

Slide 1

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## Supporting and Developing Vocabulary and Concepts in the Early Years

Children's Speech and Language  
Therapy Service



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### OBJECTIVES

- 1) An overview of **how** speech and language skills develop
- 2) **Why** vocabulary matters
- 3) **How** to help your child

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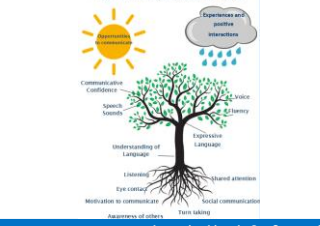
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### The Communication Tree



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### Words Matter!!



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### How do language skills develop



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<https://www.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/people/amazing-toddlers-tittle-words/261674>

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**Home support for vocabulary makes a difference!**

Children will learn words in their Early Years and school settings, but if they also come across these words at home, they will learn them faster and better. Home and school working together gets to a place neither can alone.

Teaching vocabulary is **highly effective** and **fun!**

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- Children learn words most easily when we talk about the things that they are focused on and motivated by.

  
  
"FISH"

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**Repetition:**  
Children often need to hear words used many times before they will be ready to use them themselves.

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### Help your child secure the new word by building connections

Many children with language difficulties have weak word storage. This can cause problems with:

- **VOCABULARY:** learning new words
- **SEMANTICS:** learning what words mean
- **WORD FINDING:** recalling the word you want to use
- **COMPREHENSION:** understanding the words said to you

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### Building Connections Between Words

There is a hierarchy to how children learn about word meanings:

- **FUNCTION** is what you can do with an item, e.g. wear it, eat it, play with it etc...
- **LOCATION** is where you find an item, e.g. at the park, in my toy box, in the fridge, in the bathroom etc...
- **CATEGORY** is the group the item belongs in, e.g. animals ( farm vs zoo), clothes, transport, toys, furniture etc...

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### Sound Properties + Word Meaning = Stronger Word Learning

It is the combination of information about the **meaning properties** of the word, and the **sound properties** of the word that really strengthens word learning and organisation. The word store organizes words by double entries — **Meaning & sound structure** e.g.

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### Games to build connections

- THINGS THAT GO TOGETHER GAME



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### Games to build connections

- SORTING BY INITIAL SOUND



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### Support Children to Build Strong Connections in Everyday Activities:

Getting dressed - "you've got a blue fish on your t-shirt today"



Sharing books, magazines - "there's the sea. Fish live in the sea"



Eating meals/ snacks - "we've got fish fingers"



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- **Watching TV/ films-** "ooh a fish! The man has caught a fish. A big fish" 
- **Arts/ crafts-** "let's colour the fish" 
- **On a daily walk-** "there's the pond. Fish live in ponds" 
- **Play activities,** e.g. "look- there's a fish on your puzzle" 

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**Activity**

**Wash**

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**Connections take time**

- It is important to build connections over time- it is not a quick fix process
- Allow your child plenty of time to listen, and respond to you
- **Repeating, reinforcing, linking** to experiences your child has had will really help, e.g. "you like the fish in nanny's pond"

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### Go with your child's pace

- All children are unique and will progress at their own pace
- Some children will have bursts in their language skills that seem to happen quickly, but many others need lots of time, and may take smaller gradual steps of progress.
- Be reassured, by following the advice and tips we have covered you are doing all you can to encourage your child's speech and language development.

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## Some recommended resources.....

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### The Usborne First Thousand Words in English (2013)



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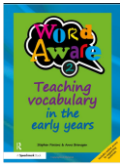
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**Word Aware 2: Teaching vocabulary in the early years.** Parsons & Branagan, 2017.



© Shropshire Community Health NHS Trust, Lisa Chapman & Vicki Anonow (Eds), 2017.  
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**Thank you**

**Any questions?**



**Any feedback would be helpful to us.**

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