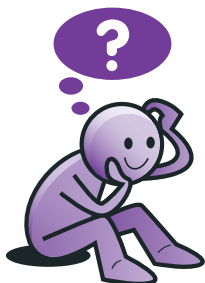


## Section 5.6

# To encourage the use of three-word sentences

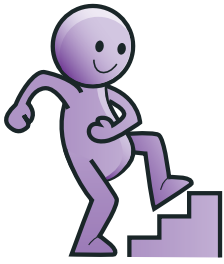


### Why is this important?

As language develops, children need to be able to use more words to make longer sentences, using an increasingly varied vocabulary. This helps them combine vocabulary and grammar to express a wide range of meanings.

### What to do

- Choose from one of the following:
  - ★ Teddy/doll or child's favourite toy and everyday objects (e.g. brush, cup, flannel).
  - ★ A book with lots of pictures of everyday scenes (e.g. children at the park, stories about going to the doctor/hairdressers).
  - ★ Pretend food and objects for a tea party.
- Start by describing what the child is doing (e.g. 'brushing doll's hair').
- Encourage the child to use three-word phrases by asking 'What are you doing?'
- If the child responds with a two-word phrase, 'add' another word to the sentence, e.g.
  - ★ Child is washing teddy's feet with a flannel.
  - ★ Adult: 'What are you doing?'
  - ★ Child: 'Wash feet.'
  - ★ Adult: 'Well done' and then adds '(You're) washing *teddy's* feet. Shall we wash something else?'
- If the child doesn't respond, offer a choice, e.g.
  - ★ Child and adult are looking at a book showing children playing in the park.
  - ★ Adult points at child on swing and says 'Look at that; what's she doing?'
  - ★ Child looks but doesn't say anything.
  - ★ Adult: 'Is the girl jumping on the bed or playing on the swing?'
  - ★ Child: 'Playing swing.'
  - ★ Adult praises 'Good' and repeats or adds a word 'Girl playing swing'.
- Everyday routines often provide the best opportunities for learning.



## Step up

- Make it a game to take it in turns to point to characters in a book and say/describe/talk about what they are doing, e.g.
  - ★ Looking at a picture of a funfair.
  - ★ Adult: 'Look, a boy riding the horse; what can you see?'
  - ★ Child: 'Boy riding horse.'
  - ★ Adult praises and continues activity.
- Continue this game during everyday routines but also when out and about too, or engaged in less familiar activities (e.g. what are people doing at the dentist, in the café, on a building site).

## Step down

- Use signs/gestures to support understanding.
- Reduce the pressure by describing what is happening rather than asking a question.
- Sometimes just watch the child playing, commenting and providing vocabulary for new words (e.g. the child points at a picture of a penguin in a book and the adult says 'penguin').
- Use everyday routines to encourage language (e.g. 'Mummy's washing Jake's face; what shall we wash next?').

