

Levels of Understanding

By 5 typically developing children are starting to develop their understanding of more abstract language and beginning to use verbal reasoning. The Blank Level model (Blank, Rose, Berlin) has been used to explain the development of understanding.

Level 1 – Naming Things (2-3 years).

The child is able to match language to what they can see and respond to requests such as;

- Point to the apple
- Find another banana
- What's this?

Level 2 – Describing things and answers who?, what? Where? type questions (3-4 years).

The child is able to match language to what they can see but moves to focus on specific details rather than the whole object. This level involves descriptive language talking about the colour, size, shape, texture (concepts) and understanding the function of an object. The child is responding to requests such as;

- Which one do you draw with? (function)
- You can throw a? (linking objects and actions)
- What goes together a bucket and a ...? (linking objects)
- Name a fruit? (categories).
- Find a big red crayon (concepts).
- Respond to who, what, where questions

Level 3 – Retelling events and talking about stories (4-5 years)

The child is starting to develop links and generalisations between objects, sequencing events and can make simple predictions and deductions. They are starting to understand context and how somebody else may feel and that some words can mean similar things. The child is able respond to requests such as;

- What will happen next? (prediction)
- How do you think he / she feels
- What do you think they are saying?
- How do you make a sandwich?
- What does party mean?

Level 4 – (Justifying, problem solving and answering why? (5-6 years)

The child is using their own experience to problem solve, make predictions, give explanations and solutions and think about past and future events. The child is able to respond to requests such as;

- What should they do now? (solution)
- What will happen if they? (prediction)
- What made that happen? (cause)
- Why can't we go to the park now the weather is bad? (justifying)
- How can you tell that man is angry? (explanation)
- How can you tell they are new shoes? (inference)

****These levels are important to think about when trying to manage behaviour,**

If your child is on the 3rd level then they will have difficulty responding if you are using level 4 questions such as;

- "Why did you do that?"
- "What should you do instead?"

In these circumstances it would be better to use level 3 questions such as;

- Tell me about what happened.
- How does x feels now.