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*Committed to developing communication in a fun, caring and dynamic environment*

Practising Members of The Speech Pathology Association of Australia

# Receptive Language



Receptive language is the ability to comprehend vocabulary, directions, concepts and questions. Understanding language also involves attention, memory and sustained concentration.

Reportedly, we understand more words in our vocabulary than we use. So, we may know the meaning of words but not use them in our everyday speech.

## Children who have receptive language difficulties may:

- ☞ Have difficulty processing information presented verbally without visuals. They may only attend to part of the instruction
- ☞ Be inattentive and display poor concentration
- ☞ Follow what others are doing and appear 'lost'
- ☞ Have difficulty answering questions eg. 'who, what, when, where, why?'
- ☞ Not follow the content of a conversation accurately, and as a result, talk 'off topic'
- ☞ Be impulsive and act before a direction is completed
- ☞ Have difficulty discriminating between words and interpreting everyday speech
- ☞ Have poor reading comprehension
- ☞ Be slower to learn new concepts

## We can assist children with receptive language problems by.....

- ✓ Shortening our directions so we outline one step at a time
- ✓ Using direct language eg. "pack your toys away", rather than "I think it's a little messy in here"
- ✓ Using gestures to help the child remember the important parts of the direction and to show them what you want them to do
- ✓ Asking lots of questions about everyday events that incorporate reasoning eg. "Why do we have to wash our hands?"
- ✓ Ensuring you have their full auditory and visual attention (ie. they are listening to you and looking at you) – you may need to call their name first or gently touch their chin to gain their attention. Attention is important for active listening
- ✓ Using visuals (pictures of what the child has to do around the home and classroom)
- ✓ Using real objects to teach concepts – hands on activities that are interactive. This helps with kinaesthetic learners also.
- ✓ Praising for 'good listening' or 'careful watching'

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