

The Importance of Early Language Skills

18th October 2022

THE COMPLEXITY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

WHAT DOES THIS SAY?

GHOTI

FISH

HOW?

GH - 'F' AS IN ENOUGH

O - AS IN WOMEN

TI - AS IN STATION

THIS COULD BE READ AS FISH!!!

LET'S THINK OF OTHER WORDS

- THROUGH
- BOUGH
- THOUGH
- ALL HAVE THE SAME ENDINGS BUT ALL PRONOUNCED DIFFERENTLY – HOW DO WE KNOW HOW TO SAY THEM??
- A CHILD NEEDS TO HEAR A WORD 500 TIMES BEFORE THEY CAN USE IT
- WHY IS IT HOUSE AND HOUSES BUT MOUSE AND MICE!!

Concerns



- CHILDREN ARE NOT COMING INTO NURSERY OR SCHOOL WITH THE NECESSARY LANGUAGE SKILLS TO UNDERSTAND AND COMMUNICATE.
- CHILDREN ARE LACKING IN INDEPENDENCE SKILLS TODAY.
- CHILDREN DO NOT ALWAYS HAVE THE NECESSARY SOCIAL SKILLS WHEN STARTING SCHOOL.
- SOME CHILDREN ARE NOT EMOTIONALLY PREPARED OR READY FOR THE TRANSITION TO A SCHOOL SETTING.

Some interesting statistics



- AROUND 1.4 MILLION CHILDREN IN THE UK HAVE SPEECH, LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION NEEDS (THAT'S 10% OF CHILDREN OR 2 OR 3 IN EVERY CLASS)
- CHILDREN OFTEN UNDERSTAND MORE THAN THEY CAN SAY
- WHEN CHILDREN LEARN TO TALK THEY NEED TO HEAR A WORD 500 TIMES BEFORE THEY USE IT.
- ATTENTION AND LISTENING SKILLS ARE VERY IMPORTANT BUILDING BLOCKS IN ACQUIRING LANGUAGE.

Some interesting statistics



- LIMITED LANGUAGE SKILLS, INCREASE THE RISK FOR MENTAL HEALTH DIFFICULTIES AND PROBLEM BEHAVIOUR.
- THESE CHILDREN ARE ALSO MORE AT RISK OF BULLYING AND MAY FIND IT DIFFICULT TO VOICE THEIR CONCERNS IN A POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS SITUATION.
- FOR SOME YOUNG PEOPLE, SLCN PERSISTS INTO ADULthood SO THERE ARE LONG TERM AFFECTS ON THEIR ABILITY TO CONTRIBUTE TO SOCIETY.
- THERE IS A HIGH INCIDENCE OF SLCN IN YOUNG OFFENDERS.

FACTS



- CHILDREN SLOW TO DEVELOP SPOKEN LANGUAGE ARE LIKELY TO BE SLOW TO DEVELOP READING SKILLS.
- TALK AND SOCIAL INTERACTION IN CHILDREN PLAY A KEY ROLE IN CHILDREN'S SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

FACTS



- A CHILD'S VOCABULARY AT 5 YRS OLD IS AN INDICATION OF HOW WELL THEY'LL DO WHEN THEY LEAVE SCHOOL.
- CHILDREN WITH SECURE ATTACHMENTS ARE MORE LIKELY TO HAVE BETTER COMMUNICATION SKILLS.
- WITHOUT SUPPORT LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES CAN PERSIST ALL THE WAY THROUGH SCHOOLING.

Some interesting statistics



- 7% OF ALL CHILDREN HAVE A SPEECH AND LANGUAGE IMPAIRMENT; IT'S THE MOST PREVALENT CHILDHOOD DISABILITY.
- 50-90% OF CHILDREN WITH PERSISTENT SPEECH, LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION DIFFICULTIES GO ON TO HAVE READING DIFFICULTIES
- WHEN LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES ARE RESOLVED BY AGE 5 ½ CHILDREN ARE MORE LIKELY TO DEVELOP GOOD READING AND SPELLING SKILLS

LOCKDOWN

- THERE IS GROWING EVIDENCE TO SAY THAT LOCKDOWN HAS HAD AN IMPACT ON YOUNG CHILDREN'S LANGUAGE SKILLS.
- THERE IS AN INCREASED NUMBER OF 4-5 YEAR OLDS NEEDING SUPPORT WITH LANGUAGE.
- THERE IS EVIDENCE TO SHOW THAT POOR LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT HAS A LONG TERM EFFECT ON LEARNING.

Why is language important?



- IT IS AN ESSENTIAL LIFE SKILL.
- LANGUAGE SKILLS AT AGE 2 CAN PREDICT READING, MATHS AND WRITING ABILITY WHEN CHILDREN START SCHOOL.
- VOCABULARY AT AGE 5 IS THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR AFFECTING LITERACY AT AGE 11.
- GOOD LANGUAGE (PARTICULARLY AT 13) IS A STRONG PREDICTOR OF BETTER OUTCOMES AT GCSE.
- GOOD COMMUNICATION SKILLS ARE RATED AS THE MOST IMPORTANT EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS NEEDED FOR YOUNG PEOPLE ENTERING THEIR FIRST JOB.
- CHILDREN WITH POOR VOCABULARY SKILLS ARE TWICE AS LIKELY TO BE UNEMPLOYED WHEN THEY REACH ADULTHOOD.
- 60% OF YOUNG OFFENDERS HAVE LOW LANGUAGE SKILLS

WHAT CAN YOU DO?



Reading



SPENDING 10 MINUTES READING TOGETHER EVERY DAY:

- HELPS YOUR CHILD DEVELOP SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SKILLS
- STRENGTHENS THEIR BOND WITH YOU
- HELPS THEM GROW INTO A CONFIDENT, HAPPY LEARNER
- IMPROVES VOCABULARY

TIPS TO ENJOY BOOKS TOGETHER

- BRING THE STORY TO LIFE – MAKE ANIMAL NOISES, CHANGE VOICE FOR CHARACTERS, MAKE YOURSELVES LAUGH
- CUDDLE UP TOGETHER AS A FAMILY AND ALL JOIN IN
- ASK QUESTIONS WHEN READING TOGETHER (INCLUDING HOW AND WHY QUESTIONS)
- LET YOUR CHILD BE THE STORYTELLER - THEY CAN 'READ' THE PICTURES TO YOU.
- FIND SOMEWHERE QUIET (AWAY FROM ANY SCREENS AND PHONES)
- THE MORE YOU TALK TOGETHER, THE MORE WORDS YOUR CHILD WILL LEARN.

Speaking and Listening

SOME IDEAS

- REMEMBERING GAMES – SHOPPING BASKET, GOING ON HOLIDAY, E.G I WENT TO THE SHOPS AND I BOUGHT.... , FOR MY BIRTHDAY I HAD...
- DESCRIBING AND GUESSING GAMES.
- WHO AM I? (ANIMALS – GUESS FROM CLUES, ASK QUESTIONS TO FIND OUT MORE)
- USE QUESTIONS – WHO, WHERE, WHEN, WHAT, HOW? TO IMPROVE CHILDREN'S VOCABULARY
- SPOT THE DIFFERENCE – ASK THE CHILD TO LOOK AWAY AND CHANGE SOMETHING ABOUT YOU (MAKE IT OBVIOUS INITIALLY)
- TALK TABLE OBJECTS – NO RIGHT OR WRONG ANSWERS BE AS IMAGINATIVE AS YOU LIKE



Remember



- GET DOWN TO CHILD'S LEVEL
- GIVE CHILDREN TIME TO RESPOND
- USE THE RIGHT LEVEL OF LANGUAGE – BREAK THINGS INTO UNDERSTANDABLE CHUNKS, REPHRASE IF CHILD DOES NOT UNDERSTAND
- KEEP THINGS FUN!
- USE CHILD'S NAME BEFORE GIVING INSTRUCTIONS (ENSURE YOU HAVE THEIR ATTENTION BEFORE CONTINUING)
- **ELIMINATE DISTRACTIONS (EG. TV, PHONE!!!)**
- **BE A GOOD ROLE MODEL FOR THE LANGUAGE YOU WANT TO HEAR**
- USE VISUAL SUPPORT IF NECESSARY (PICS FROM MAGAZINES TO REINFORCE VOCABULARY)
- PRAISE ACHIEVEMENTS
- ENCOURAGE CHILDREN TO ASK IF THEY ARE CONFUSED OR UNSURE OF WHAT YOU ARE SAYING

Remember



- **OFFER COMMENTS RATHER THAN ALWAYS ASK QUESTIONS.** CHILDREN CAN SWITCH OFF FROM BEING ASKED LOTS OF QUESTIONS – IT FEELS MORE LIKE AN INTERROGATION THAN A CONVERSATION
- CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONVERSATION – “FRED, WHAT DO YOU THINK I SHOULD DO WITH THE SHOPPING?”
- TALK ABOUT THINGS GOING ON IN THE CHILD’S WORLD
- MISTAKES ARE A GOOD THING! ENCOURAGE THEM TO THINK AGAIN.
- ENCOURAGE CONVERSATION, PARTICULARLY FOR QUIETER CHILDREN.
- NAME THAT EMOTION – CHILDREN NEED TO BUILD UP A VOCABULARY OF FEELINGS, BUT NEED TO BE TAUGHT WHAT THEY ARE. WHEN ADULTS RECOGNISE THEIR FEELINGS THIS CAN HAVE A CALMING EFFECT

Remember

- ENCOURAGE CONVERSATION, PARTICULARLY FOR QUIETER CHILDREN.

E.G. MAKE ENCOURAGING NOISES (WOW!)

COMMENT ON WHAT IS HAPPENING
(THE PAINT IS DRIPPING!)

PASS A COMMENT - “I WENT TO THE
PARK YESTERDAY” THIS WILL INVITE
CHILDREN INTO THE CONVERSATION.



IT'S EASY TO DOMINATE CONVERSATIONS WITH CHILDREN –
“ GET YOUR COAT ON” , “COME AND GET YOUR DINNER” ,
“PUT YOUR TOYS AWAY”

SO REMEMBER TO PRAISE, QUESTION, COMMENT AND
NEGOTIATE WITH THEM.

RESPOND POSITIVELY TO CURIOSITY AND INQUISITIVENESS.

IMMERSE CHILDREN IN A LANGUAGE RICH ENVIRONMENT

Mark making and Writing



- TO BECOME GOOD AND EFFECTIVE WRITERS CHILDREN NEED TO DEVELOP GOOD CORE BODY STRENGTH, STRONG WRISTS AND FINGERS AND HAVE GOOD FINE MOTOR SKILLS.
- THERE ARE LOTS OF THINGS YOU CAN DO AT HOME TO HELP.
- TAKE LEAFLET TO GIVE YOU SOME IDEAS.



THANK YOU

- PLEASE COMPLETE THE EVALUATION SLIP AND LEAVE IN THE BASKET.
- LET US KNOW IF THERE IS ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE TO KNOW MORE ABOUT.