



Children Who Have Trouble Learning Language

A Guide for Early Childhood Educators

Children who have trouble learning language need special help. They often have trouble understanding, remembering information, or repeating sentences.

How to help:

- Use short sentences to make instructions easier.
- Repeat words and phrases. For example: "Shoes on... Put your shoes on." "Hat on... Put a hat on."
- Wait. Give the child more time to think and respond.
- Try to show what you mean with your hands and face if a child doesn't understand. Don't just ask more questions.

Sometimes children who have trouble talking use unusual words or sentences.

How to help:

- Repeat words or phrases correctly rather than 'correcting' the child's words. For example, if the child says, "me poon" you could say, "my spoon", or "I want a spoon".

Adults often ask questions to make children talk more, but too many questions can do the opposite. Instead...

- Ask fewer questions.
- Comment on what the child is doing or seeing. For example: instead of asking "What is it?" you could say, "Oh, look! A dog! You see a dog!"



- Ask questions that include a choice. For example, instead of asking, "What do you want?" ask, "Do you want an apple or a banana?"
- Ask open-ended questions with "I wonder". For example, "I wonder what will happen next?"

Use these ideas to help increase a child's ability to learn and understand everyday language.



Other fact sheets on parenting your toddler are available at your local Community Health Office/Centre or online at <http://vch.eduhealth.ca>

For more information, contact a Speech-Language Pathologist or Public Health Nurse at Vancouver Coastal Health www.vch.ca

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