



Oral language skills are an essential tool for later language development. These skills are necessary and important for children to be able to express themselves, communicate and learn. Targeting aspects of oral language can help to reduce the problems children have in understanding language, which in turn will help them in comprehending what they read. The following ideas and activities will help your child to develop their oral language skills.



A Word a Day

Introduce your child to a new word each day. Get your child to say the word. Talk about it - what does the word mean? Clap the syllables in the word. Can you put the word in a sentence? Make it a competition - see how many times you and your child can use the word in a sentence that day. If children can understand and say a word, they are more likely to be able to read and write that word.



Barrier Games

Place a barrier between your child and a partner. Ask your child to draw a picture or construct an object (e.g. using lego) on their side of the barrier. They have to explain what they are doing as they do it. Their partner has to follow the instructions and try to create the same thing on the other side of the barrier. The partner could ask questions to help them clarify. Remove the barrier at the end and check if both outcomes are the same. You can make it more challenging by setting words that cannot be used.



Categories

This game can be played with lots of people or as few as two. Select a category (e.g. body parts) and take turns to name something in the category. Keep going until you can't think of any more.



Role Play with Props

Collect a range of miniature dolls/puppets/figures. Discuss the 'characters' and a possible setting and plot for a story. Ask your child to position the characters and props to create a 'picture' from their story. Encourage your child to tell their story to a partner or work with a partner to tell the story together.



Story Retell

Pick a favourite story of your child's. Ask them to retell the story in their own words (use pictures as prompts where necessary). Prompt your child to use key vocabulary and themes from the story. Your child could then also role play or rewrite the story in their own words. This activity encourages and supports your child's developing use of English.



Lost Property

Lay out a set of pictures or objects with contrasting features (e.g. stripey, spotty and plain socks of different colours). One person takes on the role of the lost property officer. The other person has to pretend to phone the lost property officer looking for their 'lost' item. They have to describe the object in detail and the lost property officer has to guess which item they are describing.