

Early Language Development and Literacy

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Aims of the Session

- To understand the typical development of speech and language in children.
- To consider the links between language and the development of literacy skills.
- To consider the links between speech and the development of literacy skills.
- To introduce some evidence based interventions to support speech and language development and subsequently literacy skills.

Basic Terms and Definitions

- Speech

The sounds we use to make words, (phonology)

- Language

Language has to do with meanings rather than sounds, (syntax, pragmatics and semantics)

- Expressive language

Thinking and putting words into meaningful spoken sentences

- Receptive language

Understanding what is being said to you





- It is expected that, when a child starts primary school, they will be able to understand much of what is said, express themselves clearly, share their feelings and make their needs known.
- This level of proficiency in speech, language and communication is critical to the development of a child's cognitive, social and emotional well being.
- In the classroom, spoken language is the primary medium through which teachers teach and children learn.
- In parts of the UK, upwards of 50% of children enter school with a delay in their speech and language development. Many of these children do not have an underlying 'impairment' and have the potential to 'catch up' if they receive timely intervention and support, (I Can: Talk Boost)

Why language development doesn't go to plan...

- Hearing
- Exposure and involvement in language
- Cognitive levels
- Part of another condition
- Physical difficulties
- Trauma/abuse
- *Often there is no identifiable cause for speech, language and communication difficulties – we just don't know*

Key terms

“Delay”: language follows the ‘normal’ pattern of development, with usually only one or two aspects of language affected

“Disorder”: Pattern of difficulties is unique to each child, one or more aspect of language affected

Speech, Language, Communication and Learning

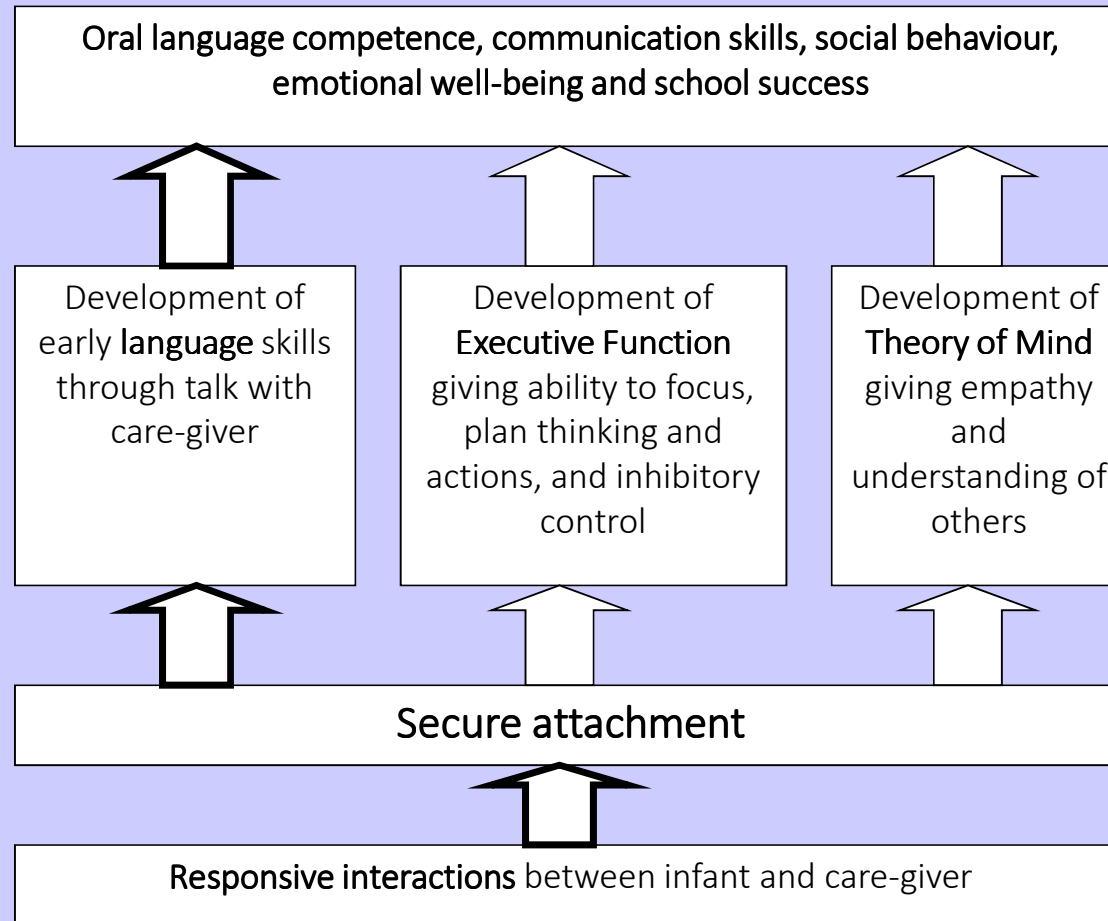
- Research has shown that there is a very close link between speech and literacy skills.
- The relationship between written and oral language is complex and not completely understood. It's widely acknowledged that children who are slow to develop oral language are likely to be slow to develop written language.
- Children presenting with language delay when they start school will often experience later difficulties in learning to read and write. **This issue can be compounded if children are exposed to teaching of reading and written language before their spoken language skills are developed enough to access this teaching.**
- Almost all children with language or communication difficulties need support with some aspect of learning to read or write. Without the right help, between 50% and 90% of children with a persistent language difficulty will go on to have reading difficulties.
- Evidence suggests that children with primary language difficulties achieve lower academically .
- Teachers involved in 'Every Child a Reader' and 'Every Child Counts' programmes found that children's literacy and numeracy was frequently hampered by under- developed language skills.

Associated Literacy Difficulties

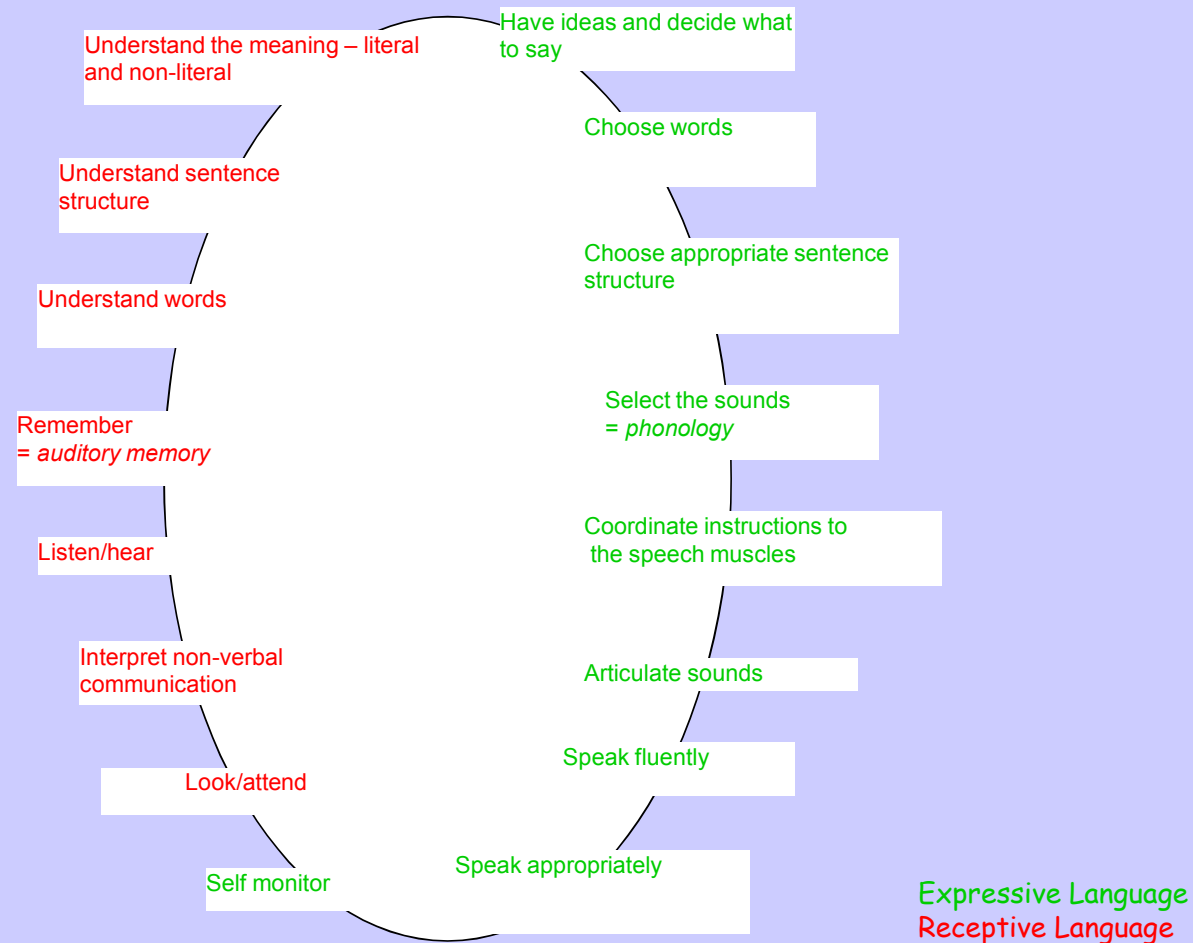
- Difficulties in identifying the sounds in words
- Difficulties producing the sounds in words
- Difficulties using correct grammatical constructions
- May have a slower rate of processing than peers
- Word finding difficulties or a restricted vocabulary
- Difficulties constructing an oral (and hence written) narrative
- May read with accuracy but lack comprehension
- May have difficulty retaining or generalising new literacy skills
- May have difficulty remembering whole instructions about tasks/homework etc
- May take instructions very literally
- May struggle with maths concepts and/or maths problems
- Visual memory may be better developed than auditory memory



Language Interaction and Development



The Communication Chain



Adapted from Elklan © Liz Elks and
Henrietta McLachlan

Listening and Attention

- He sometimes seems to appear to be in a world of his own
- She is unsure what to do next
- He has difficulty getting started
- She doesn't appear to care - doesn't seem to try
- He appears not to do what he's told to
- She will answer "Yes" because it is easier
- He is described as 'a naughty child'

(Conwy Curriculum Inclusion Service, 2015)



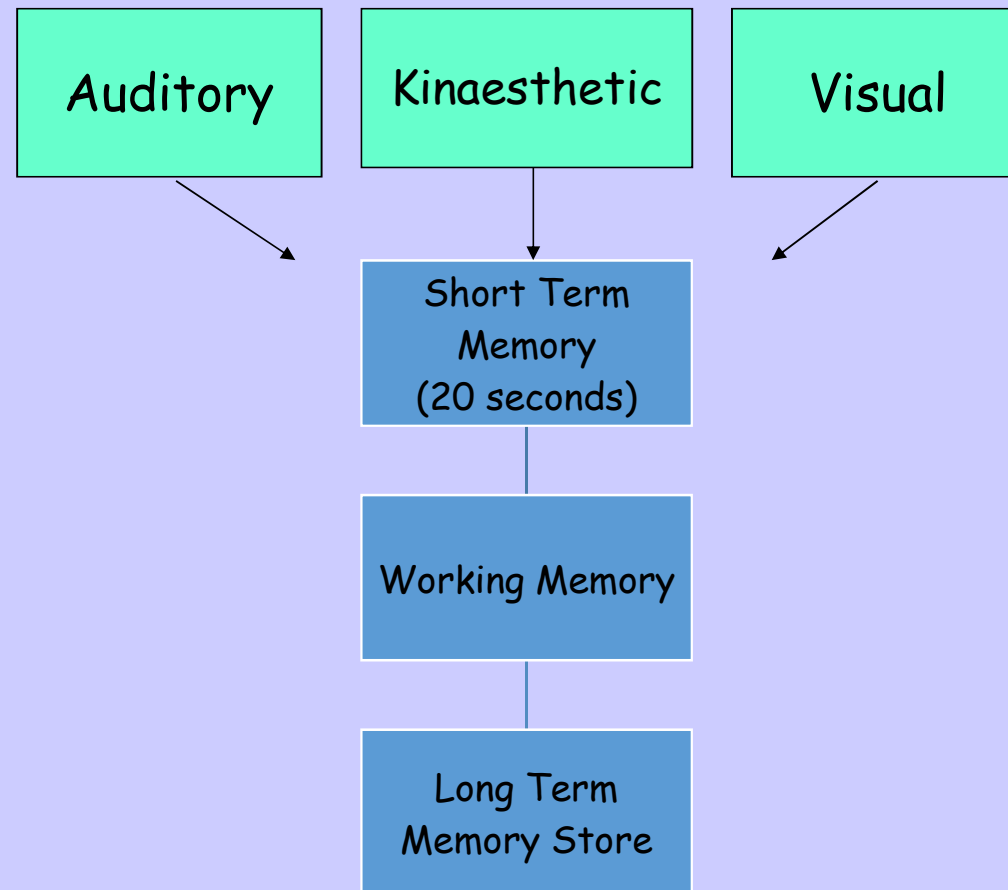
General Listening Activities

- Discovering environmental sounds
- Simple discrimination between sounds
- Sound recognition using objects or tapes
- Finding a sound
- Discrimination of letter sounds
- Sound lotto
- Listening to taped stories- child picking up objects when mentioned.
- Spotting the wrong word in a story

(Conwy Curriculum Inclusion Service, 2015)



Memory model



Activity

- Without writing anything down, simply listen to and try to remember the following numbers.

Terms and definitions

- Auditory memory
is our memory for what we hear
- Visual memory
is our memory for what we see
- Short term memory
holds the information while we process it
- Working memory
transfers information from our short term memory to our long term memory
- Long term memory
holds all our knowledge of the world

Classroom behaviours that may result from auditory memory difficulties

- She appears not to listen
- He sometimes gets it wrong
- She needs reminders about where to start or what to do
- He can only remember the first or last word of my instruction
- She is likely to remember personally important events rather than school routines

(Conwy Curriculum Inclusion Service, 2015)

Activity

First, try to write down as many numbers as you can from before.

Secondly, without writing anything down, listen to the following and try to remember as much as you can.

Rehearsal and practice of
strategies are the key to
developing and supporting
memory skills

Strategies to support memory

- **Organisational**
Bookmarks, peg photos, classroom labels, classroom plan
- **Visual**
Timetable, highlighters, visual cues, mnemonics, mind maps
- **Verbal**
Gain eye contact, repeat instructions, chunk instructions and check for understanding
- **Emotional**
Praise, reinforcement and reward
- **Practical**
Make it active, use real objects and situations, act it out, draw it, write it down

Receptive language difficulties

- He may not follow instructions, particularly those including more information carrying words
- She may change the subject
- He may appear to ignore you
- She may echo your questions or instructions
- He may watch speaker's face to guess the answer
- She may appear to understand, but is actually following what her peers are doing

(Conwy Curriculum Inclusion Service, 2015)

Receptive language difficulties

- He may show variable understanding depending on the context
- She may cope better with activities that have a strong visual component
- He may be able to read, but struggles to understand what he is reading
- She may struggle to understand mathematical concepts e.g. more than, less etc., but be good at mechanical maths

(Conwy Curriculum Inclusion Service, 2015)

Normal development of information carrying words (ICWs)

Number of ICWs understood	Age equivalent
2	2 years
3	3 years
4	4 years

Blank Levels

(Blank, Rose and Berlin 1978)

- They looked at the language demands teachers place on a child in the classroom and graded teachers' language use according to complexity.
- They broke down the language used into four levels, which reflect the development of the understanding of question types and the development of verbal reasoning.

- **Level 1**

Where the language relates to the immediate environment, matches the materials and where focus is on the whole object. Requires concrete thinking; e.g. Who is this? Where is Dad?

- **Level 2**

Child asked to focus on objects or situations in more detail, development of language for description where focus is on part of the object; e.g. Can you find me something that can grow?

- **Level 3**

Involves using own world knowledge to make basic predictions, ability to assume the role of another person, recount basic narrative, retelling events. This is the start of higher order thinking; e.g. What do you think the bear will do next?

- **Level 4**

Involves complex higher order thinking; problem solving, making predictions, finding solutions and providing explanations. Involves thinking about the past and future and making links between objects, actions and events; e.g. Why were they hiding under the covers?

Normal development of Blank Level questions

Based on Blank, Rose and Berlin (1978)

Level 1	Naming things	60% of 3 year olds understand Level 1 and Level 2 questions
Level 2	Describing things Answering Who? What? Where?	
Level 3	Talking about stories and events	65% of 5 year olds understand Level 3 and Level 4 questions
Level 4	Solving problems and answering Why? questions	

Strategies

- Seek eye contact with the child
- Know the child's level of understanding and simplify your language to their level
- Give the child time to process what has been said
- Encourage him to ask when he does not understand
- Check for her understanding by asking her to repeat back instructions or information
- Support the language used with lots of visual cues e.g natural gesture, pointing, sign, pictures
- Teach new vocabulary prior to a new topic
- Have clear rules and expectations
- Developing Narrative skills
- Teach linguistic concepts through practical and meaningful experiences

(Conwy Curriculum Inclusion Service, 2015)

Helping Children Learn Linguistic Concepts

Linguistic concepts are relational words which describe attributes (e.g. size, shape) or time (e.g. before, now) or position (e.g. on, middle). Many pupils with language problems find these concepts difficult to remember because they are often abstract and the meaning of the words change depending on the situation, i.e. a dog is big when compared with a mouse but not when compared to a horse. Pupils may already have an ICP which identifies their difficulties with linguistic concepts. If they do not have an ICP the information from this checklist could contribute to a referral to the Speech and Language Therapy Service.

Using the Linguistic Concepts Checklist

Begin by screening Linguistic Concepts Stage 1, a few at a time.

Use a multi-sensory approach.

Use language to talk about the concept.

Use real situations e.g. PE lessons for position words in order to physically explore the concept.

Use real objects where appropriate e.g. Small World, construction, Numicon, etc

Use pictures , toys , objects to give visual reinforcement.

Highlight the concepts the pupil does not know.

These concepts can now be targeted on an IEP

Work on one concept at a time .

If the pupil is unable to remember concepts through normal class teaching, focus on one concept , being careful not to compare it with another . For example when teaching 'heavy' describe the brick as 'heavy' and the feather as 'not heavy'.

Repeat the same activities many times.

Ensure generalisation.

Some pupils may understand a concept in one situation but not be able to transfer this knowledge to other circumstances e.g. thinking of 'inside' as only being indoors and not applying the concept to objects being inside something. Once comparative concepts have been taught separately e.g. hard and soft, use activities which encourage the use of these words together.

Linguistic Concepts—Personal Qualities

These are an optional extra for those children experiencing Social Communication Difficulties.

Linguistic concept checklist				
Concept	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4
QUALITY	like	same as	different	almost
		too	new	old
			very	
COLOUR	blue	black	pink	dark (er)
	green	white	orange	light (er)
	red	yellow	purple	
TEXTURE	hard		furry	
	soft		rough	
			smooth	
			warm	
SOUND	noisy	loudly		high
	quiet (ly)	softly		low
SHAPE	dot	circle	cross	corner
	spot	flat	triangle	curved
	line	square		diamond
	round			oval
				rectangle
				slope
				slant
				straight
SIZE	heavy	empty	large	deep
	little	fat	light	narrow
		full	short	shallow
		long	tall	thick
		small	thin	wide
		biggest	bigger	fatter
			fattest	heavier
			heaviest	longer
			longest	smaller
			smallest	largest
				lightest
				shortest
				tallest
				thinnest
MOVEMENT	fast	moving		jerky
	slowly	quickly		smooth
		still		

Expressive language difficulties

- He may not talk at all
- She may speak more freely in familiar social situations
- He may communicate using short phrases or single words
- She may use gesture to request things
- He may need to guide you and show you
- She may use a restricted vocabulary
- He may have word finding difficulties
- She may have sequencing problems
- He may omit ends of words and grammatical details
- She may find it difficult to recount a familiar story or event

(Conwy Curriculum Inclusion Service, 2015)

Normal development of expressive language

AGE

12-18 months

18-24 months

2½ - 3 years

3½ years →

5 years +

CHARACTERISTICS

Single words (about everyday events)

2 word phrases

Development of grammar

Increasing accuracy, consistency and length of sentences. Able to convey more complex information.

Vocabulary and grammatical development continues.

Activity

Group A:

Describe how to make a cup of tea from start to finish (i.e. filling the kettle with water, taking the milk from the fridge etc).

However...

The only verb you are allowed to use is 'do'.

Activity

Group B:

Describe how to make a sandwich from start to finish (i.e. buttering the bread, taking the ham from the fridge, etc).

However...

The only noun you are allowed to use is 'thing'.

Activity

Group C:

Describe a trip to the seaside on a hot day.

However...

The only adjective you are allowed to use is 'nice'.

A limited vocabulary means students may not be able to:

- Understand the full meaning of what is said.
- Extend knowledge through lessons because earlier work has not been understood.
- Learn through reading
- Express their ideas clearly
- Demonstrate evidence of improved knowledge through writing.
- Have confidence to succeed.

Taken from Rebecca Shanks, (Specialist SLI Therapist 2013)

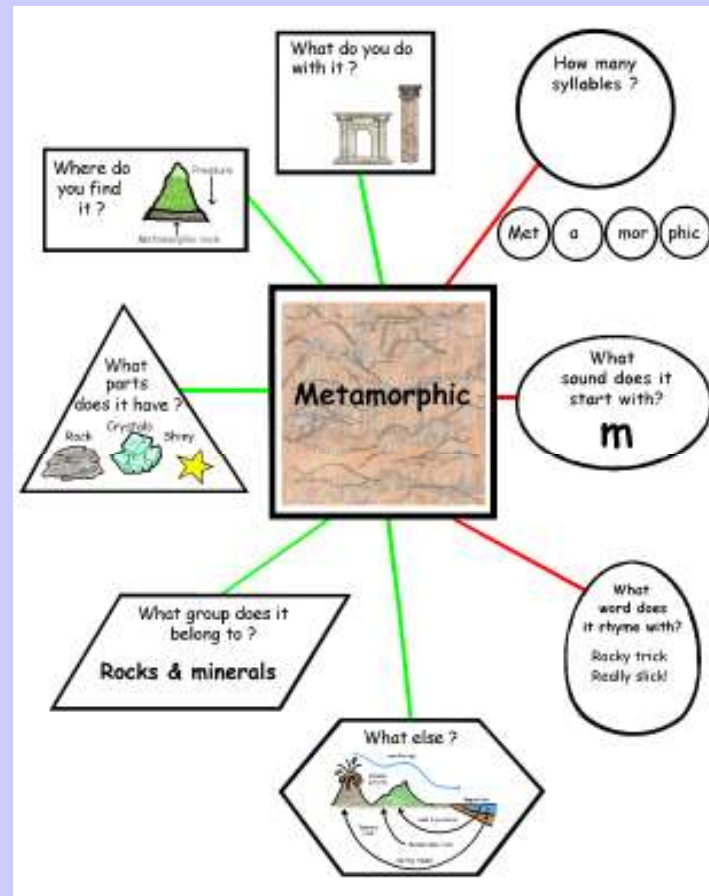
Strategies

- Plan opportunities to communicate within the Curriculum
- Give thinking time so that a child is able to respond
- Encourage peers to pause and wait
- Model the correct sentence
- Use pretend play or puppets
- Make deliberate mistakes to provoke a response from the child
- Introduce any new vocabulary in advance and through practical and play experiences wherever possible
- Focus on developing Narrative skills
- TalkBoost

Being Word Wise

- Strengthen general knowledge about the word (semantic awareness)
‘Think of meaning’
- Heighten knowledge about the structure of words (phonological awareness)
‘Think of sound’

Word Map



Elks and McLachlan, 2008

Narrative skills and Literacy

Research highlights the close links between oral narrative ability and later academic success

“Oral narratives may serve to inform clinicians about the risk of literacy problems” Botting (2002)

“Children’s narrative ability is of vital importance in determining later academic and social outcomes” Reynolds (1998)

Story Components



Who =

Orange



Where =

Red



When =

Green



What
Happened =

Yellow



The End =

Blue

WISC, Speaking & Listening Through Narrative
© Mark Davis. This book is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike license. It is available as a free download at www.wisc.co.uk.
Mark Davis. 2014. WISC, Speaking & Listening Through Narrative. 1st Edition. ISBN 978-1-906000-00-0. www.wisc.co.uk

Multi-sensory
approach:


Each story
component has a
corresponding
colour, sign and
symbol

KS1


- Can be used for retelling or story generating tasks
- Words can be written in the narrative colours to add emphasis
- Can be blown up to A3 and used as whole class story planning activity

Story Planner


When




Who




Where



What happened










The End



KS2 From oral to written narrative

Story Planner

 When <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	 Who <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	 Where <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<div data-bbox="533 841 958 1235">  Problem </div> <div data-bbox="965 841 1391 1235"> What Happened Next Solution   </div>		 In the End <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

Story Planner, final

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Narrative bookmarks to act as visual prompt and encourage independent story writing





Do you:

- Have 4-7 year olds in your class with poor language?
- Want to help learners that are under-attaining?
- Worry that these children are being left behind their peers?
- Want to give children the foundation skills to access phonics, reading and writing?
- Want to deliver a proven intervention that helps children make progress?
- Want to understand how Talk Boost KS1 can support different groups of children such as those with English as an Additional Language (EAL)?

Contact I CAN today for a quote or to find out how **Talk Boost KS1** could help you!

talkboostks1@ican.org.uk

020 7843 2515

www.talkboostks1.org.uk



"Talk Boost KS1 is great for all those children in the middle – the ones that wouldn't qualify for specialist help, but aren't thriving at school because of a speech and language problem and/or a confidence problem."

Denise O'Neil
Learning Support Assistant,
Dover Road Primary, Gravesham



Talk Boost KS1 narrows the gap between 4-7 year olds with language delay and their peers.

Speech

Phonological development

- The rules of the sound system (phonological system)
- To discriminate between different sounds in the language they hear (phonological awareness)
- To produce different sounds (articulation)
- Stress, pitch and intonation (prosody).

Speech difficulties

- He may miss sounds from the beginnings or ends of words
- She may use one sound for many different ones
- He may be able to produce vowels sounds but a limited range of consonants
- She may have difficulty copying speech sounds or using them correctly
- He may have lots to say, a good vocabulary and use sentences but is only intelligible to familiar people
- She may become shy, a reluctant speaker or may get angry and frustrated at not being understood

Phonological processes

Process	Example
Delete weak syllables	Balloon – ‘boon’
Delete final consonant(s)	Fish – ‘fi’
Use same consonant throughout word	Butterfly – ‘tutati’
Reduce clusters of consonants to make one consonant	Star – ‘tar’
Make ‘back of the mouth’ sounds at the front	Car – ‘tar’

Strategies

- Ask the child to show you what they mean
- Probe gently to gain more information, but avoid open ended questions
- Use a home/school diary
- Create a scrap book of photographs of key people and events
- Seek the child's eye contact and encourage the use of non verbal strategies
- Model responses to decrease pressures on speech
- Speech and Language Therapy and Individual Communication Plan – targets and advice

Private D., had been located at the apex of the 4 metre high perimeter barrier [MOD Standard SB/57/7/permanent/brick]. His accidental descent resulted in multiple compact fractures.

Personnel from the Kings' Own Cavalry Troup were in attendance, conveying him to the medical centre, where he underwent emergency orthopaedic surgery. Regrettably, this proved unsuccessful.'



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