

General strategies to support understanding of language in younger children

- Ensure you have your child's attention before giving them an instruction e.g. say their name first and wait for them to look
- Give children more time to respond to questions and instructions; try and count up to 10 before asking them again
- Use visuals to support what you are saying e.g. show photos, pictures, objects, use gesture, demonstrate what you mean
- Emphasise key words when you are speaking to draw your child's attention to specific parts of an instruction, for example 'Find your **blue** shoes'.
- Try and break instructions down into smaller chunks. Give one step at a time e.g. Put your book away..... go and get your shoes..... put your shoes on. Pause between each one to allow the child time to process the information.
- Repeat instructions or information if needed (but try and use exactly the same language again)
- If your child does not understand when you repeat, try and simplify or rephrase the instruction or information
- Encourage your child to let you know if they haven't understood. You may need to model this to them, for example "You can say 'I don't understand' if you don't know what to do"
- Encourage children to use strategies to help their understanding, for example teach them to repeat what they have been asked to do or help them identify the important words in the instruction
- Be aware of words that have more than one meaning e.g. face, reception
- Check your child's understanding by asking them to tell you what they need to do
- Avoid using ambiguous or non-literal language e.g. pull your socks up