

Children's Speech and Language Therapy Service

Supporting Children with Word Finding Difficulties

Some children struggle to find the right word to say. This can impact on their spoken language and how they communicate. When the child is struggling to recall a word and you know what they are trying to say, you can help by -

- Cueing with the first sound e.g. '**d**' for '**dog**'
- Cueing with the first syllable (beats in the word) of a longer word e.g. '**el**' is the first syllable of **elephant**' i.e. 'el-e-phant'.
- Cueing with a phrase you would like them to finish e.g. you cut with a sharp(knife).
- Giving a choice e.g. is it 'knife' or 'fork'?

If you don't know the word the child is trying to say you can help by -

- Allowing extra time to think. For some children this could be up to 10 seconds of thinking time.
- Asking the child to tell you about the word.
 - what kind of thing is it?
 - what's it for?
 - where would I see it?
 - what does it look like?
- Asking the child to show you (e.g. find it in a book).
- Encourage the child to use a gesture/drawing.
- If you are really struggling to help your child give them praise for trying to remember the word and you can come back to it later.
- For older children, encourage them to say when they can't remember the word (rather than just starting a new sentence when they have got stuck). You may need to model this for them e.g. reminding them to say "I can't remember that word".