



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!

Learning Words and Developing Vocabulary

Children need to learn words so that they can understand spoken language and to help them read and write. Vocabulary is known to be an important skill for doing well at school so it is important that we support children to learn new words when and where we can.



- One of the most effective ways to teach new words is to learn words in everyday situations at home and when out and about. Talk about words that you come across in conversation, books, television etc. Try to put the new word in a sentence or story. Children need to hear words a lot of times before they can use them.
- Use real life objects where possible. Being able to explore an object is much more meaningful and fun and puts the word in context. Where real objects are not possible, use pictures or other visual methods to bring the word 'to life'.
- Focus on topics and words that the child is interested in as they will be more motivated to find out what these words mean.

- Repeat the words you want your child to focus on. You will get bored before they do! Children need to hear a new word lots of times before they learn it properly, so keep saying the word you want them to learn! They may try to copy you and will often take a few attempts to get it right.
- Ask the child to explain what the word means to check that they understand and remember. We often assume that children know words without checking.
- Work on a few new words at a time. If you introduce too many words at once, this can be confusing for the child.
- Use visual strategies to help children learn words. Examples of visual strategies include mind maps, word maps and thinking about the sounds and meanings of words. *Elklan's Let's Talk Workbooks and Language Builders Series* have lots of examples of visual strategies for learning words.
- Pick an unfamiliar word such as 'mechanic' and explain it. Then ask yes/no questions to check their understanding. For example, 'does a mechanic use a spanner?', 'does a mechanic build houses?'

Activities to help learn new words:

- **Guess the Object.** A person describes an object and the child guesses what it is. There are different variations of this game. If you are learning words about a topic, you can describe words in this area for the children to guess. Games such as '*twenty questions*' are also fun where the child asks you questions to discover what you are
- **Sorting words into categories.** Use real items or pictures. You can help your child to sort objects into categories during everyday routines such as tidying up or helping sort the washing! Put all the trains and tracks in one box and the doll's house furniture into the right rooms of the doll's house, your child's socks and pants in the right drawer, pair the socks together etc.
- **Identifying opposites.** You can do this using everyday objects or pictures. E.g. rip/unripe fruit, old/new shoes.
- **Use treasure boxes.** Find an old box and decorate it. Hide objects in it and ask your child to pick one out and see if they can tell you what it is. Can they describe it as well or tell you what you do with it?
- **Bingo using categories.** Check that that child understands the category on their board before they begin the game.
- **Odd one out.** The child must identify the items that should not be in a specific category and give reasons why.
- **Replacing words in a story.** Ask the child to come up with another word without changing the meaning of the paragraph. For example, '*I am pleased to meet you*' could be changed to '*I am happy to meet you*'.
- **Find the link.** In this game, the child names one reason why certain words are linked. For example, hot and cold are linked because they both describe temperature. Try to expand by looking at abstract words not just objects.

- **Word association games.** In these games one person says a word and the child names another word that is related to it.
- **Naming words in a category.** You play this by naming words in chosen categories such as animals, things that are cold, transport etc. To add to this, you can use timers and when the timer sounds the person whose turn it is it out!

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 links and resources:

Let's get moving with action words

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dyJXulJ-x9A>

ICAN-Teaching children new words <https://ican.org.uk/media/1283/teaching-children-new-words.pdf>

How parents and Families Support Oral language and Vocabulary

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/big5-strategies-parents-families-oral-language-eng.pdf>

How to build your child's vocabulary at home