

Section 2.5

Understanding instructions using everyday routines

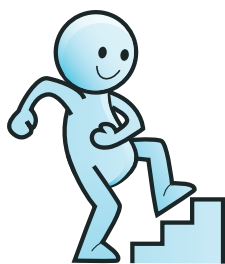


Why is this important?

Routines bring structure into children's lives. Familiar situations and the words, items and rituals they contain provide a framework whereby children begin to make the connections which lead to understanding of non-verbal clues (e.g. pointing).

What to do

- Think of routines that take place everyday or several times a week and involve both an adult and a child:
 - ★ Getting dressed
 - ★ Getting washed
 - ★ Shopping – at the supermarket or putting shopping away in cupboards/fridge
 - ★ Cleaning
 - ★ Bath-time
 - ★ Meal-time
- Choose at least one routine a day. For example, as you and the child are getting dressed, talk to the child about what you are doing.
 - ★ 'Putting socks on.'
 - ★ 'Brushing (Jack's) hair.'
 - ★ 'Pull pants up.'
 - ★ 'Over your head.'
- Make the activity as fun as possible:
 - ★ Pretend to put the child's sock on your foot or teddy's foot.
 - ★ When helping put on the child's t-shirt/jumper, play peek-a-boo or pretend you can't find him/her.
- Ask for help during everyday routines by asking simple questions (e.g. while getting dressed, say 'Find your socks' or 'Where's your nappy?'). Try not to point or look at the things you are asking for as this gives an extra non-verbal clue.



Step up

- Ask for items *out* of the usual routine (e.g. ask the child to ‘Find your socks’ just before dinner time).
- As the child becomes familiar with the vocabulary/words of routines, introduce longer sentences:
 - ★ ‘Putting jumper on (pause) keeps George warm.’
 - ★ ‘Wash Kelly’s face (pause) make it clean.’
 - ★ ‘Eat your sandwich (pause) cheese today.’

Step down

- Use single words and simply name the item of clothing/object as it is being used, e.g.
 - ★ Pick up brush and say ‘brush’. When brushing hair say ‘hair’. When finished say ‘finished’ or ‘all done’.
- Children love to join in. Give the child a duster and talk about what you are cleaning together.
- If the child finds it difficult when you ask for items during a specific routine, for example, during bath-time, give a clue (e.g. as you say ‘find the flannel’, point or look at it).
- Ensure you stick to the same order and use the same words. In this way, actions support the vocabulary. This is called a joint action routine.

