



The Communication Trust
Every child understood

Session 2.2: Vocabulary and Expressive Language



Norwich
Opportunity Area

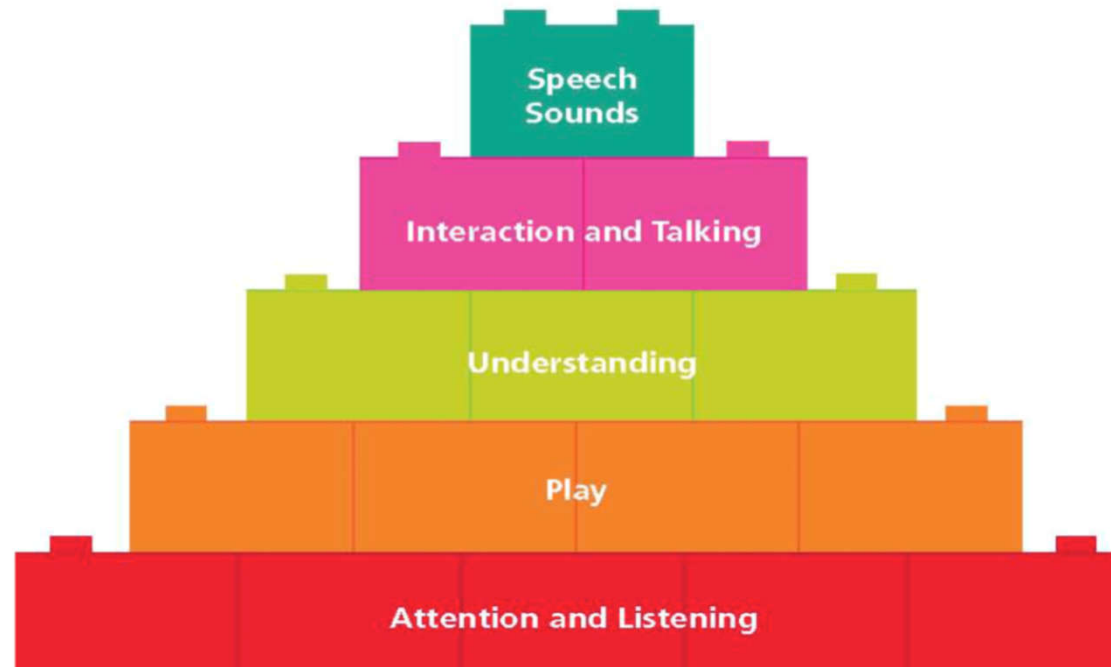
communicate

Independent Speech &
Language Therapy

Session aims

- Understand what is meant by ‘vocabulary’ and why it’s an important element of children’s speech, language and communication development
- Be aware of typical vocabulary development
- Learn some strategies and ideas to support children’s vocabulary development
- Be aware of the typical way in which children’s expressive language and use of sentence structures develops
- Learn some strategies and ideas to support the development of children’s expressive language and sentence structures

Review: What do speech, language and communication mean?



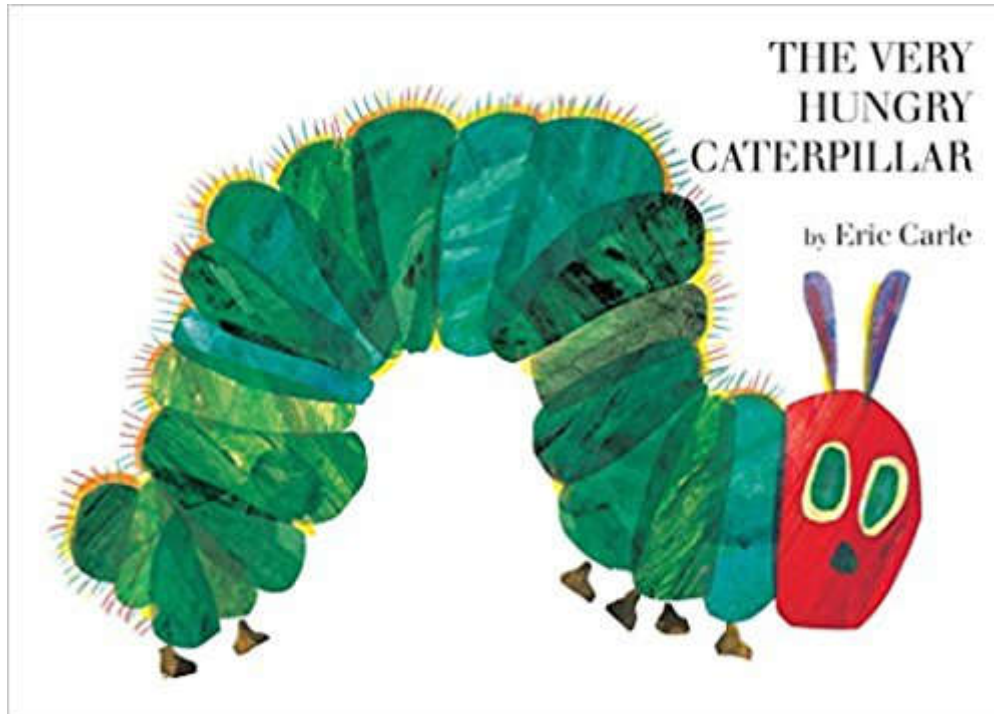
Adapted from a model used in many speech and language therapy services across the UK

Vocabulary

What does it mean?

- It's about children learning new words – understanding their meaning and being able to use them
- The important aspect of vocabulary is that children develop knowledge about a word's meaning
- Children's vocabulary develops through interactions with others, but can also be explicitly taught
- Some vocabulary is more difficult than others – for example high frequency words vs. low frequency words

Activity – The Very Hungry Caterpillar



- Which vocabulary items might you expect a child to understand/know?
- Are there any words that might be less familiar to a child and need explicit teaching?
- How might you go about teaching the new words?
- How would you know if a child didn't understand a word?
- School aged children: Which words would be the most useful for children to understand for school?

Vocabulary

Why is it important?

- Children with a stronger vocabulary are better able to grasp new skills and subjects
- Research suggests that children from more disadvantaged backgrounds hear far less vocabulary than their more advantaged peers (30 million word gap)
- Children with larger vocabularies are more likely to achieve better in maths and reading

Vocabulary development

Age	What to expect
12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- May be saying single words- Babbling strings of sounds – ‘ma-ma-ma’, ‘ba-ba-ba’
18 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- 20 words – vocabulary consists of things the child hears a lot at home – ‘bye-bye’ ‘more’ ‘water’ ‘no’ ‘doggy’
2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Over 50 words – mostly nouns and everyday words
3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Over 300 words – lots of different types of words at this age – adjectives (‘big’, ‘soft’), position words (‘under’, ‘on’), verbs (‘playing’, ‘eating’), quantity words (‘lots’)
4 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Saying lots of words and sentences!- More question words at this age – ‘what’ ‘where’ ‘why’ ‘how’
5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Learning more words all the time- Able to describe the meaning of simple words and ask what new words mean

How do you support vocabulary development ?

What are some of the ways that we already support children's spoken vocabulary development in our setting?

Think about:

- Targeted groups?
- Everyday strategies?
- Vocabulary activities?

Ways to support spoken vocabulary development

Teach children new words:

- Use all the senses – real objects if you can, or pictures if not
- Talk together about its shape, colour, texture, smell...
- Talk together about what it does, what it's similar to, what it means
- Talk together about how this links to what they already know – give examples and the context
- Talk about the structure of the word – how many syllables it has, what sound it starts with
- Help them to use it in a sentence
- Reinforce the new word regularly, in different contexts where possible

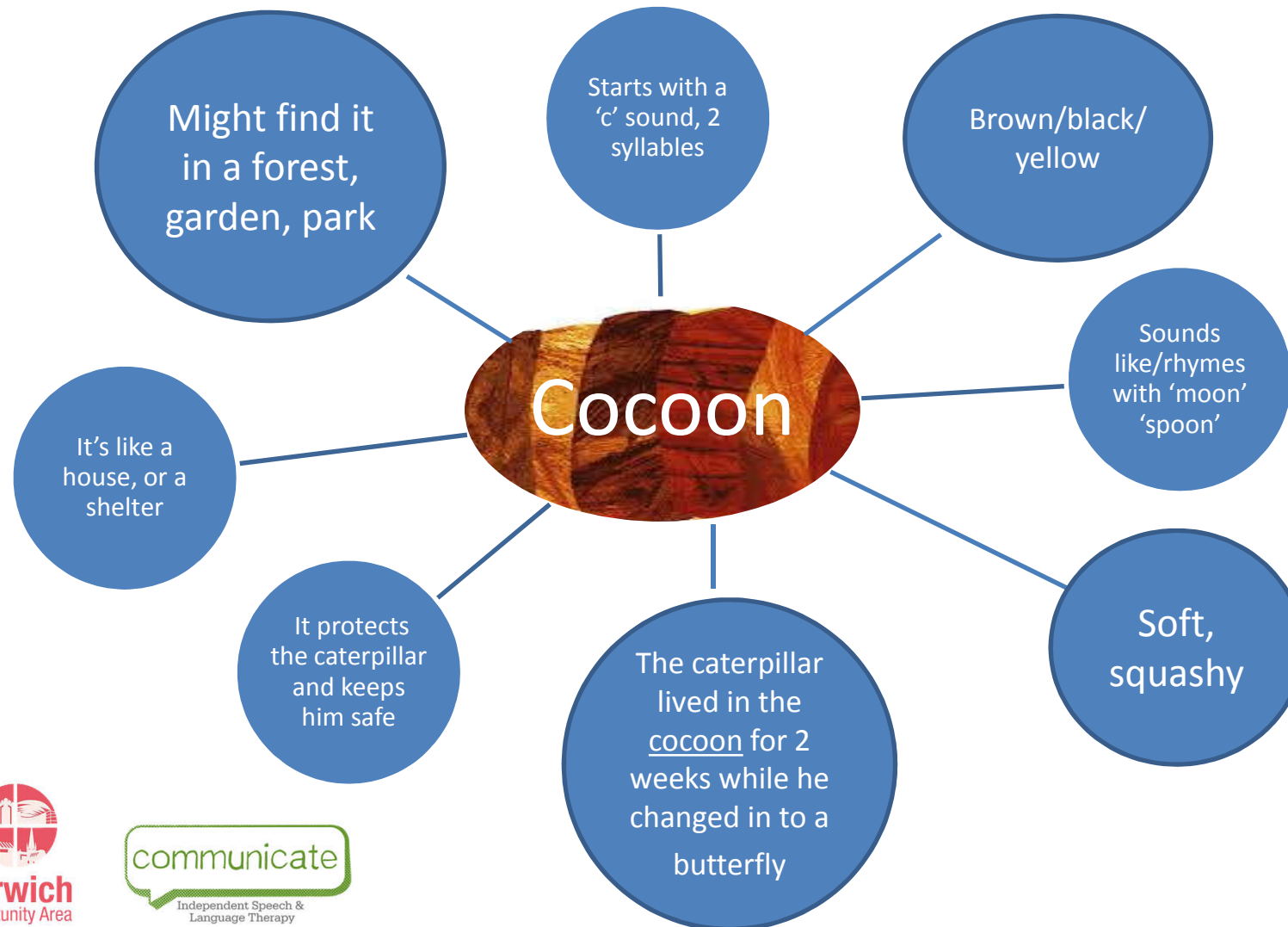
How do children learn new words?

- You're going to learn two words which are probably new to you
- At the end, which one do you feel you know best?
- What helped you develop your understanding of this word?

How do children learn new words?



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Expressive language/Talking/Use of language

What does it mean?

- Expressive language is the way in which we use our language to express ourselves – it's not always verbal
- It's very complex – expressive language includes:
 - Knowing and choosing the right words to explain what you mean (vocabulary)
 - Joining words together (in the correct order) into sentences, stories and conversations
 - Using word endings (e.g. '-ed' for the past) - grammar
 - Using different types of sentences (e.g. questions)
- Talking/expressive language/use of language are all terms that are used interchangeably

Expressive language/Talking/Use of language

It's complicated!

- English is full of exceptions and irregular words. For example, “one child”, “two children”; or “*I went to the park*” rather than “*I goed.*”
- As children get older, sentences are longer, with more complex grammar and ideas, and these ideas are linked together in stories or narratives.
- Much of what we share is like a story, for example what we did at the weekend, what’s happening in an activity, what happened when someone bumped their toe outside. These conversations can be described as stories, as they often have a sequence of events with people (characters) and a point or a purpose.

Expressive language/Talking/Use of language

Children make clever mistakes!

- Children will use the patterns that they hear in the language being used around them (e.g. 'sheeps', 'goed' 'uncapture')
- These sorts of mistakes are a sign of progress! The child is showing they are beginning to understand the rules of language
- As an adult, it's good to listen out for these mistakes and:
 - Model the correct way to say something (sheep, went, let me go!)
 - Use the mistakes to help to understand what a child is currently figuring out, and create opportunities to support that aspect of their language development

Expressive language/Talking/Use of language

Why it's important to model, NOT correct!

ATTEMPTS TO CORRECT MISTAKES

Here are two examples of parents' attempts to correct their children's language:

Example 1

Child: Want other one spoon,
Daddy.
Father: You mean you want the
other spoon.
Child: Yes. I want other one
spoon, please, Daddy.
Father: Can you say 'the other
spoon' ?
Child: Other ... one ... spoon.
Father: Say other.
Child: Other.
Father: Spoon.
Child: Spoon.

Father: Other ... spoon.
Child: Other ... spoon. Now give
me other one spoon.

Example 2

Child: Nobody don't like me.
Mother: No. Say 'nobody likes me'.
Child: Nobody don't like me.

*This exchange is repeated eight
times and then:*

Mother: No. Now listen carefully;
say 'nobody likes me'.
Child: Oh! Nobody don't likes me.

Expressive language/Talking/Use of language

Talking Tips

If a child says something that doesn't sound quite right, don't waste time trying to correct them. Simply repeat what they said using the correct words, then carry on with the conversation.

Repeating with the correct words gives the child an example of how to say what they wanted to say correctly. Continuing to talk encourages the child to keep on talking and listening to your responses.

Example:

Child: Don't giggle me!
Adult: Don't make you giggle?
Okay. I'll stop tickling you, if it makes you giggle. Can you tickle me? I bet you can't make me giggle.

If a child is leaving out words that an adult would put in, don't try to teach them where they are going wrong. Instead, repeat with the missing words inserted, then carry on talking.

Filling in the gaps helps

the child learn the relevant pattern, while carrying on talking about what interests the child gives more examples of the pattern in sentences that are easy to understand.

Example:

Child: Teddy drinking.
Adult: Teddy's drinking, is he? Is he having a cup of tea? What else is he having?
Child: Biscuit.
Adult: He's having a biscuit as well. What sort of biscuit?

What words make up a sentence?

- Nouns – object words
- Verbs – doing words
- Adjectives – describing words
- Prepositions – location words
- Pronouns – a word that can be substituted by a noun
- Determiners - go before a noun and gives the noun more detail
- Conjunctions – joining words
- Adverbs – modify the meaning of a verb/adjective
- Negatives - e.g. no, not, none, never, nobody, neither

Development of expressive language

Age	What to expect
12 months	- Babbling strings of sounds
18 months	- Using single words – mostly nouns at this stage and frequently heard words
2 years	- Starting to put short sentences together, using some different types of words e.g. ‘more’ ‘big’ - Using simple question structures - ‘what that?’, ‘who that?’
3 years	- Using lots more types of words in their expressive language – adjectives, position words, verbs, pronouns - Sentences are 4-5 words long, though often grammatically incorrect ‘him want his coat’
4 years	- Sentences are longer and some conjunctions are used to link sentences together e.g. ‘I had pizza for tea and then I played in the garden’ - Use of past tense to describe events that have happened ‘we all singed songs and the mummies and daddies did watch’
5 years	- By this age sentences tend to be quite well formed, though some irregular word patterns may not yet be fully learnt and some errors still made - Able to structure their language to enable them to re-tell stories, or organise their language to be able to tell a story about something that has happened to them

How do you support the development of children's sentence structures?

What are some of the ways that we already support children's sentence structures (in oral/spoken language) in our setting?

Think about:

- Targeted groups?
- Everyday strategies?
- Specific activities?

Strategies to support the development of expressive language

- **Modelling** – model language and talk about what you’re doing throughout the day
- **Repetition** – this helps children to learn new words and reassures children that what they’ve said has been listened to and understood. It also allows children to hear the correct way to say something if it’s repeated back to them correctly
- **Expand** – Add to what the child says to help extend vocabulary and sentence structures
- **Use open questions** – try questions that need more than a yes/no answer to encourage children to develop their use of language

A Note on Developmental Language Disorder (DLD)



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tQ-s02HWLb0&vl=en-GB>

Reflections and actions

- How do you already support children to develop their vocabulary, and their expressive language?
- Is there anything you could do more of?
- What strategies could you try from today?
 - E.g. Vocabulary map
 - Strategies to support expressive language in play