

The Importance of Language and Communication

Speech, language and communication are central life skills. They are linked to learning, attainment, behaviour, social and emotional development as well as mental wellbeing, so it is essential that everyone working with children and young people understands the importance of their role in supporting and developing these crucial skills.

Language allows us to share our ideas, thoughts, and feelings with others.

Language involves both the ability to comprehend spoken and written words and to create communication in real time when we speak or write. ... Language also allows us to access existing knowledge, to draw conclusions, to set and accomplish goals, and to understand and communicate complex social relationships.



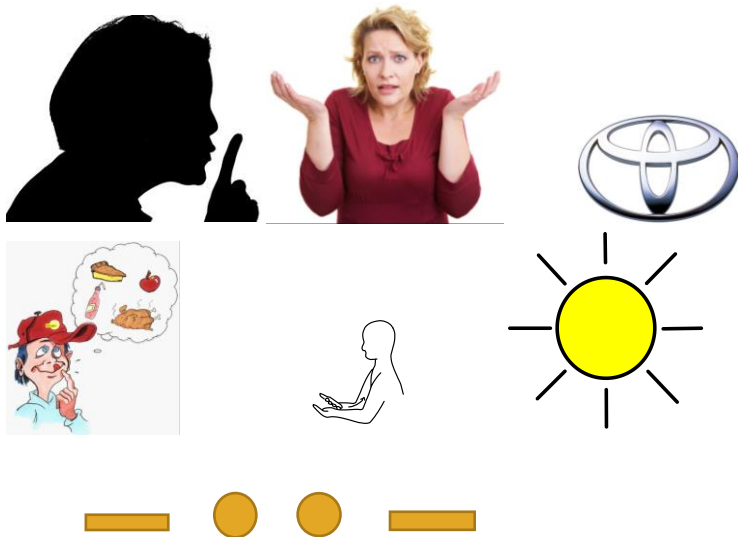
What can we do to help?

Ways to support difficulties with Receptive Language

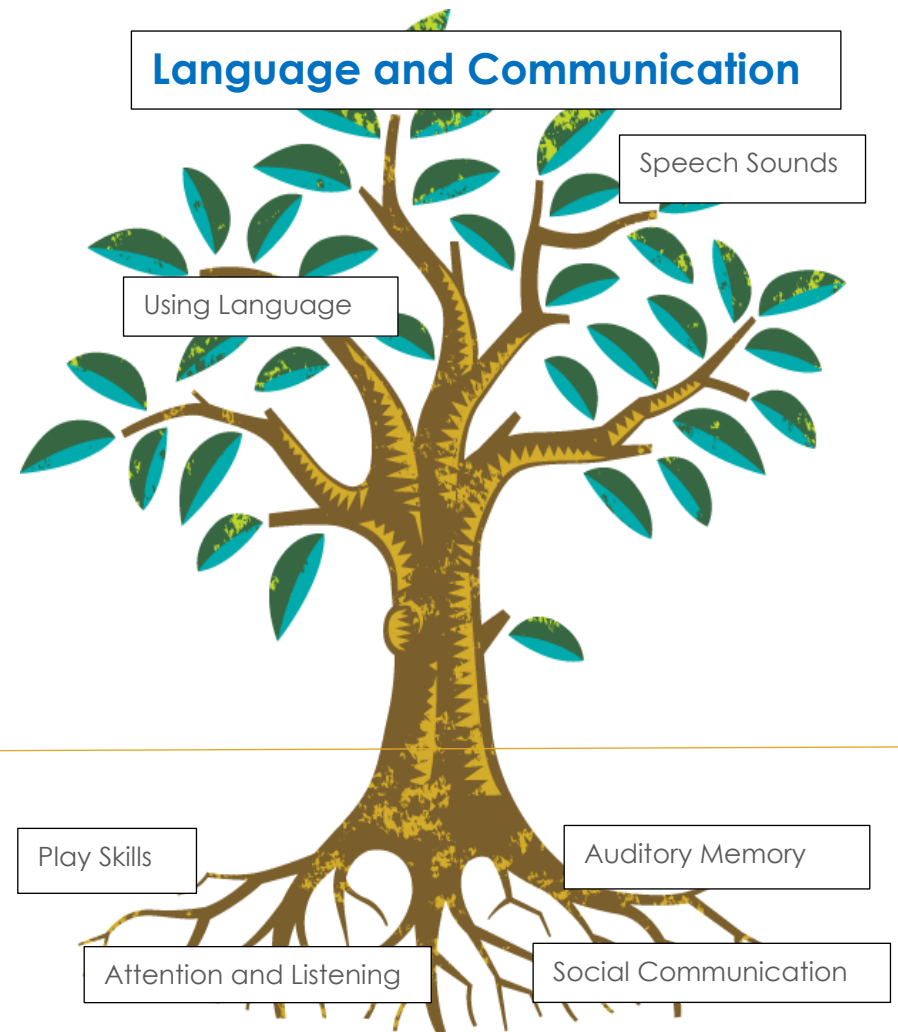
- Make sure language is clear and concise
- Use visual supports to help understanding eg symbols, objects, Makaton
- Encourage eye contact but don't insist
- Break down instructions into small steps
- Provide one step at a time, waiting for the child to complete each step before you give the next instruction
- Repeat instructions when needed
- Encourage your child to ask if they don't understand
- Model (act out) what you want your child to do
- Practice reading short stories and asking questions about it
- Asking different types of questions (who, what, why, where, when) and model the answers if your child is unsure.
- Avoid using complex language; keep instructions simple!

Expressive Language

What's being communicated?



Expressive language is our ability to communicate our thoughts and feelings through words, gestures, signs, and/or symbols. It can be as simple as pointing to a desired object or as complex as writing a book about an area of interest.



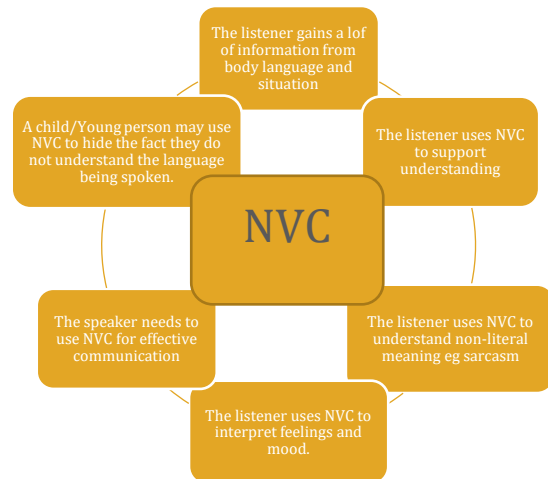
The roots of the tree are the building blocks to developing effective language and communication. Children/Young People need these firm foundations. Notice how speech comes at the top of the tree, the last thing to develop.

The importance of Non-Verbal Communication (NVC)

What is it?

This includes all the body movements, expressions, gestures and position we use. It involves everything except words!

Why is it important?



At least 50% of messages are conveyed through non-verbal communication.

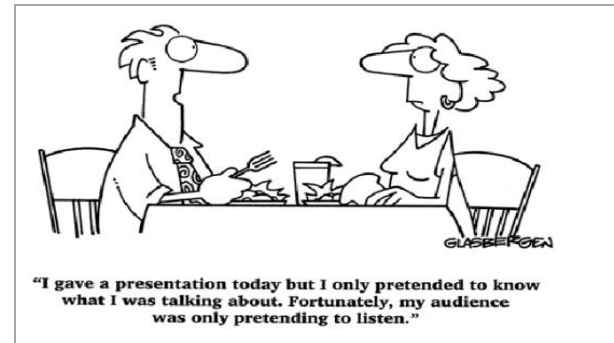
Receptive Language

The ability to interpret what someone has said in order to follow an instruction.



I'm pretty sure that's not what he meant!

The silent part of conversation



Receptive language skills allow children to gain information, decipher that information correctly and effectively communicate with others.

This includes:

- Following instructions (simple and multi-step)
- Understanding language concepts (ie. big/small, left/right, in/on)
- Understanding words and sentences
- Listening to and interpreting questions, stories and conversational information