

## Understanding (Receptive Language)

### What is appropriate for children aged 22-36 months

Identifies action words by pointing to the right picture, e.g., "Who's jumping?"  
Understands 'who', 'what', 'where' in simple questions (e.g. *Who's that/can? What's that? Where is.?*).

Developing understanding of simple concepts (e.g. *big/little*)

### What is appropriate for children aged 30-50 months

Understands use of objects (e.g. "What do we use to cut things?")

Shows understanding of prepositions such as 'under', 'on top', 'behind' by carrying out an action or selecting correct picture.

Beginning to understand 'why' and 'how' questions.

### What is appropriate for children aged 40-60+ months

Understands humour, e.g. nonsense rhymes, jokes.

Demonstrates understanding of "how?" and "why?" questions by giving explanations.  
Able to follow a story without pictures or props.

Understands instructions containing sequencing words; first...after...last, and more abstract concepts – long, short, tall, hard soft, rough.

### Common Signs of Difficulties:

- Echoing what others are saying in part or full
- Blank expression when given an instruction
- Watching / copying others
- Last to catch on
- Needs several or individual explanations in order to complete the task
- Inappropriate and inaccurate responses to questions
- Frequent misunderstandings
- Not doing as he or she is being told
- Appears apprehensive and unsure
- Watches the adults face intently – you may have queried hearing problems but hearing tests were normal
- Responds far better when shown what to do
- If a child does not understand sentences they might be late talking and become very frustrated perhaps displaying unwanted behaviours.
- Finds it hard to make friendships
- May tend to choose activities that require little talk e.g. jigsaws and riding on bikes.

### Factors Affecting Understanding:

- Poor attention and listening skills
- Limited vocabulary
- Limited experiences and interactions
- Too many information carrying words (words that carry meaning)
- Poor reasoning skills

### Strategies to Support Understanding

- Focus the child's attention on what you say
- Slow your rate of speech
- Gain eye contact
- Exaggerate the key words

- Use short, simple sentences
- Pause between sentences to give the child time to work out what you are saying
- Put key words at the beginning or end of the sentence
- To start with use simple words. We might use lots of different words for something e.g. trousers, jeans, jogging bottoms. Try to use one simple word e.g. trousers and add the other words later. Encourage everyone else to use trousers too.
- Name objects every time the child pick one up, looks at something, sees something in a book and points at things.
- Focus on verbs (doing words). Don't just name what things are talk about what they are doing e.g. "the horse is eating".
- Tidying up provides valuable opportunities to talk about objects and group them together.
- Support words with non verbal communication. Use gestures, pointing, demonstrations, signs and facial expression to help the child to understand. The child can see what to do if they can't understand the explanation
- Ask the child what they have to do
- If the child does not understand, repeat what you have said one more time. If it is still not understood, show the child what to do. Don't repeat things over and over again as you will both get frustrated! **Remember! 2 times say, 3<sup>rd</sup> time show!**
- When the child understands give some encouragement, a smile, a laugh or say "well done"
- Give the child time to process the information before repeating or rephrasing it
- Ask appropriate level of question
- Offer a choice of answers (is it.... or.....?)
- Play alongside the child giving a commentary on the play rather than asking too many questions
- Explain new words and vocabulary
- Use visual timetables and pictures positioned at the child's level

#### Further Information:

##### Websites:

[www.ican.org.uk](http://www.ican.org.uk)

[www.talkingpoint.org.uk](http://www.talkingpoint.org.uk)

[www.talktoyourbaby.org.uk](http://www.talktoyourbaby.org.uk)

[www.hello.org.uk](http://www.hello.org.uk)

[www.elizabethjarmanltd.co.uk](http://www.elizabethjarmanltd.co.uk)

<http://www.stokespeaksout>

[www.elklan.co.uk](http://www.elklan.co.uk)

##### Books:

- Early Language Builders, Liz Elks and Henrietta McLachlan (published by ELKLAN)

##### Resources:

- Refer to Pre School Basic Communication Group Activities
- Inclusion Development Programme (Supporting children with speech, language and communication needs)