Understanding two words together

Understanding language

A child needs to understand what is said to him before he can develop his own speech and language. Children who have difficulty in understanding language can become very clever at using other clues to help them know what is wanted – most of us some gesture such as pointing, or looking towards what we are talking about, but it is important in the following games not to do this so that the child learns to understand the meaning of the words only. Try to get the child to look at your face as you are talking to him so that he gives you his full attention and can see your expression. Talk fairly slowly and clearly, and use short sentences, but don’t shout.

The following are a series of games to play with your child to help him understand words in a sentence. These games should be fun and a lot can be done as you do your routine housework. In the following games the child needed only to understand the words underlined to follow the commands i.e. put the apples in a bowl. Apples usually go in a bowl not under or beside it, so this command is at a two word level. Put the brick under the box is at the three word level because a brick can go in, on or under the box.

Games for understanding two words

1. Putting away the shopping

Let your child help you to put the groceries away when you come in from the shopping. Put out on the table 3 or 4 items with which he is familiar and ask him to:

- Put the bread on the bench
- Put the apples in the bowl
- Put the jam in the cupboard etc.

Use different items and places if you can – if the apples always go in the same place he will not need to listen carefully to what you say to get it right.

2. Tidying up the room

Have a selection of toys and common objects together. Ask your child to put them in various places:

- Put teddy on the settee
- Put the cup on the table
- Put the spoon on the plate

3. Sorting the washing

Get child to help sort out the washing or hand your items of clothes for ironing:-

- Give me Daddy’s vest
- Give me Mummy’s skirt
- Give me Mary’s pants
4. Cleaning the table
Child can pass you items from the table:-
   - Mummy’s cup
   - John’s spoon
   - Daddy’s plate

5. Action game
Child can do various actions in the room:-
   - Crawl to the telly
   - Jump to the door
   - Run to the chair
   - Walk to the window

6. Play with dolly or teddy
Make teddy sit
   - on the table
   - lie on the floor
   - stand on the bed etc

7. Big and little
Have a selection of big and little objects
e.g. shoes, spoons, keys, buttons, boxes etc.
Ask child for the
   - big spoon
   - big button
   - little shoe etc

8. Toys tea party
Have a tea party for the toys. Tell child to give:-
   - Teddy some cake
   - Dolly a drink
   - Action man a biscuit etc

9. Body parts
Use several favourite toys:-
   - Touch Dolly’s foot
   - Teddy’s ear
   - Rabbit’s nose etc

10. Giving out objects
When family are together, get them all to help. Have a selection of toys or objects and ask child to give them to different people:-
   - Give John the pencil
   - Give Grandad the paper
   - Give Mary the shoes etc

11. Dressing up game
Have a selection of different hats, gloves, scarves, shirts, shoes etc. so that there are several of each that can be distinguished by colour, material or size.
Get child to dress up by saying:-
   - Put on the blue scarf
   - Put on the furry glove
   - Put on the big shoe
   - Put on the red jumper etc

12. Toy bath time
Have a selection of favourite toys.
Ask to wash:-
   - Dolly’s face
   - Teddy’s foot
   - Dolly’s hand
   - Rabbit’s tummy etc

For further information please contact: Department of Speech and Language Therapy
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If you live in South Tyneside telephone: (0191) 283 2484

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