



Strategies to help word finding skills

When the child cannot remember a word:

- 1) Encourage the child to tell you something about the word, i.e. its function, location, category, appearance or attributes, e.g.:

“What do you do with it?”
“What colour is it?” etc.

See below for areas to consider. You will not be able to ask all the questions for every word. If the child cannot answer the questions give them suggestions of answer to expand their knowledge for next time.

- 2) If you know the word that they are trying to remember:
 - a. Tell them how many syllables the word has and tap these out for them.
 - b. Use sentence closure, e.g. “it’s for boiling water, it’s called a?”
 - c. If the child still cannot remember it, tell them the initial sound of the word and not the letter name, e.g. ‘k’ not ‘kay’, ‘s’ not ‘ess’.
 - d. As a final strategy, give them forced alternatives, e.g. ‘Is it a kettle or cooker?’
- 3) If you do not know what the word is, try to ensure that they do not feel that they has failed and explain that we all forget words at times. Suggest that they tell you the word later if it comes to them, or ask them to show you if they can.

NB: Discuss these strategies with the child. Encourage them to decide which are most useful. Aim to encourage the child to use the strategies themselves to allow them to cue themselves rather than depending on an adult to give prompts.

To help him retain and recall new words:

Select 6-10 key words that are being taught within curriculum topics.

- As opportunities arise, ask the child to name the item.
- Then whether or not they are successful, ask them the types of questions on the sheet below, e.g. “What does it do?” “Where would you find it?” etc. At this point use the vocabulary word map visual if helpful (see resource section on the website)
- Discuss whether it is a long or short word and what sound it starts with. See if the child can clap how many syllables the word has and can they think of any words (real or nonsense) that rhyme with it.



SPA Number: 01234 310163 / 310712

Email: ccs.beds.childrens.slt.admin@nhs.net

Web: www.childspeechbedfordshire.nhs.uk





- FUNCTION:** What do you do with it?
- CATEGORY:** What group does it belong to, e.g. food, animal, furniture?
- PLACE:** Where would you find it?
- MATERIAL:** What is it made from, e.g. wood, plastic, glass?
- FEEL:** What does it feel like, e.g. soft/hard, smooth/rough?
- SIZE:** How big is it?
- COLOUR/SHAPE:** What colour is it?
What shape is it?
- ATTRIBUTES:** Does it have wheels/wings/teeth?
- SIMILARITY:** What else is like it?
- ASSOCIATION:** What else does it make you think of?
- SYLLABLES:** How many syllables?
- FIRST SOUND:** What sound does it start with?
- RHYMING:** Think of some words that rhyme with it.



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