



Language for Learning

Parent Information Session

Today you will learn about...

- The Child Development Service
- The importance of your relationship with your child to their learning and language development
- How to support your child as they continue to develop understanding and talking skills

The Child Development Service (CDS) provides free services for children who experience developmental difficulties in areas such as coordination and movement, speech and language, social and emotional skills, attention and behaviour and play, learning and some everyday tasks (eating, dressing).

Child Development Service staff work in partnership with parents and families to meet the unique developmental needs of each child.

Please see the Child Development Service Information for Families handout for more information.



Healthy kids, healthy communities

Compassion

Excellence

Collaboration

Accountability

Equity

Respect

Screen time

- Children's communication skills benefit from interacting and talking to real people
- Set limits on screen time and how often your child has access to devices
- Put away any electronic devices and turn off background noise when spending quality time with your child
- If using screens with your child consider the 3C's: Content, Context and Child



Spending time together

Think about what you and your child enjoy doing **together** and why you enjoy it...



Children who feel secure in their relationship with you can put their efforts into learning.

'Tune in' to your child



Notice...

What your child is doing and talking about
How your child is feeling

What can I do?

- Spend quality time with your child
- Tune in to what your child is interested in
- Talk about how your child is feeling
- Point out how others are feeling

The best times for supporting your child's language and learning are when you are tuned in to them.

Understanding and managing our feelings helps us recognise how other people are feeling. This is important for getting on with others and developing friendships.

Social interaction skills – *What can I do?*



Being comfortable in social situations takes practice

- Play games with rules together
- Model joining in ("I like your toy")
- Arrange 1-1 play opportunities
 - Have play ideas/games available
 - Be close by to help your child negotiate
- Enrol your child in community sporting / learning groups

Speech and grammar – What can I do?



Children with speech and grammar difficulties need to hear good models more often

- Recast: say it back the right way; say it a little slower with a little more emphasis

Speech error:

Child: “That’s a wion.”

Adult: “Yes, it’s a lion, a scary lion.”

Grammar error:

Child: “Her drinking.”

Adult: “Yes, she is drinking. She is drinking milk.”

Learning to use speech and language is very complex and there are some parts that are easier to notice, such as speech and grammar. These are the ‘tip of the iceberg’. Learning speech and grammar is a developmental process and it takes up to age 7 to get it right. ‘Speech’ means the way we use our tongue and lips to make sounds. Grammar refers to the way that we put words together to make sentences.

When we have a conversation, there is usually a listener and a speaker. Within a conversation each person will take on each role at different times.

When you are the speaker you have to think about and plan what you want to say. You have to find the right vocabulary and put these words in order to make your message clear. Your body language and voice need to match your message. Because communication is a two way process, you watch the listener to see that they have understood your message.

Understanding and using vocabulary – What can I do?



- Try activities to develop a wide vocabulary
 - Brainstorm naming words, action words, describing words, and emotions (e.g. about the beach)
- Help your child organise words in their vocabulary
- Let your child hear and help them learn new words
 - Add stress and show them what the word means
 - Explain what they mean and relate to experiences or familiar words
 - Say new words often, repeat many times!

When you are the listener, as well as hearing and paying attention when others are talking to you, you need to be able to understand what they are saying and show through your body language that you do understand. When you don't understand, you need to find ways to get more information so that you can get a clearer idea about what is being said to you.

Understanding language

Hearing → Listening → Understanding

- Children pay attention best in a quiet environment



Comprehension monitoring – *What can I do?*



- Model comprehension monitoring e.g. 'Tell me again', 'What do you mean?', 'I don't know'
- Watch your child's response to what you say. If they don't understand, you could:
 - Ask your child if they understand
 - Encourage your child to say when they don't understand e.g. You can say "*tell me again*"
 - Simplify instructions: Emphasise the key words or break the instructions into parts

Many children with language difficulties have trouble monitoring their comprehension, and telling the speaker that they don't understand, or asking them to repeat. These comprehension monitoring skills are very important for coping in the classroom.

When your child can let the teacher know what they do not understand, they can get more information that will help them to understand, they will feel more confident and find learning easier. This empowers them.

The more books you and your child can enjoy together, the better. Visits to the library allow you and your child to find new books.

Understanding and telling stories

Sharing books expands:

- Vocabulary
- Knowledge of the world
- Imagination
- Ability to talk about and solve problems
- Ability to understand and talk about feelings



Source: Booksharing, Successful Interaction with your Child & Books, 2012

We know that one of the best activities for children to support development of good language skills is when an adult spends time sharing books that match your their understanding and speaking ability with them.

Sharing books with your child

- Sit together where you can see your child's face as well as the book
- Use an interesting voice



Source: Booksharing, Successful Interaction with your Child & Books, 2012

Understanding and telling stories – *What can I do?*



- Read through books before sharing them
- Make connections between what is happening in the book and your child's experiences
- Have a conversation about the story
 - respond to what your child is interested in
 - take turns
 - talk about how characters are feeling
 - talk about why things might happen
 - use 'I wonder' statements
- Encourage your child to act out the story with you

Getting ready to read

- Enjoyable book sharing experiences provide a strong basis for learning to read and write
- Oral language (vocabulary, telling stories) is the foundation on which children learn to read and write

Speaking and listening  Reading and writing



Keep reading stories!



Beginning readers are practised listeners

They need:

- School reading books that are simple and repetitive
- Books that are complex and varied for sharing with you



Source: Booksharing: Successful Interaction with your Child & Books, 2012

Working together with the school

- Your child's teacher is your initial contact point.
- Make a specific meeting time with the teacher. Discuss:
 - Your child's strengths and difficulties
 - Education Plan / extra help
 - Provide email contact details for therapists
 - Discuss being a helper in the classroom or at school



Summary

- Make time to spend with your child
- Help your child:
 - manage their feelings
 - develop social skills
 - develop speech and grammar skills
 - develop comprehension monitoring skills
 - develop a wider vocabulary
 - understand and tell stories
- Advocate at school and find helpful resources

What can I realistically do right now?

Make time to share a book or do a language activity everyday



What are the communication areas where your child needs extra support? How can you support your child with this?



Advocate for your child at school and access other community resources



Speech pathologists work in partnership with your family. You play a very important role and what you do at home with your child can make the biggest difference to their progress.

If you are finding you don't have much time to spend with your child, we recommend finding opportunities to spend one-to-one time with your child your first action. Use the information from this session to plan what extra support you can give your child. Look back through your notes to help you identify some actions.

As well as supporting your child at home, you may wish to plan how you want to advocate for your child at school. You may also like to consider what other resources you could access that may support your child's needs.

Where to from here?

- Develop an action plan
- Follow-up phone call
- Parents and Speech Pathologists work together to discuss options and plan for your child

Please take some time now to complete your action plan and remember to keep it handy for your reference and for when you talk to your clinician.

When you talk to the clinician you will have time to discuss how you are going with the new ideas and how your child is progressing. At this time you are also able to discuss future plans for your child.

This document can be made available in alternative formats on request for a person with a disability.

This publication is provided for general education and information purposes. Contact a qualified healthcare professional for any medical advice needed.

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