

Using sentences

Some children have difficulty using language to express themselves. This is also known as *expressive language difficulties*. These children may be later to use their first words or to start joining words together. They may experience difficulties with forming sentences, grammar, vocabulary learning or sequencing their ideas coherently.

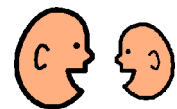
Strategies for developing spoken sentences:

- Model language. Children learn to use words and sentences by hearing good models. Try to match your language to your child's level, plus one or two words. Describe what is happening using short, simple sentences. Try to use more comments than questions.
- Pause and wait. Your child may need extra time to organise their thoughts and plan what they are going to say. Pause and wait for your child to speak first. Slow down your own talking and give your child plenty of thinking time.
- Copy and add. Repeat to affirm what your child has said, and add a word or two to expand on this.

e.g. Child: 'I got a car.'
Adult: 'Yes, you've got a *blue* car.'

Child: 'I go to Granny's.'

Adult: 'Wow, you're going to Granny's *after nursery*.'



- Don't correct mistakes in grammar or word order. Instead, repeat back words and sentences the right way. This is called *modelling* and shows your child how to use words and sentences correctly. There is no need to get your child to repeat after you.

e.g. Child: 'Running... big dog.'
Adult: '*The big dog is running.*'

Child: 'I've got mouses.'

Adult: 'Yes, you've got two *mice*.'

- Repeat. Use repetition to emphasise your model.

e.g. Child: 'I runned.'
Adult: 'You *ran*. You *ran fast*.'

- Offer choices. Offering choices can be another good way to provide a model for your child.

e.g. Child: 'Him's eating.'
Adult: 'Is he eating a banana or is he eating cake?'

