



**TOTAL TIME – 1.5 HOURS**

Resources required:

- Wellcomm Big Book of Ideas – 1 copy to refer to during session and show participants
- Several copies of the book “The Very Hungry Caterpillar”.
- An exotic fruit/food/object to use for teaching vocabulary activity (you will teach two new words, but you only need to bring in the fruit/food/object for one of them). See suggestions of objects to use in notes underneath slide for this activity.
- Videos – YouTube links are given on relevant slides.

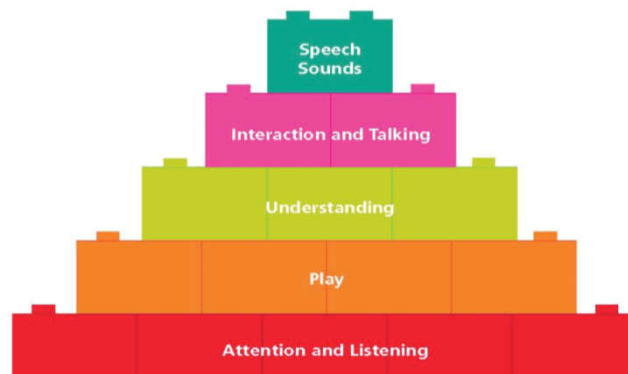
# Session aims

- 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

**1 min (0:01)**

*By the end of this session you will...*

## Review: What do speech, language and communication mean?



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

**1 min (0:02)**

*Another quick review. Last session we spoke about attention and listening, and understanding. Today we're looking at expressive language, which roughly fits into the pink block. We're also going to be talking about vocabulary, which actually crosses over both understanding and talking – because typically, children need to understand new words before they can use them.*

# 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



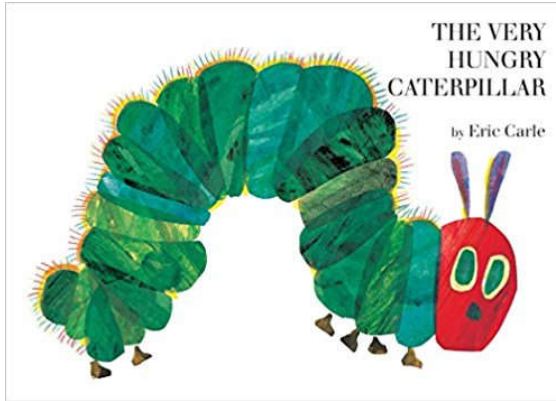
### 2 mins (0:04)

*When we talk about vocabulary it's not just about expressive vocabulary – children need to have an understanding of what a word means in order to use it effectively. So vocabulary actually crosses both receptive and expressive language.*

*There are words that children will learn easily – everyday words that are part of their everyday experiences.*

*Other words, which are less frequently used, or which might have different meanings in different contexts, may need explicit teaching.*

## 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?

### 15 mins (0:19)

- 10 mins to discuss in small groups
- 5 mins to share ideas with the wider group

Get in to groups so that everyone can see a copy of the Very Hungry Caterpillar book. In their groups, ask participants to think about the questions on the slide – it might help for everyone to get in to groups based on age of children that they work with, and focus each group on a particular age e.g. 2 year old, 3 year old, 5 year old.

# 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

### 2 mins (0:21)

*There is research and evidence to show that a child's vocabulary has a big impact on their learning.*

Hart and Risley 1995 30 million word gap study - by 4 years old, children from the most disadvantaged backgrounds had heard 30 million less words directed to them than those from the least disadvantaged group.

→ Note – there were some flaws in this study, and the focus now is less on the number of words a child hears and more on the quality of the interaction.

## Vocabulary development



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



### 3 mins (0:24)

These stages are taken from TCTs Universally Speaking.

Ask for any thoughts from participants on this – is this what they’d expect? Do the 2 year olds they know use over 50 words? Vocab size is a good indicator of language delay at this age.

## 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?



**5 mins (0:29)**

Do this activity as a whole group, asking participants to share their practice around children's spoken vocabulary development (note the emphasis here is on spoken vocabulary, not written).



## 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

**5 mins (0:34)**

*Which of these are you using already? Are there any that you could introduce into your daily practice following today's session?*

## 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?

### 10 mins (0:44)

This activity is a simple way to reinforce the ways children and young people develop their speech, language and communication.

Choose two different exotic fruits/foods/objects/words, which will (hopefully!) be unfamiliar to learners. Tell learners that you are going to help them learn two new words .

For one of them, simply tell them the name of the fruit/food/object/word you have in mind – don't have a real example – just tell them the name (but not what it is yet).

For the second, bring in a real fruit/food/object and then use the following approaches:

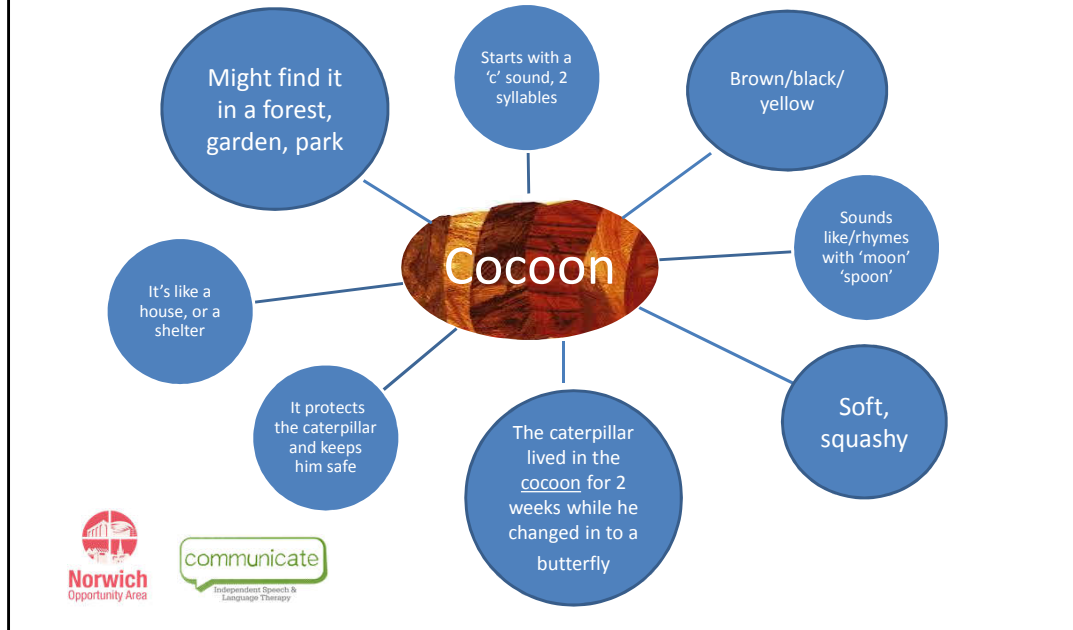
1. Ask them to look at it, smell it, taste it, touch it
2. Ask them to describe its shape, colour, texture, size
3. Talk about any similarities it may have to other fruits/objects in terms of look or taste for example
4. Ask if anyone has seen this fruit/object before; talk about who likes it etc
5. Use the name of the fruit/object lots of times and get learners to try to say it
6. Where learners share their ideas, comment and reinforce their contributions

At the end of this activity, ask learners to consider which word they are most likely to remember and why.

#### Ideas of vocabulary to teach if you can't think of any!

- "tines" – little prongs of a fork
- "aglet" – the tiny plastic part of a shoelace
- "zarf" – the cardboard sleeve/cupholder that protects your hands from the heat of your coffee
- "brannock device" – the instrument they use to measure your feet in shoe stores
- "petrichor" – the smell after it rains

## How do children learn new words?



### 3 mins (0:47)

This is just an example 'word map' from the Hungry Caterpillar – talk through the word map, reading out each of the elements.

*You could choose any vocabulary you like for a word map, and add other information as you wish – it's good to include things like sounds, syllables, rhyming, relating it to something that children know, what it's used for, what does it feel like, what does it look like, how to use the word in a sentence, etc.*

*Build the word map together with the children you work with – use their ideas and thoughts to populate your vocabulary map (building the map together is the activity).*

*Using a spider diagram such as this is a good way to help children learn new words.*

*Using real objects is really helpful. Where new words are not objects, helping children and young people to experience the word is helpful – such as through experiments or examples.*

*Talking together about the new word is really important, as is helping children and young people to link it to what they already know.*

*Finally, help children to say and practise the new words in context.*

## 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



### 3 mins (0:50)

*Now we're going to talk specifically about expressive language.*

*Remember that children may not always express themselves verbally – some children may use signing, pictures, or devices such as an iPad app to allow them to express themselves.*

Also good to make the point about the complexity of syntax and grammar – how do children know that it's a 'blue car' and not a 'car blue' (Which is the order that some languages use – be aware of this for bilingual children). How do children learn that we say feet and teeth, and not fooks and tooths?

## 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.



**2 mins (0:52)**

*Spoken language is very complex, both in terms of the rules and irregularities, but also in terms of being able to organise language in order to plan and express a series of events into a ‘story’.*

## 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



### 2 mins (0:54)

In the first bullet point, the mistakes show that the child is understanding the patterns of plural 's', past tense 'ed', and using 'un' to reverse the meaning of something.

For the final bullet point, discuss how, for example if a child is using 'sheeps', you could really make sure that you set up lots of play with lots of dogs and sheep, and create lots of opportunities to model the difference between 'dogs' and 'sheep'.

Children obviously grow out of making these sorts of mistakes, but only when they understand which words they can use the regular patterns with, and with are the irregular 'exceptions to the rules'.

This is from an article by Lucid that was published in Nursery World  
[http://www.lucid.ac.uk/media/1530/article-6\\_pine-161115.pdf](http://www.lucid.ac.uk/media/1530/article-6_pine-161115.pdf)

NB when modelling to children, it's important to do this in a way that supports their expressive language skills. i.e. don't respond to their errors by saying 'that's wrong/not right'. Instead model and build e.g. if the child says 'I goes to my grannies last night', the adult could respond 'you went to your grannies? That must have been fun!'. More about this on the next two slides!

## 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.

#### 5 mins (0:59)

Read through both the examples on the slide.

- *In the first case, although the child is happy to humour her father and repeat his correction ('Other... spoon'), she doesn't seem to have any intention of using this combination in her own speech, and follows it up immediately with the request: 'Now give me other one spoon'.*
- *In the second case, although ten repetitions of 'Nobody likes me' do eventually have some effect on the child, they don't seem to have the desired effect, and simply result in a different kind of mistake: 'Nobody don't likes me'. These examples suggest that young children can't really make use of this kind of adult correction".*

*Also – think about the impact on the child's mental health and emotional wellbeing of repeating this exchange so many times, with the child repeating the same negative message to themselves. What is more important here – to address how the child is feeling about themselves, or how they said it?*

This is from an article by Lucid that was published in Nursery World  
[http://www.lucid.ac.uk/media/1530/article-6\\_pine-161115.pdf](http://www.lucid.ac.uk/media/1530/article-6_pine-161115.pdf)

# 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.

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?

**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



3 mins (1:02)

Read through this slide

This is from an article by Lucid that was published in Nursery World  
[http://www.lucid.ac.uk/media/1530/article-6\\_pine-161115.pdf](http://www.lucid.ac.uk/media/1530/article-6_pine-161115.pdf)



# 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

## 5 mins (1:07)

Talk through these different types of words and ask participants to think of some examples of each of these types of word (some examples are given below):

- Nouns – object words – e.g. car, apple, dog, man
- Verbs – doing words – e.g. run, eat, do, go
- Adjectives – describing words – e.g. blue, big, soft, old, smooth
- Prepositions – location words – e.g. on, under, in, next to
- Pronouns – a word that can be substituted by a noun – e.g. she, he, their, her, his, we, you, I, they
- Determiners - go before a noun and gives the noun more detail – e.g. the, a
- Conjunctions – joining words – e.g. and, but, because, if, so, therefore
- Adverbs – modify the meaning of a verb/adjective – e.g. quickly, loudly, noisily, roughly
- Negatives - e.g. no, not, none, never, nobody, neither

*This is a basic list, but it's good to be aware of these in terms of children's language development – some children might need support specifically with one or more areas or types of words to support the development of their sentence structures.*

*It's important to remember that understanding precedes use, so children typically won't be using these words in their expressive language until they understand the meaning. But they might need help with putting the words in the correct order/using the correct structures, even once they start to use them.*

## 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 <b>and</b> 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



### 3 mins (1:10)

These stages are taken from TCTs Universally Speaking.

Ask for any thoughts from participants on this – is this what they'd expect?

## 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?



### **5 mins (1:15)**

Do this activity as a whole group, asking participants to share their practice around how they support children to develop the correct sentence structures in their expressive language. NB – important to emphasise that we are talking about spoken language (not written).

Refer back to some of the specific types of words that we looked at in the previous slide e.g. targeted groups to support children with prepositions (location words).

## 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



### 5 mins (1:20)

These are based on some of the strategies from the WellComm Big Book of Ideas – more information is in the book.

*Which of these are you using already? Are there any that you could introduce into your daily practice following today’s session?*

## A Note on Developmental Language Disorder (DLD)



### 8 mins (1:28)

- Just under 5 mins for video
- 3 mins for brief discussion

Explain that there is a condition called Developmental Language Disorder (previously known as SLI), which professionals are trying to raise awareness of as it affects a lot of children. This is something to be aware of as you look at the development of children's understanding and expressive language development. It can have a huge impact on children's learning and wellbeing, so it's important to be aware of it as a professional working with children.

Show the RADLD DLD 123 film - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tQ-s02HWLb0&vl=en-GB> (4 mins 37)

Discuss afterwards with the group – has anyone heard of DLD?

***NB although these children will benefit from the expressive language strategies we have already discussed, they are likely to need more specific and longer term support in order to make progress. One way of spotting them is that they don't seem to be responding to the targeted strategies we have discussed today and in the last session.***

## 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

**2 mins (1:30)** – or any additional remaining time

*Any more reflections/actions from this part of the session today?*