

How to develop understanding

Information for parents and carers



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Let your child guide you - talk about what your child is doing. Label things they reach for and are playing with, and comment on what they are doing, such as “oh green car” or “it’s a fluffy teddy”.



Children need to hear words with their meanings lots of times so that they remember them. That’s why it helps to talk about the things that are there. Going over the same things helps them to remember – for example, “here’s the car”, “it’s a red car” or “a big red car”.



When playing games with your child make sure there are no distractions or noises in the background. It is hard to focus on what someone is saying or doing when the television, radio or music is on.



Make communication fun and worthwhile. Help to make what you are saying interesting by using lots of intonation (up and down sounds in your voice). To back up what you are talking about, use facial expressions and movements as well as pictures, symbols or similar things.



Try not to use lots of long and difficult sentences. Keep it simple and at your child's level of understanding. Say the names of things rather than 'it' or 'that' all the time.



Even with all of these suggestions, there may still be times that your child does not understand something you say. When this happens, give them some time to think about it and even say it again. If this does not help, try to say it in a different way or just use the most important parts of what you are saying – for example, “get your coat” instead of “It’s time to go to the shops and get some food. Can you go and get your coat?”

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