



SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPY SERVICE

Blank's level 3

The Blank model separates questions and directions into four levels (see further information below). They show how understanding of abstract language develops for children.

Why use Blank Levels?

- To help adults change their language so that the child understands what they are being asked;
- To encourage the development of verbal reasoning skills (e.g. 'what do you draw with?', 'what might happen next?');
- To help set appropriate language targets.

Blank Level 3

Pictures and objects are required for this level. Remember not to ask too many questions i.e. aim to give **four comments to every question** that you ask.

Help the child to answer questions at level three by using cueing techniques:

- ✓ Sentence completion – give the answer sentence for the child to complete e.g. 'What will happen next? I think he might fall.....' If the child does not complete the sentence, do so for them after you have paused.
- ✓ Forced alternatives – give the child two alternatives e.g. "What might he say? I'm hungry or I'm cold"; "What will happen next? Will he have a bath or eat an apple?"
- ✓ Gesture – use gesture/signs to help the child understand or to cue them in to the correct answer.

At Blank level three the child should be able to process and respond to the following types of questions:



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Following a set of directions

Give the child an instruction containing up **to three key words** e.g. 'Put the red sock in the top drawer', 'Put your book and pen in your bag'; where the underlined words are key words as they carry meaning and there is an alternative option.

Play 'barrier' games.

It is important that children can give directions as well as follow directions. Play games where the child gives you or a friend / peer directions to follow e.g. the child can ask for items to buy at the shop in a role play situation.

Sequencing

Choose everyday activities e.g. making a sandwich, making a drink of squash, building a sandcastle, dressing for PE, getting ready for lunch.

Take clear photographs of each step showing the key action. Do not include the child /adult in the photograph to focus on the action e.g. pouring the drink, buttering the bread. Introduce the concepts of first, next, last. Give the child the photos and ask him/her to place them in the correct order and tell you what is happening.

Carry out the activity in the order that the photos have been arranged. If the photos are in the correct order discuss the first, next, last events and if they are in the incorrect order, discuss the step with the child e.g. do we dry our hands first? Use gesture, demonstration and the photos to support discussion.

Reinforce the vocabulary used in sequencing throughout the day.

This could be achieved in a range of lessons:-

Registration: Talk about what you are going to be doing, e.g.

"First of all we will do literacy, then playtime" etc

PE: Ask the child to do things in order, e.g. first walk along the bench, next stand in the hoop.

Literacy: Ask the child to find where the first picture is, what happened last in the story.

Maths: Ask the child to find the last number on a page, the first sum in the book, etc.



In any lesson when the children line up, discuss who is first / last in the queue.

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Once the child is able to sequence the photos in the correct order ask them to tell you what to do in an activity e.g. how to make a sandwich, how to wash your hands, how to draw a picture. The child may need photos to support them in this. Again discuss what happens first, next, last.

Re-telling events

It is difficult to talk about events that are not happening in the 'here and now'. This could be something that happened earlier in the day/week/year. To be able to talk about something that has happened your child needs to be able to:

- Remember what they have done.
- Think of the words and sentences to tell you.
- Put together a story of what happened.

Use photos from a recent trip e.g. going to the park, going to the beach. Encourage the child to arrange the photos in the correct order. Use the story planner (attached) to structure the story. Discuss who/ where/ when and what happened. Give the child time to respond then model the answer as required.

The child can then tell another adult about the event using the photos and story planner.

**If photos are not available items from the event can be used e.g. leaflet from the zoo, shells from the beach, conker from the park.

Making predictions

Start with simple predictions in real situations from the child's perspective. Encourage the child to predict what is going to happen next during the day e.g. 'We've finished play ... what's next?' 'You've spilt your drink... what will you do next? Give the child forced alternatives to help him/her to answer e.g. 'What's next? Is it assembly or lunch?'

Next, ask the child to **predict** what others will do in real situations e.g. 'It's Sophie's birthday ... what might she have after school?', 'Your brother has fallen over ... what might he need to do?'

Once the child can make predictions in real situations discuss what will happen next in stories. Begin with simple stories that include pictures. Pause tv programmes/ DVDs and discuss what may happen next.

If the child cannot make a suggestion then you could give him/her two alternatives.



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Suggesting what people might say

Discuss what people in real situations and in stories e.g. 'Jennifer has forgotten her lunch, what will she say?' Use role play to develop the child's understanding of the event and what could be said.

Understanding emotions

To develop the child's understanding of emotions discuss how the child feels when she/he is experiencing the emotion. Use a feeling symbol chart to discuss the child's feelings and keep your language simple. The child needs to experience the emotion and to link the feeling with the specific word such as frightened, excited, worried.

To develop the child's understanding of how others are feeling discuss what they are feeling within specific situations.

Children learn the emotions of happy, sad and angry and scared first. Start with these and then branch out to other feelings such as surprised, confused, excited, cheerful, frustrated, bored, worried.



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