

8: Understanding Language/Receptive Language

EYFS Communication and Language Development ELG 02: Understanding language

Ages and stages of receptive/understanding language

Age	Understanding language
By 6 months	Responds to different tones of voices. Selective responses to familiar/unfamiliar sounds.
12 months	Responds to own name, several word/phrases in familiar situations e.g. bye, food, no
18 months	Can follow simple commands in context and instructions containing 1 key word e.g. 'where are your <u>eyes</u> ?' Understands mainly naming words/signs e.g. 'shoe', 'ball'
2 years	Understands instructions containing 2 key words e.g. give the <u>apple</u> to <u>teddy</u> Understands basic action words/signs e.g. 'sleeping', 'jumping' Understands 'who?', 'what?', 'where?'
2 ½ years	Can identify objects by their use e.g. 'which one do we eat with?' Enjoys simple familiar stories
3 years	Understands instructions containing 3 key words e.g. 'give the <u>cup</u> and <u>spoon</u> to <u>teddy</u> ' Understands basic describing words/signs e.g. 'big', 'cold' and position word/signs e.g. 'in', 'under' Understands time concepts e.g. yesterday, this morning Beginning to understand negatives and plurals e.g. 'can't', 'cats'
4 years	Understands instructions containing 4 key words e.g. 'put the <u>little brick under the box</u> ' Starting to answer 'how' and 'why' questions

Knowles, Masidlover (1982) Derbyshire Language Scheme. Cooke, J Williams, D (1985) Working with Children's Language Oxon: Winslow Press

8.1: How to develop understanding choices

Target: **The child will understand choice making.**

Making choices gives the child an awareness that they can influence what happens around them.

You can offer choices of foods/drinks/toys/clothes/songs/games/video.

Strategies

- Start with choices of two items the child can **see**. In this way, they do not have to remember what the choices are, or the words you said, in order to make a decision.
- To begin with, offer one item you know they like and one item you know they do not like e.g. 'banana or sock?' When they can make a consistent choice in this way, you can then offer two items you know they like.
- Hold out the two items so that the child can reach for/point to the one they want.
- Use simple language such as 'milk or juice?', saying the word as you hold out each item.
- If the child takes the item you know they do not like, this could show that they actually want to explore that item. It could also indicate that they are not very interested, in that moment, in the other item you offered.
Always give them the item they chose, even if it is the one you know they do not like. Wait for a response, such as putting it down or whinging, and then offer them **both** choices again.
- If the child keeps taking the last thing they were offered, try offering the one they like and the one they don't like in a different order to make sure they are making a genuine choice.
- If the child does not reach/point to make a choice when two items are offered, try offering *one* item you know they really like and see if they take it. Children often begin learning to make choices by looking at/taking the item if they want it or pushing it away/turning away/ignoring it if they don't want it.
- When the child can consistently make a choice with one item, you can then offer one item you know they really like and a second item you know they don't like. This will help to develop their skills in looking and reaching for one item when two are offered. The aim is for the child to continue taking the one they like.

Please ensure that the child understands a wide range of single words before working on understanding of language containing two key words. See section 7 for advice on how to develop this.

8.2: How to develop understanding of 2 key words

Target: The child will understand instructions containing 2 key words.

Strategies

- **Ensure the child understands a range of single words before starting these activities.**
- It is important to give no visual cues and make sure that the child understands all of the words on their own first.
- Distractions need to be reduced for listening activities. For example, turn off the T.V. and tidy away any toys that you are not using.
- With these ideas, make sure that you have a choice of at least two items for each key/underlined word for the child to choose from when you're giving them instructions.
- Give them time to think about what you have asked them. Pause and count to **10 SILENTLY** after you have given the instruction.
- If they have difficulty, try repeating the instruction or using a gesture to support their understanding. You could also demonstrate what you're asking e.g. 'look! I'm washing baby's head!'
- Always give the instruction in one go; avoid breaking it down.
- Play for a few minutes at a time; aim for short, fun sessions.
- Keep your language simple and clear e.g. 'where's your bag?' rather than 'what have you done with your bag?'
- Children at this level understand very much in terms of 'here and now'. Questions like 'what did you do yesterday?', where the child has nothing in front of them to help them understand or answer, are too difficult at this stage.

Activities

- **Farm play:** play games where you talk about putting different animals in different place e.g. 'the horse is in the field', 'the pig is in the pond', 'the cow's in the barn'.

- **Tidying:** make tidying up the washing, shopping and toys fun e.g. 'the socks go in the drawer', 'the crisps are in the cupboard', 'the blocks go in the box'.
- **Washing/drying:** fill a bowl with water and some bubble bath. Talk about what you are doing e.g. 'turn on the tap, pour in the water.' Take turns washing a baby doll or plastic animals e.g. 'washing cat's nose', 'wash baby's head'.
After you've washed the toys, dry them, using language in the same way.
- **Tea party/shop:** talk about who you are giving food to e.g. 'Mummy wants cake', 'giving the sausage to teddy', 'give baby a banana'.

Date Target Set:

Achieved = 2

Partially achieved = 1

Not achieved = 0

Date	Outcome	Comment

8.3: How to develop understanding of 3 key words

Target: **The child will understand instructions containing 3 key words.**

Strategies

- It is important to give no visual cues and make sure that the child understands all of the words on their own first.
- Distractions need to be reduced for listening activities. For example, turn off the T.V. and tidy away any toys that you are not using.
- With these ideas, make sure that you have a choice of at least two items for each key/underlined word for the child to choose from when you're giving them instructions.
- Give them time to think about what you have asked them. Pause and count to **10 SILENTLY** after you have given the instruction.
- If they have difficulty, try repeating the instruction or using a gesture to support their understanding. You could also demonstrate what you're asking e.g. 'look! I'm washing baby's foot!'
- Always give the instruction in one go; avoid breaking it down.
- Play for a few minutes at a time; aim for short, fun sessions.

Activities

- **Farm play:** play games where you talk about what the animals are doing e.g. 'the horse is eating in the field', 'the pig is washing the pond', 'the cow's sleeping in the barn'.
- **Tidying:** make tidying up the washing, shopping and toys fun e.g. 'mummy's coat goes in the bedroom', 'put the apples and crisps in the cupboard', 'put the book in teddy's bag'.
- **Washing/drying:** fill a bowl with water and some bubble bath. Talk about what you are doing e.g. 'turn on the tap, pour in the water.' Take turns washing a baby doll or plastic animals e.g. 'washing cat's nose', 'drying baby's head'.
- **Tea party/shop:** talk about what is happening e.g. 'Mummy's eating cake', 'teddy's buying biscuits', 'baby's sitting on the floor'.

Name:

Date Target Set:

Outcome: Achieved = 2

Partially achieved = 1

Not achieved = 0

Date	Outcome	Comment

8.4: How to develop understanding of pronouns

Target: The child will understand the pronouns 'he' and 'she'.

Pronouns are words such as 'he', 'she', 'it' and 'they' which represent a person or object.

- Explain to your child that if it's a boy we use 'he', and for girls we use 'she'. You can use pictures to support this.
- Talk about what people are doing: use the pronouns 'he' and 'she' e.g. 'he is building a tower', 'she is playing on the computer'.
- Pictures: look at pictures together, such as in books and magazines. Point at the pictures to get your child's attention and describe what is happening using 'he' and 'she'. For example, "he is riding a bike", "she is walking the dog". Cut pictures out of magazines and sort them into groups which show 'he' and 'she'.
- Books: when you are reading books together talk about what is happening in the story using 'he' and 'she'. Once your child is able to understand the difference between 'he' and 'she' encourage them to start using 'he' and 'she' when describing pictures and people.

Name:

Date Target Set:

Outcome: Achieved = 2

Partially achieved = 1

Not achieved = 0

Date	Outcome	Comment