

## RECEPTIVE LANGUAGE

Receptive language is the ability to comprehend vocabulary, directions, concepts and questions. Understanding language also involves attention, memory and sustained concentration. We understand more words in our vocabulary than we use. We may know the meaning of words but not use them in our everyday speech.

Children who have receptive language difficulties may:

- Be inattentive and display poor concentration.
- Follow what others are doing and appear “lost”.
- Have difficulty understanding and using information presented verbally without visuals.
- Only attend to part of the direction.
- Be impulsive and act before a direction is completed.
- Have difficulty answering questions: who, what, when, where, why, how.
- Not follow the content of a conversation accurately, and as a result, talk off- topic.
- Have difficulty discriminating between words and interpreting everyday speech.
- Have poor reading comprehension.
- Be slower to learn new concepts.

We can assist children with receptive language problems by:

- Shortening our directions so we tell one step at a time.
- Using direct language, such as “put your toys away”, rather than hinting, “I think it’s a little messy in here”.
- Using gestures to help the child remember the important parts of the direction and to show them what you want them to do.
- Emphasizing the important words in the direction.
- Asking lots of questions about everyday events that incorporate reasoning, such as, “Why do we have to wash our hands?”
- Ensuring that you have their full auditory and visual attention (e.g., they are listening to you and looking at you). You may need to call their name first or touch their shoulder. Attention is important for active listening.
- Using visuals (pictures of what the child has to do around the home and classroom).
- Using real objects to teach concepts, such as hands-on activities that are interactive. This helps with kinesthetic learners also.
- Praising for “good listening” or “careful watching”.