

Activities to Develop Understanding of Single Words

A child who understands single words knows the name of an object and can give it to you on request, for example "give me the car".

The following tips can help to develop a child's understanding at single word level:

- ✓ Make sure you have your child's attention (use their name) before you start to talk
- ✓ Help your child to understand by pointing, showing them an object or using facial expressions
- ✓ Sometimes it is useful to stress the important words
- ✓ Praise your child when they get it right
- ✓ Label (name) things that they are looking at and give them time to think about what you have said before you say something else
- ✓ If your child still doesn't appear to understand, say it again and show them what you mean
- ✓ Offer them choices between items (e.g. "Do you want milk or juice?")



Activities to try

Feely Bag

1. Fill a bag with approximately 5 everyday objects and/or toys e.g. brush, ball, banana, teddy, spoon, book etc.
2. Pull out each of the objects one by one labelling them as they are taken out of the bag. Allow your child to explore the objects and model what you do with each one for your child. For example, brush your hair with the brush.
3. Talk about the object and repeat the model and the name of the object for your child as many times as possible. For example "Brush, X's got the brush, X's brushing his/her hair with the brush." This will help him/her to relate the word he/she is hearing with the object.

4. After you have explored all the objects with your child take two of them out of the bag and label them e.g. "banana" and "ball". Then ask your child to locate one of the objects whilst you are holding them in front of your child, for example, "X, where's the ball?"
5. If your child is unable to locate the correct item tell him/her "Here's the ball" and again let him/her explore the object.
6. Once you have explored all the items in the bag you can repeat the activity using 5 new objects if your child has enjoyed the activity and is willing to continue. Otherwise try again at another time.

Books

When your child points to a picture in a book name the object using a single word. This way you are following your child's interest and developing their language by providing them with the word.



Routines

Tell your child the names of items during familiar routines, for example washing and dressing:

E.g. Adult says: "wash hands", "wash face", "socks on", "trousers on" etc.



This way you are keeping your language very simple and giving your child the opportunity to understand. As they know the routine they can also focus completely on the language you are using and the activity they are doing.

Jigsaws

Label jigsaw pieces as your child selects them e.g. 'ball', 'cat'. If he/she says a word without a model from you repeat it back to him/her and add a word.



Post Boxes

Children often enjoy posting pictures and objects into a home-made postbox. See if they can find and post a picture/object from a choice of two. If your child is successful at this increase the number of choices to three.

