

Understanding

Understanding is also sometimes called 'receptive language' or 'comprehension'. Understanding is a key area of communication. It is important for learning and socialising. Children need to be able to tune in and process words before they start to use them. As children develop the amount of information they can understand usually grows.

Some children might need some extra help with this area of communication. If a child finds understanding tricky they might be able to follow routine instructions like "find your shoes", but not new instructions like "where's the dolly's hat?" It might seem like they are choosing what to follow.

Here are our **five top tips** to help a child to understand words and sentences:

1. Keep things simple. Use 1 or 2 words at a time

When children are learning to communicate they find it easiest when we keep what we say simple. Try to talk to them using only 1-2 words at a time. This gives them the chance to focus only on the important words and makes it easier to understand. It helps them to learn what words mean. It also shows them the types of words they could use next time.

2. Use objects to back up what you are saying

Using some visuals, like an object, can help a child to understand more. It might be tricky to understand the words said, but a child might know what an object represents. For example: showing a child a toothbrush helps them to understand it's time to brush your teeth. Remember to say the words at the same time as showing a child the object. Over time this will help them to understand what the words mean as well.

3. Leave processing time. Count to 10

Children often need lots of thinking, or processing, time. When you say something or give an instruction try counting up to 10 before saying or doing anything else. This will give the child the chance to process what they have heard and decide how to respond.

4. Try to use the same words for the same things

We have lots of words that can mean almost the same thing. For example: television, TV, telly. This can get a bit confusing! Try to choose a word and stick with it. Being consistent helps children to hear the same words lots and start to understand it.

5. Try to keep a routine, it's stressful when you don't understand

Routines help give us a sense of predictability. When we are familiar with a routine we know what is likely to happen next. This can help us to feel more confident in a situation. Routines don't rely on understanding lots of words or sentences. Even if understanding words is tricky a routine can help a child understand what is likely to happen. This might help them to join in more.



You can check out our video talking about our five top tips to help understanding.
Scan the QR code.