

My Child has Trouble Understanding: Things You Can Work on at Home

Turn off background noise (TV/radio/fans):

- Create a quiet environment so you do not have to compete with other noise when you speak to your child.

Change how you speak to your child:

- Say less.
- Be specific.
- Repeat often.
- Say important words a little louder and a little slower.
- Use actions and gestures to add meaning to your words.

Teach your child good listening rules:

- Look at the person who is talking.
- Don't interrupt.
- Sit/stand quietly.
- Keep your hands to yourself.
- Enforce these rules at home and remember to use them yourself.

If your child "echoes" or repeats what you say, it means he has not understood. You may need to help him out. (e.g., Adult: "Do you want puzzle or book?" Child: "Do you want puzzle or book?" Adult: "Do you want puzzle or book? I want book." Child: "I want book."). Give the book immediately

Use the same words in different ways to give your child lots of exposure to a word (e.g., "Apple is red." "Apple is green." "Cut apple." "Apple in tree." "Apple all gone.") Do this during playtime or everyday activities.

Encourage appropriate behaviour. Children who do not understand often get confused. They may not always behave in the way we want.

- Be specific (e.g., "Walk to the door." "Put on your shoes." "Blow your nose." "Come here now.")
- Be consistent and predictable. A structured, daily routine makes it easier for your child to do as he is asked.
- Encourage your child to use words (e.g., "no", "mine", "more", "go") instead of hitting or grabbing. Use these words yourself so he learns what to say.

Reference: "Receptive Language Delay/Disorders" – Deirdre Beckerman, M.A., SLP. Handouts/rec-dlys.doc. Adapted from "Receptive Language Disorders" Parent Handout – Pat Wevrick, C.H.E.O.