



Supporting Language Performance in the Classroom Setting

Students who have difficulties *understanding* or *using* language may be identified with a language delay or disorder. Language delays and disorders may affect communication, expressive communication, or both. *Receptive* language includes skills including following directions, reading, math, sequencing events, classroom behavior, and attention. *Expressive* language includes skills including formulating verbal productions, vocabulary, grammar skills, word finding/categorization, writing skills, and/or peer relationships. Some strategies to encourage language skills in the classroom setting include:

- Use visual supports– visuals can support comprehension, storage and retrieval of information. Use visuals for a variety of purposes (vocabulary, process charts, reminders, etc.)
- Ask questions - what, where and who questions are the easiest. Students may have more difficulty with higher level questions such as when, why, how, or what if. Encourage verbal expression by asking wh questions, rather than a yes/no question that can be answered with a head nod or shake.
- Provide phonemic cues –cue a student to respond by using the first letter of the desired word or phrase (e.g., cue “four” by saying “Ffffff”)
- Provide Semantic Cues – give a student additional cues to arrive at an answer:
 - Carrier Phrases – “You put juice in a _____.” (cup)
 - Attributes – “It’s red and it grows on a tree.” (apple)
 - Opposites – “Not up, but _____.” (down)
 - Combine with a phonemic cue (It’s in the sky; it’s hot and yellow...it’s the sssss...” (sun)
- Give adequate wait time – some children need additional processing time and may be hesitant to respond if they feel rushed.
- Chunking – give directions in 1-2 step chunks to allow for language processing time. Children with language delays/disorders may miss the beginning or end of the instruction.
- Repeat – repetition of questions or instructions allows for processing time and comprehension of vocabulary.
- Reinforce & Expand – Repeat what the student has said and then take it one step further to encourage increased verbal output and vocabulary. (e.g., “The book, that’s right. We need a book. Let’s *open* the book.”)