

Section 1.3

Understanding that words, sounds and gestures are associated with everyday actions and things

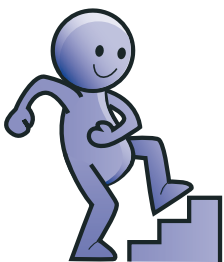


Why is this important?

The adult's role is crucial in naming the things that interest the child as he/she reaches out or points: this is how early words begin to make sense.

What to do

- Whilst looking at picture books, playing, eating or going about the daily routine, watch what captures a child's interest as he/she reaches out or points.
- Say what they see! Use single words: making noises or gestures is fun and adds to meaning.
- It makes it more fun to let the child take the lead, turning the pages of a book and playing with things he/she chooses.
- The child will begin to understand what those words mean as he/she learns to connect them with what he/she is watching.



Step up

- Pause – give the child a chance to copy.
- If he/she does, repeat it again yourself and add another:
 - ★ Child: 'Car!'
 - ★ You: 'Yes, car!'
 - ★ Then add another word: 'Blue car!'

Step down

- Use just one word with interesting intonation to 'label' what the child can see (e.g. 'banana!', 'mmm!', 'nice!').
- One of the easiest words to start with is 'more' as there are many opportunities for repetition in many different contexts (e.g. food, swinging and tickling games, singing).
- Be face-to-face and at his/her level so that it's easier to see and hear you.
- Use a sign or gesture to reinforce what you say.
- Make sure you respond to what captures *his/her* interest rather than yours!
- Show how pleased you are.

