

Understanding language

Children need to be able to understand language to interact with the world around them. They need to understand words and sentences and how they are used.



Children need to understand language so that they can play, socialise and learn.

Children can be good at hiding their difficulties with understanding by watching and copying others.

Contact us:

01752 434844

www.livewellsouthwest.co.uk

TOP TIPS

- Get your child's attention before talking to them, for example say their name.
- Use short sentences and simple instructions to start with.
- Tell your child what you **do** want them to do, not what you **don't** e.g. 'walk' instead of 'don't run'.
- Give your child time to think about your words.
- Show them what you mean by adding a gesture, sign, object or picture. Repeat instructions if they need you to.
- Check they have understood you.

More information

Activities to support a child to understand language

- **Name items:** Comment during everyday activities e.g. play.
- **Day to day activities:** When going shopping or visiting places, such as the park, talk with your child about what you are doing, what you can see, or what is happening.
- **Model new words:** Play activities with your child, that they really enjoy. During the game, model new words and phrases.
- **Simon says:** Take turns to give and follow instructions e.g. 'Simon says touch your toes'; 'Simon says first touch your toes, then clap your hands'. Use a variety of body parts and simple verbs e.g. jump, shake.
- **Obstacle course:** Put together an obstacle course in the house or outside. Take turns to give and follow instructions e.g. 'run to the tree, climb under the table'.
- **Feely bag game:** Place different everyday objects (e.g. toy car, toothbrush, cup) into a bag. Encourage the child to:
 - Reach in and try to guess what the item is before removing it.
 - Describe characteristics of the item once they have pulled it out (e.g. colour, shape, use).
 - Answer questions about the item - Is it round? Can you eat it?

- Use everyday activities (reading, playing, walking, shopping) to introduce new words.
- Explain new words in many situations.
- Gradually increase the length of the instructions in each activity.

