

# Advice sheet

## Sentence Building

As a child's vocabulary develops, they learn to join words together to form sentences. These sentences become longer and more complex as the words used by the child develop.

### Everyday Strategies

- Model the correct grammar: Repeat back the sentence using adult grammar. This helps the child learn how the sentence should be said e.g.

**Child:** 'At school today the computer broke.'

**Adult:** 'Oh, at school the computer broke.'

**Child:** 'cut stick'.

**Adult:** 'cutting and sticking'.

- Expand on what the child says: Add one piece of extra information e.g.

**Child:** 'man tree'.

**Adult:** 'The man is climbing up the tree'.

- Offer a choice: Give the child a choice of what to play with/eat/drink/wear. Adapt to the child's level of language e.g.

**Adult:** 'Jumper or t-shirt?'

**Adult:** 'Do you want the red jumper or the yellow jumper?'

**Open questions:** Avoid questions requiring a one word answer, such as 'Are the children playing on the slide?' Instead ask 'What is happening in the playground?' The child can then respond with a sentence such as 'The children are playing on the slide'.

- Sentence completion: Start a sentence for the child to finish e.g.

**Adult:** 'The man is sitting...'

**Child:** 'on top of the house'.

- Increase independence: For older children, repeat back the child's sentence the way that they have said it and ask them to think of one way they could improve it.

### Activities

- Look at pictures in books, magazines and in newspapers. Take it in turns with the child to say something about the picture.
- Find objects/pictures of things that go together and discuss.
- See if the child can select either an object or a picture of one after hearing its description. You can give the description in single words, phrases or sentences; for example, a ball can be described as "black, round, bouncy" or "It's made of rubber and you play sports with it".
- Make a scrapbook using photographs of people doing things or events. Encourage your child to give you a word/sentence to write underneath (depending on their language level). Sometimes this may encourage better sentences than if your child is just telling you.

