



SPEECH AND LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES FOR SCHOOL- AGED CHILDREN

Elklan Training run courses delivered by speech and language therapists and specialist teachers. We want to share some simple techniques and activities that we have recommended over the years that you can use at home with children to support their language and communication skills. These activities may be useful to help children with learning and keeping them focused and engaged. These activities can be used everyday and really work!

Understanding and Following Instructions

Being able to understand and follow instructions is an important skill for school so that your child can access the curriculum and complete tasks. We can carry out activities with children at home to help them in this area whilst also having fun!



Activities to help understand and follow instructions:

- **Barrier games** are a great way for children to listen and follow instructions. The idea of a barrier game is the 'speaker' gives information to the 'listener' who must act on the instructions and respond appropriately. In all barrier games, the person giving the information and the listener are not able to see what each other are doing. At the end of the game, the speaker and listener check and see if they have the same information or result. Popular barrier games include:
 - Drawing or colouring in a picture. The 'speaker' gives instructions for drawing or colouring in a picture. At the end, both speaker and listener check to see that they have drawn or coloured in the same pictures.

- Building a tower or a model. Each person has an identical set of model making equipment or bricks. The 'speaker' gives instructions for the 'listener' to follow. E.g. 'put the orange block standing up next to the yellow block'.
- **Gather objects and ask the child to carry out your instructions.** The instructions can vary in length and complexity. For example, '*before you pick up the cup, pick up the yellow pencil*'. Or '*Drive the car to shop and then get some milk and an apple*'. The first instruction is harder because the child does not carry out the actions in the order that the instructions are given.
- **Ask the child to give verbal messages to other people** or run increasingly complex errands. For example, '*go upstairs get your coat and bag and wake your sister up*'.
- **Practice recalling sentences**, short stories, songs, and passages with your child.
- **Games** such as 'Chinese Whispers' and 'I went shopping' are useful for remembering and recalling what someone else has said.
- **Give instructions using colouring activity sheets or drawing.** For example, '*colour the **big star yellow***'.
- When we give instructions, it is important that we adapt this to the ability of the child. Instructions contain different numbers of key words which are the words the child needs to understand in order to successfully carry out the instruction. For example, a three key word instruction would be 'put the **coat** in your **brother's bag**'. A four key word instruction would be 'put your **left hand** on your **right knee**'.
- **Show your child what you want them to do** if they have difficulties following spoken instructions. Some children find it hard to understand words and sentences and so having a picture helps them to follow instructions or know what is going to happen next.
- **Picture instructions** can also be used at home to help your child follow a set of instructions. This could be for completing learning tasks or everyday routines such as washing hands or getting ready for school.

Top Tips for Using Visuals at Home:

- If you find you are using lots of words, then stop! Think about ways of showing not just telling.
- Make sure that the visuals you are using are meaningful to the child. The setting that your child attends may be able to help you decide this.
- USE it, it will not work without you referring to it. If you stop using it then remove it, it will only add to the visual clutter in your house.
- DON'T stop using visuals if they are working. This is as silly as saying because my child can see well now he doesn't need his glasses! For those who need visuals to help their understanding and independence they will continue to need them. The types of visual used can be modified but the need for some form of additional visual communication will continue to be required

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If you would like to find out more about our e-learning opportunities please visit our website at <https://www.elklan.co.uk/information/practitioners/e-learning-opportunities> for a range of interactive courses to suit all ages, with or without accreditation.

For more information or advice about any of our courses or resources, and to find out about upcoming opportunities, please contact Clare on clare@elklan.co.uk or ring us on 01208 841450.

Useful Web Links:

Talking Point <https://ican.org.uk/i-cans-talking-point/parents/parent-faqs/>

Listen Up

https://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/media/3166/postcards_school_age_final.pdf

Teaching skills to children: different approaches

<https://raisingchildren.net.au/preschoolers/behaviour/behaviour-management-tips-tools/teaching-skills>

Language Development in Children:0-8 years

<https://raisingchildren.net.au/babies/development/language-development/language-development-0-8>

Let's Talk with Under 5's Workbook www.elklan.co.uk

Let's Talk with 5-11s Workbook www.elklan.co.uk

More about Visual aids

Video on using visual supports at home

https://www.google.com/search?rlz=1C5CHFA_enGB875GB876&sxsrf=ALeKk016Xb79x1YLoXjRQhjn3PwroRA5IA%3A158619322233&ei=RmOLXpfsDbWx8gLuw77QDQ&q=using+visual+supports+with+early+years+children+at+home&oq=using+visual+supports+with+early+years+children+at+home&gs_lcp=CgZwc3ktYWIQAzoECAAAQR0oJCBcSBTEyLTkySgkIGBIFMTItMjZQ-GZYv44BYPuQAWgAcAJ4AIABhQGIAbAUkgEFMTUuMTGYAQCgAQGgAQdnd3Mtd2l6&sclient=psy-ab&ved=0ahUKEwiXp7mcptToAhW1mFwKHe6hD9oQ4dUDCAw&uact=5#kpvalbx=WmOLXueaF-BhbIP_OebkA429