to:

1. recap on previous sessions on listening and communication breakdown and why it can occur
2. revise the idea that it is not the child's fault if he or she is not understanding
3. introduce ideas of what the child is to do if he or she is not understanding
4. summarise and recap on the whole of comprehension monitoring therapy.

### **MATERIALS**

Large, detailed picture for colouring, coloured pens, wall chart from Session One.

### **METHOD**

#### **1      *Recap on Session Three***

Ask if the child can remember why we might not understand. Remind the child people may talk too fast or too slowly, too quietly, without giving enough information or with too much information, or using too hard words.

#### **2      *Revise the lack of 'fault'***

Discuss the fact that it is no-one's fault if the child does not understand. Discuss also that we need to tell people when we have not understood.

#### **3      *Explain what to do when we do not understand***

Tell a story about a child who does not understand in class, saying '*I have a story that might help us to know what to do.*' Tell the child the story, and discuss what would help them to behave like Ben.

#### ***'What to do if you don't understand' story***

*Ben is in primary \_\_\_\_ (Change to reflect the age of the child.) His teacher talks to the class a lot to tell them what to do. Sometimes Ben doesn't understand what his teacher says. Sometimes she uses words that Ben doesn't understand, and sometimes she tells the class so many things that Ben can't remember what he has to do. Ben gets worried when he doesn't understand. He sits very quietly and hopes the teacher will tell him again.*

*But it is OK not to understand sometimes! Even grown-ups like Ben's teacher forget things or don't understand what people say sometimes. Instead of being worried, Ben can do something to help himself. If the teacher says something he doesn't understand, Ben can say 'Please could you say that again?' or he can say 'Sorry I didn't understand that'. Ben can also practise being a good listener when his teacher is talking.*

*Ben is much happier now that he asks for help when he doesn't understand.*

### ***Practise using a colouring picture***

Give the child a detailed colouring-in picture. Give the child a mix of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ instructions. The ‘bad’ instructions could be too vague in terms of what colour to use and which bit to colour. They could use complex vocabulary, for example ‘fuchsia’ instead of ‘pink’, or could be too long. They could also be said too quickly or too quietly. Examples are ‘*Colour that bit pink*'; ‘*Use the light blue pen, no, the dark blue pen to colour in the small rectangular area below the ....*’ The child repeats back to the adult what they have to do, to demonstrate they have been able to follow the instruction correctly, or indicates that they have identified a ‘poor’ instruction and sought clarification.

### ***Practise using stickers***

Tell the child to go and get a sticker but use incorrect volume and/or rate. Encourage the child to ask for repetition or clarification. After a clarification attempt, the child should be given a sticker. The adult can have stickers hidden around the room so the child can practise with more than one kind of communication breakdown.

### ***4 Summarise therapy***

Remind the child of what they have learned throughout the four sessions, saying: ‘*OK, we've done lots of good thinking about how to be good at listening and telling people if we don't understand them. We can ask people to tell us again. We are going to start thinking about some different things the next time I come to see you. We'll start to think about how to be better at talking* (or name the appropriate target for the child). *But, we mustn't forget about our rules for good listening. Remember, if you haven't understood something, tell me. Or tell your teacher, or whoever you are talking to. Well done – good listening*’.

## **TRANSFER TO HOME AND SCHOOL**

Monitoring of comprehension has to be transferred to the classroom and other ‘real life’ situations. There are several ways to help this.

- It is important for the child to know that it is ‘OK’ to ask for help if he or she cannot remember an instruction, and get it broken down into smaller chunks. Suggest the child uses phrases like ‘*Can you say that again, please?*’ and ‘*Can you say that slowly, please?*’

Other useful phrases for the child to use are:

‘*What was that first bit again, please?*’  
‘*Can you say that again, a bit at a time, please?*’  
‘*Sorry, I can’t remember all that.*’  
‘*Please say that slowly while I write it down.*’  
‘*Could you write that down for me please?*’

- Adults around the child need to know and agree that the child is going to ask for clarification, so that they can respond appropriately, and welcome the child’s request. There is information about this in the ‘communication friendly’ classroom handout for teachers, and explanations are needed for parents.
- Encourage the child to recap on an instruction before they carry it out. Adults can help the child rehearse by asking the child ‘*Now what have you got to do?*’ and have the child repeat the instruction.
- Encourage the child to write a note of key words in an instruction, if he or she can write, or to repeat them silently to help him or her remember.
- Remember to use guidance on ‘Communication Friendly’ environments to ensure the child hears language at an appropriate level.

## **COMPREHENSION MONITORING THERAPY: OLDER CHILDREN – EIGHT YEARS AND ABOVE, INDIVIDUAL**

Older children may be able to understand the ideas behind comprehension monitoring more quickly than younger children, and require less practice, and will need more ‘grown-up’ materials. Ideas are therefore given here for two sessions. However, children may need much longer than this to grasp the principles and transfer the learning to new contexts.

### **SESSION ONE**

#### **AIMS**

The aims of the first session are to:

1. introduce yourself to the child and explain to the child why he or she is being seen by you and what will happen
2. play some general ‘warm up’ games to establish rapport with the child
3. introduce games to develop awareness of good listening skills
4. introduce the idea of communication breakdown due to speaker problems and encourage identification of different causes of communication breakdown
5. summarise.

#### **MATERIALS**

Boardmaker™ pictures ('good sitting'; 'good looking'; 'not looking'; 'good listening'; 'talking'; 'keep quiet'; 'fidgeting'), red pen, long red pencil, short red pencil, red beanbag, blue beanbag, two male toys, two female toys, Blu-tack™, taped music or other noise-maker.

#### **METHOD**

##### ***1 Introduce and discuss why we are here***

Ask child why they think you both are here, and if they have had speech and language therapy before. Explain using this ‘script’:

*‘You are going to be coming to therapy three times a week. We are going to think about listening and talking and play lots of games to help to become even better at doing these things. First of all we are going to think about listening’.*

##### ***2 Establish rapport.***

Play an ‘ice breaker’ game (‘Hide the Pen’) and explain to child that to play this game they need to be good at looking. To play ‘Hide the Pen’ the child closes their eyes and the adult hides a pen somewhere in the room: under a table, in a bag and so on. The child must then find the pen. Role reversal can be used with the child hiding the pen for the adult to find.

### **3      Discuss becoming a good listener**

Discuss what to do to be a good listener. Brainstorm, getting the child's ideas followed by discussion.

Try to elicit the following points from the child, ideally using the child's suggestions.

- We need to do good sitting.
- We need to do good looking.
- We need to stop talking.
- We need to be sitting still.
- We need to do good listening.

As each idea is discussed back it up by showing the appropriate Boardmaker™ prompt card and use adult modelling of 'good' and 'bad' listening using examples of all the rules. Play a guessing game where the child and adult take turns to choose a card with either a 'good' or 'bad' listening behaviour on it, to model for the other person who has to guess what it is. Once all the points on the list above have been discussed, put 'good' Boardmaker™ pictures on the wall as a chart to remind the child of the 'rules'.

### **4      Introduce the idea of communication breakdown**

Introduce the idea of communication breakdown, saying:

*'You might be doing all the things we have talked about to help you to listen but sometimes the person who is talking to you – it might be your friend or the teacher or another grown up – might do something that makes it hard to understand what they have said. So it might not be your fault when you don't understand. Let's think about some of the things that can go wrong that make it hard to understand.'*

Explain about rate, volume and noise. List some speaker factors that might affect comprehension.

- Rate - say: '*I might talk really really fast so you don't know what I'm saying.*' Model speaking too quickly.
- Volume - say: '*I might talk so quietly that you can't hear me, or there might be lots of noise in the room so you can't hear me.*' Model speaking too quietly.
- Background noise is also a factor that may be discussed at this stage. This affects what the listener hears but it is not the fault of either the speaker or the listener.

Practise varying rate, volume and noise. Play a 'Mother may I .....?' game to practise speaker problems. The adult gives instructions to the child but they are given too fast, too quietly, or have noise such as coughing or taped music during the instruction. Give instructions about moving objects and toys as well as the child moving himself or herself. Some 'good' instructions should be included, to contrast with the problem ones. After each instruction is given, discuss whether the instruction could be carried out and what the speaker did wrongly, as appropriate. Also discuss what the speaker could change to allow the child to understand the instruction.

Explain speaker problems of not giving enough information. Say: '*There can be another problem. You might not be told enough information. Then what you are asked to do might not make sense. I am going to give you more instructions. Some of them won't make any sense. Listen carefully and see if you can do what I ask you to.*'

The child is to say whether or not they can carry out their instructions. Encourage them to explain their reasons rather than simply guessing. Use the session object materials and give instructions such as: 'Give me the red one.'; 'Give me the pencil.'; 'Give me the beanbag.'; 'Give that to me.'; 'Give the long red

*pencil to him.;* ‘*Give her the short pencil.*’, using relevant items but not giving enough information. Discuss with the child ‘*Can we do these instructions?*’

### **5 Summarise**

At the end of the session explain to the child that they have done a lot of work on things that help us to be good at listening. They should try to remember to do some of these things when they are listening in the classroom or to their mum or dad or their friends. Explain that they will think some more about things we need to do to help listening and talking in the next session.

## SESSION TWO

### AIMS

The aims of this session are to:

- 1 recap on the previous session, about good listening skills and communication breakdown
- 2 extend the child's awareness of communication breakdown and what can happen
- 3 introduce ways to highlight communication breakdown and seek clarification
- 4 summarise.

### MATERIALS

Large, detailed picture for colouring, coloured pens, stickers, wall chart from Session One.

### METHOD

#### **1      Recap on Session One**

Ask the child: '*Can you remember what we talked about in the last session? We talked about how it can be hard to understand what people say, even if you are listening well and practising all the things you need to do to be a good listener. They might talk too fast, too slowly or too quietly.*' Discuss these points, using Boardmaker™ pictures as prompts throughout to back this up.

#### **2      Discuss further reasons for not understanding people**

Explain that we might not understand what is said if the person talking uses a word we do not know, or uses a really long sentence. Demonstrate this, saying: '*If I asked you to draw me a picture of a 'herbivore', would you be able to do it? Or what if I asked you to tell me what an 'ophthalmologist' does? Those might be words that you might not know, so you might not be able to do what I asked. For example I might say: 'Can you tell the teacher in room six that you won't be in tomorrow after two o'clock because your mum says you have to go to your gran's house after you have seen me?' That was a really long message that was hard to remember. Long messages can be hard to understand because there is so much to remember.*'

Demonstrate 'too hard' words and 'too long' sentences. Explain that you are going to play some games to practise spotting messages that are too long, and messages with hard words in them. Play 'Simon Says' using a mix of 'easy' and 'hard' sentences. Hard sentences are to be over-long or have complex vocabulary. The child is to indicate that the message was too long or too hard. It is not necessary at this stage for them to seek repetition or clarification, just to indicate communication breakdown.

Examples of 'easy' and 'hard' sentences would be: '*Touch your nose*' versus '*Touch your scapula.*'; '*Touch your ears.*' versus '*Touch your cranium.*'; '*Touch your tongue.*' versus '*Touch your femur.*'; '*Touch your right knee.*' versus '*Touch your tibia.*'; '*Clap your hands.*' versus '*Clap your hands and before you clap your hands hop three times on your left foot and turn round twice.*'

Practise noticing speaker problems. Play another game to practise each speaker problem: too fast, too quiet, too long, or with too hard words. Play a board game where the adult gives child an instruction to complete. If the child completes the instruction correctly they get to move on one space. If the child can identify why they can not complete the instruction, for example because they could not hear it or did not

understand a particular word, they also get to move on a space. Instructions can be ‘too fast’; ‘too quiet’; against ‘too much noise’; ‘too complex’; using ‘too hard’ vocabulary; using ‘very long’ instructions, or inexplicit.

### **3     *Introduce clarification strategies***

Explain asking for repetitions and clarifications. Say: ‘*Now that we know what can go wrong and why we sometimes don’t understand, we need to think how we can fix it. I wonder what we could say when we don’t understand?*’ Brainstorm the problem together, allowing the child to think up their own examples of what to say. Write their suggestions on a flip chart. Examples of appropriate responses could be ‘Sorry?’; ‘I’m sorry can you say that again?’; ‘What does ..... mean?’; ‘Can you say that again slowly please?’ Stress to the child that it is better to ask for clarification and help if they don’t understand, rather than guessing, because when you guess you can get it wrong.

Practise asking for repetitions and clarifications. Play a game to practise clarification where the child is given a large detailed picture to colour. The adult explains that a mix of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ instructions about colouring will be given by the adult and that if the child is not sure what is meant they can think of something to ask to clarify the instruction. ‘Bad’ instructions could be too vague in terms of what colour to use and which part to colour. They could use complex vocabulary, for example ‘fuchsia’ instead of ‘pink’, or could be too long. They could also be said ‘too quickly’ or ‘too quietly’ or be inexplicit. Examples could be: ‘Colour that bit pink.’; ‘Use the light blue pen, no, the dark blue pen to colour in the small rectangular area below the...’ The child repeats back to the adult what they have to do, to demonstrate they have been able to follow the instruction correctly, or indicates that they have identified a poor instruction and asks for clarification.

### **4     *Summarise***

Summarise what has been learned, and remind the child to use clarification strategies at home and in school.

## **TRANSFER TO HOME AND SCHOOL**

Monitoring of comprehension has to be transferred to the classroom and other ‘real life’ situations. There are several ways to help this.

It is important for the child to know that it is ‘OK’ to ask for help if he or she cannot remember an instruction, and get it broken down into smaller chunks. Suggest the child uses phrases like ‘*Can you say that again, please?*’ and ‘*Can you say that slowly, please?*’. Other useful phrases for the child to use are: ‘*What was that first bit again, please?*; ‘*Can you say that again, a bit at a time, please?*; ‘*Sorry, I can’t remember all that.*;’ ‘*Please say that slowly while I write it down.*; ‘*Could you write that down for me please?*’

Adults around the child need to know and agree that the child is going to ask for clarification, so that they can respond appropriately, and welcome the child’s request. There is information about this in the ‘communication friendly’ classroom handout for teachers, and explanations are needed for parents.

Encourage the child to recap on an instruction before they carry it out. Adults can help the child rehearse by asking the child ‘*Now what have you got to do?*’ and have the child repeat the instruction.

Encourage the child to write a note of key words in an instruction, if he or she can write, or to repeat them silently to help him or her remember.

Remember to use guidance on ‘Communication Friendly’ environments to ensure the child hears language at an appropriate level.

# **COMPREHENSION MONITORING THERAPY: YOUNGER CHILDREN – BELOW EIGHT YEARS, GROUP**

## **SESSION ONE**

### **AIMS**

The aims of the first session are to:

1. introduce the group to each other and to you
2. play ‘warm-up’ games to establish rapport and group interaction
3. explain to the children why they are coming to the group
4. explain to the children about ‘good listening’ skills
5. summarise.

### **MATERIALS**

Sticky labels, coloured pens, a small teddy bear, Boardmaker™ pictures ('good sitting'; 'good looking'; 'not looking'; 'good listening'; 'talking'; 'keep quiet'; 'fidgeting'), Blu-tack™.

### **METHOD**

#### ***1 Get to know each other***

Give each child a sticky label and coloured pens and get them to design a name badge, drawing a picture of their favourite hobby or class. You are to design a badge as well. Following this, ask each child a number of closed questions about what is on their badge, such as '*What is your name?*'; '*What have you drawn on your badge?*', then follow up with a question about their drawing, for example '*When do you go swimming?*'. You will also explain about your own badge, and tell the children your name and how to address you.

#### ***2 Establish rapport***

Play an ‘ice breaker’ game (‘Hide the Teddy’) in order to build rapport and explain to the children that to play this game they need to be good at looking. To play ‘Hide the teddy’, each child closes their eyes and you hide the teddy around the room, under tables, in bags and so on. One child must find the teddy. Then use role reversal and get that child to hide the teddy. You can model being ‘good’ or ‘bad’ at looking, to contrast successful looking with unsuccessful.

Play ‘Pass the nod or blink’. The adult starts off, and all group members watch the adult carefully. The adult then passes on a double blink or nod to one of the children, who then leads the group and has the power to blink. The whole group must then watch that child until he or she has passes on the nod or blink to someone else.

#### ***3 Discuss why we are here***

Talk about why you are here, asking the children ‘*Do you know why we are here?*’ and explaining ‘*We are here because .....*’. Explain by using this ‘script’: ‘*You are going to be coming to this group three times*

*a week and you will all be coming together. We are going to think about listening and talking and play lots of games to help us to become even better at doing these things. First of all we are going to think about listening and the things we need to do to be a good listener.'*

#### **4     *Discuss becoming a good listener***

Ask ‘*Why do you think we need to be a good listener?*’ Try to elicit the following points from the children.

- So that we can understand people.
- Because it is not nice for other people if you don’t listen to what they say.
- Children do not like to be ignored when they are talking.

Then ask, ‘*What do you think we need to do to be a good listener?*’ Try to elicit the following points from the children.

- We need to do good sitting.
- We need to do good looking.
- We need to stop talking
- We need to do good listening.

Explain about ‘good’ and ‘bad’ behaviours. Illustrate with relevant Boardmaker™ pictures. Move through each and model them. Discuss each, asking, for example, ‘*What do you think this one is?*’; ‘*Do you think it will help us to be good at listening?*’. Also model ‘bad’ sitting, looking and listening and discuss how each has a negative effect on listening. Be specific.

Chart ‘good’ and ‘bad’ behaviours. Once all the points on the list above have been discussed, put ‘good’ Boardmaker™ pictures on the wall as a chart to remind the child of the ‘rules’.

Practise ‘good’ and ‘bad’ behaviours. Practise ‘good’ and ‘bad’ sitting, looking, talking and listening. Use a guessing game about ‘good’ and ‘bad’ sitting, looking, talking and listening. Here one child picks a Boardmaker™ picture that is not shown to the group. He or she then acts out what is seen on the card. The rest of the group guess what the child is demonstrating. They must put up their hands and not shout out.

Identify examples of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ behaviours. Using the pictures of behaviours that are ‘good’ and ‘bad’ for listening, throw a beanbag onto a face-down picture, turn it over and discuss why each one helps you listen or makes it hard to listen.

#### **5     *Summarise***

Wind up the session, saying: ‘*That’s all for today, but remember the things we’ve talked about to help us be good listeners. Try to practise when you’re in the classroom or the playground, or anywhere.*’

Remind the children when and where you will see them again.

## **SESSION TWO**

### **AIMS**

The aims of this session are to:

1. recap on the first session
2. introduce the idea of communication breakdown due to speaker problems
3. encourage identification of times when communication breaks down
4. summarise.

### **MATERIALS**

Red pen, long red pencil, short red pencil, red beanbag, blue beanbag, Boardmaker™ pictures as in Session One, Blu-tack™, wall chart from Session One, taped music or other noisemaker.

### **METHOD**

#### ***1 Recap on Session One***

Play a ‘Name game’. Throw a bean bag and say the name of the person you are throwing it to, to help children learn each others’ names.

Recap on good listening skills.

- Use Boardmaker™ pictures from the first session.
- Take turns to turn over a picture and model what is on the picture (‘sitting still’; ‘fidgeting’; ‘not looking’, ‘looking’) with the others guessing if it is ‘good’ or ‘bad’.
- Summarise group rules using the wall poster from Session One.

#### ***2 Consider speaker problems***

Explain talking too fast or too quietly. Introduce the idea of communication breakdown, saying:

*‘You might be doing all the things we have talked about to help you to listen. But the person talking to you – like your friend or the teacher or another grown up – might do something that makes it hard to understand them. Let’s think about some of the things that can go wrong and make it hard to understand. For example, I might talk really really fast so you don’t know what I’m saying. (Model this). Or, I might talk so quietly that you can’t hear me. (Model this). Or there might be lots of noise in the room so you can’t hear me.’* (Model this, talking against the noise maker).

Practise talking too fast or too quietly. Play ‘Grandmother’s Footsteps’ where the adult makes requests relating to a child or objects to be moved, but speaks too fast, too quietly, or coughs during an instruction. The children are to identify what the adult did wrongly.

Explain not giving enough information. Introduce the need to give sufficient information, saying: *‘I am going to give you instructions. Some of them won’t make any sense. Listen carefully and see if you can do what I ask you to’.* The children are to say whether or not they can do what is asked. Encourage the children to explain rather than guessing and to say what the adult did wrongly.

Practise identifying ‘good’ information. Put out the session object materials on the table. Give ‘good’ and ‘bad’ instructions, for example: ‘*Give me the red one.*’; ‘*Give me the pencil.*’; ‘*Give me the red beanbag.*’ Discuss why the children can or can not carry out your instructions.

### **3      Summarise**

At the end of the session, say ‘*This is the end of the group for today. Keep practising good listening. Remember to think about whether you have enough information to do something. Don’t just guess because you might be listening very well but not get enough information.*’ Remind the children of where and when you will see them again.

## **SESSION THREE**

### **AIMS**

The aims of this session are to:

1. recap on the previous two sessions
2. extend the children's knowledge of communication breakdown due to speaker problems
3. practise identifying reasons for communication breakdown
4. summarise.

### **MATERIALS**

Red pen, long red pencil, short red pencil, red beanbag, blue beanbag, Boardmaker™ pictures as in Session One. Blu-tack™, wall chart from Session One, two or more boxes.

### **METHOD**

#### ***1 Recap on Session Two***

Ask: '*Can you remember what we talked about last time?*' Remind the children: '*Last time we talked about how it can be hard to understand what people say, even if we are listening well and practising all the things you need to be a good listener.*' Ask: '*Can you remember why that is?*' Aim to elicit information from the children, for example that the speaker might talk too 'fast', 'slowly' or 'quietly', and that the speaker might not give enough information.

#### ***2 Consider more reasons for not understanding people***

Explain 'too hard' words and 'too long' sentences. Say: '*There is another reason we might not understand what is said. The person talking might use a word we do not know, or might use a really long sentence. For example, if I asked you to draw me a picture of a 'herbivore', would you be able to do it? Or what if I asked you to tell me what an 'ophthalmologist' does? Those might be words that not everyone knows, so not everyone would be able to do what I asked. For example, I might say: 'Can you tell the teacher in room six that you won't be in tomorrow after two o'clock because your mum says you have to go to your gran's house after the language therapy group.' That was a really long message. Long messages can be hard to understand because there is so much to remember'.*

Practise spotting 'too hard' words and 'too long' sentences. Play 'Mother may I ....?' to practise spotting messages that are too long, and messages with hard words in them. Here the adult uses a mix of 'easy' and 'hard' sentences. 'Hard' sentences are to be over-long or have complex vocabulary. The children are to indicate that the message was too long or had 'hard words', and say whether or not they could carry out the instruction. It is not necessary for the child to seek repetition or clarification at this stage, just to indicate communication breakdown. An example of the 'too long' instruction is '*Pass me the short red pencil that is beside the long, blunt yellow pencil and put it inside the box that has the funny face on the front of it, behind the blue box*'.

Play any board game to practise identifying speaker problems. Here the adult reminds the children of the point of the game, saying: '*We are going to practise all the things we've found out about messages. Some*

*are too fast, too quiet, too long or have too hard words’.* Then give each child an instruction to complete. If a child completes the instruction correctly they get to move on one space. If a child can identify why they cannot complete the instruction, for example, because they couldn’t hear, or didn’t understand a word, the child also gets to move on a space. You should use some instructions that are too fast, too quiet, have background noise, are too complex, have hard vocabulary or are very long or inexplicit. Each child should be asked: ‘*Can you do it? Why not?*’ The other group children can help.

## **SESSION FOUR**

### **AIMS**

The aims of this session are to:

1. recap on previous sessions on listening and communication breakdown and why it can occur
2. revise the idea that it is not a child's fault if he or she is not understanding
3. introduce ideas of what each child is to do if he or she is not understanding
4. summarise and recap on the whole of comprehension monitoring therapy.

### **MATERIALS**

Large, detailed picture for colouring, coloured pens, stickers, wall chart from Session One.

### **METHOD**

#### ***1 Recap on Session Three***

Ask if the children can remember why we might not understand. Remind the children people may talk too fast or too slowly, too quietly, without giving enough information or with too much information, or using too hard words.

#### ***2 Revise the lack of 'fault'***

Discuss the fact that it is no-one's fault if a child does not understand. Discuss also that we need to tell people when we have not understood.

#### ***3 Explain what to do when we do not understand***

Use a story to illustrate what to do if the children do not understand. Tell children the story, and discuss in the group what would help them to behave like Ben.

##### ***'What to do if you don't understand' story***

*Ben is in primary \_\_\_\_ (Change to reflect the age of the children.) His teacher talks to the class a lot to tell them what to do. Sometimes Ben doesn't understand what his teacher says. Sometimes she uses words that Ben doesn't understand, and sometimes she tells the class so many things that Ben can't remember what he has to do. Ben gets worried when he doesn't understand. He sits very quietly and hopes the teacher will tell him again.*

*But it is OK not to understand sometimes! Even grown-ups like Ben's teacher forget things or don't understand what people say sometimes. Instead of being worried, Ben can do something to help himself. If the teacher says something he doesn't understand, Ben can say 'Please could you say that again?' or he can say 'Sorry I didn't understand that'. Ben can also practise being a good listener when his teacher is talking.*

*Ben is much happier now that he asks for help when he doesn't understand.*

Practise seeking repetitions and clarifications. The group shares a detailed colouring-in picture. Give a mix of 'good' and 'bad' instructions. The 'bad' instructions could be too vague in terms of what colour to

use and which bit to colour. They could use complex vocabulary, for example ‘fuchsia’ instead of ‘pink’, or could be too long. They could also be said too quickly or too quietly. Examples are ‘*Colour that bit pink*'; ‘*Use the light blue pen, no, the dark blue pen to colour in the small rectangular area below the ....*' Each child repeats back to the adult what they have to do to demonstrate they have been able to follow the instruction correctly or that they have identified a ‘poor’ instruction and sought clarification.

Using stickers, ask each child to go and get one but use incorrect volume and/or rate. Encourage each child to ask for repetition or clarification. After a clarification attempt, the child should be given the sticker.

#### **4 Summarise Therapy**

Remind the children of what they have learned throughout the four sessions, saying: ‘*OK, we've done lots of good thinking about how to be good at listening and telling people if we don't understand them. We can ask people to tell us again. We are going to start thinking about some different things at the next group. We'll start to think about how to be better at talking. But, we mustn't forget about our rules for good listening. Remember, if you haven't understood something, tell me. Or tell your teacher, or whoever you are talking to. Well done – good listening.*

## **TRANSFER TO HOME AND SCHOOL**

Monitoring of comprehension has to be transferred to the classroom and other ‘real life’ situations. There are several ways to help this.

- It is important for each child to know that it is ‘OK’ to ask for help if he or she cannot remember an instruction, and get it broken down into smaller chunks. Suggest the child uses phrases like ‘*Can you say that again, please?*’ and ‘*Can you say that slowly, please?*’

Other useful phrases for a child to use are:

‘*What was that first bit again, please?*’  
‘*Can you say that again, a bit at a time, please?*’  
‘*Sorry, I can’t remember all that.*’  
‘*Please say that slowly while I write it down.*’  
‘*Could you write that down for me please?*’

- Adults around each child need to know and agree that the child is going to ask for clarification, so that they can respond appropriately, and welcome the child’s request. There is information about this in the ‘communication friendly’ classroom handout for teachers, and explanations are needed for parents.
- Encourage the child to recap on an instruction before they carry it out. Adults can help each child rehearse by asking the child ‘*Now what have you got to do?*’ and have the child repeat the instruction.
- Encourage each child to write a note of key words in an instruction, if he or she can write, or to repeat them silently to help him or her remember.
- Remember to use guidance on ‘Communication Friendly’ environments to ensure each child hears language at an appropriate level.

## **COMPREHENSION MONITORING THERAPY: OLDER CHILDREN – EIGHT YEARS AND ABOVE, GROUP**

Older children may be able to understand the ideas behind comprehension monitoring more quickly than younger children and require less practice, and will need more ‘grown-up’ materials. Ideas are therefore given here for two sessions. However, children may need much longer than this to grasp the principles and transfer the learning to new contexts.

### **SESSION ONE**

#### **AIMS**

The aims of the first session are to:

1. introduce the group to each other and to you
2. play some general ‘warm up’ games to establish rapport and group interaction
3. explain to the children why they are in the group and what will happen
4. introduce games to develop awareness of good listening skills
5. introduce the idea of communication breakdown due to speaker problems and encourage identification of different causes of communication breakdown
6. summarise.

#### **MATERIALS**

Boardmaker™ pictures ('good sitting'; 'good looking'; 'not looking'; 'good listening'; 'talking'; 'keep quiet'; 'fidgeting'), red pen, long red pencil, short red pencil, red beanbag, blue beanbag, two male toys, two female toys.

#### **METHOD**

##### ***1 Get to know each other***

Give each child a sticky label and coloured pens and get them to design a name badge, drawing a picture of their favourite hobby or class. You are to design a badge as well. Following this, ask each child a number of closed questions about what is on their badge, such as '*What is your name?*'; '*What have you drawn on your badge?*', then follow up with a question about their drawing, for example '*When do you go swimming?*'. You will also explain about your own badge, and tell the child your name and how to address you.

##### ***2 Establish rapport.***

Play an ‘ice breaker’ game (‘Hide the Pen’) and explain to children that to play this game they need to be good at looking. To play ‘Hide the Pen’ the children close their eyes and the adult hides a pen around the room, under tables, in bags etc. The children must then find the pen. Role reversal can be used with a child hiding the pen for other children to find.

Play ‘Pass the nod or blink’. The adult starts off, and all group members watch the adult carefully. The adult then passes on a double blink or nod to one of the children, who then leads the group and has the power to blink. The whole group must then watch that child until he or she has passes on the nod or blink to someone else.

### **3     *Discuss why we are here***

Ask the children why they think they are here, and if they have had speech and language therapy before. Explain using this ‘script’: ‘*You are going to be coming to this group three times a week and you will all be coming together. We are going to think about listening and talking and play lots of games to help to become even better at doing these things. First of all we are going to think about listening*’.

### **4     *Discuss becoming a good listener***

Discuss what to do to be a good listener. Brainstorm, getting the children’s ideas followed by discussion. Try to elicit the following points from the children:

- We need to do good sitting.
- We need to do good looking.
- We need to stop talking.
- We need to do good listening.

As each idea is discussed back it up by showing the appropriate Boardmaker™ prompt card and use adult modelling of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ listening using examples of all the rules. These points become the ‘group rules’ to be followed throughout all sessions.

The adult then models ‘good’ and ‘bad’ examples of listening, covering all the ‘rules’. Children are then divided into pairs or threes and given a prompt card showing an example of ‘good’ or ‘bad’ listening. Each set role-plays what is shown on the card, while the others decide what they are trying to demonstrate.

Once all the points on the list above have been discussed, put ‘good’ Boardmaker™ pictures on the wall as a chart to remind the children of the ‘rules’.

### **5     *Introduce the idea of communication breakdown***

Introduce the idea of communication breakdown, saying:

*‘You might be doing all the things we have talked about to help you to listen but sometimes the person who is talking to you – it might be your friend or the teacher or another grown up – might do something that makes it hard to understand what they have said. So it might not be your fault when you don’t understand. Let’s think about some of the things that can go wrong that make it hard to understand what they have said.’*

Explain talking too fast or too quietly. Discuss some speaker factors that might affect comprehension:

- Rate – say: ‘*I might talk really really fast so you don’t know what I’m saying.*’ Model speaking too quickly.
- Volume – say: ‘*I might talk so quietly that you can’t hear me, or there might be lots of noise in the room so you can’t hear me.*’ Model speaking too quietly.
- Background noise is also a factor that may be discussed at this stage. This affects what the listener hears but it is not the fault of the speaker or the listener.

Practise spotting talking too fast or too quietly. Play a ‘Mother may I ....?’ game to practise speaker problems. The adult gives instructions to the children but they are too ‘fast’, too ‘quiet’ or have ‘noise’ such as coughing or music that is too loud during the instruction.

Give instructions about moving objects and toys as well as the children moving themselves. Some ‘good’ instructions should be included, to contrast with the problem ones. After each instruction is given, the children should discuss whether the instruction could be done and what the speaker did wrongly, as appropriate. Also discuss what the speaker could change to allow the children to understand the instruction.

Explain speaker problems of not giving enough information to the listener. Say: *‘There can be another problem – you might not be told enough information, so that what you are asked to do might not make sense. I am going to give you more instructions. Some of them won’t make any sense. Listen carefully and see if you can do what I ask you to.’*

Practise spotting a speaker not giving enough information to the listener. Each child is to say whether or not they can carry out their instructions. Encourage them to explain their reasons rather than simply guessing. Use the session object materials and give instructions such as ‘*Give me the red one.*’; ‘*Give me the pencil.*’; ‘*Give me the beanbag.*’; ‘*Give that to me.*’; ‘*Give the long red pencil to him.*’; ‘*Give her the short pencil.*’ using relevant items but not giving enough information to identify which. Discuss with the children in a group ‘*Can we do these instructions?*’

## **6      Summarise**

At the end of the session explain to the children that they have done a lot of work on things that help us to be good at listening. They should try to remember to do some of these things when they are listening in the classroom or to their mum or dad or their friends. Explain that they will think some more about things we need to do to be good at listening and talking in the next session.

## **SESSION TWO**

### **AIMS**

The aims of this session are to:

1. recap on the previous session, about good listening skills and communication breakdown
2. extend the child's awareness of communication breakdown and what can happen
3. introduce ways to highlight communication breakdown and seek clarification
4. summarise.

### **MATERIALS**

Large, detailed picture for colouring, coloured pens, stickers, wall chart from Session One, Blu-tack™.

### **METHOD**

#### ***1 Recap on Session One***

Ask the children: ‘*Can you remember what we talked about in the last session? We talked about how it can be hard to understand what people say, even if you are listening well and practising all the things you need to do to be a good listener. They might talk too fast, too slowly or too quietly.*’ Discuss these points, using Boardmaker™ pictures as prompts throughout to back this up.

#### ***2 Discuss further reasons for not understanding people***

Explain using ‘too hard’ words and ‘too long’ sentences. Tell the children that a person talking might use a word we do not know, or they might use a really long sentence. Demonstrate this, saying: ‘*If I asked you to draw me a picture of a ‘herbivore’, would you be able to do it? Or what if I asked you to tell me what an ‘ophthalmologist’ does? Those might be words that you might not know, so you might not be able to do what I asked. And if I said: ‘Can you tell the teacher in room six that you won’t be in tomorrow after two o’clock because your mum says you have to go to your gran’s house after the language group?’ That was a really long message that was hard to remember. Long messages can be hard to understand because there is so much to remember.*’

Practise spotting ‘too hard’ words and ‘too long’ sentences. Explain that you are going to play some games to practise spotting messages that are too long, and messages with hard words in them. Play ‘Chinese Whispers’ to demonstrate what happens if too long a message is given. Write down the original and final versions of the message to show that when it is too long people might forget parts or get muddled up. For example; try: ‘*Last night at ten past seven me, my mum and my brother David went to the shops to buy four cans of coke and strawberry ice-lollies to eat in the park.*’; ‘*Tomorrow I want to walk from my house to my auntie Betty’s house so that I can take her dog Alfred for a walk.*’

Play ‘Simon Says’ using a mix of ‘easy’ and ‘hard’ sentences to practise spotting messages that are too long or have hard words in them. The children are to indicate that the message was too long or too hard. It is not necessary at this stage for them to seek repetition or clarification, just to indicate communication breakdown. Examples of ‘easy’ and ‘hard’ sentences would be: ‘*Touch your nose*’ versus ‘*Touch your scapula.*’; ‘*Touch your ears.*’ versus ‘*Touch your cranium.*’; ‘*Touch your tongue.*’ versus ‘*Touch your femur.*’; ‘*Touch your right knee.*’ versus ‘*Touch your tibia.*’; ‘*Clap your hands.*’ versus ‘*Clap your hands and before you clap your hands hop three times on your left foot and turn round twice.*’

### **3     Introduce clarification strategies**

Explain how to ask for repetitions and clarifications. Introduce and discuss useful strategies. Say: ‘Now we know what can go wrong and why we sometimes don’t understand. We now need to think how we can fix it. I wonder what we could say when we don’t understand?’ Brainstorm the problem together, allowing the children to think up their own examples of what to say. Write their suggestions on a flip chart. Examples of appropriate responses could be ‘Sorry?’; ‘I’m sorry can you say that again?’; ‘What does ..... mean?’; ‘Can you say that again slowly please?’ Stress to the group that it is better to ask for clarification and help if they don’t understand, rather than guessing, because when you guess you can get it wrong.

Practise asking for repetitions and clarifications. Play a game where the group is given a large detailed colouring picture to share. The adult explains that a mix of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ instructions about colouring will be given by the adult and that if the children are not sure what is meant they can think of something to ask to clarify the instruction. ‘Bad’ instructions could be too vague in terms of what colour to use and which part to colour. They could use complex vocabulary, for example ‘fuchsia’ instead of ‘pink’, or could be too long. They could also be said ‘too quickly’ or ‘too quietly’ or be inexplicit. Examples could be: ‘Colour that bit pink.’; ‘Use the light blue pen, no, the dark blue pen to colour in the small rectangular area below the ....’ The children repeat back to the adult what they have to do in order to demonstrate they have been able to follow the instruction correctly, or indicate that they have identified a poor instruction and ask for clarification.

### **4     Summarise**

Summarise what has been learned, and remind the children to use clarification strategies at home and in school.

## **TRANSFER TO HOME AND SCHOOL**

Monitoring of comprehension has to be transferred to the classroom and other ‘real life’ situations. There are several ways to help this.

- It is important for each child to know that it is ‘OK’ to ask for help if he or she cannot remember an instruction, and get it broken down into smaller chunks. Suggest the child uses phrases like ‘*Can you say that again, please?*’ and ‘*Can you say that slowly, please?*’.

Other useful phrases for a child to use are:

‘*What was that first bit again, please?*’  
‘*Can you say that again, a bit at a time, please?*’  
‘*Sorry, I can’t remember all that.*’  
‘*Please say that slowly while I write it down.*’  
‘*Could you write that down for me please?*’

- Adults around the children need to know and agree that a child is going to ask for clarification, so that they can respond appropriately, and welcome the child’s request. There is information about this in the ‘communication friendly’ classroom handout for teachers, and explanations are needed for parents.
- Encourage each child to recap on an instruction before they carry it out. Adults can help the child rehearse by asking the child ‘*Now what have you got to do?*’ and have the child repeat the instruction.
- Encourage each child to write a note of key words in an instruction, if he or she can write, or to repeat them silently to help him or her remember.
- Remember to use guidance on ‘Communication Friendly’ environments to ensure each child hears language at an appropriate level.

## **COMPREHENSION MONITORING PROBES**

### **PROBING**

In order to determine whether a child should move on or repeat therapy targets, probes can be used to see how well the child can cope without support. Comprehension monitoring probes test a child's ability to detect a 'faulty instruction' of the type encountered in comprehension monitoring games. Probes should be carried out by each child individually. They are very brief.

Write out the probes before a probe session, and for all four aspects of comprehension monitoring present five 'impossible' and five 'possible' probes, recording the child's success on each as a tally out of five. Make notes also about how the child seeks help.

### **NOT ENOUGH INFORMATION IS GIVEN**

#### ***Materials***

Use a selection of toys and objects. Include two spoons of difference sizes, two horses of different colours, two red blocks, two cups of different sizes, two saucers, two toy people.

#### ***Probe***

Say: '*I'm going to tell you to do some things. If you can understand, then do what I said. If I didn't give you enough information, then tell me and I'll give you some help.*'

#### ***Examples***

Give 'impossible' instructions, saying: 'Give that to me.'; 'Put it next to the red one.'; 'Pass me the small one.'; 'Put it on top of the black.'; 'Give me the horse.' Mix those with five instructions that are possible to follow, for example: 'Give me the short, red pencil.' when one is available.

#### ***Record***

Record a tally of five 'possible' and five 'impossible' instructions, and note how the child seeks help. For example, when given an instruction with not enough information, does the child say '*I don't understand. Can you help me?*' or make similar comments?

## INSTRUCTIONS THAT ARE TOO COMPLEX AND/OR TOO LONG

### **Materials**

As above.

### **Probe**

Say: '*I'm going to tell you to do some things. Some of them will be easy to understand. Some of them will be too difficult. If you don't understand, you tell me*'.

### **Examples**

Say: '*If there is someone wearing glasses in the room, then find the smallest toy on the table, turn it over, then put one of the cups on top of it, but you must roll the longest pencil along the table first.*'; '*When you have moved one of the plates from one side of the table to the other, get one of the toy people and make them jump up and down five times before making them go to sleep.*'; '*If you're wearing blue socks, then find the red block on the table, pick it up, put it in a cup and put a saucer on top, but you must first roll up your sleeves.*'; '*After you have bent over and touched your toes, find two horses, put them under the table, turn yourself around and switch off the light.*'; '*Before you sit down you should build the blocks into a tower while standing on one leg and with one hand behind your back*'. Mix these with five instructions that are possible to follow, for example: '*Stand up and hop on one leg.*'; '*Jump up and down three times*'.

### **Record**

Record success, and how the child seeks help. For example, when given an instruction which is too long and complex, does the child say '*I don't understand. Can you help me?*' or make similar comments?

## VOCABULARY THAT IS TOO DIFFICULT

### **Materials**

Paper and pens.

### **Probe**

Say: '*I'm going to ask you to draw some things. Some of them you will know, but some you won't. If you don't know what the word is then ask me*'.

### **Examples**

Say: '*Draw a marsupial.*' (= a kangaroo); '*Draw a topiary.*' (= a garden of trees clipped into shapes); '*Draw a flagon.*' (= a large bottle); '*Draw a crypt.*' (= a space below a church for burials); '*Draw a trematode.*' (= a flatworm). Mix these with five examples that are easy, for example: '*Draw a cow*'.

### **Record**

Record success, and how the child seeks help. For example, when given an instruction with difficult vocabulary, does the child say '*I don't understand. Can you help me?*' or make similar comments?

## SPEECH THAT IS TOO QUIET OR TOO FAST

### **Materials**

Use a selection of objects.

### **Probe**

Say: '*I'm going to give you some more instructions. I might say them too quickly or too quietly. If I do, then ask me to say it again.*'

### **Examples**

Give a ten simple instructions, five that are intelligible and five that are not. All should be possible to carry out with the available objects, so that only the loudness or rate of speech is a problem.

#### ***Too quiet.***

Say: '*Put the red spoon in the box.*' (possibly cover your mouth as you say this); '*Put the dog next to the cat.*' (perhaps say this in a whisper); '*Put the monkey on the block.*' (perhaps cough as you say this); '*Touch your nose.*' (perhaps turn away as you are talking); '*Stand up and then touch your toes.*' (get very quiet towards the end). Include five clear examples at normal loudness as well.

#### ***Too fast.***

Say: '*Pick up the block.*'; '*Open the door.*'; '*Count to ten..*'; '*Clap your hands four times.*'; '*What's your name and address?*' but speaking very quickly. Include five clear examples at normal speed as well.

### **Record**

Record success, and how the child seeks help. For example, when given an instruction which is too quiet or too fast, does the child say '*I don't understand. Can you help me?*' or make similar comments?

## **6 VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT**

### **INTRODUCTION**

All children in school meet new words as they progress in the curriculum, and so need to ‘learn how to learn’ words. This section discusses how this can be done, and gives activities intended to be helpful to children.

To learn new words we need to do three things: make links with words that have related meanings (semantic links); discover the speech sound structure of the word (phonological pattern) and practise ways of bringing the word to mind (word finding). This section discusses these factors. Principles are presented, followed by a list of useful games.

### **SEMANTIC AND PHONOLOGICAL PROBLEMS**

Poor vocabulary development is common in language-impaired children. This can be due to factors such as semantic and phonological problems.

#### ***Semantic problems.***

Issues relating to word meaning are called ‘semantic’. The child may have problems understanding and linking the meanings of words. Semantic problems can hinder children in accessing the language of the classroom. This, in turn, further impedes their vocabulary development. A ‘semantic error’ is one where the child has wrongly used a word with a different meaning, for example, saying ‘apple’ instead of ‘orange’. The ‘wrong’ word often has a similar, or associated, meaning to the target word. A ‘semantic cue’ is where the adult gives the child a prompt relating to the meaning of the word he or she is trying to say, for example, saying ‘*It’s fluffy, with long ears*’ to help the child say ‘rabbit’.

#### ***Phonological problems***

Issues relating to the speech sound patterns of words are called ‘phonological’. The child may have difficulties in analysing the speech sound (or ‘phoneme’) structure of words and in breaking words down into phonemes; and/or remembering the sequence and combinations of phonemes in words, and/or in noticing which is the first or last sound in a word.. Difficulties in these areas can make it hard for the child to build up ‘phonological representations’, the reflections of the phoneme patterns of words in the mind. Much current research into language impairment is concerned with investigating the nature of these underlying phonological problems, and finding out how and why they can be impaired.

### **WORD-FINDING DIFFICULTIES**

Semantic and phonological information may not be available in a complete form when the child needs to say a word, and the word may not be ‘found’ at the right moment. Children with difficulties in vocabulary development can therefore display ‘word-finding difficulties’. This is when the child appears to know the word he or she wants to use but is unable to say it. Often, the child is able to use the word with no problem on some occasions, but struggles at other times. For example, if the child was trying to say ‘caterpillar’, the following are possible word-finding difficulties he or she could experience:

- a semantic error, for example a word with a related meaning ‘pops up’ instead of the target word, such as ‘worm’.
- a phonological error, with the wrong speech sounds said, for example ‘caterpillow’.

A word-finding difficulty can also result in the child seeming to be unable to get to the point, as he or she cannot find the word they want. This is sometimes called ‘circumlocution’, as the child ‘goes around’ the word, using a phrase. For example, the child says ‘*I got a new jumper and a hold your trousers up* (for belt)’. An example, relating to ‘caterpillar’ as before, would be the child describing the caterpillar, saying: ‘*It’s like .... It’s got lots of legs .... It’s hairy ....*’

A ‘phonological cue’ is when an adult gives the child a prompt relating to the first sounds in the word, for example saying ‘*It’s a ma-*’ (for magazine), to help the child find the word.

## **OVERALL AIM FOR VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT THERAPY**

The overall aim of therapy to develop vocabulary is to improve the child’s understanding and use of vocabulary, and to help them learn new vocabulary as necessary.

This can be tackled by:

- helping the child to build semantic and phonological associations amongst words, and
- helping the child to make helpful word associations when learning new items of vocabulary, and
- encouraging the child to use self-cueing strategies to retrieve words, and
- encouraging the child to use the skills learnt in real-life word-learning situations, and not just in therapy.

This involves teaching the child to reflect on their own word-learning, and to take control of how they learn words.

## **GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT**

- Select useful ‘target’ words to focus on. Although we are teaching strategies to help a child learn words, we may as well choose relevant words to practise the strategies.
- Associate the target word with related words that the child is already familiar with and discuss how they are related, for example, if they are in the same category (a section on ‘Categories’ is included) or if they have similar meanings (the section on ‘Synonyms’ is relevant).
- Discuss the word’s phonological features – which speech sound(s) it starts with and ends with, which other speech sounds are in it.
- Use the target word in a range of different contexts, with plenty of repetition and discussion, which is essential to strengthen the semantic features of the word.
- Explain to the child why we are playing vocabulary games in therapy. It helps the child to realise he or she is learning skills to use in everyday life, as opposed to just playing games. It is particularly important in vocabulary and word-finding activities to discuss the reasons for games, to equip the child with practical strategies to help him or her learn and retrieve words. This is important as they meet new words throughout their school curriculum and social lives.
- The sections on ‘cueing’ give advice on how to put this into practice and enable the child to reflect on his or her own word-learning.

## WORD FEATURES

All words are made up of semantic and phonological features, for example two features of ‘dog’ are that it is an animal and that it starts with a ‘d’ sound. Features are usually divided into semantic (word-meaning) and phonological (word-sound) features.

A feature-map is a diagram that can detail the semantic and phonological features of a word. Feature-maps can be useful as a visual reminder of the important characteristics of a word. They can be used to consolidate and revise vocabulary as well as to learn about new words. They can also help the child to learn strategies for remembering words. Feature-maps can come in different formats and are known by different names, for example ‘semantic webs’, or ‘word-maps’.

A list of possible questions can be asked about the word to allow a feature-map to be completed. Not all of the questions need to be asked – which are helpful depends on the word being described.

## BUILDING A FEATURE MAP

Ask and answer these questions:

*Semantic features:*

<i>description</i>	<i>what does it look like?</i>
<i>location</i>	<i>where is it usually found?</i>
<i>function</i>	<i>what do we use it for?</i>
<i>group/category</i>	<i>what kind of thing is it?</i>
<i>related words</i>	<i>what words mean (nearly) the same as/opposite to it? do any words often go alongside or near it?</i>

### ***Phonological features:***

<i>syllables</i>	<i>what number of syllables does the word contain?</i>
<i>length</i>	<i>is it long or short?</i>
<i>rhyme</i>	<i>what does it rhyme with?</i>
<i>words within words</i>	<i>are there little words within the word?</i>
<i>sounds</i>	<i>what sounds are in the word, at the start and end?</i>

Not all questions will have useful answers. The example of a feature-map for the word ‘planet’ illustrates this.

### ***Semantic features for the word ‘planet’***

<i>description</i>	<i>what does it look like?</i>	round , big
<i>location</i>	<i>where is it usually found?</i>	in space
<i>function</i>	<i>what do we use it for?</i>	nothing (!)
<i>group/category</i>	<i>what kind of thing is it?</i>	space things
<i>related words</i>	<i>what words have similar/opposite meanings do any words often go alongside/near it?</i>	none (!) star, moon, rocket

### ***Phonological features for the word ‘planet’***

<i>syllables</i>	<i>how many does the word contain</i>	two syllables
<i>length</i>	<i>is it long or short?</i>	short
<i>rhymes</i>	<i>what does it rhyme with?</i>	Janet (Or with nonsense words if the child does not know any real rhyming words.)
<i>words within words</i>	<i>are there little words within the word?</i>	plan
<i>sounds</i>	<i>what sounds are at the start/end of the word? are there any other sounds in the word?</i>	pl, t n

For concepts and relational terms (like ‘if’ and ‘unless’) ‘related words’ is usually the only relevant semantic feature. For any target word we would develop semantic features, phonological features and retrieval strategies at the same time. However, for clarity these are presented separately in this manual.

## **SEMANTIC FEATURES**

Semantic features are concerned with word meanings and also link with knowledge of the world. A child may be helped by thinking about all the semantic features of a word, as in the ‘planet’ example. To work on these features we can ask questions and encourage the child to tell us what they know about the target word. Semantic features can be elicited with some of the following questions, arranged in groups of related questions. Not all need to be asked for every word! The adult can use common sense to pick the most appropriate questions for the word; for example, for ‘planet’, you would not need to ask what it was used for. Nor should the adult stick to a question-answer format for these activities: the questions below are to be used only as guidelines for the adult to structure discussion about a target word. At times the child may need more explicit teaching, with the adult giving information about the word’s features, as opposed to asking questions. This is especially necessary for words new to the child.

### **TYPES OF SEMANTIC FEATURES**

Examples of ways to think about semantic features and make links with world knowledge are listed here.

#### ***Description***

- What does it look like? (for example, colour, shape, size)
- Does it make a noise / sound? What sound does it make? (For example, quiet, an animal sound)
- What does it feel like? (for example, hard, smooth)
- Does it have a smell? What does it smell like?
- What does it taste like?
- What is it made of?
- What do you use it for?
- When do you use it?
- Where do you see it?

Also, add any additional descriptive words that seem appropriate, for example: for ‘sea creatures’, a description could include ‘slippery’.

#### ***Location***

- Where do you find it?
- Where does it live?
- Where do you see it?

#### ***Function or use***

- Is there anything else you can use it for?
- Sometimes children give unexpected responses; for example a child may say ‘*You wash it*’ as a use for ‘cup’. You may need to follow up and discuss when this happens.
- When would you use it?
- What does it do?

#### ***Category or group***

- What group does it belong to? (or ‘What kind of thing is it?’) It will probably be necessary to lead the child in by an example such as ‘*Coat, sock, jumper are types of clothes. Orange is a type of .....?*’

expecting the child to complete using ‘fruit’ or ‘food’. For a word like ‘planet’, where there is no category name as such, a more general one, for example: ‘things in space’ will suffice.

- Can you think of any other words in this group?

You may need to check the child understands what ‘group’ means. If this needs to be taught specifically, use the section on ‘categorisation’.

### ***Related words***

- Does this make you think of any other words?
- Try and have a picture in your head of this word. What else can you see? For example, with ‘planet’ the child may ‘see’ ‘sun, moon, rocket’.
- Is there something that goes with this word? Or, simply, ‘What does it go with?’ Some words have strong associations, like ‘fish’ and ‘chips’; ‘knife and fork’. Others have weaker associations, but these still help to link the word with its semantic meanings. For relational terms, children might give simple definitions and this should be encouraged.

### ***Synonyms (similar meanings)***

- Can you think of another word that means nearly the same as (target word)?

You may need to check the child understands that words can have similar meanings; for example, that ‘cold’ is similar to ‘chilly’, ‘sofa’ is similar to ‘settee’, ‘computer’ to ‘PC’, etc. See the section on ‘Synonyms’ for more advice.

### ***Antonyms (opposites)***

- Can you think of the opposite of (target word)?

Antonyms will only need to be covered if working on a target word that has an opposite; for example, words like ‘smooth’ and ‘lumpy’ or ‘bumpy’. These words are likely to be mainly adjectives, or conceptual words. Understanding that words can have opposite meanings may need to be taught, if so, see the section on ‘Antonyms’.

### ***Relevance***

It is important to identify the most relevant semantic features of the target word and for the child to be able to recognise which features are of central relevance and which are not, in any particular context. This will help the child to describe the word to the listener more efficiently so that the target word can be identified. For example: if a child describes a word as ‘*It’s food, it’s red, it tastes sweet, it’s in the kitchen cupboard*’, the word has been described by category, description and location, but the listener may not be able to identify it as ‘jam’ unless the child gives a more crucially relevant description, such as the function ‘*You spread it on bread*’.

This skill of giving relevant descriptions of semantic features will be useful if the child is struggling to find words as it is more precise than saying everything known about the word, and should enable the adult/listener to come to a quicker understanding of what the child is trying to say. However, the most relevant semantic features of a word will vary with context. Discussion with the child of what information results in the ‘best guesses’ will be helpful here. Useful games for developing semantic features appear in the ‘Games for Semantic Features’ section of the Manual that follows.

## **PHONOLOGICAL FEATURES**

As well as semantic features it is important for the child to be able to reflect on the phonological, or sound features of words. Important phonological features in a target word tend to be:

- the initial sound
- the onset (sound/s if any before the first vowel)
- the ‘rime’ (first vowel and end of word)
- any little words that are present within the word
- the number of syllables within the word.

The ability to identify and think about these features is called phonological awareness. Considering the phonological features of a word helps to both learn and retrieve words.

## **TYPES OF PHONOLOGICAL FEATURES**

### ***Syllable awareness***

Dividing a word into syllables is the first step in learning that words can often be broken down into smaller units. Developmentally it occurs before a child can split words into their individual sounds or phonemes. Compound words, for example: ‘blackbird’, ‘sunshine’, may be the easiest words for children to divide up. Children are often taught to clap once for each syllable.

### ***Onset/initial sound awareness***

After recognising syllables, the next stage in a child’s phonological awareness is becoming aware that one-syllable words can be divided into their first sound/s, known as ‘onset’ and then the rest of the word, i.e. the vowel and final consonant/s, known as ‘rime’.

Think of the first sound/s of the word and not their letter names. The adult can separate the initial sound from the rest of the word to make it more noticeable for the child, for example ‘t...able’. If there is more than one consonant before the vowel, i.e. ‘sp-’, ‘fl-’, ‘cr-’, ‘str-’, the whole cluster forms the onset, for example: ‘trick’ has ‘tr-’ (onset), ‘-ick’ (rime).

As with syllable awareness, some children will be able to identify the onset of a word and others will need you to demonstrate it for them. Ask the children to say the onset first and if this is too hard, the adult can demonstrate it.

### ***Rhyme awareness***

Working on rhymes strengthens links amongst words and reinforces the phonological form of individual words. For most activities the adult demonstrates a word that rhymes with the target word. This can be a real word rhyme or a nonsense (made-up) word. For example: to rhyme with ‘dog’, ‘frog’ is a real word and ‘sog’ is a nonsense word. For the child these can be called ‘made-up’ words. It is appropriate to encourage children to generate some made-up or nonsense words themselves as well as thinking of real-word rhymes. The ability to do this demonstrates that they have understood the principle of rhyme. Being able to produce a nonsense word in a rhyming task is difficult and a child who does this is showing phonological awareness. However, finding ‘real’ words when they exist shows that the child has searched successfully amongst the words in their head.



### ***Word length awareness***

Ask the child if the target is a long or a short word. You may need to check they understand these concepts first. Factors to consider are the number of syllables (for example, a three-syllable word is likely to be seen as a long word) and the spelling if the child is aware of this. For example: ‘hedgehog’ may be seen as a long word, even though it only has two syllables, because of its spelling. As a general rule, words of over three syllables will be considered long words. Concentrate on the number of syllables.

### ***Visualising parts of words***

This uses ‘mind-pictures’ or ‘visualisation’ as an additional strategy to help with word-learning and word recall. The children practise visual imagery, imagining pictures in their minds that relate to particular words. They link syllables with pictures and draw their ideas. Useful games for developing phonological features appear in the ‘Games for Phonological Features’ section of the Manual that follows.

## **PUTTING SEMANTIC AND PHONOLOGICAL FEATURES TOGETHER**

So far, connections between the word and its semantic features and between the word and its phonological features have been discussed separately, with activities for children who need special help to develop one or both areas. However, many children will be helped in learning new words by thinking of both semantic and phonological features, and will be able to work on both simultaneously. Doing this will further strengthen the mental representation of a word. The adult can decide on a selection of semantic and phonological features to work on from the previous two sections, or using the games below that target semantic and phonological features together. By alternating as they do between semantic questions and phonological questions, the games help the children to link up these areas in relation to the words being used.

## **HELPING THE CHILD TO FIND WORDS**

Because semantic and phonological information may not be available in a complete form when the child needs to say a word, the word may not be ‘found’ at the right moment. Often, the child is able to use the word with no problem on some occasions, but struggles at other times. There are some strategies that can be used to help the child to say the word when he or she needs to. Some involve adult cueing, and others involve the child in helping themselves.

### ***Cueing strategies for the adult to use with the child***

When a child is struggling to remember a word, whether this occurs in a task aimed at vocabulary development or in a ‘real life’ situation, you can use a variety of cues to help the child access the word. Cues are questions that relate to the word causing difficulty. They invite the child to think of the semantic and phonological features that we looked at in the above sections.

Some cues will vary depending on whether the adult does or does not know the word that the child is trying to say. For example, you can only tell the child the first sounds of a word if you already know the word. If you cannot tell from the context what the child’s target word is, you would have to encourage the child to think of the initial sound on their own, or give a different cue. You can use both semantic and phonological cues, and you can use questions and give clues.

For example, if the child is trying to say ‘chimpanzee’ and the adult knows this is the child’s intended word, the adult can:

- Give the child a clue for some of the word's semantic features, for example: '*It looks like a big monkey*'.
- Give the child a clue about syllables, for example: '*It has three claps in it*'.
- Ask the child a question about the word's semantic features, for example: '*Where does it live?*'
- Ask the child a question about the phonological features of the word, for example: '*What sound does it start with?*'

If the adult does not know the target word, only the last two questions are useful.

Obviously, it is harder for the child to answer a question about their intended word than to respond to a part-word clue about it. However, we are aiming for the child to be able eventually to cue him or herself by thinking of questions like this. It is helpful if the child hears cueing questions from an adult first. It is also important to tell the child that you are asking questions or giving clues because that is what we have to do to remember words. Emphasise to the child that it is important that they learn how to ask themselves such questions.

## **LIST OF CUES**

### ***Phonological Cues***

Ways of cueing the child to think of phonological links were listed in the section on 'Phonological Features', above. They are listed again here for convenience Examples of phonological cues are as follows:

- Giving / asking for the number of syllables / beats / claps in a word, for example: '*It's got four claps*' for 'radiator'.
- Giving / asking for the initial sound, for example: '*What sound does it start with?*' You can also ask the child if they know any of the other sounds in the word.
- Giving / asking for a rhyming word, for example: '*It rhymes with late.*' for 'gate'.
- You can also give the child a 'forced alternative' as a phonological cue. This is when the adult gives the child two similar sounding words to choose from, one of which the adult knows to be the target word; for example: '*Is it a radio or a radiator?*' when the target is 'radiator'. Forced alternatives are more commonly used with semantic cues however – as outlined below.

### ***Semantic Cues***

Ways of cueing the child to think of semantic links were listed in the section on 'Semantic Features', above. They are listed again here for convenience.

Examples of semantic cues are as follows:

- Giving / asking for a description, for example: '*What does it look like?*'
- Giving / asking for its location, for example: '*Where can you find it?*'
- Giving / asking for its group name, for example: '*It's an animal*'
- Giving / asking for its function, for example: '*We use it for sweeping the floor*'
- Giving / asking for related words, for example: '*Can you think of any words to go with it?*'
- Forced alternative, which can only be given when the adult knows the target word. An example would be: '*Is it a kangaroo or a monkey?*' when the target is known to be 'kangaroo'.

## **SELF-CUEING: TEACHING CHILDREN TO CUE THEMSELVES**

We are aiming to enable children to have the skills to cue themselves so they will eventually be able to help themselves to remember words rather than depending on an adult to give clues or ask cueing questions. When working on vocabulary development tasks and using cueing it is therefore important to discuss with the child why you are doing it. For example, you can ask a child struggling to access a word '*What do you need to ask yourself, to help you remember the word?*' The aim is that children will learn to ask these questions of themselves.

Brainstorming can be a way of encouraging the child to think about the relevant cue questions. The child can brainstorm, '*What do I know about this word?*' to help learn the sort of questions to ask themselves to find a word. Self-prompts can be semantic, for example: '*What do I do with it?*', or phonological, for example: '*What sound does it start with?*' The child can be encouraged to think of the question prompts themselves.

Making a set of cue cards for the child, using cue questions or Boardmaker™ pictures to illustrate the questions, can be a useful visual reminder for the child.

## **ADDITIONAL STRATEGIES FOR THE CHILD**

There are some other things that children can do to help themselves find words.

### ***Rehearsing***

The child can be encouraged to rehearse the word once it has been retrieved. For example, for the word 'orchard' the child could rehearse '*Apples grow in an orchard. An orchard has lots of trees*'.

### ***Miming and drawing***

If the above strategies are not proving useful to help the child access a particular word, then encouraging the child to act out, mime or draw the word can be used as a 'last resort' strategy. Sometimes you may want a child to do this if you think you know the word they are trying to say, but want verification (you may or may not get this from a drawing or mime). You can then help to cue the child when you know what they are trying to say.

## **TEACHING THE CHILD TO BUY TIME AND ASK FOR HELP**

Children can be taught some handy phrases to use when they are stuck on a word, for example: '*I'm just thinking of the word*'; '*I'm trying to remember the word*'. This can give the child some time to cue him- or herself. It is important to stress that it is all right to do this and that everyone has to do it sometimes when they forget a word, so the child does not give up when struggling with a word.

Finally, the child needs to be reassured that it is all right to ask for help when stuck on a word. Discussions appropriate to the child's developmental level can take place during therapy to the effect that lots of people forget or get stuck on words and if the child can describe a feature of a word the adult can help them find the word. For example, the child could say '*I'm thinking of the word. It's something we wear on our feet in summer*' and the adult would be able to guess the target 'sandals'. Children with vocabulary and word-finding difficulties will need a lot of practice at describing word features, making

feature-maps and playing vocabulary games, coupled with an awareness of what they need to do when stuck on a word, and discussion of self-cueing during therapy, before being able to make a request for help.

## GAMES FOR SEMANTIC FEATURES

For the following games, a wide variety of picture cards will be needed. Clipart and Boardmaker™ can be used to provide these. The games can be used for groups of children to play, or can be used in individual therapy, with the adult taking a turn.

### ***Clues game 1***

The adult gives the child/ren a list of features as clues to decide what the word is, for example: '*It's an animal. It starts with "c". It's big and black and white. It lives on a farm. It gives us milk*'. The features can be given one at a time, so the child/ren can guess what it is and decide whether enough information has been given or not. The child/ren can also take turns at listing features for the adult to guess, with the adult providing feedback on whether more clues are needed before they can guess the object. A prompt sheet can be used to help the child/ren describe the word, with written or visual reminders of the features needed, for example: 'description', 'function/use', 'location', 'category', 'other related words'. A good way of practising this is to choose one picture to describe from a selection of picture cards, keeping it hidden from the others.

### ***Clues game 2***

Clues Game 1 can be used with a point awarded for each semantic feature described. A maximum of five points would be awarded for describing the five main features, and two points for guessing correctly. In this way, the scoring is weighted in favour of describing rather than guessing, as this is the skill being targeted in therapy.

### ***Clues game 3***

This time stress that the person doing the describing for the others to guess must use as few features as possible. This is to practise selecting the most relevant features of the object. To guess for example the word 'cow', the most relevant clues would be '*It's an animal that gives us milk*' as opposed to '*It lives on the farm*', or '*It's big and black and white*'. As children often seem to find it fun to make it hard for the other person to guess by *not* giving the most relevant clues, it does need to be stressed that this variant of the game is won by the person who gives fewest clues resulting in a successful guess. Keep a record of the number of clues each person gives to see who has fewest at the end.

### ***Clues game 4***

Instead of using pictures, think of something in the room to describe, or any word from the imagination.

### ***Clues game 5***

Look at a 'busy' picture, showing lots of activities, with the child/ren. Take turns to describe something in the picture for the other/s to guess.

### **Clues game 6**

Place a set of topic-related pictures on the table. A child silently chooses a picture without the adult/others knowing. The child must describe the two most relevant characteristics of the item he or she has chosen. The adult or the first child to put up their hand can guess the word. This game can be made harder by putting out a set of related words, for example ‘drinks’.

### **Object functions**

Ask the child/ren questions about the function or use of an object, for example: ‘*What do I need to blow my nose?*’ Make the game into a quiz. Pictures can be laid out so that the child/ren can choose the picture that fits the question. This will make it easier than if there are no pictures.

### **Location names**

Ask the child/ren where you might go for a specific reason, for example: ‘*Where would I go to buy a stamp?*’

### **Pairs**

Give the child/ren a word each to think of everything it could be paired with, for example: ‘black’ with ‘bird’ and ‘board’; ‘hot’ with ‘dog’ and ‘day’, changing the semantic category as in these examples if the child/ren can cope with this.

### **Question bingo**

The/each child has a card with pictures of objects on it, for example: ‘book’, ‘car’, ‘money’, ‘tree’. A question is asked relating to a semantic feature of one of the objects and the child has to see if the answer is on his or her card, for example: ‘*What has pages?*’; ‘*What grows in the ground?*’ The/each child places a counter on the appropriate picture on their board.

### **Twenty questions**

The adult or a child thinks of an object. The other/s ask questions to find it out what it is, using questions to elicit semantic features.

### **Word search game**

A single word is selected and the/each child has to think of as many related words as possible. Initially, prompts can be used for eliciting words via ‘description’, ‘location’, ‘function/use’, ‘category’ and ‘other related’. As a child becomes more proficient fewer prompts are given, and the activity can become a point-scoring game with points allocated, for example: ‘category’ - five points; ‘description’ - one point; description of ‘salient feature’ or ‘unique characteristic’ - two points; ‘location’ – three points; ‘function/use’ - four points; ‘other related word’ - one point.

### **Cue card dice game**

You need a selection of pictures, a dice, some counters and six cue cards numbered 1 - 6 on the back, with these semantic cue questions on the front:

1. What category/group does it belong to?
2. What do you use it for?
3. Where would you see it?

4. What shape is it?
5. What colour is it?
6. What size is it?

Place the pictures in a pile, face down, and spread out the cue cards with the number showing. A child throws the dice, picks the cue card with the matching number and takes the top picture. The child then both answers the cue card question and names the picture. If both of these are correct, the player gets a counter. In groups, the child with most counters is the winner.

### ***Find your fish***

You need sets of cut-out paper fishes with coloured tails – one colour per set, one set for each child playing; also paper clips, sets of pictures and semantic cue cards as above. Clip one picture and one cue card to each fish, making sure the coloured tail is hidden. The/each child chooses which colour they will collect. The/each child selects a fish and turns it over to see if it is their colour. If it is, they must answer the cue card and name the picture to keep their fish. If it is not the right colour, the fish is returned to the ‘pool’.

### ***Feature checklist***

The adult draws a semantic feature-map for the child/ren where not all the features are correct/appropriate. Children discuss and decide which features to remove from the map.

### ***Comparing features***

The adult gives the child/ren two different semantic feature-maps of two different words to discuss and compare.

## GAMES FOR PHONOLOGICAL FEATURES

### *Activities to develop syllable awareness*

These are presented in order of difficulty with the easiest first. Games marked ‘\*\* Thinking’ ask children to think up examples themselves.

#### *Syllable clapping*

The presentation of syllable activities will depend on the child/ren’s level of awareness. If a child recognises syllables, the adult can ask ‘*How many beats/bits/claps* (i.e. syllables) *are there in* (target word)?’ If they are not yet sure, the adult can demonstrate. Hand-on-hand clapping with the adult placing his/her hands over a child’s can be useful to help young children gain awareness of syllables.

1. Clap each syllable as you say it.
2. Count the syllables. Use visual support if necessary, for example the adult or child points to a written number as they say each syllable:  
1                  2                  3  
e                  le                  phant.
3. Think of other words with the same number of syllables. Choose from the target words that you are working on, if possible.

#### *Games for children who need more help to develop syllable awareness*

The following games are for children who are having difficulties identifying syllables in a word. These additional games would not be appropriate for a child who already has good awareness of syllables.

#### *Jump up*

The/each child is given a target word. The adult says one word clearly, emphasising the syllables, and claps them. The/each child has to jump up when they hear their target word. Alternative responses are moving forward on a game board when the child hears his or her word, or playing ‘Grandmother’s footsteps’.

#### *Roll the dice*

Have pictures of words containing a variety of syllables laid out on the table. The/each child rolls a dice with four spots and find/s a word containing that number of syllables: for example a child rolls ‘two’ and finds a picture containing two syllables.

#### *Clap your picture*

Use a board game with pictures of words containing more than one syllable. Play a simple roll-the-dice game, where the/each child moves forward the number of spaces they have rolled and claps the number of syllables of the word they land on. Alternatively they can count out the number of syllables in the word they have landed on.

### ***Catch and count***

Play a fishing game where each player takes it in turns to ‘catch’ pictures, using a magnet on a fishing rod and paper clips on the pictures. They then have to clap or count the number of syllables in the picture they have caught.

### ***Beanbags***

Play at throwing beanbags into hoops with pictures in them. The/each child throws a beanbag and claps or counts the number of syllables for the picture in that hoop. Alternatively, have a numbered dice and the/each child has to roll the dice and throw the beanbag into the hoop containing the picture with the same number of syllables. As each player hits the target a replacement picture should be placed in the hoop, taken from the top of a pile of spare cards.

## ***Activities to develop onset awareness***

### ***Initial sounds: sound-picture match***

The/each child takes it in turn to select a representation of a speech sound (phoneme) from a box or bag. If the child knows some letters, represent the sound with a letter. It is important in onset awareness that you talk about the initial sound of a word rather than a letter name, for examples use ‘kuh’ rather than ‘kay’ for /k/. If the child does not know letters, you will need a pictorial representation of the sound and to be sure the child understands it. Spread out some pictures, and the/each child has to find a picture that starts with the sound they have chosen. They can name the pictures first, and attempt to find their chosen sound. If a child finds a match, they take the picture and select another sound. The adult replaces the picture with another one. If there is no picture that matches their sound, the child can either retain the sound for the next turn, when there might be a match, or change it.

### ***Games for children who need more help to develop onset awareness***

The following games are for children who are having difficulties identifying the onset sounds of a word. These additional games would not be appropriate for a child who already has good awareness of onset. Games marked \*\* can be extended to allow the child to think of, and say, relevant words, not just recognise them.

### ***Post by sound***

Have two boxes with pictures on the front that start with different speech sounds (phonemes), or with a word-initial letter if the child knows some letters, for example a ‘t’ box and a ‘b’ box. Have pictures of words starting with ‘t’ or ‘b’ face down on the table, or objects starting with ‘t’ or ‘b’ in a bag. The/each child takes turns to select a picture and ‘post’ it into the appropriate box, according to its initial sound. For a change, they can pop the picture into a labelled hoop. Have several sets of pictures or objects with different onsets, for example ‘s’, ‘d’, ‘t’, ‘f’.

### ***Sound snap***

Play ‘Snap!’ where ‘Snap!’ is said if two pictures begin with the same sound, for example: ‘sun’, ‘sea’ – ‘Snap!’

\*\* Thinking. The/each child plays Snap!, thinking of and saying an additional word with the same onset.

### ***Sound lotto***

Play Lotto, matching lotto pictures to squares with the same sound(s) at onset.

\*\* Thinking. Encourage the/each child to think of and say additional words.

### ***Run to the sound***

Put four different pictures on the wall in the room (or in hoops on the floor of the room). The adult says a beginning sound and the/each child has to run to the picture with that onset.

\*\* Thinking. Take it in turns to think of and say the sound.

### ***Pelmanism***

Have about twenty-four pictures with four different onsets, face down. The/each child turns over two pictures. Two pictures with the same onset is a match and they get to keep the pair.

\*\* Thinking. Think of and say another word beginning with that sound.

### ***Skittles***

Place pictures with different onsets under skittles. As the skittles are knocked over the/a child names the pictures and says the initial sound.

\*\* Thinking. Think of and say another word beginning with that sound.

### ***Hide and seek***

Hide pictures with various onsets around the room. The/each child ‘finds’ a picture, names it, thinks of the onset, and tries to think of and say another word with same beginning sound.

\*\* Thinking. Think of yet another word beginning with that sound.

### ***I went shopping***

Play a game where the/every child thinks of and says words with the same onset.

\*\* Thinking. Think of yet another word beginning with that sound.

## ***Activities to develop rhyme awareness***

### ***Rhyme List***

The adult names a word, then says a real or made-up word that rhymes with that word. The/each child thinks of more rhymes, and says if they are real or made-up words.

### ***Rhyme decisions***

The adult says two words, such as ‘ball’ and ‘doll’ and asks the child/ren if they rhyme. The adult also uses examples where the words do not rhyme, such as ‘ball’ and ‘tree’. If a child can do this successfully, they are offered three words, and have to say which two words rhyme.

## ***Games for children who need more help to develop rhyme awareness***

The following games are for children who are having difficulties identifying rhymes. These additional games would not be appropriate for a child who already has good awareness of rhyme. Games marked \*\* can be extended to allow the child to think of and say relevant rhymes, not just recognise them.

### ***Nursery rhymes***

Place a number of objects or pictures of objects on a table. The adult reads a line from a well-known nursery rhyme, missing off the rhyme word. The/each child has to identify and select the missing word from the pictures or words on the table top. For example: ‘*Jack and Jill went up the ....*’ (the child selects ‘hill’). The adult should also model, saying ‘*Oh, ‘Jill’ and ‘hill’ rhyme*’. Encourage the child/ren to recite the line if they want to.

### ***Choose a rhyme***

Have two toys, such as a toy cat and a toy man. Place objects or pictures of objects in a bag that rhyme with each toy, for example: ‘cat’ – ‘mat’, ‘bat’, ‘rat’; ‘man’ – ‘can’, ‘fan’, ‘pan’ etc. The/each child should take a picture from the bag and decide which toy to give the card to – a picture rhyming with ‘cat’ should be given to the cat, and so on.

### ***Rhyme snap***

Have several sets of pictures that rhyme. Play ‘Snap!’ Where a ‘Snap!’ occurs with two pictures that rhyme, for example: ‘cat’, ‘sat’.

\*\* Thinking. The/each child has to think of and say an additional word that rhymes, for example: ‘cat’, ‘sat’, ‘mat’.

### ***I spy***

Play ‘I spy’ saying ‘*I spy something that rhymes with .... (target)*’. The/a child has to find the appropriate picture.

\*\* Thinking. The/each child takes turns to say ‘I Spy’ and set the targets.

### ***Rhyme hoops***

Have a number of hoops laid on the floor and place one picture or object in each hoop. Have a separate box or bag containing pictures or objects that rhyme with the pictures in the hoop. Each child takes it in

turns to select a picture from the bag and decide which hoop it should be placed in, for example: ‘frog’ rhymes with ‘dog’ so it should go in the ‘dog’ hoop.

\*\* Thinking. The/each child has to think of and say additional real or nonsense rhyming words

### ***Rhyming lotto.***

Have a lotto board and lotto cards that rhyme with the pictures on the lotto board. Take turns at turning over a card to see if it rhymes with a picture on the board. The first person to complete their board wins. To make this easier the adult says the name of the picture and the/each child has to say if they have a word that rhymes on their board. If they do, they get to put a counter over that picture.

### ***Odd-one-out***

Lay out three pictures, two that rhyme and one that does not, for example: ‘cat’, ‘mat’, ‘log’. The/each child has to find the picture that does not rhyme. This task can be made more difficult by laying out more than three objects or by having a semantically linked word as a distracter, like ‘cat’, ‘mat’, ‘dog’.

### ***Rhyme runs***

Place a number of hoops on the floor with a picture inside the hoop. The/each child has to walk around the hoops (either to music or not). The adult then says a word and the child/ren should run to the hoop with the picture that rhymes with that word.

### ***Additional games for generating rhyme***

These additional games are suitable for children who need to learn to generate rhymes.

#### ***Skittles***

Set up skittles, placing a picture underneath each. The/each child knocks down a skittle and names the card under the skittle, then thinks of and says at least one real or nonsense rhyming word.

#### ***Picture rhyme 1***

Play a simple board game with pictures on each square. Take turns to roll the dice and move forward the corresponding number of spaces. The/each child has to name the picture on the square they land on and think of an additional rhyming word.

#### ***Picture rhyme 2***

Use a simple board game and a dice with one, two and three dots. Take turns to throw the dice and move forward the corresponding number of spaces. Name the picture landed on and ask the child to think of and say extra rhyming words, the number of words depending upon the number thrown on the dice.

#### ***I went rhyme shopping***

The/each child takes a turn to add to a list of imaginary shopping items that must rhyme, for example: ‘*I went shopping and bought a hat, a cat, a mat ....*’ etc.

## HOW TO USE WORDS-WITHIN-WORDS

First, the child/ren should practise visual imagery, i.e. seeing pictures in their mind relating to scenes or words. A good way to start is to ask the child/ren to imagine a scene from a short story that the adult tells them, then to take a turn at describing what their mind-picture was like, for example, what the character/s looked like, what the setting looked like.

Once the notion of seeing and describing mind-pictures is understood, the idea can be used for individual words. The basic sequence is: break the word into syllables; decide if any of the syllables (or a combination) forms a word, and draw that smaller word (word-within-a-word). This serves as a visual reminder of the original word.

A word of two or more syllables is selected to work on, on the basis that it is a new word for the child/ren or one that they are having difficulty learning and recalling.

### ***'Herbivore' example***

The example here will be 'herbivore'. The word is broken down into its syllables and said by the child: 'her-bi-vore'. This can be done in a group by each child saying one syllable. A syllable usually starts with a consonant and is followed by a vowel, so the second syllable of 'herbivore' is 'bi' rather than 'i', but children will vary in how they break words up and there is no need to be too exact about it.

The child/ren then decide/s if any of the syllables form new words. Each child is encouraged to 'see' the new word in their mind. The children do not have to stick to any strict notion of where to divide the word, so if a child thinks 'herb' not 'her' is the first syllable, that is useful, and relates to the meaning. A child may also join two syllables to make a word, for example 'herbi', which could be a name.

This strategy is designed to be a flexible tool for helping each child to remember certain difficult words, and therefore the method that works best for each child is to be adopted. It is also important that each child decides which word/s within the main word they will choose, as using the child's own idea should help them to remember.

Sometimes there are no words within the main word, or parts of it are left over. When this is the case, the adult can encourage the children to see if any of the syllables 'sound like' other words. For example, the end of 'herbivore' sounds like 'four' and this could be used to remember syllable three. It is important to discuss such images.

When the child's word/s have been discussed with the adult, the child makes a drawing of the mind-picture/s of their words. The child can choose whether to use all of the target word's syllables, i.e. to have drawings representing 'her' 'bi' and 'vore', or whether to use only some in their depictions, such as 'her' or 'herb'.

On future occasions when the child is trying to remember the target word 'herbivore' they are encouraged to use their mind-pictures to help remember.

## GAMES FOR BOTH SEMANTIC AND PHONOLOGICAL FEATURES

### **Secret words**

Choose words that all begin with a particular sound, for example, ‘b’, which is well known to the child. The/each child is given a ‘secret’ word. He or she then gives clues for others to guess what the word is, for example for ‘bear’ saying: *‘It’s an animal that’s big, brown and hairy starting with ‘b’.*’ The initial sound is changed from time to time.

### **Linking pictures**

Use a selection of picture cards, including some which can be related to each other by category, for example: a selection from ‘clothes’, ‘transport’ or ‘buildings’. Ask the/each child to find two that go together, and to explain why. An example would be ‘socks’ and ‘trousers’, as *‘They are both things we wear.’*, or *‘They are both clothes’*. The adult then asks for a word from the same selection of pictures that starts with a certain sound, for example ‘sh’ for ‘shirt’ or ‘shoes’. Alternate between the two types of questions, making semantic and phonological links.

### **Sound match**

The/each child is given a letter representing a speech sound (phoneme). The adult holds up one picture card at a time until the child with the matching initial sound identifies it, for example: ‘v’ for ‘van’. The adult then asks the child to think of the semantic category, here ‘transport’.

### **Sound starters**

This game is similar to ‘Sound match’ above, except the/each child has pictures and the adult chooses a sound, saying, for example: *‘I’m thinking of something that starts with ‘b’.*’ The child who has the matching picture, for example ‘biscuit’, identifies it and gives its category name, ‘food’.

### **Sound and syllable match**

Show the child/ren a group of related objects, for example ‘kitchen utensils’. The child/ren should choose and say items that start with the same sound, for example ‘l’ for ‘ladle’ and ‘liquidiser’, or that have the same number of syllables, for example ‘ladle’, and ‘masher’ – both with two syllables.

### **Sound lists**

The/each child has to provide as many words as they can beginning with a certain sound, for example /b/, within a wide category, such as ‘things you find at school’. Examples would be ‘book’, ‘board’, ‘biro’. This activity can be made into a board game, where every time a child lands on a certain picture on the board they have to think of and say another word with the same initial sound from the category, until no more words can be thought of. Another initial sound can then be selected.

## PUBLISHED RESOURCES

There are many published resources that give helpful ideas for developing semantic and phonological work. The following were available during the project, with numbers cross-referred to the list appearing at the end of this Manual (Section Nine).

### *Semantic*

Semantic Links	4
Facilitating Word Recall	13
Talking Semantics	27
Rhodes to Language	34
Say and Do Vocabulary Game Boards	35
Secret Square Game	36
CLIP Semantics Worksheets	39
Semantic Connections	42

### *Phonological*

Phonological awareness activities were available from

[www.ltscotland.org.uk/5to14/specialfocus/earlyintervention/teachingphonologicalawareness.asp](http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/5to14/specialfocus/earlyintervention/teachingphonologicalawareness.asp)

# MAKING WORD CATEGORIES

## INTRODUCTION

Learning about the semantic features of individual words is important in building a child's vocabulary. Linking new words with related words within a category helps a child to organize words into meaningful groups, which is important for learning and retrieving them.

Words can be categorised in different ways, for example, where the items are found ('farm animals'), what they are used for ('tools') or what they look like ('red things'). Some words belong to well-defined categories such as 'animals' or 'clothes'. Others can come under broader headings like 'things in the kitchen'. A category can itself be divided into other categories: for example, 'animals' can be split into 'pets', 'zoo animals' and 'farm animals'. Whether a child categorises items into sub-categories ('zoo animals') or the overall category ('animals') will depend on his or her developmental level and the words used.

Categories can be depicted in different ways. At the simplest level, pictures of items can be sorted and grouped. The activities described below give lots of ideas for grouping. Mind-maps are also a popular way of making a visual display of topics and sub-topics within a category, and can be as simple or as complex as needed.

This section gives detailed examples of activities where the aim is for a child to learn to categorise words to promote vocabulary development.

### *Sorting games – identifying categories*

#### *Sorting pictures into two or more categories.*

Lay out a selection of pictures from a number of categories. Set out a hoop or a large sheet of paper for each category. Discuss which category will go in which hoop or onto which piece of paper. The/one child picks a picture and places it according to category. Examples are: 'clothes' or 'food' (easy) and 'things we wear outdoors' or 'things we wear indoors' (harder). Alternatively, the adult sorts pictures into categories and a child has to decide what each category is. This gives practice at labelling categories.

#### *Choosing the category*

Place several cards from different categories on a table. Give a/the child an object or picture card and ask him or her to choose which of the cards on the table it belongs with.

#### *Searching for examples*

Give a/the child a picture scene with lots going on, or for an older child a book or magazine. Ask the child to search for items from a given category. As an adaptation a magazine can be used and the/each child can cut out and stick items on different pages of a scrapbook or exercise book, according to category.

### ***Category lotto***

Give the/each child a lotto card on which are placed pictures or words from certain categories. Say a category heading and if a child has items from that category they can place a counter on one of the pictures, naming it first.

### ***Thinking of words within categories***

#### ***Generating items within a category.***

A/the child selects a category card from a bag and has to think of and say as many items in the category as possible.

### ***Category dice***

The adult either decides which numbers on a dice will represent which categories, or sticks category names on the sides of a large dice. The child/ren can roll the dice and name items from the category shown. Alternatively, using a ‘category’ dice as above and a normal dice, play a board game where the child rolls both dice and has to say the number of items that the number dice specifies, from the category shown by the other dice. The child can then move the same number of spaces on the board game.

### ***Pass the beanbag (group game)***

One child chooses a category. The others close their eyes as the beanbag is passed. When the child says ‘stop’, the person with the beanbag must name one or more items from the chosen category.

### ***‘My grandmother went to market and she bought....’***

The/each child must add an item from the given category, for example ‘fruit’.

### ***Listening for examples***

The/each child has a category assigned to him or her. The adult reads a list of words and the/each child has to listen for words that come into their category, and indicate when they hear one.

### ***Happy category families***

The/each child sees a selection of cards from different categories, chooses what to collect and asks for cards from that category. It is easier if the child/ren can see all of the cards, by having them face-up on the table. The/each child could have a sheet of paper, or hoop, where they place the cards they are collecting.

### ***‘Odd one out’ games***

#### ***Find the ‘odd-one-out’***

For ‘odd-one-out’ games a child is given three or more words and is asked to judge the ‘odd-one-out’ that belongs to a different category, for example three ‘animals’ and one piece of ‘furniture’. ‘Odd-one-out’ games can also be used to explain of any of the semantic features outlined above, for example by presenting three objects used for ‘brushing’ and one for ‘mending’ (function), or three objects that are made of ‘metal’ and one of ‘wood’ (description).

### ***Explain the ‘odd-one-out’***

Lay out four or more pictures, with one in a different category from the rest. The/each child decides which is the odd-one-out and says why. A child may come up with something different to what the adult had in mind, but, as long as they can explain their reasons, this should be accepted. Alternatively, the/each child can select their own ‘odd-one-out’ pictures and the adult or another child can find which is the ‘odd-one-out.

## **PUBLISHED RESOURCES**

There are many published resources that give helpful ideas for developing word categories. The following were available during the project, with numbers cross-referred to the list appearing at the end of this Manual (Section Nine).

Semantic Links	4
Talking Semantics	27
Clip Semantics, pp. 107-114	39
Rhodes to Language	34
Where do I belong? Games	47

## HOW TO MAKE A MIND MAP

There are four stages in developing a mind map:

1. Choose a topic. Brainstorm with the child/ren all the words or ideas they can think of within the topic that is being discussed. Write down or draw these words.
2. Discuss the categories the words can form.
3. Put an image (picture or word) that depicts the topic in the centre of the page. From this draw lines to the main categories within the topic. Decide on what the main categories will be called.
4. Fill in subcategories and individual words from the brainstorming session.

### *Seasons example*

This worked example on ‘Seasons’ illustrates a ‘Mind Map’ approach, using the following categories, sub-categories and words.

#### **Seasons**

##### **Spring:**

weather	cool
nature	buds, baby animals
clothes	jacket
months	March, April, May

##### **Summer:**

weather	hot
nature	flowers, leaves
clothes	shorts, sandals, tee-shirt
months	June, July, August

##### **Autumn:**

weather	cool, windy
nature	falling leaves
clothes	as Spring
months	September, October, November

##### **Winter:**

weather	cold, snowy
nature	no leaves, animals hibernate
clothes	coat, scarf, hat, gloves
months	December, January, February

## **SYNONYMS AND ANTONYMS**

### **INTRODUCTION**

It can be helpful for children to think of words that mean nearly the same as (synonyms) and words that mean the opposite of (antonyms) the target word. This helps to strengthen semantic links.

### **SYNONYMS**

These are words that sound different but have the same, or nearly the same, meaning. For example: ‘sofa/couch/settee’; ‘spire/steeple’. Some words are only synonymous when applied to a particular item, for example: ‘mature/ripe’ are synonymous when applied to fruit, but only ‘mature’ can be applied to people. Teaching synonyms expands the semantic links or range of semantic information associated with each synonymous word.

### **ANTONYMS**

Some words can be paired with others that have (nearly) the opposite meaning. These are antonyms. For example, ‘hot’ is an antonym of ‘cold’ and vice versa. Several types of antonymy have been identified to take account of different relationships amongst concepts, as it can be misleading to define antonymy simply as ‘oppositeness of meaning’. In the above example, although ‘hot’ and ‘cold’ are opposites, the concepts are relative as an item could be ‘warm’, whereas the concepts ‘dead’ and ‘alive’ are mutually exclusive.

If a concept has an opposite then typically the pair is taught together. Bracken & Myers (1986 pp. 5 – 9: Section 9 No. 6) provide useful advice on how to select which of a concept pair (or series, if we consider ‘hot/cold/warm’ or ‘same/similar/different’) should be taught first, and how they should be presented.

- Teach words that occur in pairs (or in a series such as ‘same/similar/different’) in the same session, if possible, to maximize the meaningfulness of each.
- When teaching pairs that are opposite (i.e. ‘up-down’; ‘in-out’) or words that occur on a continuum (i.e. ‘hot/warm/cold’) teach the ‘positive’ word first. The positive is the word that describes a greater amount and represents ‘the most’ of the concept expressed; so ‘fat’ would be taught before ‘thin’, and ‘loud’ before ‘quiet’.
- Word pairs and series should be taught so that children identify positive examples as expressing ‘the concept’ and negative examples as ‘not the concept’. For instance, an item could ‘be tall’ or ‘not tall’. The children are then taught that when something is ‘not the concept’, for example ‘not tall’, it could be described as ‘short’.
- Even when both poles of a concept are learned, the adult can reinforce the point that if something is ‘not the positive’ concept then it is the ‘negative’ concept and vice versa: for example, if it is ‘not tall’ it is ‘short’.

## **PUBLISHED RESOURCES**

There are many published resources that give examples of synonyms and antonyms. The following were available during the project, with numbers cross-referred to the list appearing at the end of this Manual (Section Nine).

### ***Synonyms***

Rhodes to Language:	34
(Synonym Crosswords pp.140 - 41; Answers p. 142)	
Clip Semantics worksheets: 3	9
(Labels (Nouns) and Actions, pp. 36 - 40;	
Locatives (Prepositions) p. 70; Attributes (Adjectives) pp. 94 - 98)	

### ***Antonyms***

Practical Language Activities:	20
(Antonyms pp. 50 - 54)	
Rhodes to Language:	34
(Antonym Crosswords pp. 138 - 139; Answers p. 142)	
Clip Semantics Worksheets:	39
(Locative (Prepositions) pp. 68 - 71; Attributes (Adjectives) pp. 99 - 105;	
Time & Sequence pp. 146 – 148)	

### ***Activities that combine synonyms and antonyms***

Rhodes to Language:	34
(Same or Different pp. 124 - 129; Antonyms and Synonyms pp. 130 – 137)	

## **VERBS**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Children with language difficulties frequently experience considerable difficulty in learning verbs. School ‘topic’ vocabulary is often concerned with nouns and, to a lesser degree, concept words, and verbs may receive limited attention. The semantic features discussed previously will apply to verbs, especially ‘function’, as will the section on phonological features. However, verbs require some special consideration and this section looks at links between verbs and other words in a sentence. This ties in with the ‘Colourful Sentences’ section of the Manual, discussed under ‘Grammar’. The aim is for the child/ren to understand and use a variety of verbs.

Verbs are ‘done’ by things, animals or people (‘subjects’), and act upon things, animals or people (‘objects’) using ‘instruments’. Subjects, objects and instruments are usually referred to by nouns or pronouns. Verbs are learned in relation to such semantic relationships.

#### *Activities*

##### ***Subject of the verb.***

Subject refers to words representing things or people that ‘do’ the verb. Subjects will rarely need much work as it will usually be a person or character that ‘does’ the verb. On occasions there will be a name for the person who ‘does’ a particular verb: for example, for ‘cooking’, ‘chef’ would be a possible subject. Such names can be explained and discussed with the child/ren.

##### ***Object of the verb***

Object refers to words representing things the verb acts upon. Select a target verb to be worked on; for example ‘cut’. Ask the child/ren to think of all the things that can be cut, for example, ‘paper’, ‘hair’, ‘material’, ‘grass’, ‘bread/cake’, ‘knee/arm/finger’ and so on. Write or make a drawing for ‘cut’, and draw these things around it. If a child is having difficulty thinking of things that go with the verb, a selection of pictures could be used with words for the child to select. Alternatively forced alternatives can be given: for example, ask ‘Does paper or house go with cut?’

##### ***Instrument of the verb***

Instrument refers to any words representing things that are needed to perform the action of the verb. For example, we can cut with ‘scissors’ or ‘knives’ or ‘axes’. Again, these objects can be drawn around the word ‘cut’.

##### ***Verb -verb links***

Verbs can be either synonyms or antonyms of other verbs. For synonyms, other verbs with the same or similar meaning can be discussed, for example: ‘wash/clean’. For antonyms, verbs with opposing meanings can be found, for example: ‘wash/dry’; ‘break/mend’.

### ***Colour coding***

The verb, object, instrument and subject can be colour-coded if this is felt to be beneficial for a particular child. If this is the case, the same colours are used as in Colourful Sentences: please refer to the Colourful Sentences section of the Manual.

## **PUBLISHED RESOURCES**

There are published resources that give examples of verbs. The following were available during the project, with numbers cross-referred to the list appearing at the end of this Manual (Section Nine).

Action Lotto	2
Semantic Links	4

## **CONCEPT AND RELATIONAL WORDS**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Words that represent concepts and relationships are very important for children understanding everyday classroom instructions and activities. Concepts should be taught according to the child's needs and should be introduced through activities, with lots of modelling at first. With each new concept, the adult should take time to model the target word(s) before asking the child to try using the words(s). Though it is not always necessary to give an explanation or definition of the word, it may be appropriate to give the child some information. For example, if discussing 'either/or' the adult might say: '*Today we are going to think about some words you might hear when you are given a choice.*' For all activities, reverse roles to allow the child to practise using the new word as well as hearing it.

### **SAME/DIFFERENT (SIMILAR)**

#### ***The meaning***

It is important to check a child's comprehension of the concept underlying 'same' and 'different' before working on other areas, as it underlies many relationships. Ask the child/ren to classify objects and/or pictures that are identical or show differences, and discuss the classification with the child/ren.

#### ***Activities***

##### ***Concepts in pictures***

Use the Black Sheep Concepts in Pictures 11 - Same/Different pack to work on this concept (Section Nine, No. 9.) Once a basic understanding of the concept of 'same/different' is reached (i.e. that two pictures are 'exactly the same' or 'different') it may be useful to discuss things that are 'the same' in contrast to things that are 'similar' – use Boardmaker™ pictures for this. The adult can introduce the idea of items having some attributes the same: for example 'cat' and 'dog' are not the same, but have some things in common as both have four legs, a tail and are kept as pets.

### **EITHER/OR**

#### ***The meaning***

Explain that these words help you to make a choice when you can only have one thing.

#### ***Activities***

##### ***Port - starboard game***

Label two walls of the room with pictures and give oral directions, such as '*Either run to the cat's wall or the dog's.*' Check with the/each child after the task that they knew they could not run to both places, they had to go 'either' one way 'or' the other.

### ***Choose your snack***

Give choices at (pretend) snack time – either ‘juice’ or ‘milk’; either ‘biscuit’ or ‘crisps’. Once the adult has given lots of choices like this, encourage the/each child to ask the adult or other children whether they would like ‘either’ one ‘or’ the other.

### ***Picture meals***

Give choices about pretend meals and what the/each child can have. Use two piles of pictures and ask ‘*Would you like either (choice a) or (choice b)?*’: for example either ‘curry’ or ‘chips’. Choose items to fill the plate.

### ***Musical statues***

Play musical statues, where the adult gives a choice of what to do when the music stops: for example either ‘clap hands’ or ‘stamp feet’.

### ***Board games***

Play board games where the/each child is given either an action card or an object picture to talk about. Once a child has practised responding to adult choices, they can take a turn at offering the choice: for example saying ‘*Tom, you can choose/I’m choosing either (an action) or (an object)*’.

### ***Barrier games***

Play a barrier game, where the/each child can colour a hat ‘either blue or red’. The child chooses the colour they want. The activity can be reversed, with the child giving instructions once they have practised listening.

## **IF**

### ***The meaning***

‘If’ tells us what has to happen to make something else happen. There is a template for ‘cause and effect’ in Cause and Effect Colorcards® (Section Nine, No. 8), and CLIP Syntax worksheets pp. 128 - 133 (Section Nine, No. 40).

### ***Activities***

#### ***‘What happens if we .....?’***

Introduce the idea using clear cause and effect questions, for example: ‘*What happens if we turn on the tap?*’ Encourage the/each child to respond, saying for example: ‘*If we turn on the tap, water comes out*’.

### ***Simon says***

Play ‘Simon says’, with examples like ‘*If you’ve got ....stand up.*’ Use this game to discuss the word ‘if’, and check the/each child’s understanding. The child/ren can only stand up if they have whatever the adult says, for example ‘red hair’. Use some impossible actions also to check for comprehension, saying for example ‘red hair’ when no-one has red hair.

### ***Magic chair***

Say '*If I nod/blink (etc.) at you, come and sit here*'. Then ask a question, for example: '*Did I blink at you?*' Do not always carry out the action mentioned; for example say: '*If I blink at you, come and sit here.*' but 'nod' instead, so the child/ren should not respond.

### ***Pass the nod; blink you're out***

If you are nodded at, you then pass the nod on to someone else. If you are blinked at, you are 'out'.

### ***Swap seats if you like/have got***

The adult starts this, but the/each child can take turns at making suggestions. Include some impossible actions also to check on comprehension, for example: '*If you have a yellow t-shirt on, swap seats*' when no-one has a yellow t-shirt.

### ***Colouring race***

Say '*Colour a bit of the picture if you have .....*' For groups, see who can colour all of their picture first.

### ***Board race***

The/each child has a picture of a face or an animal and a board game. The adult makes statements such as '*If your picture has glasses, move one space on the board*'.

### ***Mother, may I .....*?**

The adult gives instructions, such as '*You can move two steps if you have/are wearing .....*'

## **UNLESS**

### ***The meaning***

'Unless' tells us why something might not happen, or when we should not do something. It means 'but not if'. So when we say '*I'll go shopping unless it rains*' the second clause '*unless it rains*' gives a reason that the first clause might not happen. We can say this the other way round as well: '*Unless it rains, I'll go shopping*', where the first clause gives a reason that the second might not happen. Sentences like the first example, '*I'll go shopping unless it rains*' may be easier for children to understand, as they do not have to remember the first part whilst hearing the second.

### ***Activities***

#### ***Simon says***

Use attributes of the child/ren to give instructions, for example: '*Stand up unless you have blue eyes*'. This is likely to need extra explanation, such as: '*That means stand up, but not if you have blue eyes*'.

#### ***Colouring games***

Using colouring sheets, give instructions using 'unless', for example: '*Colour the hat blue unless you are a boy*'. Once the/each child is confident of the meaning, he/she can take a turn at giving directions.

### **Decoding messages**

The adult gives the child/ren a message containing ‘unless’. The/each child has to work out whether the stated activity is going to happen or not. For example, the adult says ‘*We will go to the park unless it rains. It is raining. So will we go to the park?*’

## **BUT NOT/EXCEPT**

### ***The meaning***

These words explain what does not apply. Therefore make sure the/each child understands ‘but not’ before moving on to ‘except’. It helps if the adult demonstrates the meaning using contrastive objects, for example, saying ‘*This pencil is big and blue. The other pencil is big, but not blue.*’

### ***Activities: But not***

#### ***Please get me ....***

The adult asks the child/ren to pass objects, for example ‘*Please give me apples, but not oranges*'; ‘*Please give me red pencils, but not blue pencils.*' Shake your head and use a hand gesture for ‘not’ when giving instructions, to give extra information.

#### ***Actions***

The adult gives directions, such as: ‘*Run and touch the chairs, but not the black ones.*’ This game increases the language load, and should only be done once the/each child has a good grasp of the meaning, or with careful monitoring of the amount of information being given.

#### ***Colouring and drawing***

The adult says ‘*Please colour the shoes blue but not the ones with laces*’ or ‘*But not if they have spots*’. Again, the language load needs to be monitored carefully.

### ***Activities: Except***

Teach ‘except’ as an extension of ‘but not’. Using multiple objects, the adult should introduce the idea in a similar way to ‘but not’, for example saying: ‘*All the boys except Tom stand up*'; ‘*Get me all the fruit except the bananas*’ and so on. Use the same activities, and remember to reverse roles to practise using ‘except’. CLIP Semantics worksheets p 124 has examples (Section Nine, No. 39).

## **ALL/SOME/NONE/ALL BUT (EXCEPT) ONE**

### ***The meaning***

These words refer to quantity in relation to countable objects. Introduce ‘all’ first and then use the same activities to bring in contrasts in the order, ‘all/some’; ‘all/some/none’; ‘all/some/all but (except) one’. ‘All but (except) one’ can be introduced through colouring activities, where children colour ‘all but (except) one’ of the spots brown and so on. CLIP Semantics worksheets pp. 122, 123 has examples (Section Nine, No. 39).

## **Activities**

### **Listen and do**

The adult gives instructions relating to ‘all’, for example: ‘*Let’s all touch our toes*’; ‘*Colour all the stars*’, with feedback to reinforce the meaning, for example: ‘*Oh good, everyone did that, you all did it*’; ‘*Well done, you coloured them all, you coloured every star*’. Emphasise ‘all’ each time.

### **Please get me...**

Say ‘*Please get me all the pencils*’ and so on, with feedback as above.

### **Happy ‘families’**

Have six pictures sets of several items, dealt between child/ren and the adult. The/each child chooses which picture set to collect, for example ‘bananas’ and asks the others in turn ‘*Have you got a ....?*’. The response is ‘*I have some*’; ‘*I have none*’; ‘*I have one*’ and so on, with the cards passed over as appropriate. This is a good game for groups, with the cards shared amongst the children. If possible, the person collecting the cards can then summarise their hand, for example: ‘*I have some bananas*’; ‘*I have all but (except) one of the bananas*’.

### **Pick up sticks**

The adult can give instructions, for example: ‘*Pick up all the sticks*’; ‘*Pick up some (of the) sticks*’; ‘*Pick up none of the sticks*’ and so on.

## **COMPARATIVES AND SUPERLATIVES**

### **The meaning**

Comparatives and superlatives relate things to each other. Comparatives compare two things along some dimension, for example: ‘bigger’, ‘longer’, ‘faster’, ‘younger’. Superlatives identify which has most of the dimension under discussion, for example: ‘biggest’, ‘longest’, ‘fastest’, ‘youngest’. The underlying term being compared should be targeted first to ensure comprehension, for example check the child can identify ‘big’ and ‘small’ before moving to ‘bigger’ and ‘biggest’, ‘smaller’ and ‘smallest’. This should be done by classifying ‘big/small’ objects, and could begin with the adult modelling for the child by labelling each as ‘big/small’ as appropriate. This can be repeated with pictures if necessary. If the child requires to work on a number of comparatives/superlatives, it is best to start with qualities that can be represented visually first, such as size, ‘big/small’, or length, ‘long/short’, rather than more abstract aspects like ‘slow/fast’. Clip Morphology worksheets pp. 124-125 has examples, (Section Nine, No. 38) as has Cambridge Language Activity files p. 116- 134, (Section Nine, No. 5). 100% Concepts pp. 16 - 17 (Section Nine, No. 1) has examples for older children, and Fun Deck and Do (Section Nine, No. 14) has examples of comparatives.

## **Activities**

### **Objects, pictures and stories**

If possible, comparative and superlative terms should be introduced with objects, for example balloons, blown up to different sizes. Alternatively, Black Sheep Words in Pictures 5 -Comparatives (Section Nine, No. 52) or Boardmaker™ symbols can be used. The adult should begin by modelling, using for example

stories like Goldilocks, where all three terms ‘big’, ‘bigger’, ‘biggest’ can be used in relation to each other.

### ***Opposites***

It is possible to work on opposite meanings at the same time, for example, saying *‘This one is the biggest, can you find me the smallest?’* Discretion has to be used, as some children may find this confusing.

## **PUBLISHED RESOURCES**

There are published resources that give examples of concept and relational words. The following were available during the project, with numbers cross-referred to the list appearing at the end of this Manual (Section Nine).

100% Concepts pp. 16 - 17	1
Cambridge Language Activities pp.116 - 134	5
Cause and Effect Colorcards®	8
Black Sheep Concepts in Pictures 11 - Same/Different	9
Fun Deck and Do	14
Clip Morphology worksheets pp. 124 - 125	38
CLIP Semantics worksheets p. 124.	39
CLIP Syntax worksheets pp. 128 -133	40
Black Sheep Words in Pictures 5 - Comparatives	52

## SPACE AND TIME WORDS

### INTRODUCTION

Words that signal space and time are important in that they give precise information for following instructions and for curriculum areas, such as science. Activities to develop a space and time vocabulary are divided here into ‘location’ words, which say where something is in space, and ‘time sequence’ words, which say when something happens in time.

When working on a new time or space word it is useful at first to demonstrate its meaning, using real objects and having the child as an active participant. This is the first stage for each word targeted. Next it is important to ensure that the child’s understanding is developed before we expect them to use the word in spoken language. Secondly, help the child to comprehend by giving lots of examples to develop understanding of the underlying meanings, first with toys or objects then with pictures. Pictures are more abstract and can be more difficult. Let the child carry out lots of actions with objects or point to pictures to show that he/she has understood. Thirdly, help the child to use the word, again with toys or objects, then pictures. Ask the child to describe actions or pictures and to give instructions to practise using the word.

### LOCATION WORDS

Words that signal location in space are listed below with activities to help a child understand and use them.

#### IN, ON, UNDER

##### *The meaning*

These words mark a location in relation to a place or object. Sometimes, ‘inside’, ‘on top of’ and ‘underneath’ are easier to learn than ‘in’, ‘on’ and ‘under’ as they are easier to hear. Contrast the meanings of two words when introducing location words. Begin with ‘on/on top of’ and ‘under/underneath’; then ‘in/inside’ and ‘under/underneath’; then ‘on/on top of’ and ‘in/inside’. Place an object and describe its location in relation to another saying, for example: *‘The book is underneath the table’*. Check for comprehension – can the child put a pencil ‘on’ a cup, or put a knife ‘under’ a plate.

##### *Activities*

Ask the child/ren to use the word in relation to objects. Prompt with forced alternatives, modelling and expansion, saying, for example: *‘Is it on the cup or under the cup? That’s right, the pencil is on the cup.’* It is all right for a child to convey the meaning by saying a single word, for example: ‘on’ or ‘in’ while he or she is still learning the word. We cannot expect the child to use the word in full sentences immediately – this comes gradually. Similar work can be carried out for ‘in’ contrasted with ‘under’, and ‘on’ with ‘in’ if necessary. Cambridge Language Activity Files has a section on ‘in’ (Section Nine No. 5).

## **BEHIND, IN FRONT OF, IN THE MIDDLE OF, BETWEEN**

### ***The meaning***

Make sure that the adult sits next to the child/ren so that both ‘in fronts’ and ‘behinds’ have the same orientation. It is easier for a child to relate ‘front’ and ‘behind’ to him or herself, or to things that have a clear ‘front’ and ‘back’ such as houses or dolls than to things where the ‘front’ is less clear, such as cups. ‘Behind’ and ‘in front’ should be established before moving on to ‘in the middle’ and ‘between’, but the sequence and activities for achieving good use are similar.

### ***Activities***

#### ***A train of chairs***

Make a pretend train or bus, using chairs. The driver sits in ‘front’, the passengers sit ‘behind’. If you have three seats you can refer to ‘in the middle’, ‘in front’, ‘behind’ and ‘between’. Check for comprehension with lots of examples. Ask the/each child to swap places in the train with other children or toys, for example saying: ‘*Go (or stand) behind Bob the Builder*’. Add other actions, for example: ‘*Put this ball in front of Jane*'; ‘*Put this ball between Bob and Big Dog*’.

#### ***Traffic jams***

Make a traffic jam with toy vehicles. Discuss the fact that the lorry is ‘in the middle’, the car is ‘in front’ and so on.

#### ***Find it***

Sit, or stand, in a circle. One child has his or her eyes closed, and an object is placed somewhere in the room. The child opens their eyes, is told where it is, for example: ‘*It’s in front of Bob*’ or ‘*It’s behind the car*’. Next encourage use, in this game, with the child looking for the object and saying where it has been placed.

#### ***Do what I say.***

The child/ren can give commands, for example ‘*Put the bean bag behind the red hoop.*’; ‘*Throw the bean bag between two hoops*’. Cambridge Language Activity Files has a section on ‘behind’ and ‘in front’ (Section Nine No. 5)

## **NEXT TO, BESIDE**

### ***The meaning***

Use the stages, activities and games outlined above, but concentrate on the words ‘next to’ and ‘beside’. These have very similar meanings and can be taught together. As with ‘in front’ and ‘behind’, objects with clearly marked sides may be easier than those without.

## **NEAR, CLOSE, FAR**

### ***The meaning***

Demonstrate the meaning using toy cars, people, pictures, or us/them drawings. For example, place a car ‘near’ a house then drive it ‘far away’. Check for comprehension with lots of examples, then have the child/ren use the words.

### ***Activities***

#### ***Roll a ball***

Roll a ball around other objects. Model the words ‘near’ and ‘far’, for example: ‘*The ball is near the hoop; now it is far away from the hoop*’. It is useful to introduce a new location word using words already familiar to the child/ren. For example, using ‘close’ can help a child learn ‘near’ and so on.

#### ***Hide and seek***

Hide an object, and as the/each child looks for it tell them he or she is ‘near’ or ‘far away’.

#### ***‘What’s the time Mr Wolf?’***

A child or the adult is the ‘wolf’ and child/ren step nearer and nearer asking ‘*What’s the time Mr Wolf?*’, until the wolf shouts ‘*Dinner time!*’ and chases them. Discuss how ‘close’ or ‘far away’ they got before the wolf shouted.

#### ***Stick the tail on the donkey***

Have a poster of a donkey with no tail, and a string tail with Blu-tack™ on it. One child is blindfolded and tries to stick the tail on the donkey. Mark where they stick the tail with chalk. Discuss how close’ or ‘far away’ they get to the right spot. As before, check comprehension and encourage use.

## **RIGHT, LEFT**

### ***The meaning.***

‘Right’ and ‘left’ are abstract concepts, and can appear different to the speaker and listener. Children need a way to remember the words. To teach this, put the child’s hands flat on the table with the thumbs extended and teach ‘L for left’, using the angle between the forefinger and thumb as ‘L’. Possibly use a red (for ‘right’) sticker on the right hand.

### ***Activities***

#### ***Simon says***

Play ‘Simon says’, giving instructions such as ‘*Simon says point to your left foot/ the window on your left*’, with the child/ren following the commands.

#### ***Colouring***

When colouring in a drawing, the orientation of ‘left’ and ‘right’ can change between the drawing being coloured and the person colouring. If the child is ready to learn this, have them colour ‘left’ or ‘right’

parts of a drawing. Use a drawing of something with a clear ‘left’ and ‘right’ such as a doll, bear or puppet drawn facing outwards. Have a matching object, with the right side labelled ‘red for right’ as above. Discuss where ‘puppet’s right hand’ is in the object and in the drawing. Some children may need lots of practice to understand this. The child can then follow instructions to colour in ‘clown’s left foot’ and so on, and give similar instructions to others when they can comprehend.

## OVER, THROUGH

### ***The meaning***

Many objects can be passed ‘over’ the top of something: only those with internal space can be passed ‘through’. Discuss and demonstrate this difference, and what things can be gone ‘through’ in the/each child’s school and house. Demonstrate ‘through’ actions with a ball, then get the child/ren to do them, for example: ‘*Go through the hoop*’; ‘*Go over the hoop*’; ‘*Go over the toy plane*’. Phrases like ‘over the top of’ and ‘through the middle of’ might be helpful as they are easy to hear. As before, check comprehension and encourage use.

### ***Activities***

#### ***Through the hoops***

Have three or four hoops and a ball. Prop up one or two hoops, so that the ball can be thrown ‘through’ them, and lay the others on the ground, so the ball can be thrown ‘over’ them. Ensure the/each child comprehends the meaning, then tell the adult/others to do both actions. Repeat with other materials which balls can pass ‘through’ or over, such as pillow cases with both ends cut open, paper chain or skipping rope loops draped on furniture, or chair legs.

#### ***Fishing nets***

Use a child’s fishing net and some materials, such as sand in a bucket, that can go ‘through’ the holes, with others that may or may not be too large, such as mixed dried seeds. Play at fishing, and discuss which objects go ‘through’ and which do not.

#### ***Goals and tunnels***

Make miniature goal posts with straws or pipe cleaners, or tunnels with strips of paper and Blu-tac™, and play at flicking balls of scrunched-up paper at them across a table. Discuss which paper balls go ‘through’ the posts or tunnels, and which go ‘over’ the top.

## FIRST, NEXT, LAST – IN SPACE

### ***The meaning***

Some words such as ‘first’, ‘next’ and ‘last’ can signal either a ‘location in space’ or a ‘point in time’. The use of these words to refer to a spatial sequence, things in a line, is common in learning to read and to count, where writing letters and numbers correctly in left-to-right order is often called ‘first’, ‘next’ and ‘last’. Demonstrating these meanings with objects and pictures is required, then lots of examples to help the child comprehend, then asking the child to use the words. Where a start point has to be chosen, use the left side for the ‘first’ item, as this is the direction in which English is written.

## **Activities**

### ***Line-up games***

Encourage grouped children to line up, or individual children to line up play people, cars, animals, and so on. Make a clear start point, such as a line or a bus stop. Ask ‘Who’s first in the line?'; ‘Who’s next?'; ‘Who’s last?’.

### ***Line-up pictures***

Use cut-out pictures and line them up in rows, on a pictured washing line, or road, or path. Make a clear start point. Discuss which is the ‘first’, ‘next’ and ‘last’ picture. Take turns to put out the pictures and use the target words.

## **FIRST, NEXT, LAST – IN TIME**

Since the words ‘first’, ‘next’ and ‘last’ can signal either a ‘location in space’ or a ‘point in time’, their use as points in time is discussed below, with activities to help a child understand and use them.

### ***The meaning***

To teach words such as ‘first’ or ‘start’, ‘next’, ‘last’ or ‘end’ as time sequence words, it is helpful to use a visual template to represent the ‘start’ and ‘end’ of the time sequence. This converts the time sequence into a spatial example, and helps the child to relate both space and time meanings. Stress that we represent the spatial sequence from ‘left’ to ‘right’, and also colour-code the template to reinforce ‘start’ and ‘end’. Traffic light green is used for the beginning of the sequence, then orange/amber, then red to signify the end of the sequence.

FIRST	NEXT	LAST
GREEN	ORANGE	RED

## **Activities**

### ***Everyday sequences***

Model or simulate common sequences of activity. For example, the sequence for brushing teeth is: put toothpaste on the brush, brush teeth then spit. Mime such sequences and describe what you have just done using the key time words, saying: ‘I did three things there. First, I .... Next, I ... Last, I ...’. The/each child then chooses one of the activities from the sequence to act out, or is given a complete action sequence to demonstrate from a set of objects or pictures. The adult talks through the child/ren’s actions, saying: ‘First you put on the toothpaste. Next you ... Last you ....’. For the next step add pictures to actions and introduce the coloured template, as above, and reinforce its meaning, saying ‘The first picture goes on the green space because green is for ‘go’. The next picture goes on the orange space and the last picture goes on the red space. It is the end of the story and red is for ‘stop’ – the story has stopped.’ Encourage the child to place pictures from the three-part action sequence onto the template in the appropriate order. For a game to reinforce this, see Black Sheep Words in Pictures - Sequences, p. 4 (Section Nine No. 9). To help the child use ‘first’, ‘next’, ‘last’, plan speaking activities to parallel the

above activities. Black Sheep Concepts in Pictures - 5, pp. 18 - 20 (Section Nine No. 9) and CLIP Semantics Worksheets, pp. 152-157 (Section Nine No. 39) have picture-based exercises.

### ***Who's first?***

There are some general strategies that can be used to reinforce 'first', 'next' and 'last', such as asking children '*Who wants to go first?*' and '*Who's next?*'.

### ***Sequence games***

The adult gives directions such as '*First throw the blue bean bag, next the yellow bean bag and last the green bean bag*'. When a child can understand these, they can give the directions.

### ***Action slips***

The/each child chooses three slips of paper with an action sequence drawn on them, arranges the sequence in an appropriate order using the coloured template, then acts out the sequence, and says what they did. For groups, the other children can say what the child did 'first', 'next' and 'last'.

### ***Barrier games***

For older children play barrier games, with the same items on each side. The child has to direct the adult or another child, saying, for example: '*First put the red brick on the blue brick. Next put the green brick beside the yellow brick. Last put two blue bricks on the yellow one*' and so on.

### ***Fishing games***

Fishing games can also be used, where the order in which fish are to be caught is indicated.

### ***Race games***

Play race games with model cars or grouped children, and ask '*Who/what came first?*'; '*Who/what was next?*'; '*Who / what was last?*', and so on. You can also incorporate teaching of 'second' and 'third' into this game.

### ***Board games***

Play board games, with coloured tokens or competing grouped children, and ask '*Who/what starts first?*'; '*Who/what is next?*'; '*Who/what is last?*', and so on. You can also incorporate teaching of 'second' and 'third' into this game.

### ***Do three actions***

Get the/each child to think up three actions to carry out. Ask '*What are you going to do first?*' and encourage the child to say the sequence of actions. You could make this more difficult by giving instructions and then having a quiz, for example asking '*What did I ask you to do last?*'; '*So, when will you do (part of sequence) – at the beginning or at the end?*'

### **'What's missing' pictures**

Remove one picture from a sequence, thus taking away one pictured event from the beginning, middle or end of a story. Ask the child/ren to say what should go in the blank. CLIP Semantics Worksheets, pp. 152 – 156 (Section Nine No. 39) have examples that could be adapted.

### **Any-order actions**

Here, actions are carried out which could logically occur in any order, such as drawing a mouth, eyes and ears on a face. A child chooses the order of the sequence, and the adult or another child has to say what the child did 'first', 'next' and 'last'. If the memory load is not too great, the child can also say the order in which they carried out the actions. Black Sheep Concepts in Pictures – 5, pp. 6 - 8 (Section Nine No. 9) has examples.

### **Story retell**

Tell a story and the/each child has to say what happened in order. Black Sheep Concepts in Pictures – 5, pp. 12 – 13 has examples (Section Nine No. 9).

## **AND THEN**

To lengthen the sequence, we extend the coloured template to between four and six sections, for example:

FIRST	NEXT	AND THEN	AND THEN	LAST
GREEN	ORANGE	ORANGE	ORANGE	RED

The activities for demonstration, comprehension and use are similar to those used above. Demonstrate with longer sequences of pictures, modelling and sequencing, using 'and then'. Check comprehension by asking '*And then what happened?*' Encourage retelling of stories containing longer sequences or describing sequences of every-day actions and events.

## **BEFORE, AFTER**

### ***The meaning***

These words also indicate time points and sequences so we can use the left-to-right template developed for 'first, next, last' to represent time sequences. Again, move through demonstrating, to checking comprehension, to a child's use of 'before' and 'after', in order to structure learning. Use the template with an arrow pointing left to reflect 'before', and then pointing right to signify 'after'.

Initially only demonstrate the meaning of 'after'; comprehension and use will be worked on when 'before' has been introduced. Mime an action, such as teeth brushing, and say: '*But before I brushed my teeth I had to do something. I had to put on the toothpaste. After I finish brushing I will have to do something else. I will need to spit*'. Explain the arrow, pointing left to indicate 'before' and right for 'after' and say for example: '*If we move the arrow this way it shows us what happened before. For this one, before he brushed his teeth he put on toothpaste*'.

## **Activities**

### **What went before?**

Use two-item picture sequence or photo sequence cards. Show the first part, saying: ‘*This wee boy is having a drink. This is what is happening now. Can you show me what he had to do before he could drink?*’ Show a pictured choice of pouring a drink and an irrelevant distracter. Reinforce with further picture cards.

### **Fishing game**

Use Black Sheep Concepts in Pictures - 2, pp. 3 and 4 (Section Nine, No. 9) to make a fishing game. A/the child fishes for a scenario to discuss, then the adult reads questions to go with that scenario and that child or another fishes for the picture which comes ‘before’.

### **Real-life actions**

Think of some real-life actions for the/erach child to practise, for example: ‘*Wash your hands before you go to lunch*’. Remember it is easier this way round: saying ‘*Before you go to lunch, wash your hands*’ reverses the order in which the child carries out the actions and is harder to remember and understand.

## **PUBLISHED RESOURCES**

There are published resources that give examples of concept and relational words. The following were available during the project, with numbers cross-referred to the list appearing at the end of this Manual (Section Nine).

Black Sheep Concepts in Pictures - 2, 5	9
CLIP Semantics Worksheets, pp. 152-157	39

## **'WH' WORDS**

### **INTRODUCTION**

It is helpful to explain to children how 'wh' words work. They are used to ask (and answer) questions, and to indicate the time, place or reason things are done, for example: '*When will we go?*'; '*We'll go when Gran's ready*'; '*We're going back where we went yesterday*'.

### **GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR WORK ON 'WH' WORDS**

Understanding and using 'wh' words is a very important area of language, as they allow us to find out information and give responses when information is sought. Being able to use questions also helps us to reason, and they frequently appear in children's reading books. Children with language disorders often have difficulty in using and understanding 'wh' words and need extra help and support to learn to do so. Understanding and use of 'wh' words can be developed by:

- telling the child what we are working on and why
- explaining what each 'wh' word means
- encouraging the use of questions to seek additional information
- reflecting on what has been learned at the end of each session.

It may be useful when introducing 'wh' questions to encourage the child to listen to and practise making the 'wh' sound, for example (for Scottish English) blowing on their hand or on tissue paper. The 'wh' questions, 'what', 'who', 'where', 'why', 'when' and 'how' are discussed here.

### **WHAT**

#### ***The meaning***

'What' can be used to ask for different types of information and so get lots of different answers. It often asks for the name a thing - not a person. It is therefore helpful if a 'what' question is also answered with 'what'; i.e. 'what' is repeated to indicate the part of the question that has been answered. Start with modelling, using examples where the adult asks and answers 'what' questions, with lots of repetition. For example, say: '*What is this? It's a dog. Yes, that's what it is.*'; '*What is the man doing? He's drinking, that's what he's doing.*' Other types of 'what' questions to be introduced are '*What is your name/age?*'; '*What is happening?*' and so on.

The adult can then do something and ask the child '*What did I do?*'. Once a child can answer 'what' questions with short answers, move on to questions that require a longer answer, for example '*What do you want for tea?*'; '*What do you like to do?*'

To encourage a child to generate simple 'what' questions, role reversal can be used, with the child thinking up questions to ask an adult in relation to objects, pictures or games. In a group, prompts such as '*What does X like to play with? Ask him.*' can be used to encourage a child to use 'what' to seek information from a peer. Lots of comprehension work, checking the child's understanding, needs to be done initially, moving on to the child using the 'wh' word.

## **Activities**

### **Object pictures**

Use pictures of objects and ask the child/ren to name a picture when asked ‘*What’s this?*’ When they answer, say: ‘*Yes, that’s what it is.*’

### **Objects by use**

Collect objects (or pictures of objects) that have a definite use. Lay them out and ask the child/ren to point to them in response to questions such as ‘*What do we write with?*’; ‘*What do we wash with?*’; ‘*What do we put on our feet?*’. When the appropriate picture is selected say ‘*Yes, that’s what we ...*’. Examples include ‘*We wear ... clothes*’; ‘*We eat/cook/cut ... food*’; ‘*We kick/throw ... a ball*’. Once the child/ren can respond to questions containing a verb like ‘*What do we eat?*’; ‘*What do we wear?*’ and so on, encourage them to name the action in response to the general question ‘*What’s this for?*’.

### **Fishing game**

Fish up object and action pictures and ask ‘*What is it/what are they doing?*’.

### **What can you see?**

This is a variation of ‘I-Spy’. The adult asks the child/ren ‘*What can you see in the corner/outside the window?*’ and so on.

### **Guessing game – what is it?**

The adult gives three clues about an object and asks the child/ren ‘*What is it?*’ or ‘*What do you think it is?*’. This can be used with role reversal when a child gives clues and asks ‘*What is it?*’.

### **Survey**

The child/ren take/s turns to ask the adult three ‘what’ questions, for example: ‘*What do you like to eat?*’; ‘*What’s your favourite TV programme?*’; ‘*What is your best friend called?*’. In groups, children can ask each other.

## **WHO**

### **The meaning**

Asking a ‘who’ question lets us identify a person. It is important that ‘who’ is repeated in the answer to reinforce the meaning. Start with modelling and picture-based materials. For example, use action pictures such as a boy kicking a ball. Say ‘*Who is kicking? The boy is kicking, that’s who.*’; ‘*Who is in the picture?*’; ‘*Who is running?*’; ‘*Who is eating?*’ and so on. Ask general ‘who’ questions using action pictures, but if a child is having difficulties answering give them a choice. For example, ‘*Who is he talking to? The girl or the boy?*’; ‘*Who is the boy kissing? The baby or mummy?*’. The child may give an incorrect response; for example, if the adult asks ‘*Who is mummy kissing*’ and the child says ‘*Mummy.*’ If this happens, give the full version ‘*Mummy is kissing the wee girl, that’s who she’s kissing*’. Once a child is able to respond to ‘who’ questions with a visual reference, they can move onto harder, more open, questions such as: ‘*Who lives at your house?*’. Remember to repeat ‘who’ in the answer each time, for example ‘*Who lives in your house? Mummy and you, that’s who live in your house*’. When taking turns in any activity, make a point of asking ‘*Who gets to take a turn now?*’.

## **Activities**

### ***Choose the person***

Action pictures with different people doing the same action can be used to practise use of ‘who’. Barrier games can be built from these, with the/each child being asked to give details about their picture so the adult or another child can find one exactly the same. Having the same action but a different actor allows the child to respond to ‘who’.

### ***Favourite things (group activity)***

Go around the group and ask each child to name one food they like, or their favourite thing. The adult then chooses one of these and asks a child ‘Who likes to eat pizza?’; ‘Who likes Pokemon?’ and so on.

### ***Who am I?***

The child listens to descriptions to decide who is talking. Speaking and Listening Through Narrative - exercise 2.1 (Section Nine, No. 41) has materials.

### ***Who is it?***

Speaking and Listening Through Narrative - exercise 2.2 (Section Nine, No. 41) has materials.

### ***Who did it? (group activity)***

A child closes their eyes, another child is tapped on the shoulder and blinks at a third, who puts their hand up. The first child opens their eyes and asks the child with their hand up ‘Who blinked at you?’.

### ***Squeak piggy squeak (group activity)***

A child closes their eyes and another is chosen to make a piggy noise. The first child must guess ‘who’ it was that made the noise when asked by a third child.

### ***Guess who***

Play a game with lots of repetition, asking ‘Who is in the picture?’ The game can be altered by asking questions such as ‘Who has blue eyes?’; ‘Who has blue eyes and a hat?’ and so on.

### ***Happy families***

Using Happy Families playing cards, the/each child can ask ‘Who has Mr Bun the Baker?’ and so on. Where there is no group the adult can play on behalf of miniature figures or puppets. The answer is: ‘I do.’ and the adult repeats, saying: ‘X had Mr. Bun. That’s who had him’.

## **WHERE**

### ***The meaning***

A ‘where’ question helps us discuss the places things are found. Repeat and model ‘where’ questions, as with ‘what’ and ‘why’ above, starting with the physical location of objects in the room or pointing to the

location of objects in pictures. Start with observable locations, and move on locations that are out of sight, for example: ‘*Where do you go to buy sweets?*’; ‘*Where do you go to play football?*’ and so on.

### ***Activities***

#### ***Stickers***

Put a sticker somewhere on you. The/each child is asked to say ‘where’ it is.

#### ***Where am I***

Speaking and Listening Through Narrative - exercise 3.7 (Section Nine, No. 41) has materials. Give clues and the/each child has to determine where the speaker is, from what they describe.

#### ***‘Where’ quiz***

Speaking and Listening Through Narrative - exercise 3.1 (Section Nine, No. 41) has materials. The child/ren can practise answering ‘where’ questions.

#### ***‘Where’ sorting game***

Speaking and Listening Through Narrative ‘Who goes where? - game pp. 27, 28 (Section Nine, No. 41) has materials.

#### ***Hide and seek***

Objects are hidden and found by a child. The child is asked ‘*Where was it?*’ and responds with a location. The child then asks the question of another child or the adult.

#### ***Usual locations***

Ask ‘*Where do you see a cow?*’; ‘*Where do you buy bananas?*’; ‘*Where do you live?*’ and so on.

#### ***‘Where do you....?’***

Ask ‘*Where do you ...?*’, then have the child/ren ask the question. Examples could be: ‘*Where do you wear socks?*’; ‘*Where do you live?*’ (harder); ‘*Where do you go to school?*’; ‘*Where do you go swimming?*’.

#### ***Barrier game***

Two children or the adult and a child sit on opposite sides of a screen with the same set of objects and a tray with places to locate objects stuck to it, for example three different coloured pieces of paper, por three different shapes. One/the child chooses where to put their set of objects and the partner asks ‘*Where’s X?*’, so they can arrange their objects in the same places on their side of the barrier. This game can be made more difficult with more objects/locations but each child will need to be able to understand and use at least basic position words, such as ‘on’, ‘under’ and ‘next to’.

### ***Secret square game***

The board game ‘Secret Square’ can be adapted to ask and answer ‘where’ questions (Section Nine, No. 36).

## **WHY**

### ***The meaning***

‘Why’ helps to find out more about a situation. ‘Why’ questions may help to develop a child’s reasoning skills and develop a degree of flexibility in their thinking, as being able to say ‘why’ something happened allows a child to explain more about a situation. Gaining further information by asking ‘why’ allows a child to make sense of events, or to find out more about what is happening. The idea of a causal link between events may be difficult for a child to fully understand: it is more complex than simply recognising two actions, and requires a connection to be made between at least two events. As with ‘what’ and ‘when’ above, ‘why’ should be introduced by demonstrating clear cause-and-effect events, with visual support through actions or pictures so that the child comprehends the meaning. Using clear cause-and-effect pairs should make the reasoning process easier for the child. It is important to continue to repeat ‘why’ in the answer after each question to reinforce the meaning.

### ***Activities***

#### ***Everyday actions***

Carry out everyday actions, and talk about reasons while doing them. For example, ask ‘*Why are we washing our hands?*’ and answer ‘*Because they are dirty.*’

#### ***Staged events***

Cause-and-effect events can be ‘staged’ to give the/each child the opportunity to practise reasoning and responding to ‘why’. For example, show dirty hands, or dirty plates. Ask ‘*What will we do?*’ and a child responds ‘*Wash them*’. Say ‘*Yes, we’ll wash them because they are dirty*'; ‘*Why will we wash them? Because they are dirty*’.

#### ***Why/Because***

Use Cause-and-Effect Colorcards® (Section Nine, No. 8). Look at the second picture in each pair and ask the child/ren ‘why’ the depicted event might have happened, for example: ‘*Why is he crying? Because he lost his balloon/dropped his lolly.*’ There may be more than one possible answer, giving the opportunity to discuss several reasons. The first card is then shown to see if the child was right or if there was a different reason for the reaction. Remember to repeat ‘why’ in the answer.

#### ***Why do we?***

Start with straightforward concrete examples, like: ‘*Why do we wear clothes?*’; ‘*Why do we use a brush?*’. When the child/ren can respond appropriately to ‘why’, move on to asking about motivations/feelings or more abstract ideas. For example: ‘*Why do people cry sometimes?*’; ‘*Why do we need to go to school?*’.

#### ***Board games***

Play a board game with the child/ren and ask a ‘why?’ question for every space moved on.

## **WHEN**

### ***The meaning***

‘When’ questions allow us to find the time something happened. ‘When’ can also be used as a time word, not a question word, to indicate the point in time an action takes place, for example: ‘*When do you get up? When the alarm goes off*’. Both uses of ‘when’ should be practised as both are used frequently in the classroom, and the question form is important to a child seeking additional information. As with other ‘wh’ words, ‘when’ should be introduced with everyday events and with visual cues where possible, and should be repeated within appropriate answers.

### ***Activities***

#### ***‘When’ questions***

Practise with everyday, regularly occurring events, for example: ‘*When do you put your coat on?*’; ‘*When do you have breakfast?*’; ‘*When does Santa come?*’ and so on. Make sure you repeat both question and answer for reinforcement: ‘*Yes, Santa comes at Christmas, that’s when he comes*’.

#### ***‘When’ quiz***

Speaking and Listening Through Narrative p. 64 (Section Nine, No. 41) gives practice in answering ‘when’ questions.

#### ***Day/night sorting game***

Speaking and Listening Through Narrative pp. 68 - 70 (Section Nine, No. 41) involves sorting pictures of things that happen during the ‘day’ or at ‘night’. This game can be adapted using object or action pictures with the/each child asked when they might see or do each one.

#### ***Barrier games***

Two child/ren and/or a child and the adult have a barrier and a range of action pictures and ‘when’ pictures indicating time. Both have the same set. The pair take turns to choose ‘what’ is happening, and ‘when’, for example: ‘*The man is cooking at Christmas.*’ An adult playing should deliberately omit the ‘when’ some of the time, for example saying ‘*The man is cooking.*’ to make the child ask ‘*When is he cooking?*’.

#### ***Molly the monster time path***

Speaking and Listening Through Narrative p. 82 (Section Nine, No. 41) has a story about a monster, and materials for children to plot their own time path through the day.

#### ***Katie calendar game***

Speaking and Listening Through Narrative p. 84 (Section Nine, No. 41) has materials to record special times during a child’s year.

### **Categorising**

Items can be sorted into different categories according to ‘when’ they are seen or used. Alternatives can be offered if a child finds this difficult, for example ‘*When do you eat ice-cream/wear shorts/go on holiday?*’; ‘*When do you see snow/does Santa come/do you go to the pantomime?*’. Giving alternatives of ‘summer’ or ‘winter’ would be useful for these examples.

## **WHEN AS ‘WHENEVER’**

### ***The meaning***

The word ‘when’ is also used to tell children the right time to do something. They will need to have this use explained.

### ***Activities***

#### ***Wait for ‘when’***

Say ‘*When you hear your name do ...*’, or ‘*When I do this, you do it too.*’ The adult should at times deliberately not carry out their action in order to check that a child is comprehending. Say for example: ‘*When I clap my hands I want you to stand up*’. Carry out several actions before the clap. Repeat, saying ‘*When did you stand up? When I clapped my hands.*’ Role reversal can also be used with a child giving the instructions.

## **HOW**

### ***The meaning***

‘How’ acts like a ‘wh’ word and is used with two related meanings. It can tell us the way to do something, explaining the method of doing it, such as how to make toast. It is also used to give greater detail about the manner or attitude with which something was done; for example ‘happily’ or ‘quickly’. (In Scotland ‘how’ is also used as a dialectal form of ‘why’, short for ‘how come?’ This should be acknowledged and accepted from a child who uses it but should not be taught, as it could be too confusing.)

Practise with actions that can be broken into smaller units, saying for example: ‘*How do we put a cardigan on? We put one arm in one sleeve, then the other arm in the other sleeve and do up the buttons. You tell me how we do it.*’ Some part of the ‘how’ sequence should be in the response: if a child just says ‘*Put it on.*’ they may not be understanding ‘how’. The adult can help the child/ren to understand ‘how’ by following a child’s incomplete suggestions to the letter. For example, if the child says ‘*Put it on.*’, put the cardigan on your head and ask if that is right. Further examples are ‘*How do we brush our teeth?*’ and ‘*How do we pour a drink?*’

### ***Activities***

#### ***Barrier games***

The/each child builds a tower of bricks behind a barrier and their partner has to ask how to make theirs look the same. For example, they ask: ‘*How do I start/How do I do it/How do I turn it?*’ Roles can be reversed.

### ***Guessing emotions***

Looking at action pictures or pictures or showing emotions, the/each child is asked ‘*How do you think that person feels today?*’ Alternatives can be offered if this is difficult for a child, asking ‘*Is he worried, or sad?*’

### ***Sentences game***

The/each child listens to a sentence describing an action picture. The challenge is to make it into a better sentence by adding a descriptive word in response to ‘how’, for example running ‘quickly’, shouting ‘loudly’, laughing ‘happily’. A board game can be played where a child gets to move on one space when they think of an answer to the ‘how’ question.

### ***Miming emotions***

The child/ren can mime an action in a particular manner. For example they sweep the floor and pretend to cry, i.e. they are sweeping ‘sadly’ or ‘unhappily’. The question ‘*How is X sweeping?*’ is asked and other children or the adult must guess.

## **PUBLISHED RESOURCES**

There are published resources that give examples of concept and relational words. The following were available during the project, with numbers cross-referred to the list appearing at the end of this Manual (Section Nine).

ColorCards®	8
Secret Square™	36
Speaking and Listening Through Narrative	41

## **THE VOCABULARY OF MATHS**

### **INTRODUCTION**

All curriculum subjects have a special vocabulary, and all are taught using language. However, mathematics is a special case, since words with everyday meanings are also used in a technical, mathematical, way, and these specialist meanings have to be understood to enable the child to understand the maths lesson. For example, a child might know the word ‘odd’ meaning ‘different’ (as in ‘odd-one-out’ games), or ‘peculiar’ (as in ‘an odd guy’), but have to learn the mathematical meaning of an ‘odd’ number as being ‘one left over when divided by two’. In the research project we were not concerned with the mechanics of maths, nor how to carry out computation, but included some specialist maths vocabulary that language impaired children can have difficulty understanding. Advice and information from teachers is essential when deciding which maths vocabulary is a priority for a child.

As well as specialist meanings of words, maths uses symbols to represent meaning. Linking maths vocabulary with numbers and symbols and giving worked examples can be helpful to illustrate meanings: for example linking ‘add’ with ‘+’ and ‘take away’ or ‘subtract’ with ‘-’.

### **PRINCIPLES FOR DEVELOPING MATHS VOCABULARY**

1. Use simple language to introduce new maths words. For example, to teach the word ‘subtract’, start by using ‘take away’ or ‘count back’ to familiarise the child with the word. Once this is understood, introduce ‘subtract’ and ‘minus’ as different words that have the same meaning (please see the section on Synonyms for further guidance). The language used to introduce a word should be less complex than the words themselves.
2. Where possible use concrete objects, such as blocks, before pictures. To introduce words, aim for an approach where the child hears the maths word in discussion and sees it demonstrated with its symbolic and/or written form. Allow the child to manipulate the objects as required by the word: for example, have five blocks and physically take two away when learning ‘subtract’.
3. When working on a word use only numbers that the child knows. Use your discretion, and discuss with the teacher which numbers the child knows.
4. Use phonological cues to help the child recall new vocabulary. Discuss what speech sound the word starts with and rhymes with, if there are any words inside it (‘subtract’ has ‘act’ and ‘sub’). Similarly, children may find rhymes or mnemonics help them to learn and recall words and their meaning, and you can use the child’s individual associations with the word. Please see the section on developing phonological awareness for further guidance.
5. Continue to practise and use learned maths vocabulary once the child has acquired them and moved on to new targets. This extra practice can help with new words by building on previous knowledge. Liaise with teachers to check on classroom opportunities for practice.
6. Mathematical problems presented in class often use words with opposite meanings, leading towards science concepts. When words are naturally paired as opposites or polar terms, for example: ‘long/short’, start by introducing the ‘positive pole’ word. This is the one that has most of the measurable quality, as discussed in the section on concepts. Sometimes the positive pole is easy to determine, for example: ‘long’ implies more length than ‘short’, and ‘top’ more height than ‘bottom’. Sometimes the relationship is less clear, and some words have a variety of opposite poles according to meaning or context: for example a ‘light’ or ‘heavy’ sack, but a ‘light’ or ‘dark’ room; a ‘thick’ or ‘thin’ line, but a ‘fat’ or ‘thin’ puppy. The specific context

needs to be taken into account. Bracken and Myers (1986) give helpful examples of ‘pole’ and ‘negative pole’ words, and principles to teach them (please see Section Nine No. 6).

Examples of polar terms used in maths or occurring in maths problems in primary schools are:

<i>Positive pole word</i>	<i>Negative pole word</i>
add	subtract
multiply	divide
even	odd
tall	short
long	short
full	empty
top	bottom
above	below
hot	cold
clockwise	anti-clockwise
solid	hollow
up	down
in	out
high	low
wide	narrow
thick	thin
heavy	light
light	dark
more	less

add	subtract
multiply	divide
even	odd
tall	short
long	short
full	empty
top	bottom
above	below
hot	cold
clockwise	anti-clockwise
solid	hollow
up	down
in	out
high	low
wide	narrow
thick	thin
heavy	light
light	dark
more	less

There are many more terms and a comprehensive list of maths vocabulary can be found in Mathematical Vocabulary: The National Numeracy Strategy guidance – Curriculum and Standards. DfES (2000) (please see Section Nine No. 29).

After teaching the positive pole word, the next step is to introduce the idea of ‘opposite’ or ‘not positive’, for example ‘long’ with ‘not long’. Then explain that the ‘not pole’ word can be called by another name, for example ‘not long’ can be called ‘short’, and teach the negative pole word.

7. Use a multi-sensory approach, i.e. hearing the word, seeing the symbol, and physically manipulating objects that demonstrate the meaning.
8. Use grosser differences before finer, for example compare a ‘circle’ to a ‘square’ before a ‘circle’ to an ‘oval’.
9. Keep instructions short, or break longer instructions into short chunks.
10. Before moving on to the next level of difficulty within one word, take time to recap on what the child has learned previously. This will ensure they experience a level of success.

## **PUBLISHED RESOURCES**

There are many published resources that give examples of mathematical words. The following were available during the project, with numbers cross-referred to the list appearing at the end of this Manual (Section Nine).

100% Concepts	1
Bracken Concept Development Program	6
Mathematical Vocabulary: The National Numeracy Strategy	
Guidance	29

## **THE VOCABULARY OF LITERACY**

Some children may require support in order to fully understand the language used to teach literacy skills. This is such a requirement of school life that a special section is included here. For younger children, book awareness skills may need to be taught, such as to begin at the front and to know which way up the book goes. These skills are often assumed to be present by school-age, but this is not necessarily the case and additional help may be needed.

## **GENERAL TEACHING PRINCIPLES**

It is important that learning experiences are made as concrete as possible, with lots of examples of the feature being discussed. The words to be discussed may relate to both reading and writing skills. It is a teacher's role to teach reading and writing skills, but children may need extra support to understand the relevant vocabulary, and so some relevant items are included here.

### **READING, WRITING**

#### *The meaning*

Explain to the child/ren that 'reading' is what we do when we look at words and understand the meaning of what someone has written down. 'Writing' is what we do to record the stories and words we want other people to read or to read ourselves, using a pencil, pen or key-board.

#### *Activities*

Semantic and phonological activities to help children learn content words like 'reading' and 'writing' appear in Section Six, Vocabulary Development.

### **WORD, LETTER, SPELLING**

#### *The meaning*

'Word' is defined as a single unit of meaning. Explain to the child/ren that one word tells you about one 'thing' or one 'idea', an 'action', an 'object' or a 'person'. We have words in our head, but in reading and writing a 'word' has a blank space on either side of it. Written words are made up of 'letters'. These are symbols, special shapes used to make up words that relate broadly to speech sounds (phonemes) but do not match exactly. In reading and writing the letters that form a word are placed close together, with only a small spaces in between. Saying the name of each of the letters in a word is called 'spelling' the word.

#### *Activities*

Check with the/each child's school if a published scheme is used for teaching letters and sounds, and whether children are expected to know the names and/or the sounds of letters, and which letters have been introduced. Use the same terms in therapy as are used at school. Children may also have a set of words they are thought to know. Where possible these can be used in therapy alongside spoken words and the child can be reminded to look carefully at them and to read them.

## **SENTENCE**

### ***The meaning***

A sentence should contain and express at least one complete idea, question or command, and must contain a verb. Explain to the child/ren that it should make sense on its own. The Colourful Sentences section of the Manual gives more detail on the components of sentences.

### ***Activities***

#### ***Find the sentence***

Have the/each child identify sentences in written text, without reading the text, by the capital letters and full stops. Discuss that the text between these is the ‘sentence’.

#### ***Missing capitals and stops***

Write sentences on cards, omitting some capitals at the start and full stops at the end. Discuss these with the/each child, who is to recognise what is missing, and make the changes needed.

#### ***Make up sentences***

Use sentences made from words written on separate slips of paper. Remove the verb or subject. Read the rest aloud, and discuss why they are not proper ‘sentences’. Have the/each child choose the verb or subject needed to fix the sentence, and if they can read find and insert the right written word. If they can not read, the adult adds the right slip of paper with the word on it. Further ways to construct sentences and to build up meanings are contained in the Colourful Sentences section of the Manual.

## **CAPITAL LETTER, UPPER CASE, LOWER CASE, FULL STOP, COMMA**

### ***The meaning***

Letters are written as either ‘capitals’ (also called ‘upper case’) or ‘lower case’, and these have different shapes. Explain to the child/ren that we use a ‘capital’ letter when a word is at the start of a sentence, and some words always have a ‘capital’ at the start, like the names of places or people. Sentences start with a capital letter and end with a ‘full stop’, written like a dot. This helps the reader know when the idea expressed in the sentence is complete. For pauses along the way, we use ‘commas’, which are dots with a little curl on them to show they are just pauses, not full stops.

### ***Activities***

Check with the child’s school if a child is expected to know these terms. If you decide to target them, use semantic and phonological activities taken from Section Six, Vocabulary Development.

#### ***Case recognition***

Mix cards with capital letters and lower case letters in a pile, and ask the child/ren to pull out capital or lower-case letters only.

### ***Letter recognition***

Mix cards with capital letters and lower case letters in a pile, and ask the child/ren to name letters within each case. Then see if they can match upper case letters with their lower case equivalent.

## **ALPHABET, ALPHABETICAL ORDER**

### ***The meaning***

Explain to the child/ren that letters stay in the same special order within the ‘alphabet’, called ‘alphabetical’ order, to make it easier to remember letters and find written words. The first letters of words in a list are often arranged in alphabetical order – all the words starting with the letter ‘a’, then those starting with ‘b’, then ‘c’ and so on.

### ***Activities***

It is important for children to know what ‘alphabetic order’ means, even if they find it hard to recall the order. They may have individual dictionaries arranged alphabetically. Many children learn the alphabet by singing it! Children can practise putting words into alphabetical order using strips with the alphabet printed on to help.

## **(SPEECH) SOUND**

### ***The meaning***

Sounds are not the same as letters, although there is a relationship. A ‘sound’ relates to the speech we hear, but can be thought of as the noise a letter makes: for example, ‘b’ often ‘says’ /b/. Readers and writers have to learn how the sounds of speech are represented by letters, and unfortunately English has very complex spelling rules. For example, many speech sounds are written using a variety of letters, so that the sound /s/ at the start of a word can be written as in ‘sun’, ‘science’, ‘circus’ or ‘psychology’; and the letter ‘s’ in the word ‘has’ in fact ‘says’ /z/. It can be helpful for older children to be given an understanding of letter-sound correspondences as they develop spelling rules.

### ***Activities***

The phonological awareness activities in the Section Six, Vocabulary Development relate to speech sounds, and can be linked with letters when this is helpful.

## **CONSONANT, VOWEL, CLUSTER, BLEND**

SLTs use the term ‘consonant’ to refer to speech sounds where the air in the lungs is occluded in some way as it passes through the mouth, making a noise (the ‘sound’). They use ‘vowel’ for sounds where the air passes through the mouth freely, with only a little shaping by the tongue and lips. In reading and writing five letters are classed as ‘vowels’ (‘a’, ‘e’, ‘i’, ‘o’, and ‘u’) although other vowel sounds are heard in speech. The other 21 letters of the alphabet are classified as ‘consonants’, although some can be used to represent vowel sounds, such as the ‘y’ in ‘silly’. ‘Blends’ or ‘clusters’ occur when two or more consonants come together in a word, for example, ‘br’, ‘gl’, ‘spr’. It can be helpful for older children to be introduced to this literary usage and some of the complexities as they develop spelling rules.

### **Activities**

It is important for children to understand how teachers are using these terms, and the phonological awareness activities in Section Six, Vocabulary Development give activities to help a child think about sounds comprising words. Where possible link written forms to words being practised.

## **LEFT, RIGHT, FIRST, LAST, TOP, BOTTOM**

### **The meaning**

When we read or write we start at the ‘left’ side and move to the ‘right’. Explain to the child/ren that we read the words and look at pictures on the ‘left’ page of a book before we look at the ‘right’ page. It is important that this concept is understood clearly as a foundation for other areas of literacy. Other relevant words are ‘first’, ‘last’, ‘beginning’, ‘end’, ‘top’ and bottom.

### **Activities**

Ways of introducing these words as points in space appear within the Space and Time Words section of the Manual.

## **FICTION, NON-FICTION, REFERENCE**

### **The meaning**

It can be helpful to explain the meaning of these terms. Explain to the child/ren that ‘fiction’ books contain made-up or imaginary stories and are not about real people; whereas ‘non-fiction’ books contain stories that really happened to real people, or tell you facts like history books or books about science. ‘Reference’ books are not read from start to finish: instead you look something up in them. Examples of reference books are ‘dictionaries’, ‘encyclopaedias’ and ‘thesauruses’. Information in reference books is often organised alphabetically.

### **Activities**

Games for helping children learn new words like ‘fiction’, ‘non-fiction’ and ‘reference’ are listed in Section Six, Vocabulary Development and the importance of learning about alphabetical order is discussed above.

## **FRONT COVER, BACK COVER, SPINE, HARDBACK, SOFTBACK**

### **The meaning**

Explain to the child/ren that the cover at the front of the book has information about the book, and often a picture or colours that look interesting and make you want to read it. The back cover sometimes says what the book is about, and may also be coloured, with pictures. The ‘spine’ is the part of the cover in between that joins the front and back covers together. It may have information about the book so that you can tell what the book is called when it is on a bookshelf. The covers and spine may be of hard or soft card, known as ‘hardback’ and ‘softback’.

## *Activities*

### ***Find the right bit***

Check if the child can understand these words by asking them to find the ‘front cover’, ‘first page’, ‘top’ and ‘bottom’ of the page and so on. Games for helping children learn nouns like ‘cover’ and ‘spine’ are listed in Section Six, Vocabulary Development, and ways of learning words like ‘front’ and ‘back’ in the Space and Time Words section. Further guidance on words with opposite meanings (antonyms) like ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ appears in the Synonyms and Antonyms section.

### ***Where to start***

With a pile of interesting-looking story books, discuss with the child where we would start reading the actual story.

## **ON THE COVER: TITLE, AUTHOR, ILLUSTRATOR, PUBLISHER, DEWEY NUMBER, ISBN**

### ***The meaning***

The cover of a book gives summary information, which children learn as they move through school.

Explain to the child/ren that paying attention to this information can be helpful in choosing books to read, and is used in some schools for discussing the process of writing. The ‘title’ or ‘name’ of the book usually says something about what the book is about and children often give a title when they write news or a story in class. The ‘title’ is often repeated on the spine. The ‘author’ is the name of the person who has written the book, and there can be more than one author. When children write their news or stories, they are the ‘author’. If there are pictures in the book, the name of the person who has drawn them is given as the ‘illustrator’, although sometimes the author and illustrator are the same person and sometimes no information is given about who drew the pictures. The name of the ‘publisher’, the person or company that produced the book, had it printed and transported to bookshops, appears on the cover and often on the spine of the book. A ‘Dewey system’ number may appear, which is how books are organised in many libraries. Every topic area such as ‘history’, ‘geography’ and so on has a different number, and within each topic books have their own number. Some children may find a number a comprehensible way of linking topics and searching for information.

Explain to the child/ren that every book also has a special number to identify it. Even if you have two different versions of the same story (for example, a hardback Harry Potter and a paperback Harry Potter) they will have different numbers. This can help if you want to order a book from the publisher, a bookshop or the library. The number is The ‘ISBN’ (International Standard Book Number) and can often be found on the back cover near the barcode, or if there is no barcode it should be on one of the first pp. inside the book after the title page.

## *Activities*

### ***Find a book***

Discuss the most important information needed to find a book, and why. The ‘title’, ‘author’ and ‘ISBN’ are very helpful: the ‘publisher’, ‘colour’ or ‘picture’ on the front are less useful.

### ***Find who made the book***

Have the child identify the ‘author’, ‘title’, ‘publisher’ and so on for individual books.

### ***Draw a cover***

Have the child draw their own book covers to include all important information, for imaginary books or stories they have dictated or written.

### ***Guess the story***

Discuss what a child thinks a book will be like from its cover and title, and why they think this. Read (some of) the book aloud and see!

## **INSIDE THE BOOK: PAGE, PARAGRAPH, CHAPTER, CONTENTS LIST, INDEX**

Explain to the child/ren that a book is made up of many ‘pages’ or sheets of paper. Most books number their pages so you can take a note of where you read or saw something of interest to you. Stories or pieces of writing are divided up into ‘paragraphs’. A new paragraph is used when a new idea or new part of a story is begun. In books a new paragraph may be recognised by an empty line before it and/or a blank space to the left at the start of it. Books are often split up into ‘chapters’. In a fiction book, these are smaller bits of the overall story. In a non-fiction book the chapters might be about different things, for example in a book called ‘animals’, there could be chapters on ‘farm animals’, ‘zoo animals’, ‘pet animals’ and so on. Chapters usually have headings or titles of their own. The ‘contents’ page tells you what is in the book. It lists the chapters with their names and tells you which page each one starts on, so that you can turn straight to a chapter you are interested in or see how long each chapter is. The ‘index’ is usually at the back of a non-fiction book. It lists all the topics that have been in the book in alphabetical order and tells you which pages they are on. If you want to find out information about a specific thing, it might be quicker to look it up in the index rather than read through the whole book. For example, in a book called ‘animals’ it would be quicker to look up ‘hedgehogs’ in the index than to read every page to find out about ‘hedgehogs’.

### ***Activities***

#### ***Find the pages***

Ask ‘*How many pages does this book have?*’ and help the child find out from the contents page. Check with the number written on the last page.

#### ***Spot the chapters***

Find out what pages chapters start on and what each chapter is called. Check the contents page against the first page of each chapter for number and title.

#### ***Find the information***

Write items that appear in a reference book on slips of paper, look them up in the contents page and write down the page number(s) that they appear on. Go to the page(s) and find the word. Use the written slips to ease the memory load. The same activity can be used where a book has an ‘index’.

## THE STORY: CHARACTERS, PLOT

### ***The meaning***

Explain to the child/ren that ‘characters’ are the people, animals, monsters and so on who act in the story. Usually we use the word ‘characters’ in the context of in a fictional story. ‘Plot’ is another word for ‘what happens’ in the story. A story can often be summed up quickly by telling the plot: for example: *‘In Harry Potter books a boy discovers he is a wizard and goes to a special school for wizards where he makes new friends and helps beat the bad guys.’*

### ***Activities***

#### ***Plot summaries***

After reading books (with the adult reading aloud if necessary) or telling short stories, ask the child/ren to summarise the story in a couple of sentences, giving the most important general points only. This can be tape recorded and played back to the child/ren, or written notes can be made for or by them.

## **VOCABULARY PROBES**

### **PROBES FOR SELF-CUEING STRATEGIES**

Once self-cueing strategies for word retrieval have been taught to the child it is important to check if they are able to apply them without prompting from an adult in order to determine whether a child should move on or repeat therapy targets. Probes for self-cueing should be carried out by each child individually. They are very brief. Children might need to be reminded, so probes should be carried out weekly.

Give the child a word and ask him or her to '*Tell me all about it*'. The adult should note down all spontaneous information given by the child. If the child is unable to give any information, or becomes 'stuck' at an early stage, prompts or cues should be given to allow the child to feel a sense of achievement, but these should be noted and not included as 'correct'. Probe two words in this way each week. Initial examples to be used are: 'car'; 'chain'; 'telephone' and 'strawberry'. The child's SLT will then choose other words relevant to the child.

### **PROBES FOR NOUNS, VERBS AND PERSONAL OR TOPIC VOCABULARY**

Probes for vocabulary should be carried out by each child individually. They are very brief. Children might need to be reminded, so probes should be carried out weekly.

Use picture naming, which checks whether a child has stored all the correct information and can access the correct word. Include both five topic words that have been focused on mixed with five other words that the child can name easily, to give some success. For example, if the topic is 'mini beasts' the five topic words could be 'spider'; 'ladybird'; 'caterpillar'; 'centipede' and 'moth', plus five other known words, such as 'bus', 'apple', 'house', 'dog' and 'car', giving ten pictures to name in total. The five topic words must be chosen to suit the individual child and the topic they have been working on. Note and record the total out of five words named correctly.

### **PROBES FOR CONCEPT AND RELATIONAL WORDS**

Probes for concept and relational words should be carried out by each child individually. They are very brief. Children might need to be reminded, so probes should be carried out weekly.

We need to ensure the child has understood the meaning of each concept or relational word worked on in therapy. Each requires a separate probe and each concept should be checked before proceeding to the next one. Examples are given below. Note and record the total out of five words named correctly in each instance,

#### **SAME, DIFFERENT**

The child is given a page of blank shapes and asked to '*Mark the two triangles to look the same*' or '*Make the two squares look different*' and so on. Five examples should be recorded.

## **EITHER ... OR**

The child is given a black and white picture and asked to colour one area or another, saying: '*Either colour his hair or colour his nose*'. Five examples should be recorded.

## **UNLESS**

The child is given a black and white picture and given a set of instructions about colouring in. There should be a mixture of instructions including some the child is to complete and others they should not. For example, say: '*Colour the hat, unless you are a girl – girls can't!*'; '*Colour the hat, unless you are a boy – boys can't*'. Five instructions should be recorded .

## **IF**

The child is given a black and white picture and a set of colouring-in instructions. A mixture of instructions should be given, including some the child is able to complete and others they cannot. For example, say: '*If you're wearing a jumper, colour in the hat*'. Five examples should be recorded.

## **BUT NOT, EXCEPT**

'But not' should be probed first. The child is given a black and white picture and a set of colouring-in instructions. A mixture of instructions should be given, including some the child is able to complete and others they cannot. For example, say: '*Colour in the hats, but not the watches*'. The child's picture should contain a number of objects so that one can be excluded from the instruction, such as: '*Colour in the hats except the big ones*'. Five examples should be recorded.

## **ALL, SOME, NONE, ALL BUT (EXCEPT) ONE**

The child is given pictures filled with shapes and given instructions on what to colour in. Contrasts should be probed individually, checking 'all' with 'none'; 'all' with 'some' and so on. Five examples should be recorded.

## **COMPARATIVES, SUPERLATIVES**

The child is given pictures showing examples of comparatives or superlatives and given instructions to colour in specific comparative/superlative terms. Use the examples that have actually been worked on in therapy. Check use by asking the child to use the comparative/superlative term. Black Sheep Words in Pictures - 5 (Section Nine No. 52) has relevant materials. Five examples of both comprehension and expression should be recorded..

## **PROBES FOR SPACE AND TIME WORDS**

Probe both the child's comprehension and use of relevant time and space words. Ensure you are seated next to the child, rather than facing them, so that you both share the same reference points with regard to location, such as 'behind' or 'in front of' a given object. Five examples of both comprehension and expression should be recorded.

## **IN, ON, UNDER, BEHIND, IN FRONT, IN THE MIDDLE OF, BETWEEN**

Similar activities can be used for these locational propositions. Place a selection of objects on the table and have the child pull other objects from a bag. Put the object selected by the child on the table and model the target preposition; for example: '*I'll put your car in the cup*'; '*I'll put your bus under the wee table.*' and so on. When several are on the table, say: '*Show me where your car is under something.*' and so on, to check comprehension, and then '*Tell me where your bus is.*' and to check expression. Five examples of both comprehension and expression should be recorded.

## **NEXT TO, BESIDE.**

For 'next to' and 'beside' you should only have one object on the table and contrast it with other objects placed 'next to' or 'beside' it, to avoid potential confusion with 'between' and 'in the middle of'. The child places an object when asked to do so, or names the location in response to an adult question. Five examples of both comprehension and expression should be recorded.

## **NEAR, CLOSE, FAR**

For 'near', 'close' and 'far' you again need one object on the table, with others being placed in locations contrasting by closeness. Five examples of both comprehension and expression should be recorded.

## **RIGHT, LEFT**

Begin with the child, asking them to carry out actions with their 'right' or 'left' hand, and to touch their 'right eye', 'left ear' and so on to check comprehension. Ask the child to say aloud and then do such commands, to check use. Five examples of both comprehension and expression should be recorded. Then ask them to give you similar commands, but use the wrong hand or touch the wrong ear at times – explain in advance that you might make such deliberate mistakes. This will check use. Five examples of both comprehension and expression should be recorded. For later stages move on to miniature figures, dolls, puppets or soft toys that have clear 'right' and 'left' sides, and first you and then the child repeat the commands. Five examples of both comprehension and expression should be recorded.

## **OVER, ABOVE, THROUGH.**

Use one object that can be used to compare these three concepts together, for example a chair with rungs or a hoop, with a teddy or animal jumping 'over', being held 'above', or going 'through' the rungs of the chair or the hoop. Contrast the target with a concept already worked on, such as 'underneath'. Give the child five instructions to carry out, then ask them to give you five instructions, to check use. Explain that you might make deliberate mistakes and ask the child to spot them. Five examples of both comprehension and expression should be recorded.

## **FIRST, NEXT, LAST AS LOCATIONS IN SPACE**

The child is given a sheet with four shapes in a row. They are then asked to colour the 'first' the 'next' or the 'last' shape. Then reverse roles to probe use, with the child asking you and spotting any deliberate mistakes you make. Five examples of both comprehension and expression should be recorded.

## **FIRST, SECOND, THIRD AS LOCATIONS IN SPACE**

Materials are as for 'first'; 'next', 'last', with the child asked to colour the 'first'; 'second' or 'third' shapes. Five examples should be given. Then reverse roles, with the child asking you and spotting any deliberate mistakes you make. Five examples of both comprehension and expression should be recorded.

### **FIRST, BEGINNING, NEXT, AND THEN, LAST, END AS POINTS IN TIME**

Use a sheet with four shapes. Give instructions containing three parts, saying: '*First colour the square, next colour the star and last colour the triangle*'. To check on use, set out pictures showing a four-piece story sequence and ask the child to tell it to you and note whether the child includes four words marking the sequence. Five examples of both comprehension and expression should be recorded.

### **FIRST, SECOND, THIRD AS POINTS IN TIME**

Use a sheet with four shapes. Give instructions containing three parts, saying: '*First colour the square, second colour the star, and third colour the triangle*'. To check on use, set out a four-piece story sequence, using pictures, and model the use of 'first', 'second', 'third' with reference to what happened in each picture. Ask the child to tell it to you and note whether the child includes the three words marking the sequence. Five examples of both comprehension and expression should be recorded.

### **BEFORE, AFTER**

Set out a three or four-piece picture sequence story and tell it to the child modelling the use of 'before' and 'after'. Then point to one of the pictures in the sequence, and ask the child: '*Tell me what happened before this.*'; or '*Tell me what happened after this.*' If the child gives the correct information but omits to use the word 'before' or 'after' this is at least evidence of comprehension. Ask the child to tell you the story using the words 'before' and then 'after' and note what the child says. Five examples of both comprehension and expression should be recorded. Black Sheep Concepts in Pictures - 2: Before and After, p.s 14-15 (Section Nine No. 9) could be used, or Dotbot Sequencing Activities (Section Nine No. 31) with the sentences altered from those provided.

## **PROBES FOR QUESTION WORDS**

### **WHAT**

The child can be asked ten ‘what’ questions in relation to pictures. Use action pictures or ‘busy’ pictures (pictures with a lot happening). Ask five ‘*What is this/it?*’ questions, then have the child ask you five similar questions. Repeat with ten ‘*What is he or she doing?*’ questions.

### **WHO**

The child is asked ten ‘who’ questions in relation to pictures, and about him or herself. Use action pictures or ‘busy’ pictures involving a range of different actors. Ask five questions, for example: ‘*Who is in the picture?*’; ‘*Who has a red jumper on?*’; ‘*Who is (doing the action)?*’. The child can point. Then have the child ask you similar questions. Then ask five questions about the child, for example: ‘*Who makes the tea in your house?*’; ‘*Who are you friends with?*’; ‘*Who do you like on TV?*’. Then have the child ask you five similar questions.

### **WHERE**

The child is asked ten ‘where’ questions in relation to preposition pictures or ‘busy’ pictures, and about him or herself. Ask five ‘where is’ questions, for example: ‘*Where is the vase?*’; ‘*Where is the boy standing?*’. Then have the child ask you five similar questions. Ask five ‘where do’ questions, for example: ‘*Where do you live?*’; ‘*Where do you go swimming?*’; ‘*Where do you keep your socks?*’. Then have the child ask you five similar questions.

### **WHY**

Using picture cards, ask the child five ‘why’ questions relating to the pictures, for example: ‘*Why is he crying?*’; ‘*Why is she jumping?*’. Then have the child ask you five similar questions.

### **WHEN**

The child is asked five questions about ‘when’ something happens, for example: ‘*When do you go swimming?*’; ‘*When do you brush your teeth?*’; ‘*When do you have your breakfast?*’. Then have the child ask you similar questions. Then give five ‘when’ instructions, for example: ‘*When I touch my head, you touch your nose*’; ‘*When I clap my hands, you stamp your feet*’ and so on. Then have the child tell you to do similar things.

### **HOW**

The child is asked ten ‘how’ questions with picture support, such as pictures showing sequences. Ask five ‘how do you’ questions, for example: ‘*How do you make a cup of tea?*’; ‘*How do you get to school?*’ Then have the child ask you similar questions. Ask five ‘how’ questions in relation to an action picture to see if the child can give information about the manner of the action.

## **7 GRAMMAR THERAPY**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Grammar therapy has two sections – grammar markers, teaching the short words and word endings that signal factors like plurality and tense; and structure, reflecting relationships amongst words. Structure is taught by colour-coding parts of sentences, in the Colourful Sentences section of the Manual.

### **GRAMMAR MARKERS**

The aim of this section is to develop each child's understanding and use of grammatical markers. Grammatical markers are presented in the approximate sequence they appear in a child's development, but we will, of course, start intervention at a level appropriate for an individual child. The way to work on these structures is by the adult first modelling them and, when it appears that a child understands the structure, prompting them to use it, with the adult 'recasting' any errors (see 'Golden Rule' Seven). For example, a child says '*She eated her tea.*' and the adult says '*Yes, she ate it.*' The activities described below for each structure are to be used flexibly, for the adult to model the required marker then for a child to practise its use. Whether they are used following modelling or as practice activities will depend on the stage of therapy that the child is at. It is unlikely that all of the following structures will need to be worked on by any one child. The starting point will depend on the child's level of grammatical development, and further markers, for example more auxiliary verbs, may need to be introduced.

### **PRESENT PROGRESSIVE TENSE: ING**

#### ***The meaning***

Explain to the child/ren that 'ing' tells us that someone is doing something at this moment. For example we say '*He is running.*' or '*She is swimming.*' right now.

#### ***Activities***

#### ***Action verbs***

Select verbs describing actions to work on 'ing', for example 'jump' or 'eat', not 'be' nor 'have'. Demonstrate and model verbs with 'ing' endings, either through direct activity or with miniature figures, saying: '*We're jumping*', '*We're hopping*.' Action cards and pictures with people carrying out actions can also be used both for the adult to model the target to the child/ren, and to ask the child/ren to describe what is happening. Useful questions to ask the child/ren are: '*What's happening here?*'; '*What's he or she doing?*'

### **PUBLISHED RESOURCES**

There are many published resources that give examples of 'ing'. The following were available during the project, with numbers cross-referred to the list appearing at the end of this Manual (Section Nine).

Transparent Language Activities pp. 6, 13, 27, 28	46
Language Therapy pp. 147-149	28

## **REGULAR PLURALS**

### ***The meaning***

Explain to the child/ren that when we have more than one of something, we have to use a special ending on the word, for example ‘catssss

### ***Activities***

#### ***How many can you see?***

Show pictures of one and several objects, saying for example: ‘*Here’s a car, here are two cars.*’ and so on. Ask the child/ren to name the pictures in a similar way.

#### ***Shopping game***

The adult or one child plays a shop-keeper and each player asks for items from a shop display, for example: ‘*Can I have some books?*’; ‘*Can I have three bananas?*’

## **PUBLISHED RESOURCES**

There are many published resources that give examples of regular plurals. The following were available during the project, with numbers cross-referred to the list appearing at the end of this Manual (Section Nine).

Cambridge Language Activity File pp. 5 - 27	5
Developing Receptive and Expressive Language Skills in Young Learners	1
Fundecks	14
Practical Language Activities pp. 92 - 94	20
Language in Pictures Regular Plurals pack	24
Dotbot	31
CLIP Morphology pp. 1 - 15	38
Transparent - Worksheet 29	26

## **DETERMINERS: A, AN, THE**

### ***The meaning***

Explain to the child/ren that we need to put a little word before the name of things, either ‘the’ or ‘a’/‘an’. We say ‘a’ the first time we mention the thing, then we say ‘the’: for example ‘*A book was lying on the table. The book was about birds.*’ We say ‘an’ when the next word starts with a vowel, which usually just happens naturally because it is easier to say.

## **Activities**

### **Choose ‘a’ and put ‘the’**

Have a post-box and several pictures in the same category with all of the pictures visible to save time. Give instructions such as ‘*Find a hat. Put the hat in the box.*’ Have the child/ren give similar instructions to you or another child. The picture is posted into the box if the child says ‘a’ and then ‘the’ appropriately.

## **PUBLISHED RESOURCES**

There are many published resources that give examples of determiners. The following were available during the project, with numbers cross-referred to the list appearing at the end of this Manual (Section Nine).

Language Therapy pp. 147-149	28
Transparent Worksheets 16, 17, 19, 22, 24, 59	46

## **COMMON IRREGULAR PAST TENSES: WENT, CAME etc.**

### ***The meaning***

Explain to the child/ren that when we talk about things that have ‘finished’, we have to change the way we say the action word (verb), and that some verbs have their own special forms for this. For example: ‘go’ changes to ‘went’, ‘come’ changes to ‘came’.

## **Activities**

### ***What they did***

Enact short sequences with miniature figures, for example making one figure ‘eat’ something, another ‘go’ somewhere like school. Talk about what the figures are doing, saying for example: ‘*This girl is eating a biscuit.*’ Then ask ‘*What did she do?*’ to elicit the past tense from the child/ren, who should say ‘*She ate a biscuit.*’ If a child cannot answer a question the adult should answer their own question, making it a modelling activity.

### ***Toy stories***

This is similar to ‘What they did’, but at a harder level. Miniature figures are used. The adult acts out and tells a short story sequence with the miniature figures, using verbs in the present tense. The story events are then re-told by the adult, pointing to the props used but speaking in the past tense. If the figures are pointed to but do not carry out actions during the story repetition it helps the child/ren to realise that the events have already taken place. A child is then asked to tell the story to a puppet. The adult can prompt with ‘*And then...*’. If a child is struggling, the adult models the story again in the past tense.

An example of a story is: ‘*This little girl drank her juice, then ate her food, then stood up on her chair, then she fell down. She got up and went to bed.*’ The props needed would be: a ‘girl’ figure; a small ‘table’; a ‘cup’, ‘plate’, ‘chair’ and ‘bed’. The story could be made easier or harder. A child might need to enact the story again with the props before trying to verbalise it. Picture cards showing an event sequence could be used as alternative materials.

## PUBLISHED RESOURCES

There are many published resources that give examples of common irregular past tenses. The following were available during the project, with numbers cross-referred to the list appearing at the end of this Manual (Section Nine).

Black Sheep – Language in Pictures 9, 10	24
Cambridge Language Activity File pp. 55 - 66	5
Dotbot	31
Language Therapy pp. 193, 201	28
Practical Language Activities pp. 95, 145	20
Rhodes to Language p. 71	34
Transparent Worksheet 70 ‘went’; 94	46

## THIRD PERSON SINGULAR (PRESENT TENSE): s

### *The meaning*

Explain to the child/ren that when we are describing what one person does lots of times, we add an ‘s’ sound, for example: ‘*He swims every Thursday*'; ‘*Mummy cooks tea every night*'. The sound of this grammar marker varies slightly with the word it is attached to, but this need not be stressed.

### *Activities*

#### *No-object verbs*

Initially it is easier for a child to work on third person singular using verbs that do not require a following object, for example ‘*He walks*’ as opposed to ‘*He takes the book*’. Use miniature figures to carry out actions and describe them, stressing the ‘s’ on the verb. For example, say: ‘*Look, this boy jumps and this one sleeps*’. Similarly, look at pictures (in books or on picture cards) and describe actions using third person singular ‘s’. Ask the child/ren to think of and describe similar actions.

#### *‘He runs’ but ‘they run’, singular and plural*

It is necessary to check that the/each child understands plural before trying this. Use pairs of pictures showing the same verb where the first picture has a plural subject, for example ‘*The girls run.*’ and the second a singular subject, for example ‘*The girl runs.*’ The adult points to the first and says ‘*These girls run and ...*’ (switching to the second picture) ‘*this girl also... (runs).*’, leaving a space for the child/ren to say the verb before the adult. By stressing in this way the adult highlights the difference in the number of people, and therefore the different verb ending required for the singular. If a child is not yet able to use the structure, the adult can demonstrate, or model, the response. When a child is showing some competence at this activity it can be made harder by using different, but related, verbs in the same sentence, for example: ‘*These girls swim in the pool, but this girl only ... paddles.*’

## PUBLISHED RESOURCES

There are many published resources that give examples of third person singular endings. The following were available during the project, with numbers cross-referred to the list appearing at the end of this Manual (Section Nine).

Cambridge Language Activity File pp. 86 - 96	5
CLIP Syntax Worksheets p. 1	40
Transparent Worksheets 31, 57, 58	46

## POSSESSIVE: 's

### *The meaning*

Explain to the child/ren that when something belongs to a person, we use a special 's' sound to show this. This tells us who the thing belongs to, for example 'Harry's shoe'; 'the cat's house'. The sound of this grammar marker varies slightly with the word it is attached to, but this need not be stressed.

### *Activities*

#### *Say who*

Use miniature figures and decide with the child/ren whether you are going to give them names or refer to them as 'the boy', 'the girl' and so on. Put some objects into a bag and take turns selecting one and giving it to one of the figures. Say whose object it is, for example: 'It's Sarah's apple'; 'It's the boy's hat'. The adult can model for the child/ren who cannot use the grammar marker.

## PUBLISHED RESOURCES

There are many published resources that give examples of possessive -s. The following were available during the project, with numbers cross-referred to the list appearing at the end of this Manual (Section Nine).

Cambridge Language Activity File pp. 28 – 45	5
Practical Language Activities p. 144	20
CLIP Morphology pp. 26 – 36	38
Transparent Worksheet 26 (called 'Genitive -s')	46

## REGULAR PAST TENSE: ed

### *The meaning*

Explain to the child/ren that when we talk about things that have 'finished', we have to change the way we say the action word, for example: 'She walked to school'; 'James jumped really high.' and that lots of action words use this ending. The sound of this grammar marker varies slightly with the word it is attached to, but this need not be stressed.

### **Activities**

Use activities from the section on irregular past tense above, but with verbs that have a regular past tense. Examples of the latter are ‘look-looked’, ‘hop-hopped’, ‘stop-stopped’, ‘skip-skipped’, ‘kick-kicked’, ‘open-opened’, ‘close-closed’, ‘smile-smiled’, ‘laugh-laughed’, ‘play-played’, ‘kneel-kneeded’.

## **PUBLISHED RESOURCES**

There are many published resources that give examples of regular past tenses. The following were available during the project, with numbers cross-referred to the list appearing at the end of this Manual (Section Nine).

Cambridge Language Activity File pp. 44 - 54	5
Language in Pictures 5	24
Language Therapy pp. 199, 200	28
Dotbot	31
Transparent Worksheet 93	46

## **COPULA - VERB ‘TO BE’: IS, ARE, WAS, WERE**

### ***The meaning***

Explain to the child/ren that when we are describing something, we need to put in a little word before the describing word. This is usually from the verb ‘to be’, for example we say: ‘*She is sad*'; ‘*The dogs are clean*'; ‘*The man was a nurse*'; ‘*They were happy*.’ The word can be said in full, as in the above examples, or contracted as in ‘*She's sad*.'; ‘*They're clean*.’ We will mainly concentrate on the uncontracted form, to make the rule clear to the child, but the contracted copula can be encouraged if that is advised by the therapist.

### **Activities**

### ***Contrasting picture description***

Use pictures where the contrast is in the descriptive part, for example: a ‘dirty’ dog with a ‘clean dog’. The adult points to the first picture and says ‘*This dog is clean here but* (pointing to the second picture) *this dog ....is dirty*.’ Encourage the child/ren to complete the second sentence before the adult: if no-one does, the adult models. The same resources can be used to practise past tense forms, such as ‘was’ and ‘were’.

## **PUBLISHED RESOURCES**

There are many published resources that give examples of the verb ‘to be’. The following were available during the project, with numbers cross-referred to the list appearing at the end of this Manual (Section Nine).

Cambridge Language Activity File pp. 67 - 71, 74 - 81	5
Language Therapy pp. 202 - 204	28
Transparent Worksheets 25 (adapted), 54 (Contracted Copula)	46

## AUXILIARY VERBS

### ***The meaning***

The auxiliary form of the verb ‘to be’ links with ‘ing’ to indicate something is currently happening. Explain to the child/ren that we say a little word when we talk about what someone is doing at the moment, before action and other ‘-ing’ verbs. Examples are: ‘*The dog is barking*'; ‘*The girl is walking to her judo class*' and the auxiliary can be contracted, for example: ‘*The girl's singing.*' We will mainly concentrate on the uncontracted form, to make the rule clear to the child, but contracted auxiliaries can be encouraged if that is advised by the therapist.

### ***Activities***

#### ***Action Pictures***

Use pairs of pictures with one person doing an action and two people doing the same action, for example one picture with one baby crying and another with two babies crying. The adult points to one picture and says ‘*He is crying and* (pointing to the second picture) *they are crying*'. The adult can describe the pictures the other way round, for example: ‘*They are crying and he is crying*', depending on whether the singular or plural forms are the target. Encourage the child/ren to complete the second sentence before the adult: if no-one does, the adult models.

## PUBLISHED RESOURCES

There are many published resources that give examples of auxiliary verbs. The following were available during the project, with numbers cross-referred to the list appearing at the end of this Manual (Section Nine).

Cambridge Language Activity File pp. 72, 73, 82 - 85	5
Practical Language Activities p. 95	20
Dotbot	31
Language Therapy pp. 204 - 205	28
Transparent Worksheets 34, 49, 50	46

## PRONOUNS

### ***The meaning***

Explain to the child/ren that sometimes, instead of saying someone’s name or saying ‘the man’ or ‘the girl’ we substitute a pronoun instead, ‘on behalf of’ the noun. As the subject of the sentence we use the singular pronouns ‘I’; ‘you’; ‘he’, ‘she’ or ‘it’ to replace singular nouns, and ‘we’, ‘you’ and ‘they’ for plurals. (‘You’ is therefore used for both singular and plural.) ‘He’, ‘she’ or ‘it’ are often used for the second and later mentions of something or someone, as in: ‘*The woman was looking for her dog. She was very worried about where it could be.*’ As the object of a sentence we use ‘me’, ‘him’ or ‘her’ in the singular, and ‘them’ in the plural.

### **Activities**

#### **Action pictures**

Use pictures of children doing activities. Have the child/ren sort them into piles, by gender then plurality. Label the pictures using pronouns, for example ‘*He’s skipping*’; ‘*She’s writing*’; ‘*They’re playing football.*’ and so on. The child/ren then label the pictures in the same way.

#### **Replace the name**

Discuss with the child/ren how silly it would sound to use a person’s name all the time. Tell stories to illustrate this, such as: ‘*Sam and Joe went into Sam and Joe’s house to get Sam and Joe’s swimming kit to go to the pool that was near Sam and Joe’s house. Sam and Joe’s mother said ‘Are Sam and Joe both ready yet? Sam and Joe and I will be late if Sam and Joe are not quick’.* Then choose individual sentences and have the child/ren replace the nouns with pronouns.

## **PUBLISHED RESOURCES**

There are many published resources that give examples of pronouns. The following were available during the project, with numbers cross-referred to the list appearing at the end of this Manual (Section Nine).

Cambridge Language Activity File 97 - 102	5
Practical Language Activities pp. 110, 147, 149	20
Fundecks	23
Language in Pictures 3	24
Rhodes to Language p. 107	34
CLIP Morphology Worksheets pp. 140-151	38
(Subject Pronouns), pp. 152 – 159 (Object Pronouns)	
Transparent Worksheets 32, 35, 55, 61, 62, 69	46

## **POSSESSIVE ADJECTIVES**

#### **The meaning**

Explain to the child/ren that, if we want to say that something belongs to someone, we have to use a special word before the name of the thing. For example we say ‘my’; ‘your’; ‘his’; ‘her’; ‘our’ or ‘their’ shoes, to tell who owns them.

### **Activities**

Have a lotto board for each child and adult and corresponding pictures in a bag. Take turns at taking a picture out of the bag and say as appropriate ‘*It’s my orange*’ or ‘*It’s your banana*’. Give boards also to miniature figures, to practise ‘his’, ‘her’, ‘their’.

## PUBLISHED RESOURCES

There are many published resources that give examples of possessive adjectives. The following were available during the project, with numbers cross-referred to the list appearing at the end of this Manual (Section Nine).

Practical Language Activities pp. 110, 148	20
Language Therapy pp. 160 – 169	28
Rhodes to Language p. 107	34
CLIP morphology pp. 160 – 170	38
Transparent Worksheets 82, 83, 84	46

## NEGATIVES

### ***The meaning***

Negatives are used when we want to say something is *not* something else, and so learning the negative is helped by contrasting it with the positive meaning, for example: ‘*This pencil is blue, but these pencils are not blue.*’; ‘*He’s running flat out, but he’s not running/he isn’t running at all*’. Negatives can be contracted into ‘isn’t’; ‘can’t’; ‘hasn’t’ and so on, unless they come at the end of a sentence, as in ‘*He’s trying hard, but she’s really not*’.

### ***Activities***

#### ***Not the category***

With a range of objects, ask the child/ren to find various objects that are ‘not’ something. For example, say: ‘*Find me something that is not big.*’ Have the chil/ren ask as well.

#### ***Not doing it***

Look at pictures that contrast, with one person doing an action and the other not, for example a girl ‘dancing’ and a girl ‘standing’. Ask the child to point to ‘*She isn’t dancing*’, and then to reverse roles and to ask the adult or other children to point.

#### ***What about Fred?***

When the target is for the child to use a negative with an ‘auxiliary + -ing’ verb form such as ‘*He’s not waving.*’ or ‘*He isn’t waving.*’ it can be very difficult to elicit the phrase in full. The child is more likely to respond with ‘*He isn’t*’ as opposed to ‘*He isn’t waving*’. This ‘Fred’ activity is used to elicit the full negative verb phrase. Four pictures are needed of similar characters, for example cats with three of the pictures showing cats doing the same action, such as ‘jumping’. The fourth must be of a cat not engaged in any activity, just standing still, so that a child is less likely to say what it *is* doing as apposed to what it is *not* doing. The adult points to the three pictures of jumping cats and says something like: ‘*Look at these cats jumping.*’ The adult then points to the fourth picture and expresses some surprise by saying something like: ‘*Oh dear, this is Fred. What about Fred?*’ A child will often respond with the target, ‘*He’s not jumping*’. Of course modelling and recasting can be used should a child make no response or an incorrect one. Suggested picture stimuli are:

- Three boys running and one standing still.
- Three girls in bed sleeping and one girl in bed with her eyes open.
- Three dogs eating and one not.

- Three cats drinking and one not.

It is best to avoid contrasts where the character is actually doing something, such as three cats eating and one drinking, as the child is then likely to respond '*That cat's drinking*' as opposed to the desired target '*He's not eating*'. The odd one out does not have to be given a name, like 'Fred', but doing so can help to particularise the difference.

## PUBLISHED RESOURCES

There are many published resources that give examples of negatives. The following were available during the project, with numbers cross-referred to the list appearing at the end of this Manual (Section Nine).

CLIP Syntax Worksheets pp. 62 – 72	40
Language Therapy pp. 223 – 225	28
Transparent Language Activities 51, 53, 63, 65	46

## IRREGULAR PLURALS

### *The meaning*

The meaning of plurals is discussed above, but some words have irregular versions. These are often learned after many regular versions are known, and regular plurals should be taught first. Common examples of irregular plurals are 'man-men'; 'woman-women'; 'mouse-mice'; 'foot-feet'; 'tooth-teeth'; 'goose-geese'. These do not have an added 's' to guide comprehension, and indeed no consistent changes for the plurals.

### *Activities*

#### *Make the pair*

Since there is no consistent change to signal irregular plurals, children need to learn common examples one by one. Use pictured examples of 'one' and 'more than one' of the item, and use phonological awareness tasks to indicate which part of the pair are similar (usually the beginning and end consonants) and which are different (the vowel). Have the child/ren match the pairs, and say the singular and plural versions. Teaching the words in 'families', such as the group where 'oo' vowels become 'ee' vowels (such as 'foot-feet'; 'tooth-teeth'; 'goose geese' can be helpful.

## PUBLISHED RESOURCES

There are many published resources that give examples of irregular plurals. The following were available during the project, with numbers cross-referred to the list appearing at the end of this Manual (Section Nine).

Transparent Language Activities 92	46
Language in Pictures - Irregular Plurals	24

## FUTURE TENSE

### ***The meaning***

When something is going to happen in the future, we have to use the words ‘going to’ before the action word (verb). For example we say: ‘*I am going to wash my car, he is going to get the bus.*’

### ***Activities***

#### ***What next?***

Use sequence picture cards, and when they have been placed in order point to one and talk about what is going to happen next, for example ‘*Next, he is going to eat his dinner.*’ Talk about what the child/ren will do after school, tomorrow morning and so on.

## PUBLISHED RESOURCES

There are many published resources that give examples of future tenses. The following were available during the project, with numbers cross-referred to the list appearing at the end of this Manual (Section Nine).

Transparent Language Activities 30, 44, 56 (target ‘going to’ instead of ‘wants to’)	46
Rhodes to Language p. 71	34

## **GRAMMAR MARKER PROBES**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Before you probe, you may need to demonstrate or model each target first if the child is unsure what to do. This would mean giving the child some examples, for example: '*Look, she's running*' (for 'ing' form); '*He's drinking. What did he do? He drank.*' (for irregular past tense). However, after a few examples, give and record the child's response to five probes for each grammar marker with no further clues. Probe each child's responses individually.

### **PRESENT PROGRESSIVE TENSE: ING**

Use action picture cards, and say: '*Tell me what's happening.*' The child should use the 'ing' ending on the verb, but does not have to use a full sentence. For example they can say '*Running*', or '*He's running*', or '*He running*'. Record five probes.

### **REGULAR PLURALS**

Use a range of objects or toys. Probe, saying: '*Here's a pencil, and here are two ....*' The child should use the plural form, for example: '*pencils*'. Record five probes.

### **DETERMINERS: A, AN, THE**

Use a range of pictures. Probe, saying '*What's this?*'. The response should be 'a' or 'an' plus the name of the picture, for example '*A box*'. Record five probes. For 'the' give two pictures of a boy and a girl. Ask about things in the picture, such as '*Who's wearing the yellow jumper?*'; '*Who has red hair?*' The response should be '*The boy*' or '*The girl*'. Repeat with other pairs, such as 'man' and 'woman', 'dog and 'cat', recording five probes for each determiner.

### **COMMON IRREGULAR PAST TENSES: WENT, CAME etc.**

Use miniature figures, adult miming or action cards. You have to ensure you use actions that have irregular past tense forms, for example: 'slept'; 'bought'; 'drank'. Probe by making a figure 'eat' and saying, '*Look, he's eating*', putting the figure down, and asking '*What did he do?*' Or mime saying '*I'm eating*', finish miming, and ask '*What did I do?*' Or show an action picture card, saying '*The boy's eating*', turn the card over, picture side down, and ask '*What did he do?*' The child should say 'ate' or 'he ate' or 'you ate'. It does not matter if the child does not use a full sentence. Record five probes.

### **THIRD PERSON SINGULAR (PRESENT TENSE): 's**

Use action picture cards, holding a card without showing it to the child, and say: '*This girl likes to read*'. Show the card to the child, and say: '*Every day she...*'. The child should use 's' with the relevant verb. Record five probes.

### **POSSESSIVE: 's**

Use two miniature figures, objects or toys, and agree the names of the figures with the child. Say: '*This apple belongs to Harry. Whose apple is it?*' The child should say '*Harry's*'. Record five probes.

## **REGULAR PAST TENSE: ed**

Do the same as for irregular past tense but use verbs with regular past, for example ‘jumped’; ‘laughed’; ‘cried’. Record five probes.

## **COPULA - VERB ‘TO BE’: IS, ARE, WAS, WERE**

Use a number of objects. Take turns selecting some object and describing its colour and size. Say: ‘*This brick is green. This banana is little. You tell me about some now.*’ The child should say: ‘*This beanbag is red.*’ or ‘*They are red.*’ etc. For past tense copulas, show one picture of an object of one colour and size, then a second of the same object in a different colour or size. Point to the second picture and say for example: ‘*This brick is green now.*’. Then point back to the first and say ‘*What was it before?*’ The child should say: ‘*It was red.*’ or ‘*The brick was red.*’ Record five probes for each copula.

## **AUXILIARY VERBS**

Use pictures of one person doing an action and two people doing another action, for example one boy ‘hopping’ and two boys ‘jumping’. To elicit the plural form say: ‘*This boy is hopping, but these boys...*’ To elicit the singular form, say: ‘*These boys are hopping, but this boy...*’ The child should say: ‘... is/are hopping’ as appropriate. Record five probes

## **PRONOUNS**

For subject pronouns ‘I’, ‘we’, ‘you’, the adult, child or both together carry out actions. The child then answers the question ‘*Who did it that time?*’ The child should say ‘*I/you/we did.*’ as appropriate.

For ‘he’, ‘she’, ‘it’, ‘they’ use pictures in sets with a boy, a girl, an object and more than one person doing the same action. Say for example: ‘*This boy’s falling over, this girl’s falling over, this chair’s falling over and these plates are falling over. Now you tell me about the pictures.*’ The child should say ‘he’, ‘she’ or ‘they’ as appropriate. Record five probes for each pronoun. Record five probes.

For ‘him’ ‘her’ ‘them’ use a variety of pictures of boys, girls and lots of people together. Say: ‘*I like him, I like her, and I like them. Now you tell me who it is that you like.*’ The child should say ‘him’, ‘her’ or ‘them’ as appropriate. To include the object pronoun ‘me’ use miniature figures and the child with a toy plate in front of each. Share out counters, asking the child ‘*Who is this one for?*’. The child should say ‘*It’s for him/her/them/me.*’ as appropriate. Record five probes for each pronoun.

## **POSSESSIVE ADJECTIVES**

Use miniature figures of a boy, a girl and any other two people, for example two adults, with objects or toys. Take turns sharing the objects out between the boy, the girl and other two. When an object has been distributed, take turns saying ‘whose’ it is. The child should say ‘*It’s his pen*’; ‘*It’s her apple*’; ‘*It’s their car.*’ and so on using the relevant possessive pronoun and object. To probe the possessive adjective ‘my’ include the child in the share out. Record five probes for each possessive adjective.

## **NEGATIVES**

Use picture sets of four pictures, like the therapy materials for negatives. Point to the pictures of characters doing the same action, saying: '*Look, these mice are running*', then point to the picture of the character not doing the action, and saying '*What about this mouse? He ...*' The child should say '*He's not...*' or '*He isn't...*' with the relevant verb. Record five probes.

## **IRREGULAR PLURALS**

Use the same materials as for regular plurals, but using words with irregular plurals, for example 'teeth', 'feet'. You may need to show pictures to get a range of irregular plural forms. Record five probes.

## **FUTURE TENSE**

Use pictures showing a sequence of events. Point to the first card, and ask '*I wonder what he's going to do next? Can you see what it is?*' The child should say '*He's going to ...*' with the relevant verb. Record five probes.

## COLOURFUL SENTENCES

### INTRODUCTION

Some children may have difficulties in understanding sentence structures. The aim of this section is to develop awareness and use of sentence structure and word order for a range of sentence types.

This can be tackled:

- by explaining to the child that sentences are being targeted;
- by introducing and developing the idea of different parts of a sentence, and labelling these with colour cues;
- by encouraging use of appropriate word order in a range of sentence structures;
- by reflecting on targets used within sessions and encouraging carry-over to other situations.

A system of colour coding is used to help children understand sentence relationships and construct sentences. It also aims to extend the length and grammatical complexity of their speech. This is based on the work of Bryan (1997) who coded semantic relationships, and a long tradition of colour coding syntactic forms, at least since Lea (1973). The reason for colour coding is to give the child an extra visual cue to support the development of different and more complex sentence types. The colour helps to reinforce elements within a sentence.

To do this sentences are broken down into the following elements:

‘Subject’ (the doer)	<i>‘The boy is running’</i>
‘Verb’ (the doing)	<i>‘The boy <i>is</i> running’</i>
‘Object’ (the done to)	<i>‘The boy is kicking <i>a ball</i>’</i>
‘Location’ (where the verb is done)	<i>‘He plays <i>in the garden</i>’</i>
‘Instrument’ (what is used to do the verb)	<i>‘I hit the ball <i>with a bat</i>’</i>
‘Indirect object’ (who or what gets the object)	<i>‘I gave <i>her</i> a gift’</i>
‘When/time’ (when the verb is done)	<i>‘I swam <i>yesterday</i>’</i>
‘Why’ (the reason the verb is done)	<i>‘I cried <i>because I was sad</i>’</i>
‘Adjective’ (description)	<i>‘A boy <i>with blond hair</i>’</i>
‘How’ (the manner in which the verb is done)	<i>‘She cheered <i>loudly</i>’</i>

A colour code can also be applied to any aspect of grammar that is targeted via Grammar Markers section of the Manual, for example auxiliary verbs can be the same colour as the main verb. For example:

The boy	is stirring	his drink	quietly	at teatime	in the kitchen
Subject	Verb	Object	How	When	Location

Each element is then colour-coded, using the following colours:

Subject	orange	Indirect object	pink
Verb	yellow	When	purple
Object	red	Why	black
Location	blue	Adjective	green
Instrument	brown	How	turquoise

For conjunctions, negatives and anything else not colour coded use black words on a white background.

Each sentence element can be cued by using a particular question. These questions are presented on appropriately colour-coded cue cards as visual support for the child when working on each sentence element.

QUESTION	ELEMENT	COLOUR
who?	subject	orange
what ... doing?	verb	yellow
what?	object	red
where?	location	blue
what using?	with	brown
who to?	indirect object	pink
when?	time	purple
why?	reason	black
what like?	adjective	green
how?	adverbial	turquoise

## INTRODUCING COLOUR CODING

Boardmaker™ symbols with written words underneath are used to represent each sentence element. These are placed in appropriately colour coded ‘frames’ – i.e. coloured backgrounds. For children who can read it may be more appropriate to use coloured written words or coloured backgrounds with words written in black.

Questions are used as prompts to encourage the generation of sentences. Questions should be asked verbally, with visual backup in the form of Boardmaker™ symbols on the relevant colour.

Initially Boardmaker™ pictures are used to build up descriptions of action pictures. Templates for sentences are constructed from coloured strips of card that can be assembled by the adult into the correct order for the sentence type being targeted, for example: ‘orange - yellow – red’ for ‘subject + verb + object’.

There is a hierarchy of complexity of sentences and this should be followed carefully. For children who use simple sentences but not complex ones, the early levels may be useful in helping them develop sentences. For children at later levels, earlier levels may be used to introduce the colour-coding system.

Comprehension of each sentence level should be targeted before moving on to the child’s use of that level.

Any verb tense can be used and can be changed to give variety, or the relevant tense used where a child has verb tense as one of their therapy targets. However, each sentence type should first be introduced using a form of the present tense (for example: ‘walks’; ‘is walking’) to allow the child to understand the basic sentence structure. No examples relating to ‘instrument’ or ‘indirect object’ are given here, but the principles and activities may be used with these sentence elements.

## **LEVEL 1: SUBJECT + VERB**

### ***The meaning***

These are two-element ‘person or thing acting’ sentences, for example: ‘*The man walks.*’; ‘*The baby is crying.*’; ‘*The door shuts.*’; ‘*The cat was sleeping.*’ The adult introduces an action picture and explains to the child that a sentence will be made up to describe the picture. Boardmaker™ pictures are used to represent the sentence visually. A simple example would be a picture of a ‘man’ (orange background) and ‘walking’ (yellow background). If child/ren already use such early sentence forms they may be used to introduce the colour coding system, but do not require to be covered in detail.

### ***Activities***

The adult shows the sentence to the child and says, ‘*See, the man is walking.*’ They take time to draw attention to the colours, saying for example: ‘*The man is the person who is doing something, so this picture is orange. He is walking, so the picture of what he is doing is yellow.*’ Colour coded question prompt cards are then introduced. Ask, ‘*So, who / what is in the picture?*’ (orange prompt card). ‘*What are they doing?*’ (yellow prompt card).

At this stage the adult produces both the question and the response, to model the targets for the child/ren. Lots of examples are needed.

Once comprehension practice has been carried out and the adult is confident that the child/ren understand the basic principles of building sentences, and that each part of the sentence has a different colour, the child/ren should work on sentence production. As before, an action picture is presented to the child/ren, this time with the general prompt ‘*What’s happening?*’ A basic ‘subject + verb’ structure is sought. This can be cued in several ways: by offering alternatives, for example: ‘*Is it a man or a lady?*’; ‘*Is he running or walking?*’ or by asking appropriate questions, such as ‘*Who is in the picture?*’; ‘*What are they doing?*’ If a child gives only part of the description the appropriate question to elicit the rest of the sentence should be asked, for example: ‘*It is a man, but what is he doing?*’ or ‘*Yes, running, so can you tell me who is running?*’

If a child uses pronouns to describe the subject, for example ‘he’, ‘she’ or ‘they’, the appropriate questions should be asked to elicit a more specific label for the subject.

If a child produces a sentence that misses out the ‘little words’ the adult should recast the sentence with the words inserted. For example, if a child says ‘*Man running.*’ the adult says ‘*Yes, that’s right, the man is running.*’

Having worked with action pictures initially, ‘subject + verb’ sentences should be practised, using the examples suggested at the end of this section.

## **LEVEL 2A: SUBJECT + VERB + OBJECT**

### ***The meaning***

This level increases the length of sentences by adding an object, for example: ‘*The man is carrying the bag.*’; ‘*Cats eat mice.*’; ‘*Tom was buying shoes.*’ As with Level 1, comprehension that the object is the thing ‘done to’ should be worked on first.

### **Activities**

The adult should again start with action pictures and introduce the third part of the sentence with the ‘red’ question prompt. As before, the adult should initially ask the questions and provide the answers. Once expressive work is started the techniques for sentence elicitation are as before. If a child omits part of the sentence, the adult should use question prompts to try and get the whole utterance to be formed. If the sentence is elicited in ‘bits’ like this, it is important for the adult to take time to ask ‘*What’s happening?*’ again, and repeat the whole sentence. Practise using the examples suggested at the end of this section.

## **LEVEL 2B: SUBJECT OR OBJECT + ADJECTIVE**

This level deals with simple sentences where an adjective element is added to describe the subject or object.

The adjective can be put in two places. Initially, the adjective should be placed with the subject or object, for example ‘*The tall boy jumps.*’; ‘*She ate the delicious ice-cream.*’; ‘*The angry man shouted.*’; ‘*He is reading a long letter.*’ The adjective does not have to be a single word, it could be for example: ‘*The boy has a red, baggy t-shirt.*’ or ‘*The girl has short, black hair.*’

The second place for the adjective is following a ‘is/was/were’ verb, giving more information about the subject, for example: ‘*He is happy.*’; ‘*Tom was tall.*’; ‘*Mum is angry.*’; ‘*They were fat.*’

### **Activities**

The question form ‘*What .... like?*’ should be used, for example ‘*What does he look like?*’; ‘*What do you think he’s feeling like?*’

Comprehension should as usual be worked on first, starting with action pictures or emotion pictures, then use of the structure.

## **LEVEL 3A: SUBJECT + VERB + LOCATION**

### ***The meaning***

Sentences are now extended to ‘subject + verb + location’. No object is used to start with, resulting in examples like: ‘*A girl is eating in the kitchen.*’; ‘*The teacher is working in the school.*’; ‘*The boys ran to the park.*’; ‘*Fred was swimming in the sea*’. The location tells us where the action is happening and can be explained to the child/ren like this: ‘*We are now good at making up sentences, but it would be better if we can tell everyone where this happens.*’

### **Activities**

As before, the sentence should be introduced with action pictures and with the adult saying the sentences. Alternatively, Level 1 ‘subject + verb’ pictures can be used and the child/ren can choose a location for the action from picture cards or their imagination.

Use of the sentence can be targeted as described above, using ‘where’ as the prompt question.

## **LEVEL 3B: SUBJECT + VERB + OBJECT + LOCATION**

### ***The meaning***

Having worked on both comprehension and use of ‘subject + verb + location’, the ‘object’ can be reintroduced to form ‘subject + verb + object + location’. Examples are: ‘*The girl is eating an ice-cream on the beach.*’; ‘*A boy is washing dishes in the sink.*’; ‘*Dogs were chewing bones in the garden.*’; ‘*He brushed his teeth in the bathroom.*’

### ***Activities***

Prompt questions are used as before. It is important to make sure that the adult repeats complete sentences once they have been constructed. It may also be useful to precede this with a ‘*What’s happening?*’ question.

## **LEVEL 4A: SUBJECT + VERB + TIME**

### ***The meaning***

This level introduces the idea of the time ‘when’ the action happened. The ‘when’ part can occur in different positions in a sentence, but to keep things simple ‘when’ should initially be introduced at the end of the sentence. These examples may have to be modelled as they cannot be depicted easily, for example: ‘*Dad left after tea.*’; ‘*Mrs Smith swims every day.*’; ‘*I will go today.*’; ‘*He was running yesterday.*’

### ***Activities***

The question prompt ‘when’ should be used with other parts of the sentence, for example: ‘*Yes, a man’s running, but I wonder when he is/was running?*’ Since the focus is on including a time marker within the sentence, it may be necessary to do some work on the ‘when’ question used. If so, please refer to the ‘Wh’ Words section of the Manual.

## **LEVEL 4B: SUBJECT + VERB + OBJECT + TIME**

### ***The meaning***

This combines four elements worked on so far into one sentence, and the meaning of each should be revised. . ‘When’ can occur in different positions in the sentence, but should be introduced at the end of the sentence initially. Examples are: ‘*He is walking the dog now.*’; ‘*Susan does her homework every day.*’; ‘*The boy bought sweets on Tuesday.*’; ‘*Jack was playing football yesterday.*’

### ***Activities***

Prompt questions are used as before. Remember to continue to model and repeat the child/ren’s utterances back to them. As sentences increase in complexity, more practice may be required to ensure they are correctly used. Once the child is confident with understanding and using a ‘when’ indicator at the end of the sentence its use in other places can be discussed, for example: ‘*Yesterday I swam.*’ with ‘when’ at the

start. Although the focus is simply on including a time marker in sentence structure, it may be necessary to do some work on the ‘when’ question word. If so, please refer to the ‘Wh’ Words section of the Manual.

## **LEVEL 4C: SUBJECT + VERB + OBJECT + LOCATION + TIME**

### ***The meaning***

This combines the previous elements, and adds the idea of ‘where’ the action happened. The meaning of each element should be revised. Examples are: ‘*He is walking the dog in the park now.*’; ‘*Susan does her homework in the kitchen every day.*’; ‘*The boy bought sweets at the shops on Tuesday.*’; ‘*Jack was playing football in the park yesterday.*’

### ***Activities***

Prompt questions and repetitions should be used as before. Since the focus is on including a time marker in sentence structure, it may be necessary to do some work on the ‘where’ question word. If so, please refer to the ‘Wh’ Words section of the Manual.

## **LEVEL 5: SUBJECT + VERB + MANNER**

### ***The meaning***

This level introduces the idea of the manner in which the action is done, for example: ‘*He walks quickly.*’; ‘*Tom is smiling happily.*’; ‘*Mum spoke loudly.*’; ‘*Elaine was writing messily.*’ The prompt question is ‘how’.

### ***Activities***

As the ‘how’ part of a sentence may not be concrete and visible, it may be hard for children to make suggestions about the manner in which an action is done. It may therefore be useful to use specific prompts in addition to ‘*How is he doing it?*’ These may include questions about how a child thinks someone is feeling. For example: say ‘*He looks happy. So we could say, he is smiling happily.*’; ‘*She looks like she’s in a hurry. So we could say, she is walking quickly.*’

## **LEVEL 6: SUBJECT + VERB + REASON**

### ***The meaning***

This level introduces reasons, using the question prompt ‘why?’ Examples are: ‘*The man is running because he is late.*’; ‘*Susan is smiling since she is happy.*’; ‘*Tom was washing up so that he did not get a row.*’; ‘*Anne went to the bank to get some money.*’

### **Activities**

The part of the sentence that answers the question ‘why’ usually has a sub-structure of its own and this may need additional explanation and teaching to ensure it is understood and used correctly. If so, use the preceding sections to explain the structure.

It can be hard for children with language disorders to cope with reasoning tasks, and this may be a separate issue, with the child/ren requiring support from an adult in order to come up with ideas about ‘why’ things are happening.

## **LEVEL 7: NEGATION AND ‘NOT’**

Please see the Grammar Markers section of the Manual for further details about negation. ‘Negatives’ can be included in any of the above sentence types to indicate something that is not happening. The negative ‘not’ is attached to the verb using an auxiliary verb form.

### **Activities**

The word ‘not’ should be written in black on a white background and placed on the verb part of the sentence frame. Examples are: ‘*He is not running.*’; ‘*The girl was not eating.*’; ‘*Somebody is not playing.*’

‘No’ may also occur as a negative form with a subject or object, for example: ‘*No girls have dark hair*'; ‘*The boy has no sweets.*’ In these instances the negative would be placed with the subject or object.

## **COMPOUND SENTENCES**

### ***The meaning***

Linking words can be used to join two or more sentences together. Linking words should be written out and placed between coloured elements. This is to avoid confusion with auxiliary verbs, for example, which will be written out but placed on the appropriate coloured background. The sentences that are being joined should be complete and be any of the types listed above. Examples of linking words are: ‘and’; ‘but’; ‘before’; ‘after’; ‘because’. They have individual meanings which must be explained. Information appears in the Vocabulary Development section of the Manual.

Once the child is linking sentences together, he or she can further develop narrative skills. Please see the section on Narrative in the Manual for further information. The principles of colourful sentences may be useful for introductory work on narrative.

## **USING COLOURFUL SENTENCE FRAMES**

### ***Visual question prompts***

It is very important to have written or symbolic question prompts visible at all times when building up sentences. Use action pictures to elicit examples, with a set of colour-coded Boardmaker™ pictures to illustrate each sentence element. For example: ‘*The man is eating a cake.*’ requires ‘man’ (orange); ‘eat’ (yellow) and ‘cake’ (red). Pictures that may be either a subject or object in different sentences require to

be printed out on both orange and red backgrounds, so they can be used in the appropriate place in different sentences.

Prompts can be selected by the adult to target sentence types appropriate to the level being targeted. Either use coloured question prompts and ask the child to generate an answer to each question, with the adult choosing the sentence structure, or use Boardmaker™ pictures, with the child choosing one of each colour to build the sentence. These principles can be used to make up sensible and ‘silly’ sentences; in terms of meaning: the structure will remain correct. Encourage the child/ren to monitor the adult making incorrect sentences when taking their turn at building a sentence. For example, say: ‘*Went I home? Is that a good sentence?*’ Repeating the child/ren’s errors is also important to allow them to attempt self-correction, before the adult gives the correct form as a model.

## **Activities**

### **Roll a dice**

Number Boardmaker™ representations of sentence elements. Roll a dice and pick up one ‘subject’, one ‘verb’, one ‘object’ and so on with the corresponding number on them. Arrange the words to make up the sentence.

### **Blu-tack™ sentences**

Build sentences using Velcro strip or Blu-Tack™ and then post completed sentences in a posting box.

### **Piles of sentences**

Place piles of pictures round the room. The/each child collects one picture from each pile and builds the sentence up at the table.

### **Fill the gap**

Using coloured frames, take away one part of a sentence and get the child/ren to generate as many possible alternatives as possible. For example, remove ‘fish’ from: ‘*The man is eating fish.*’ and get the child/ren to generate other ‘objects’. Be aware of possible knock-on effects for the rest of the sentence, regarding verb agreement, plurality and so on.

### **Make an action picture**

The/each child makes his or her own action picture, using cut outs, and then makes up sentences from it, using a colour coded frame or Boardmaker™ pictures as appropriate.

### **Giving directions**

The/each child chooses an activity. The adult then carries out the activity and the child reports back on ‘what’ the adult is doing, ‘where’, ‘how’ and so on. Miniature figures or other children within a group can be used to vary the ‘subject’. For example, the child says: ‘*I choose Tom and jumping.*’ The adult asks ‘*What is happening?*’ and the child says ‘*Tom is jumping*’. Further prompts can be given as appropriate to elicit additional parts of the sentence, for example: ‘*Tom is jumping, but where is he jumping?*’

### ***Sorting***

Using non colour-coded pictures, the/each child is asked to sort them out according to ‘subject/verb’ or ‘verb/location’. This activity checks on a child’s understanding of different parts of the sentence.

## **PUBLISHED RESOURCES**

There are published resources that give examples of sentences that may be colour coded. The following was available during the project, with a number cross-referred to the list appearing at the end of this Manual (Section Nine).

Action Lotto

2

## **COLOURFUL SENTENCES – EXAMPLES**

The examples listed here are taken from Action Lotto boards (Section Nine, No. 2). Adjectives are optional, and may be included according to the level of ability of the child.

### **ACTION LOTTO BOARD: IN THE GARDEN – EXAMPLES.**

#### **LEVEL 1: SUBJECT + VERB**

The girl is climbing; The boy is painting; The girl is washing; The boy is playing.

#### **LEVEL 2: SUBJECT + VERB + OBJECT**

The girl is climbing a/the climbing frame; The boy is painting a/the fence; The girl is washing a/the/her car; The boy is catching/throwing a/the/his ball.

#### **LEVEL 2A: SUBJECT / OBJECT + ADJECTIVE**

The fair-haired girl; The boy in the red t-shirt; The red car; A blue ball.

#### **LEVEL 3A: SUBJECT + VERB + LOCATION**

The order of sentence elements may be changed in some examples of the following levels.

The girl is climbing in the garden/outside; The boy is painting in the garden/outside; The girl is washing in the garden/outside; Outside/in the garden, the boy is playing.

#### **LEVEL 3B: SUBJECT + VERB + OBJECT + LOCATION**

The girl is climbing a/the climbing frame in the garden/outside; The boy is painting a/the old fence in the garden/outside; The girl is washing a/the/her red car in the garden/outside; The boy is catching/throwing a/the/his ball under the tree/outside.

#### **LEVEL 4A: SUBJECT + VERB + TIME**

The children played all day; The sun was shining in the afternoon; After breakfast Sam painted; Yesterday the children went swimming; At six o'clock it is time for tea.

#### **LEVEL 4B: SUBJECT + VERB + OBJECT + TIME**

Some location suggestions have been included in brackets, but should be left out until the time sentence element is ready to be used in a longer sentence.

After school Kim climbs the climbing frame (in the garden); Sam painted the fence (in the garden) after lunch; In the morning Josie washed the car (on the grass); John played (outside) with his ball all morning.

#### **LEVEL 5A: SUBJECT + VERB + MANNER**

Kim is climbing carefully; Josie is washing quickly; Sam is painting slowly; John is playing happily.

**LEVEL 5B: SUBJECT + VERB + OBJECT + MANNER**

Kim is climbing the climbing frame carefully; Josie is washing the car quickly; Sam is painting the fence slowly; John is throwing his ball brilliantly.

**LEVEL 6: SUBJECT + VERB + OBJECT + REASON**

Josie is washing the car because it is dirty; Sam is painting the fence to make it look nice.

**ACTION LOTTO BOARD: IN THE LIVING ROOM – EXAMPLES****LEVEL 1 : SUBJECT + VERB**

The boy is reading; The girl is drawing; Kim is sitting; Kim is chatting/telephoning/talking; John is playing.

**LEVEL 2: SUBJECT + VERB + OBJECT**

Kim is telephoning her friend; Sam is playing his Game Boy; John is reading a book; Josie is drawing pictures.

**LEVEL 2A: SUBJECT OR OBJECT + ADJECTIVE**

The boy in the red t-shirt; The white telephone; The red curtains; The girl in the orange dress.

**LEVEL 3A: SUBJECT + VERB + LOCATION**

The order of sentence elements may be changed in some examples of the following levels.

Kim is sitting on the sofa/settee; Sam is playing in the living room; John is reading on the sofa; Josie is lying on the floor.

**LEVEL 3B: SUBJECT + VERB + OBJECT + LOCATION**

Kim is talking to her friend on the sofa/settee; Sam is playing his Game Boy in the living room; John is reading a book on the sofa; Josie is drawing pictures on the floor.

**LEVEL 4A: SUBJECT + VERB + TIME**

The children play after tea; John reads before bedtime; Sam plays all the time; Josie draws in the evenings.

**LEVEL 4B: SUBJECT + VERB + OBJECT + TIME**

Some location suggestions have been included in brackets, but should be left out until the time sentence element is ready to be used in a longer sentence.

John read his book before bedtime; After tea the children play games (inside); Sam plays with his Game Boy as often as possible; Josie draws pictures (on the floor) after tea.

**LEVEL 5A: SUBJECT + VERB + MANNER**

John reads fast; Josie draws slowly; Kim chats loudly; Sam plays happily.

**LEVEL 5B: SUBJECT + VERB + OBJECT + MANNER**

John is reading his book quietly; Josie is drawing her picture quickly; Sam is playing his Game Boy excitedly.

**LEVEL 6: SUBJECT + VERB + OBJECT + REASON**

John is reading his book because he enjoys it; Josie is drawing her picture so that she can give it to her mum.

**ACTION LOTTO BOARD: IN THE BEDROOM – EXAMPLES****LEVEL 1: SUBJECT + VERB**

Kim is looking; Josie is tidying; The boy in the green t-shirt is kneeling; The boy in the stripy shirt is sitting.

**LEVEL 2: SUBJECT + VERB + OBJECT**

The girl is drawing/holding the curtain; Sam is folding a towel; Josie is hanging-up a shirt; John is enjoying music.

**LEVEL 2A: SUBJECT OR OBJECT + ADJECTIVE**

The boy in the yellow t-shirt.

**LEVEL 3A: SUBJECT + VERB + LOCATION**

The order of sentence elements may be changed in some examples of the following levels.

The pink elephant is hiding in the corner; The kangaroo is sitting by the cupboard; The yellow, furry dog is sleeping on the bed; Josie is tidying in the bedroom.

**LEVEL 3B: SUBJECT + VERB + OBJECT + LOCATION**

Kim is watching the birds from the bedroom window; Josie is putting a shirt in the bedroom cupboard; Sam is folding his green towel on the bed.

**LEVEL 4A: SUBJECT + VERB + TIME**

Before tea the children played; After lunch the children tidied up; When the sun shone the bedroom heated up; The kangaroo snoozes during the day.

**LEVEL 4B: SUBJECT + VERB + OBJECT + TIME**

Some location suggestions have been included in brackets, but should be left out until the time sentence element is ready to be used in a longer sentence.

John listens to his music all the time (in his room); Every night the children tidy their room; Kim wears a dress without sleeves on hot days (to the park).

#### **LEVEL 5A: SUBJECT + VERB + MANNER**

Josie is tidying up quickly; Kim is watching carefully; John is sitting happily.

#### **LEVEL 5B: SUBJECT + VERB + OBJECT + MANNER**

John is listening to his music happily; Josie is tidying the bedroom quickly; Sam is folding the green towel carefully; Kim is watching the window sadly.

#### **LEVEL 6: SUBJECT + VERB + OBJECT + REASON**

Josie is tidying up (the bedroom) because her mum told her to; Kim is watching the window because she wants to play outside.

### **ACTION LOTTO BOARD: IN THE KITCHEN – EXAMPLES**

#### **LEVEL 1: SUBJECT + VERB**

One boy is drinking; The boy in the red shirt is smiling/stirring; A girl is pouring; She is cutting.

#### **LEVEL 2: SUBJECT + VERB + OBJECT**

Josie is wearing blue shorts; The boy is drinking milk; The boy is stirring his drink; A girl is pouring orange juice; The girl is cutting a cake.

#### **LEVEL 2A: SUBJECT OR OBJECT + ADJECTIVE**

The girl in the blue shirt; The boy with the red shirt.

#### **LEVEL 3A: SUBJECT + VERB + LOCATION**

The order of sentence elements may be changed in some examples of the following levels.

The children are in the kitchen; The boy in the red shirt is leaning on the table; The boy is drinking on a stool; The boy is sitting on a stool/in the kitchen; The cup and saucer are/are sitting on the shelf.

#### **LEVEL 3B: SUBJECT + VERB + OBJECT + LOCATION**

The boy with the red shirt is stirring his drink in the kitchen; The boy is drinking milk on a stool; The boy is stirring his drink in the kitchen; Josie is pouring orange juice into a glass; John is wearing a black watch on his wrist.

#### **LEVEL 4A: SUBJECT + VERB + TIME**

The children drink often; The children meet at dinnertime; At teatime the children all eat; They ate in the afternoon.

**LEVEL 4B: SUBJECT + VERB + OBJECT + TIME**

At teatime Josie drank some orange juice; They ate cake in the afternoon; Kim likes cake at teatime.

**LEVEL 4C: SUBJECT + VERB + OBJECT + TIME + LOCATION**

At teatime Josie drank some orange juice in the kitchen; They ate cake in the afternoon in the garden.

**LEVEL 5A: SUBJECT + VERB + MANNER**

Sam stirred noisily; Kim cut carefully; Josie poured quickly; John drank slowly.

**LEVEL 5B: SUBJECT + VERB + OBJECT + MANNER**

Sam stirred his drink noisily; Kim cut the cake hungrily; Josie poured her orange juice carefully; John drank his milk slowly.

**LEVEL 6: SUBJECT + VERB (+ OBJECT) + REASON**

Kim wanted the cake because she was hungry; Josie poured her orange juice so that she would not spill it.

## **COLOURFUL SENTENCES PROBES**

### **MATERIALS**

Use the four large pictures from the Action Lotto boards to elicit the following sentence types. For each level, set out the relevant coloured frames and tell the child they are to use these to help make their sentence. The child needs to produce five sentences at each level.

#### **LEVEL 1: SUBJECT + VERB**

Use the following frames: ‘orange’ (subject) and ‘yellow’ (verb). Probe, saying ‘*What’s happening?*’ The target is for the child to say a ‘subject + verb’ sentence, such as ‘*The girl is climbing.*’ Carry out five probes.

#### **LEVEL 2: SUBJECT + VERB + OBJECT**

Use the following frames: ‘orange’, ‘yellow’ and ‘red’ (object). The adult gives examples first, such as ‘*Look, the girl is reading a book.*’ The probe is then given: ‘*Now you tell me about this boy using the colours to help you remember all the words.*’ The target is for the child to say a ‘subject + verb + object’ sentence such as ‘*The boy is playing a game.*’ Carry out five probes.

#### **LEVEL 3A: SUBJECT + VERB + LOCATION**

Use the following frames: ‘orange’, ‘yellow’ and ‘blue’ (location). The adult gives examples first, such as ‘*Look, the kangaroo is sitting by the cupboard.*’ The probe is then given: ‘*Now you tell me about this one, using the colours to help you.*’ The target is for the child to say a ‘subject + verb + location’ sentence such as ‘*The dog is sleeping on the bed.*’ Carry out five probes.

#### **LEVEL 3B: SUBJECT + VERB + OBJECT + LOCATION**

Use the following frames: ‘orange’, ‘yellow’, ‘red’ and ‘blue’. The adult gives examples first, such as ‘*Look, the girl is pouring orange juice into a glass.*’ The probe is then given: ‘*Now you tell me about what somebody is doing, using the colours to help you.*’ The target is for the child to say a ‘subject + verb + object + location’ sentence, such as ‘*The boy is drinking milk on a stool.*’ Carry out five probes.

#### **LEVEL 4A: SUBJECT + VERB + TIME**

Use the following frames: ‘orange’, ‘yellow’ and ‘purple’ (when). The adult gives examples first, such as ‘*Look, the children played all day.*’ The probe is then given: ‘*Now you make up a sentence like that, about when something happened. Use the colours to help you.*’ The target is for the child to say a subject + verb + time’ sentence, such as ‘*The sun shone all afternoon.*’ Carry out five probes.

#### **LEVEL 4B: SUBJECT + VERB + OBJECT + TIME**

Use the following frames: ‘orange’, ‘yellow’, ‘red’ and ‘purple’. The adult gives examples first, such as ‘*Look, the children played games after tea.*’ The probe is then given: ‘*Now you make up a sentence like that, about when something happened. Use the colours to help you.*’ The target is for the child to say a ‘subject + verb + object + time’ sentence such as: ‘*The girl drew a picture after school.*’ Carry out five probes.

**LEVEL 5A: SUBJECT + VERB + MANNER**

Use the following frames: ‘orange’, ‘yellow’ and ‘turquoise’ (how). The adult gives examples first, such as ‘*Look, the girl is tidying quickly.*’ The probe is then given: ‘*Now you make up a sentence like that about how someone is doing something. Remember to use the colours to help you.*’ The target is for the child to say a ‘subject + verb + manner’ sentence such as ‘*John is sitting happily.*’ Carry out five probes.

**LEVEL 5B: SUBJECT + VERB + OBJECT + MANNER**

Use the following frames: ‘orange’, ‘yellow’, ‘red’ and ‘turquoise’. The adult gives examples first, such as ‘*Look, the girl poured the orange juice carefully.*’ The probe is then given: ‘*Now you make up a sentence like that, about how someone does something. Use the colours to help you.*’ The target is for the child to say a ‘subject + verb + object + manner’ sentence such as ‘*The boy drank his milk slowly.*’ Carry out five probes.

## **8 NARRATIVE THERAPY**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Narratives are a very important part of how we communicate. They are an integral part of everyday social interaction and the school curriculum. We relate events that have happened to us on a daily basis and are also able to create fictional stories. Both are narratives. Most school-aged children are familiar with the concept of ‘stories’ through repeated exposure to books, television and children’s literature. However they may find it difficult to create made-up stories or tell real, true-life ‘stories’ about themselves. Narrative therapy gives the child a framework that can be applied to both real and made up stories, to help them organise narratives and to ensure that the child understands what information is required by the listener to allow the story to make sense. The work here is based on Shanks and Ripon (2001: Section Nine, No. 41).

### **STRUCTURE OF A NARRATIVE**

We often think of stories as having a beginning, middle and an end. These are useful ideas that have been refined here to help us teach children to include all the parts of a story.

#### **THE BEGINNING**

The beginning of a story gives the setting and we usually need a beginning of some kind to set the scene. The setting can tell us ‘who’ the narrative is about, and ‘where’ and ‘when’ the story took place. The ‘when’ can range from the very specific, ‘at 10 o’clock yesterday’, to the more general, ‘last summer’. Similarly, ‘who’ and ‘where’ can contain very detailed information (*‘Once there was a little boy who was very naughty. He was always getting into trouble at school. The teachers always had to get his mum and dad in. The boy was called Jonathon and he was six .....’*), or be brief (*‘Once a boy called Jonathon did a naughty thing. He .....’*.)

#### **THE MIDDLE**

The middle section of the narrative is where the story actually happens. It is where the central plot of the story occurs and where the exciting bit takes place. It is defined by a sequence of three parts:

##### ***What happens – 1***

This is an ‘initiating event’ that acts as a trigger for the narrative. It is an event/action/perception that causes the character(s) to do something, for example: *‘Susie the squirrel went to her friend’s house for tea. But her friend didn’t know where the nuts for tea were buried.’*

##### ***What happens – 2***

Following this is the action that the character carries out because of the initiating event. It is the action that the character carries out because of the initiating event, for example: *‘So Susie dug up some of her own nuts.’*

### **What happens – 3**

This part occurs as a result of ‘What happens 2’. It is the consequence, which may record the success or failure of the characters’ actions, for example: ‘*Susie and her friend had a delicious tea.*’

When all three parts are present in the middle section it is known as an ‘episode’. Most familiar stories have more than one episode, making them longer and more complex. This idea may be introduced later, but it is important to ensure that basic narrative structure where ‘the middle’ is composed of one complete ‘episode’ is first understood.

## **THE ENDING**

There may be another section called the ‘ending’. This is an additional sentence that may or may not be required to complete the story. This is often where the general moral of the story is given, or it is used to give a neat finish, such as ‘*They all lived happily ever after.*’

## **THE COMPLETE NARRATIVE STRUCTURE**

The complete structure of a narrative episode is therefore as follows:

<b>Beginning</b>	Who?
	When?
	Where?

At least one of these is usually present.

<b>Middle</b>	What happened?	1
	What did the character do about that?	2
	What happened then?	3

Well-formed narratives need all of these ‘middle’ parts.

**Ending** This tells the listener that the story is now complete.

It is not always necessary to have an ‘ending’, as ‘What happened – 3?’ may give enough information. For each story the child/ren should be asked if an additional ending is required.

Some children need help to construct narratives. The aim of narrative therapy is to increase a child’s awareness and use of the components required to form a complete narrative.

This can be tackled by:

- increasing awareness and use of the ‘beginning’, ‘middle’ and ‘end’ of a story
- learning that the ‘beginning’ is often composed of three parts: ‘who’, ‘when’, ‘where’
- learning that the ‘middle’ is always composed of three parts
- learning how to conclude a story
- using visual prompts to aid the creation of narratives
- developing an increasingly complex narrative structure
- encouraging reflection on the current narrative target.

## DEVELOPING NARRATIVE STRUCTURE

### ***Explain the components***

Each child's awareness of stories should be checked first to ensure they have the basic concept of a story as a description of a 'happening'. Introduce each narrative component, using cue cards listing 'who', 'when', 'where', 'what happened 1, 2 and 3', and 'end'. Cue cards should be visible to the child/ren at all times and should be highlighted by pointing when the relevant part of a story occurs. When therapy moves on to target specific aspects of a story, the cue cards should again be visible and should be referred to frequently. For example, say: '*Now we are going to think about 'who' is in our story.*' and show the 'who' card.

### ***Brainstorm***

Discuss and explain that stories can be 'real', i.e. they really happened to someone, or made-up, i.e. they did not really happen. Stories can be about the child/ren, another person, (real or imaginary), an animal or a monster and so on. Older children should be asked what they know about stories to discover if they are able to generate relevant ideas. Younger children may require more prompts and suggestions to be given to them.

### ***Tell a short story***

Pointing to cue cards as above, tell a short story. Each child is asked if they can identify the key components of the story:

- who it is about (introduce the idea of 'character' as an actor in the story)
- where it took place
- when it happened
- what happened
- what the character did about it
- what happened as a result
- what was the end.

For older children the complete narrative sequence can be highlighted using cue cards before the story is told, to focus their listening.

Once the parts of the story have been identified, the child/ren can be given selected cue cards. The adult retells the story with emphasis on the key parts, asking '*Where is the .....(named component) card?*' for each part of the story.

For example:

*'One day ..... ('That's 'when' the story happened, where is the 'when' cue card?')  
in the forest ..... ('That's 'where' the story happened, where is the 'where' card?')  
the three bears ..... ('That's 'who' the story is about, where is the 'who' card?')  
found that their porridge was too hot to eat. ('That is what happened, where is the 'what happened 1' card?')  
So they went for a walk to let it cool down. ('That is what they did about it where is the 'what happened 2' card?')  
But when they came back they found it had all been eaten up! ('That is the consequence, where is the 'what happened 3' card?')  
After that they always locked the door behind them when they went out! ('That is the end, where is the 'ending' card?')*

In fact, the original story does not end there but continues with another episode and a new character, with Goldilocks arriving and eating the porridge, which can be added once the child/ren can understand episode structure.

This whole explanation of narrative structure, or specific parts of it, can be repeated as many times as is necessary for the child/ren to gain an understanding of a ‘story’, and the main components within it. Additional examples of stories should be used. Once all of the labels and cue cards for narrative components have been introduced and understood, specific work on each part of the narrative can begin.

## TEACHING BEGINNINGS

### WHO

#### *The meaning*

When children hear stories they do not always hear about the main characters first. However, when children create a story it is important to have someone to build their ideas and story around. Therefore the main character of the story is dealt with first. Repeat the point that a story can be about anyone, so it is very important to tell the people listening to the story ‘who’ it is about. Tell the child/ren your ‘aim’, for example: *‘Today we are going to talk about telling stories. When we tell a story it is important to say who is in the story or who it is about. For example, let’s look at this story. Can you tell me who the story is about?’*

Use a story framework and talk through a one-episode story, and encourage the child/ren to think of other people the story could be about, for example: *‘Can you think of who else could be in the story or who else the story could have been about?’; ‘Can you think of another story and tell me who is in it? For example it needn’t be about three bears, but could be about three rabbits, or three aliens.’*

Read short stories and encourage the child/ren to identify who is in the story. Use their suggestions to retell the story – stories can be as silly as children make them, but the focus remains on the fact that a story must have a ‘who’ and that it is only the ‘who’ that changes at in this activity. All other information remains the same. The child/ren can draw pictures of their new story characters. If any child is finding it difficult to generate ideas, the adult can make suggestions, or a selection of characters can be placed in a bag for the child/ren to choose and put into the story. ‘Speaking and Listening Through Narrative’ pack materials can be used for this (Section Nine, No. 41).

For older or more advanced children, the adult should encourage further description of each child’s chosen character. These expanded character descriptions can then be slotted into the story framework as before. All other information remains the same. If a child experiences difficulty in generating additional information about their character, pictures from the ‘Speaking and Listening Through Narrative’ pack (Section Nine, No. 41) can be used as a focus.

For example the story could be about not just ‘a boy’, but include information on:

- what he looked like: ‘a big boy’
- what he was like: ‘a naughty boy’
- where he lived: ‘a boy from Glasgow’; ‘a boy who lived in a little red house’
- what he liked to do: ‘a boy who liked football’
- what his family was like: ‘a boy who lived with his three sisters’.

Repeat the point that the storyteller must let the listener know ‘who’ the story is about, explaining that this can go wrong if we don’t give enough information: for example if the teller starts a story with ‘he’, ‘she’ or ‘they’ as the character. Give examples such as: ‘*One day at school, he was running about in the playground.*’ and ask the child if they know ‘who’ that story is about. If they identify ‘he’ as the character, explain that we don’t know very much about that character – whether ‘he’ is a ‘boy’ or a ‘dog’ or a ‘monster’. Explain that when we first talk about the main character(s) in our stories it is important to give as much information as possible so the listener knows ‘who’ it is, and does not have to guess. Practise this, with the adult giving ‘good’ and ‘bad’ examples of character introductions. Using pronouns with no initial character description would be ‘bad’, for example: ‘*One cold morning he went to the shops to buy milk for his mum.*; ‘*At ten past three that afternoon they were to meet for coffee.*’ The child/ren should then reflect on the characters they previously created and decide if they gave enough information about their ‘who’. If not, what could they have included for the listener to gain sufficient information? For example, say: ‘*We just talked about the importance of telling people ‘who’ is in your story. Can you remember why it’s important to tell people ‘who’ is in your story?*’

Then explain to the child/ren that there can be more than one ‘who’ in the story, and that it is important each character is introduced properly when they first appear.

### **Activities**

The following activities can be used at any point that appears appropriate within the ‘who’ narrative sessions. Different children will require varying amounts of repetition and time spent on this area of narrative. These activities can be repeated, adapted and used for as long as is necessary for any child.

#### **A script for ‘who’**

State the aim, saying: ‘*Today we are going to talk about telling stories. When we tell a story it is important to say who is in the story, or who it is about.*’

Explain, saying: ‘*Telling people who is in the story lets them know about the ‘character’, that this is who is in the story, and it helps people understand the story.*’

Tell a story as an example, saying: ‘*Let’s think about this story. Can you tell me who the story was about?*’

Expand, saying: ‘*Can you think of who else could be in the story or who else the story could have been about?; or Can you think of another story and tell me who is in it?*’

Reflect, saying: ‘*We just talked about the importance of telling people who is in your story. Can you remember why it is important to tell people who is in your story?*’

Reinforce, asking: ‘*Can you remember what it is important the next time we tell a story? That’s right, we have to say who the story is about.*’

If difficulties arise, refer to the ‘Wh’ Questions section of the Manual.

#### **‘Speaking and Listening Through Narrative’ pack ‘who’ activities**

The ‘Speaking and Listening Through Narrative’ pack (Section Nine, No. 41) has activities such as asking the child to draw a picture of and talk about their favourite book or story and ‘who’ is in it; showing books and asking if the child can identify or guess characters from looking at the front of the book; giving the child a character to respond to as the adult reads a story, and the child jumps up when they hear their character mentioned, and listening to short sentences for the words that tell you ‘who’.

## WHERE

### ***The meaning***

Make the point that not only is it very important to tell listeners ‘who’ a story is about, but also ‘where’ the story is taking place. Using a personal event narrative, i.e. a story about themselves, encourage each child to think about ‘where’ it happened. Explain that the location could be a specific, small place, for example: ‘in the back garden’, or could be a bigger place, for example, ‘in Spain’. Use the story as a framework to practise and discuss different places for the story to happen. Using picture cards with sample ‘locations’ on them, get the child/ren to pick one from a bag and slot it into the story. Discuss if the ‘where’ is small and specific or large and general; and if general, how could it be altered to become specific, or vice versa. Find out if the child/ren can generate different places for the sample story without the aid of pictures, for example: *‘I wasn’t at the beach, I was at a farm’*. The child/ren can draw their suggested locations. The adult can provide some ‘bad’ examples of non-specific locations and encourage the child/ren to identify these as inappropriate, for example: *‘I went there.’*; *‘I’m going somewhere tomorrow.’*; *‘Jenny went to that place with her mum.’* These examples do not give us enough information to identify, picture and draw the location where the story is taking place. Provide a selection of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ examples so the child/ren can judge whether a good description has been used.

If difficulties arise, refer to the ‘Wh’ Questions section of the Manual.

### ***Activities***

The following activities can be used at any point that appears appropriate within the ‘where’ narrative sessions. Different children will require varying amounts of repetition and time spent on this area of narrative. These activities can be repeated, adapted and used for as long as is necessary for any child.

#### ***A script for ‘where’***

State the aim, saying: *‘When we are telling a story we need to tell ‘where’ the story happens.’*

Explain, saying: *‘Telling where the story happened is important to tell the listener about the place in which the story happens. The place could be very specific place, for example, ‘in the kitchen’, or in a much bigger place, ‘Spain’ for example.’*

Tell a story as an example, saying: *‘Let’s think about this story. Can you tell me where the story happened?’*

Expand, saying: *‘Can you think of where else the story could have happened?’* or *‘Can you think of another story and tell me where it happened?’*

Reflect, saying: *‘We just talked about the importance of saying where a story happened. Can you remember why it is important to tell people where your story happened?’*

Reinforce, asking: *‘The next time you tell a story what are you going to remember to put in? That’s right, we have to say where the story happened.’*

#### ***‘Speaking and Listening Through Narrative’ pack ‘where’ activities***

The ‘Speaking and Listening Through Narrative’ pack (Section Nine, No. 41) has activities such as children listening for words that tell you ‘where’; finding ‘where’ activities are taking place in familiar books, and saying ‘where’ they would like to go and ‘who’ they would take with them.

## **WHEN**

### ***The meaning***

Tell a simple story and discuss the idea of needing to know the time that a story takes place. Get children to identify the time from the story. Discuss specific versus non-specific time frames, and explain to the child/ren that if you know when something happened, you can tell the listener, for example; ‘on Tuesday’; ‘last week’; ‘last Christmas’; ‘in the summer’. When you don’t know a specific time, or for made-up stories, or when something happened a long time ago, there are other descriptions that can be used, for example: ‘once upon a time’; ‘one day’; ‘long ago’. It should be explained that it is usually helpful for some time marker to be given. A simple story can then be adapted, with the child/ren suggesting different times to put in. If any child finds it difficult to generate ideas, a selection of pictures can be used to help. The child/ren can draw pictures to illustrate each of these. It may also be useful to discuss different periods of ‘time’, for example: ‘days of the week’; ‘months of the year’; ‘seasons’, ‘special’ days; ‘times of day’, parts of lifetime, for example: ‘when I was a baby’, and unspecified past times, like ‘a long time ago’. These can all be used to provide the ‘when’ part of a story.

If difficulties arise, refer to the ‘Wh’ Questions section of the Manual

### ***Activities***

The following activities can be used at any point that appears appropriate within the ‘when’ narrative sessions. Different children will require varying amounts of repetition and time spent on this area of narrative. These activities can be repeated, adapted and used for as long as is necessary for any child.

#### ***A script for ‘when’***

State the aim, saying: ‘*We are going to talk about when the story happens. This may be the time the story takes place or the day, month or year.*’

Explain, saying: ‘*When we tell a story we need to let the listener know what time the story takes place.*’

Tell a story as an example, saying: ‘*Let’s think about this story. Can you tell me what time the story happened?*’

Expand, saying: ‘*Can you think of another time the story could have happened, for example a different day of the week, or time of day?*’ or ‘*Can you think of another story and tell me when it happened, for example in the middle of the night?*’

Reflect, saying: ‘*We just talked about when the story happened. Why do we need to do this?*’

Reinforce, saying: ‘*The next time you tell a story, what are you going to remember to put in? That’s right, we have to say when the story happened.*’

#### ***‘Speaking and Listening Through Narrative’ pack ‘when’ activities***

The ‘Speaking and Listening Through Narrative’ pack (Section Nine, No. 41) has activities such as children listening to words that tell you ‘when’; a ‘Whodunit’ game, a ‘Molly the Monster’ game and a ‘Katie Calendar’ game.

#### ***Pass the story***

The/a child gets to choose a prompt card for one ‘beginning’ component of a story and thinks of something to say. For example, if the child picks the ‘when’ prompt, they must decide ‘when’ the story took place. The adult and child alternate, or for groups each child gets to choose a component. Once all three story ‘beginning’ parts have been generated (‘who’, ‘where’ and ‘when’), the adult retells all the

parts as a coherent narrative. This ordered structure is then used as a basis for the child/ren to elaborate and retell, and then change each component of the story.

## THE MIDDLE: WHAT HAPPENED 1, 2 AND 3

### *The meaning*

When we know about the ‘beginning’ of the story, ‘who’ is in it, ‘where’ it happens and ‘when’ it happens we need to construct the main part of the story in the ‘middle’. The ‘middle’ is discussed as one ‘episode’ comprising three components:

- ‘What happened 1’ the initiating event, when something happens to start the action
- ‘What happened 2’ what the character(s) do because of this event
- ‘What happened 3’ what happens as a result, the consequence.

Most familiar stories have more than one middle section or ‘episode’ and this makes them more complex. However, it is important to ensure each child has an understanding of how a single ‘episode’ is structured before moving on to episode sequences. This may mean that the narratives generated at early stages appear short and very basic, but they will help the child/ren to understand the key points regarding narrative components.

Explain to the child/ren that after we have told the ‘who’, ‘when’ and ‘where’ of the story, we can get onto the best bit, which is finding out what happened. Highlight that there are three parts to the middle. Draw three boxes numbered 1, 2 and 3 below each other, one for each ‘middle’ component.

Each component should be described separately:

*‘What happened 1: this is the initial event, which happens first in the story and starts the whole thing off.’*

*‘What happened 2: this is what the character does to deal with what has happened.’*

*‘What happened 3: this is the result, what occurs because of the character’s attempt.’*

An emotive initial event should be discussed to which there is likely to be an obvious reaction. The adult describes such an event, points to box 1, and explains ‘*The first thing that happens is .....*’ They point to box 2, and say: ‘*And we now need to find out what the character does about that.*’ The child/ren can generate ideas for this, which can be developed into ‘silly’ stories. The adult then points to box 3 and asks ‘*And then what happened at the end?*’ so the child/ren can give ideas.

This should illustrate the three parts to the episode. However, it is likely that the ‘What happened 1, 2 and 3’ sequence will require a lot of description, repetition and practice for each child to gain an understanding of all three parts of the ‘middle’, and how they follow each other. Each child’s needs will vary and as much time as is thought necessary can be spent on the ‘middle’ of a story.

To further illustrate, use picture story sequences that show all three parts of the ‘middle’, then leave the last one out or take it away. Encourage the child/ren to suggest what could have happened instead. This can be developed by removing the last two pictures and getting the child/ren to suggest a ‘What happened 2’ section, what the character does because of the initial event, and a ‘What happened 3’ section, the end result that occurred subsequently. The child/ren can thus manipulate both ‘What happened 2’ and What happened 3’.

To check understanding, the adult tells additional stories and each child has to identify which bits make up the ‘beginning’; and then which bits form the ‘middle’, including the specific ‘What happened 1, 2 and 3’ sections.

## **Activities**

All of these activities can be repeated as many times as is necessary for any child. They can be adapted by using different pictures and different ‘beginnings’.

### **A script for the ‘middle’**

State the aim, saying: ‘Now that we know who is in the story, when it happened and where it happened, which is our good beginning, we are going to think about what happened’.

Explain, saying: ‘The middle of a story tells us what happens and we find out about what started the story, what the character did and what happened because of that.’

Give an example, saying: ‘Let’s look at the three parts in the middle of this story. What happened 1 was ... A little boy had a sore tooth. What happened 2 was ..... He didn’t like going to the dentist, but he did go. What happened 3 was ..... He had to get a filling, but it didn’t hurt too much.’

Expand, saying: ‘Can you think what else might have happened in the story? For example, what else might have happened to start the story, like a sore leg? Or you could change what happened at the dentist.’

Reflect, saying: ‘We thought about three parts in the middle of a story. Can you remember them?’

Reinforce, saying: ‘When we tell a story, what parts do we have to put in the middle? What does each part tell us? That’s right, we have to say all three things that happened.’

### **Pull out a story**

Have pictures representing ‘What happened 1’ or ‘What happened 1’ and ‘What happened 2’ in a bag. Get the child/ren to pull out a picture and generate their own ‘What happened 2’ or ‘What happened 3’, as appropriate.

## **EXTENSION FROM SINGLE EPISODES**

### **The meaning**

Once the child/ren can generate stories following the three part ‘What happened 1, 2 and 3’ sequence, the adult should explain that two or more such sequences can be joined together to make a longer story. The ‘What happened 1, 2 and 3’ sequence forms an ‘episode’, and it may be helpful to teach that term to some children.

For example, say:

‘One day in the forest, a little boy called Tom... (That was the ‘Beginning’.)  
found a magic lamp. (That was ‘What happened 1’.)  
When he rubbed it ..... (That was ‘What happened 2’.)  
a genie appeared! (That was ‘What happened 3’.)

*Then three more things happened.*

*The genie said: ‘You can have three wishes Tom.’ (That was a ‘What happened 1’ again.)  
And Tom thought carefully for a minute and wished for a new bike, a huge bar of chocolate and a puppy.  
(That was a ‘What happened 2’ again.)  
There was a flash of smoke and the bike, the puppy and the chocolate all appeared. (That was a ‘What happened 3’ again.)  
Tom was very happy and took them all home. (That was the ‘Ending’.)*

## **Activities**

### ***Spot the episodes***

Children should be given practice in identifying episodes in stories. When they are at the stage of writing their own stories, they can spot the episodes within them.

## **TEACHING THE ENDING**

### ***The meaning***

Sometimes we add an additional sentence that signals ‘the end’. Signalling the ‘end’ in this way is optional, but tells the listeners you have stopped and so adds a formal closure to the story. Additional information is not given within the ending, however, the general ‘moral’ of the story is sometimes told. The adult should give examples where the ‘ending’ is useful and ones where it is less so. This depends upon whether an adequate ending is supplied in the ‘What happened 3’ section or not.

Examples are:

*Last summer, my sister and I were in Spain.* (‘Beginning’).

*My sister was bitten by a snake .....* (‘What happened 1’).

*and she had to go to hospital.* (‘What happened 2’).

*The doctor put a plaster on and gave her some medicine.* (‘What happened 3’).

*She was glad that the doctors knew what to do.* (‘Ending’).

*Ruth went to the hairdressers’ on Tuesday.* (‘Beginning’).

*The hairdresser dyed her hair green by mistake.* (‘What happened 1’).

*Ruth was very upset and told the hairdresser to make her hair look normal again.* (‘What happened 2’).

*The hairdresser fixed it by putting on some different hair dye.* (‘What happened 3’: no ‘ending’ is required.)

## **Activities**

### ***Ending formulas***

Endings are often formulaic, signalling the end of the story but not adding new information. The child/ren should be given examples of these, such as: ‘*And they all lived happily ever after*’; ‘*And that was the last of that*’; ‘*And that is the end of the story*’. They can learn to spot these, and see which fit their own stories.

## **EMOTIONS**

### ***The meaning***

For older or more advanced children it should be explained that it is possible to make their story better and more interesting if they tell the people listening what the character is feeling and/or thinking. Information about the character’s emotions and feelings can be given at any point throughout the narrative structure, for example during the ‘beginning’ when setting the scene, or during the ‘middle’, either after the initiating event, the action, or the consequence. Suitable examples should be given at this point.

## **Activities**

### **Add emotions**

The child/ren should have the opportunity to make up stories, then add to the story by including the characters' feelings about what is happening to them. Picture prompts can be used if the children are experiencing difficulty generating additional information.

## **CAUSALITY**

### ***The meaning***

Stories should ideally give some explanation as to 'why' events are happening or 'why' characters are reacting in a certain way. This adds extra meaning to a narrative, by giving causal links rather than just a list of events. For example: '*I went to the shops so I could buy a birthday present for Emma.*' has a causal link - needing a present made you go shopping, but '*I went to the shops. I bought a birthday present.*' has no such causal link.

## **Activities**

### ***A script for causality***

State the aim, saying: '*We are going to think about why things might happen in a story. That means think about the reason that things have happened. If you know the reason for something it can help you to understand it better.*'

Explain, saying: '*We need to let the listener know why things in the story happen, or why a character does something.*'

Give an example, saying: '*Let's look at a story together. Can you tell me why ..... happened?*' or '*Can you tell me why the character did that?*'

Expand, saying: '*Can you think of another reason they did that?*' or '*Can you think of another reason why that happened?*'

Reflect, saying: '*We have been thinking about telling the listener why things happen in the story. Why should we do that?*'

Reinforce, saying: '*The next time you tell a story, what are you going to remember to put in it? Yes, saying why things happen helps you understand what the story was all about.*'

### ***Why activities***

Further activities for 'why' are listed in the Wh Questions section of the Manual and could be incorporated into narrative sessions.

## **LINKING WORDS**

### ***The meaning***

Discuss the fact that some stories are longer than others and that sometimes there is additional information we want to add into our story. Words such as 'and', 'because' and 'therefore' can be used to join up all the information and can make a story sound better. Additional information may add further description or another episode.

### **Activities**

Principles and activities to teach linking words are listed in the Concept and Relational Words section of the Manual and these principles could be incorporated into narrative.

## **COHESION OF THE STORY**

### ***The meaning***

There may be occasions when a child is ‘story telling’ that they go off-topic, do not give the listener enough information to allow them to understand the story, or assume the listener already knows information that has not in fact been included. When this occurs, the adult should request clarification, to guide the child back on-topic or encourage additional information to be given. Such requests are discussed in the Comprehension Monitoring section of the Manual. Monitoring should help both the listener and the child, as the listener will gain the information required to understand the story and the child should become aware that all necessary information must be given for their story to be understood.

Another aspect of cohesion that may confuse a child is their use of determiners ‘a’ and ‘the’ and pronouns. The following rules should be followed to ensure the child is using these appropriately: ‘a’ should be used when someone or something is being introduced for the first time within the story, and ‘the’ for subsequent mentions of that person or thing. An example would be *‘A long time ago a young prince lived in a big castle. The prince was not very handsome.’* Similarly, nouns are used for the initial mention, but pronouns for subsequent reference to characters, as in: *‘The prince was not very handsome, and he was not very kind either.’*

### **Activities**

Activities to develop the use of determiners and pronouns are listed in the Grammar Markers section of the Manual.

## **PUBLISHED RESOURCES**

There are published resources that may be used to support narrative. The following was available during the project, cross-referred to the list appearing at the end of this Manual (Section Nine).

## NARRATIVE PROBES

It is important to ensure that each child is demonstrating an increasing ability to understand and use a more complete narrative structure. Progress within this area should be checked weekly using this tick list whilst listening to a narrative that the child creates in the course of therapy. Add explanatory notes if possible. The probe should be used to monitor what areas of narrative structure still require additional work. Probe children individually and repeat by asking for more short stories if possible, up to five.

**Yes**      **No**

### BEGINNING

Was there a:

‘who’

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------

‘where’

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------

‘when’

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------

### MIDDLE

Were there the following three parts? ☐

‘What happened - 1?’

<input type="checkbox"/> -	<input type="checkbox"/>
----------------------------	--------------------------

‘What happened - 2?’

<input type="checkbox"/> -	<input type="checkbox"/>
----------------------------	--------------------------

‘What happened - 3?’

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------

### END

Was an additional ending desirable?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------

Was it present?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------

### ADDITIONAL POINTS

Was additional character information included?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------

Were characters’ emotions detailed?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------

Did the child use linking words?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------

## 9 LIST OF PUBLISHED RESOURCES

Published materials available during the research project are listed, with publishers' addresses.

1. *100% Concepts*. LinguiSystems Inc, 3100 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, East Moline, IL 61244, USA.
2. *Action Lotto*. LDA, Duke Street, Wisbech, Cambridgeshire, PE 13 2AE, UK.
3. Armstrong, S. *The Great Game Pack*, STASS Publications, 44 North Road, Ponteland, Northumberland, UK.
4. Bigland, S., and Speake, J. *Semantic Links*. STASS Publications, 44 North Road, Ponteland, Northumberland, UK.
5. Bigland, S., Thomas, H. and Speake, J. *Cambridge Language Activity File*. STASS Publications, 44 North Road Ponteland, Northumberland, UK.
6. Bracken, B. and Myers, G (1986) *Bracken Concept Development Program*. Harcourt Assessment, 32 Jamestown Road, London, NW1 7BY, UK.
7. *Colorama*. Ravensburger Spieleverlag, Postfach 1860, D-88188, Ravensburg, Germany.
8. *ColorCards ®: Complete Set*. Speechmark Publishing, Telford, Bicester Road, Oxon, OX 26 4LQ UK.
9. *Concepts in Pictures 1 – 11*. Black Sheep Press, 67 Middleton, Cowling, Keighley, West Yorkshire, BD 22 0DQ, UK.
10. De Gaitano, J. *Developing Receptive and Expressive Language Skills in Young Learners*. Great Ideas for Teaching Inc., PO Box 444, Wrightsville Beach, NC 28480, USA.
11. DeNinno, J. and Gill, K. *Say and Do Grammar Game Boards*. Winslow Press, Goyt Side Road, Chesterfield, Derbyshire, S40 2PH, UK.
12. Duggleby, S., Duggleby, R. *Storycards: Prepositions*. Speechmark Publishing, Telford, Bicester Road, Oxon, OX 26 4LQ, UK.
13. *Facilitating Word Recall*. Winslow Press, Goyt Side Road, Chesterfield, Derbyshire, S40 2PH, UK.
14. Gill, K. and DeNinno, J. *Fun Deck and Do, Fun Deck and Say*. Winslow Press, Goyt Side Road, Chesterfield, Derbyshire, S40 2PH, UK
15. *Guess Who?* Hasbro UK Ltd., Caswell Way, Newport, Gwent, NP9 0YH, UK
16. *How do You ...?* Pro-ed Inc., 8700 Shoal Creek Boulevard, Austin, Texas, 78757 USA. From: Winslow Press, Goyt Side Road, Chesterfield, Derbyshire, S40 2PH, UK.
17. *Hedbandz™ for Kids*. The Future Trends Experience Ltd. From: Paul Lamond Toys and Games Ltd., PO Box 3353, London, N1 1SR, UK.

18. Hunt, L., Lewis, S. and Papier, T. *Mystifying Metaphors and Smiley Similes*. Bird Art, 3 Lansdowne Crescent Lane, Worcester, WR 3 8JG, UK.
19. Jeffries, J. and Jeffries, R. *Auditory Processing Activities*. ECL Publications, PO Box 26, Youngtown, Arizona 85363, USA.
20. Jeffries, J. and Jeffries, R. *Practical Language Activities*. ECL Publications, PO Box 26, Youngtown, Arizona 85363, USA.
21. *Language Cards: Actions*. LDA, Duke Street, Wisbech, Cambridgeshire, PE 13 2AE, UK.
22. *Language Cards: Social Sequences – at School*. LDA, Duke Street, Wisbech, Cambridgeshire, PE 13 2AE, UK
23. *Language Fun Decks*. Winslow Press, Goyt Side Road, Chesterfield, Derbyshire, S40 2PH, UK.
24. *Language in Pictures 1 – 11*. Black Sheep Press, 67 Middleton, Cowling, Keighley, West Yorkshire, BD 22 0DQ, UK.
25. *Let's Talk: Discussion and Prompt Cards*. Winslow Press, Goyt Side Road, Chesterfield, Derbyshire, S40 2PH, UK.
26. Lewis, S. and Papier, T. *Reversible Verbs*. Bird Art, 3 Lansdowne Crescent Lane, Worcester, WR 3 8JG, UK.
27. Lewis, S. and Papier, T. *Talking Semantics*. Bird Art, 3 Lansdowne Crescent Lane, Worcester, WR 3 8JG, UK.
28. Lewis, R. E. and Penn, C. *Language Therapy*. London: Whurr Publishers. 19b Compton Terrace, London, N1 2UN, UK.
29. *Mathematical Vocabulary: The National Literacy Strategy Guidance – Curriculum and Standards*, 2000. DfES Publications Centre, PO Box 5050, Annesley, Nottingham, ND15 0DJ.
30. Martin, L. *Think it, Say It*. Harcourt Assessment, 32 Jamestown Road, London, NW1 7BY, UK.
31. Mulder, C. *Dotbot Sequencing Activities*. ECL Publications, PO Box 26, Youngtown, Arizona 85363, USA.
32. *Names and Descriptions*. Big Leap Designs, PO Box 754, Canterbury, Kent, CT 2 7FY, UK.
33. *Pragmatics/Semantics 1 – 2*. Black Sheep Press, 67 Middleton, Cowling, Keighley, West Yorkshire, BD 22 0DQ, UK.
34. Rhodes, A. *Rhodes to Language*. STASS Publications 44 North Road Ponteland Northumberland, UK.
35. *Say and Do Vocabulary Game Boards*. Winslow Press, Goyt Side Road, Chesterfield, Derbyshire, S40 2PH, UK.

36. *Secret Square*™. University Games Corporation, Burlingame, CA, USA
37. *Shopping List*. Orchard Toys, Formlend Ltd., Keyworth, Nottingham, NG 12 5HN, UK
38. Semel, E. and Wiig, E. *Clinical Language Intervention Program (CLIP): Morphology Worksheets*. The Psychological Corporation, Harcourt Assessment, 32 Jamestown Road, London, NW1 7BY, UK.
39. Semel, E. and Wiig, E. *Clinical Language Intervention Program (CLIP): Semantic Worksheets*. The Psychological Corporation, Harcourt Assessment, 32 Jamestown Road, London, NW1 7BY, UK.
40. Semel, E. and Wiig, E. *Clinical Language Intervention Program (CLIP): Syntax Worksheets*, Harcourt Assessment, 32 Jamestown Road, London, NW1 7BY, UK.
41. Shanks. B. and Rippon, H. *Speaking and Listening Through Narrative*. Black Sheep Press, 67 Middleton, Cowling, Keighley, West Yorkshire, BD 22 0DQ, UK.
42. Speake, J. and Bigland-Lewis, S. *Semantic Connections Book*. STASS Publications, 44 North Road, Ponteland, Northumberland, UK.
43. *TaleSpin*. Living and Learning, 5 – 7 Pembroke Avenue, Waterbach, Cambridge, CB5 9QP, UK.
44. Toomey, M. and Christy-Pallo, S. *From Sentence to Narrative*. Circuit Publications, PO Box 1201, Marblehead, Mass. 01949, USA.
45. Toomey, M. and Christy-Pallo, S. *Talking in Sentences*. Circuit Publications, PO Box 1201, Marblehead, Mass. 01949, USA.
46. *Transparent Language Activities*. Lecharlierlaan 93, 1090, Brussels, Belgium.
47. *Where Do I Belong? Sets 1, 2*. Philograph Publicatons Ltd. From: Philip and Tacey, North Way, Andover, Hampshire, SP10 5BA, UK.
48. *Where Do You ...?* Pro-ed Inc., 8700 Shoal Creek Boulevard, Austin, Texas, 78757 USA. From: Winslow Press, Goyt Side Road, Chesterfield, Derbyshire, S40 2PH, UK.
49. *Where is It?* Pro-ed Inc., 8700 Shoal Creek Boulevard, Austin, Texas, 78757,USA. From: Winslow Press, Goyt Side Road, Chesterfield, Derbyshire, S40 2PH, UK.
50. *Who Is It and What Are They Doing?* Pro-ed Inc., 8700 Shoal Creek Boulevard, Austin, Texas, 78757 USA. From: Winslow Press, Goyt Side Road, Chesterfield, Derbyshire, S40 2PH, UK.
51. *Why Do You ...?* Pro-ed Inc., 8700 Shoal Creek Boulevard, Austin, Texas, 78757 USA. From: Winslow Press, Goyt Side Road, Chesterfield, Derbyshire, S40 2PH, UK.
52. *Words in Pictures 1 – 5*. Black Sheep Press, 67 Middleton, Cowling, Keighley, West Yorkshire, BD 22 0DQ, UK.

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