



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!

Developing Spoken Language



Children need to use words and sentences to describe and talk about everyday events and actions but also in school to present their ideas in speech and in writing. To do this, children need to have a good understanding of the rules of grammar and be able to think of, remember and recall words.

- Don't correct mistakes in grammar or word order. Instead repeat back sentences correctly. This is useful strategy if they have missed out or used the incorrect grammar words. E.g. if they say "*I **eated** dinner*" repeat back, "*yes, you **ate** dinner*". Emphasise the word that you want them to notice.
- Expand on your child's speech by adding on one or two words. You can add descriptive words or words such as *and, because etc.* This will encourage them to use these structures later.
- Keep language at the child's level and add small pieces of information E.g. if a child is using two words, model sentences containing three words.
- Ask open ended questions to encourage answers in sentences. Try To avoid questions with a yes/no answer as these don't encourage

children to use language. E.g. *'What have you done today?'* Rather than *'Did you go out for a walk?'*

- Wait for the child to respond. It is important to give them plenty of time to say that they mean.
- Give your child an opportunity to communicate. Sometimes at home children can help themselves freely to toys and snacks or their family members can predict what they want and give it to them without them having to ask. This means they can move through the day with very little need to initiate conversation. So, it is important to provide opportunities where they have to ask for things, e.g. Putting the cereal or TV remote out of reach so s/he has to request it, not stepping in and fulfilling their every need, modelling how to ask and then giving the item when s/he makes an attempt to ask even if it's just a noise or a reach towards the item. For older children create problem solving activities where s/he must work out what might happen or share ideas with other children and co-operate with others. Don't always step in and solve these problems for them, step back and see what happens. Obviously if it is becoming dangerous or traumatic you will need to intervene.
- Check the child's understanding, not talking may be a sign of not understanding too.
- If your child is struggling to remember or say a word, encourage them to think around it or describe what it does. If you know what the word is, give sound clues such as "it begins with the sound 'w...' " or meaning clues "you find it in the garden".
- Many of the visual techniques for learning words are useful for helping children use words in speech. Word Maps and Mind Maps help strengthen the knowledge about the meanings of words and what they sound like. Because they are visual, children can use these to remember words rather than having to recall them from their memory.

Activities to develop spoken language:



- Practice creating sentences in response to pictures. You can also use photos or images from the internet or TV for fun.
- Play games where children are encouraged to sequence and describe pictures. Children can describe a picture using a sentence in a pairs game or even when reading a book.

- *Jumbled sentences.* Have a selection of sentences that are cut up and jumbled up. The child must find and correct the mistakes. This can be adapted for younger children by using photographs and symbols to accompany the written word.
- Create sentences using a given word. You can make this more complex by using more abstract words such as 'otherwise', 'therefore'.
- Encourage the child to imagine what people in a picture might be saying to each other or what they might be thinking.
- Create simple stories with pictures as support.
- *Barrier games.* These are also a great way to work on speaking as well as listening to and following instructions. In barrier activities, the child has to give specific instructions to their partner. Ideas for barrier games are described above.

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 websites and resources:

9 ways to help your child's language development

<https://www.parents.com/baby/development/talking/9-ways-to-help-your-childs-language-development/>

Activities to encourage speech and language development

<https://www.asha.org/public/speech/development/activities-to-Encourage-speech-and-Language-Development/>

Top Tips for Developing Talk -

https://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/media/617945/tct_toptips_pdf.pdf

Saying simple sentences

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D_yjSmQHTM0&feature=emb_rel_end

Listen up For parents and practitioners of 5-11s

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

School- age children: Communicating well with children

<https://raisingchildren.net.au/school-age/connecting-communicating/communicating/communicating-well-with-children>

Let's Talk with under 5s workbook, 2018 www.elklan.co.uk

Let's Talk with 5-11s workbook 2018 www.elklan.co.uk