

Speech refers to:

- saying sounds accurately and in the right places in words
- speaking fluently, without hesitation, prolonging or repeating words or sounds
- speaking with expression in a clear voice, using pitch, volume and intonation to add meaning

Language refers to:

- understanding and making sense of what people say
- using words to build up sentences which are used in longer stretches or spoken language and to build conversations
- putting information in the right order to make sense

Communication refers to:

- being able to communicate to people and take turns as well as change language/communication to suit the situation; in effect, how we interact with others
- non-verbal communication, for example eye contact, gestures and facial expressions
- being able to consider another person's perspective, intentions and the wider context

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.



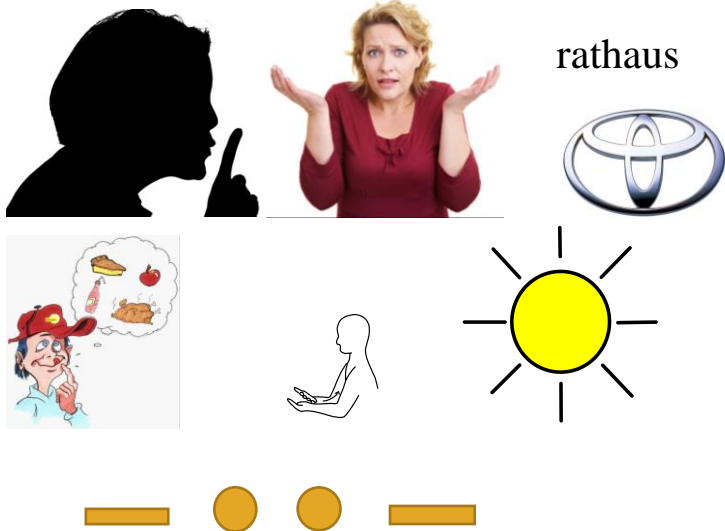
What can we do to help?

Ways to support difficulties with Receptive Language

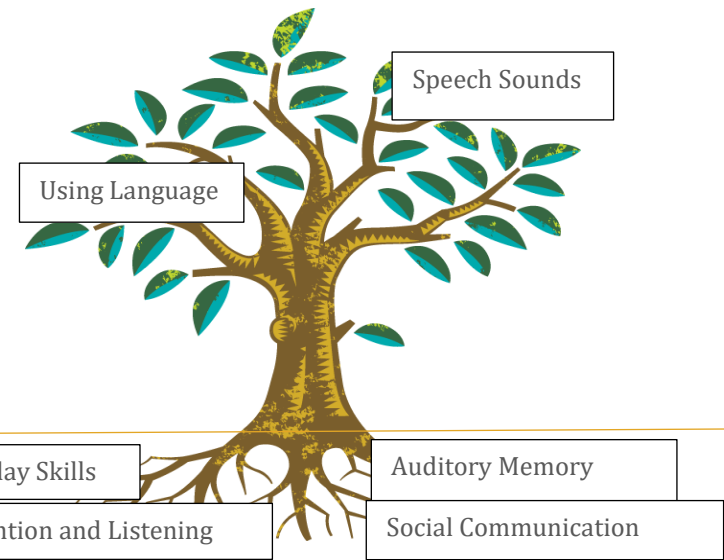
- Make sure language is clear and concise
- Use visual supports to help understanding eg symbols, objects, Makaton
- Encourage eye contact but don't insist
- Break down instructions into small steps
- Provide one step at a time, waiting for the child to complete each step before you give the next instruction
- 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.

Attention and listening skills – this refers to the ability to pay attention and listen carefully to what is being said. This skill is required in order to have, and to follow, a conversation, as well as retaining information.

Social Communication/interaction – this refers to the capacity to relate to others in a socially appropriate manner and plays a pivotal role in promoting social integration. This also involves expressing emotions, using, and decoding non-verbal communication.

Play is related to cognitive skills in that one thing can stand in for another, for example using a building block to represent a car. It is important to development, both academically and socially. This concept is vital for language learning and literacy, for example, letters of the alphabet written on paper can represent a word and the spoken word can represent a specific object.

Auditory Memory is an important skill as it helps to retain words long enough in your head for the child to be able to carry out an instruction accurately.

The importance of Non-verbal Communication (NVC)

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

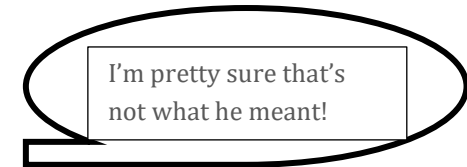
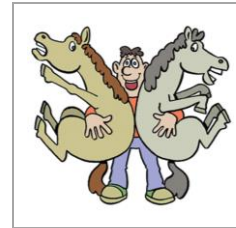
Why is NVC important?

- **The listener gains a lot of knowledge from body language and situation**
- **The Listener uses NVC to support understanding**
- **The listener uses NVC to understand non-literal meaning eg sarcasm**
- **The listener uses NVC to interpret feelings and mood.**
- **The speaker needs to use NVC for effective communication**
- **A child/Young person may use NVC to hide the fact they do not understand the language being spoken.**

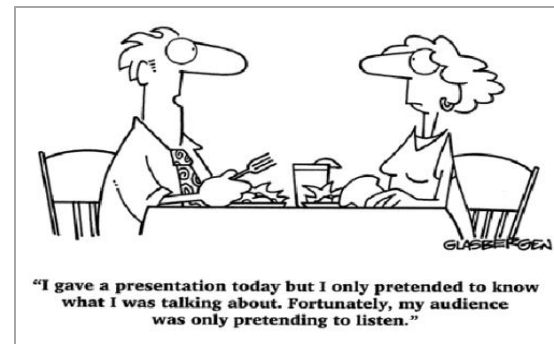
At least 50% of messages are conveyed through non-verbal communication.

Receptive Language

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



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