

Speech & language
therapy

Comprehension difficulties strategies for supporting a child in class

1. Gain the child's full attention before continuing to talk to them, e.g. encourage them to look at you.
2. Simplify instructions – break down into smaller parts, allow pauses e.g.

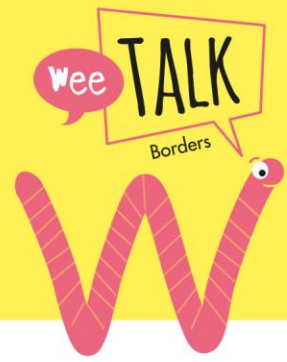
difficult: "after you get out your maths book, find a partner and choose a table to work at"

easier: "get your math book"(wait until this has been done)

Make sure your language is clear and doesn't contain lots of irrelevant information e.g

- **may be confusing:** "It's too cold to go out like that"
- **clearer:** "It's too cold, put your coat on"

3. Help by using pointing and gesturing if necessary.
4. Emphasise the important words, e.g.
 - "get a **blue** pen"
 - "**before** you go into the cloakroom"
 - "put your **reading book** in your bag"
5. Check that they have understood what has been said by asking them to tell/show you what they have to do or by asking specific questions.
6. Anticipate new and difficult vocabulary that a child will need for class work, e.g. new topic: buildings. List types of buildings, parts of buildings, materials, shapes etc. Do not assume the child already has this knowledge.
7. Check that implied meaning or inference has been understood when presented with text/information, e.g. "James was going to need his umbrella today" ask "why?"
8. Listen for detail. Build up a store of absurd sentences and see if the child can spot the mistake, e.g. "the boat came into the harbour and the brakes were put on".



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9. Compare sentence meanings, e.g.

- “He did his homework until dinner time”
- “When it was time for dinner, he stopped doing his homework”
- “Everyone except John likes football”
- “John likes football”

10. Check vocabulary and grammatical information has been understood, e.g.

- “Jack followed Sue into the shop” – “who went first?”
- “Liverpool thrashed Chelsea” – “who won?”

11. Where appropriate, encourage the child to write down key points to serve as a reminder of instructions.

12. Check understanding of new subject, specific vocabulary. Ask the child to define it.

13. Encourage the child to use a dictionary and thesaurus and to keep these at hand at all times.

For more information on the Speech and Language Therapy Service (including how to request support from us) please see: <http://www.nhsborders.scot.nhs.uk/slt>
[Check out our Wee Talk Borders Facebook page or you can call us on 01896 826710](#)