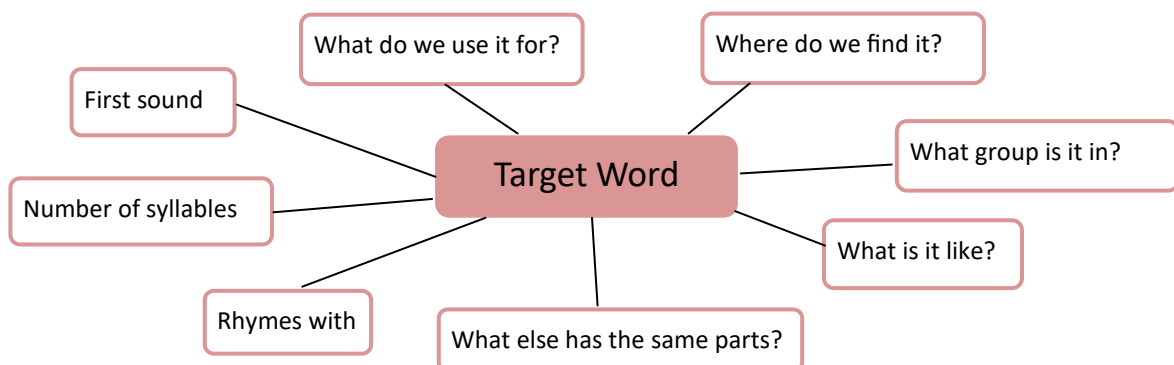**Children's Speech and Language Therapy Service**

Supporting a Child's Vocabulary Development

Vocabulary (words) may be regarded as the building blocks of all language. Children sometimes struggle with words for a range of reasons therefore it can be helpful to teach new words to them.

Strategies to support vocabulary development -

- **Multi-sensory -** Children learn words in practical ways including seeing, doing and feeling what is being talked about. For example, if you were teaching a child the word 'flower' you could show the child a real flower, ask them to smell it, ask them to touch it and talk about how it feels. You could even ask the child to draw the flower or plant it. You could look for a flower when out and about e.g. in the park, in someone's garden etc.

- **Grouping (categorisation) -** This helps a child to understand how words are linked together in different ways and helps us to remember the new words. For example, car/lorry/truck/bus are all types of transport and shorts/t-shirt/jumper/socks are all types of clothing. Words can be grouped in many different ways such as what it does, size, colour, where it's found etc. For example, an apple could be grouped as 'red' (colour), 'something you eat' (what it does) and 'food' (type of object).

- **Using word webs -** could be used to support a child with grouping. This is something your child's school may already be using to support your child. Here is an example.

Things to Remember -

- Always check that a child understands the words you are using before expecting them to say it.

- Repeat and revisit new words frequently to check they have remembered the words they have learnt.

- Provide opportunities for the child to hear the new words often during their daily routine.

- Use real objects, books and pictures.

- Encourage the child to draw new words.

- Allow opportunities for the child to say new words themselves. This could be saying the word on its own and then starting to use it in a sentence.

- Word games are available for all levels of vocabulary development e.g. I-spy, what am I?, charades etc.