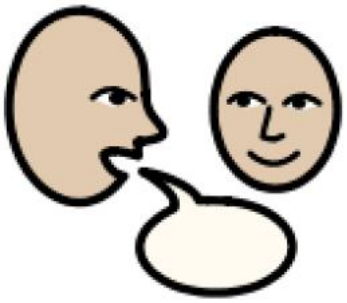
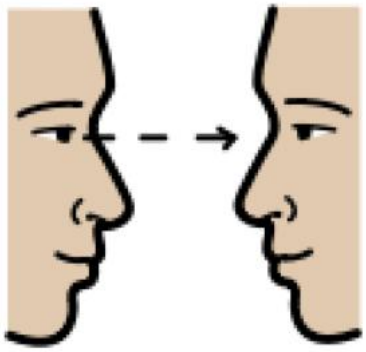
SLCN Guidance



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Attention



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Level of Attention	What this looks like	Strategies to help
Level 1: Fleeting	The child is easily distracted, they are highly distracted by other sounds and movements within the environment. They may appear to ignore the adult, they will flit from one activity to another.	√ Use highly motivated toys and the child's interests. √ Increase enjoyment of joint attention through anticipation games. You may want to use repetition of play and songs too. √ Use of sensory play activities. √ Use of object cues and objects of reference to support understanding. √ Keep your language simple, emphasising key words.
Level 2: Rigid	The child can concentrate on a task of their own choice but cannot tolerate interruption by an adult.	√ Gentle physical and verbal prompts such as calling the child's name and touching their hand to gain attention and look towards the adult. √ Use highly motivated activities/items.
Level 3: Single Channelled	The child cannot cope doing one thing and listening to an instruction about something else at the same time. They have to do one or the other.	√ Verbal prompts such as calling the child's name to gain attention and look towards the adult. √ Use a gesture/sign and show excitement in your tone of voice to gain and maintain the attention of a child. √ Use visual support to support understanding i.e. Now and Next boards, Class visual timetables. √ The child must be asked to stop their current activity, listen to the adult for instruction then continue to the activity or follow out the next instruction.
Level 4: Focusing	The child is gradually able to shift their attention from one activity to the other themselves without the help of an adult.	√ Tell the child it is time to listen. √ Give children explicit praise when they are showing active listening. ('You are looking at me, so I know you are listening').
Level 5: Two Channelled	The child can now do a task and understand an instruction at the same time.	√ Praise the child for Good listening. √ Use reward charts/systems.

Attention and Listening

Strategies to help support a child with develop Attention.

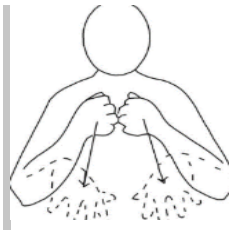
- √ If possible carry out specific activities in a distraction free environment - Make yourself the most exciting thing in the room.
- √ Make sure the child is looking at you when you are talking to them - Say the child's name, get down to their level, keep sentences short and to the point.
- √ Use items/toys that you know will motivate the child – toys that make noise, flashing lights, spinning or a child's special interest toy.
- √ Initially, any activities should be short and frequent, 1-2 minutes eventually building up to 2-3 minutes as the child's attention increases.
- √ Allow movement breaks within activities and keep these functional/meaningful where possible.
- √ Be consistent and reinforce Good listening.
- √ Use pictures and symbols to provide visual support of the expectations – for example, now and next boards, this will also help the child remember and understand what is expected of them. If this is too hard, speak to the SALT (Speech and Language Therapist).
- √ Teach active listening strategies – Good Sitting, Good Looking, Good Listening. Discuss what these look like and give explicit praise when a child is showing these i.e. 'Your legs are crossed and you have still hands'. Use a Good looking, Listening and Sitting chart to reinforce the behaviour. You may want more bespoke visuals i.e. hands to yourself. Talk to the SALT you're unsure

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 Good Looking	 Good looking
 Good sitting	 Good sitting
 Good listening	 Good listening

Strategies to support a child to stop an activity and attend to you.

- √ Make it clear when the task is finished – use a sand timer, explain when the timer is finished, they are finished. Use signs to support this.



- √ For children who have extreme difficulty in focusing, a separate work station may be necessary – TEACCH Workstation.

- √ Frequent breaks between tasks are beneficial where they can choose a task of their own liking, this can be a little as 5 minutes. Remember, you can use a timer/now and next board to indicate when the activity is finished. Use of a motivator.

- √ Some children may need time to process when a task is going to finish and benefit from a countdown of when a task is finishing. For example 5 minutes then X, 4 minutes then X…we have finished.

- √ Be mindful that for some children the word 'finish' is a trigger and they may need more concrete language i.e. now it's X next it's Y.

Now and next boards.

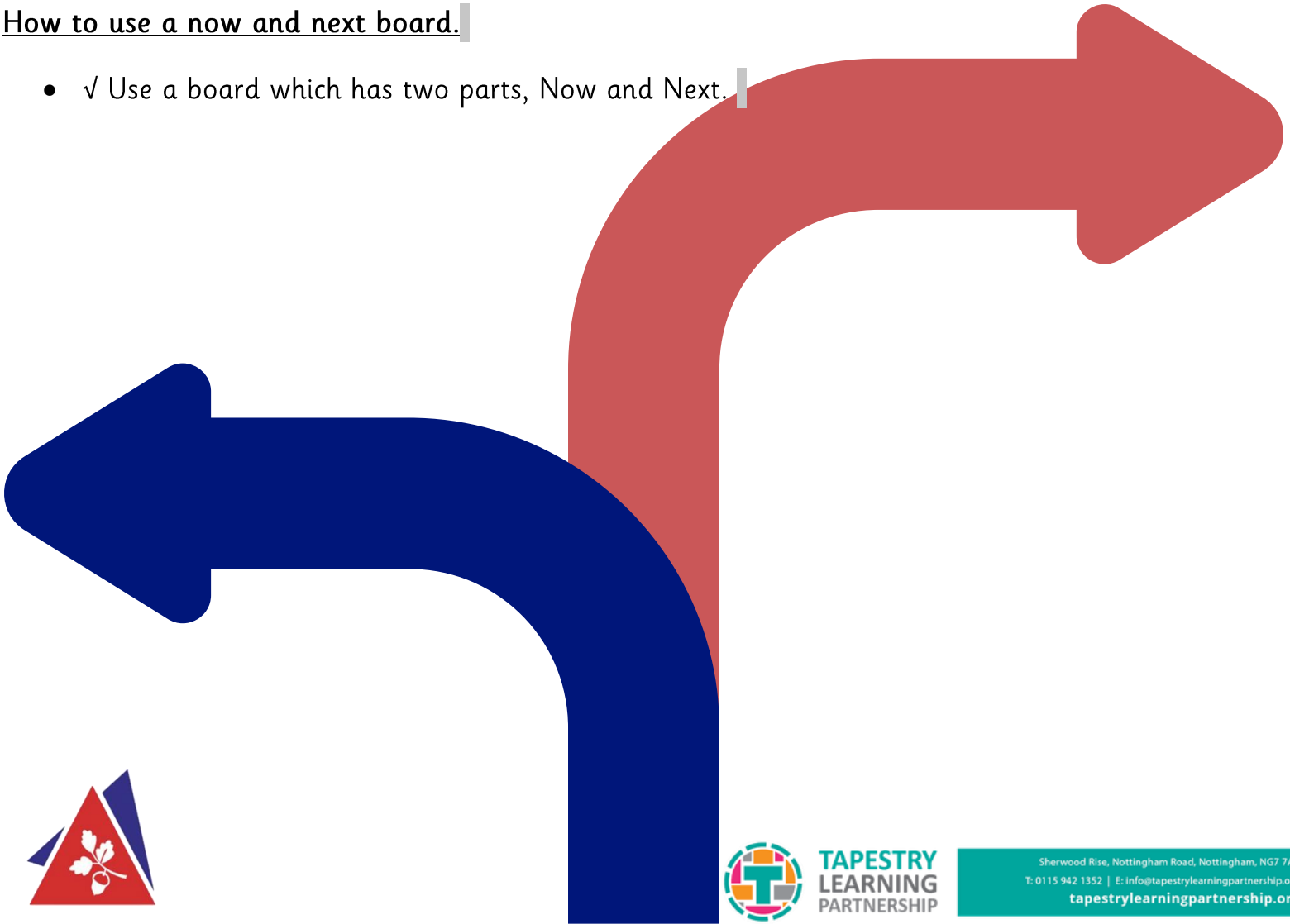
Now and next boards are for helping a child to understand what is expected of them at times of transition throughout the day and where the class timetable is too overwhelming.

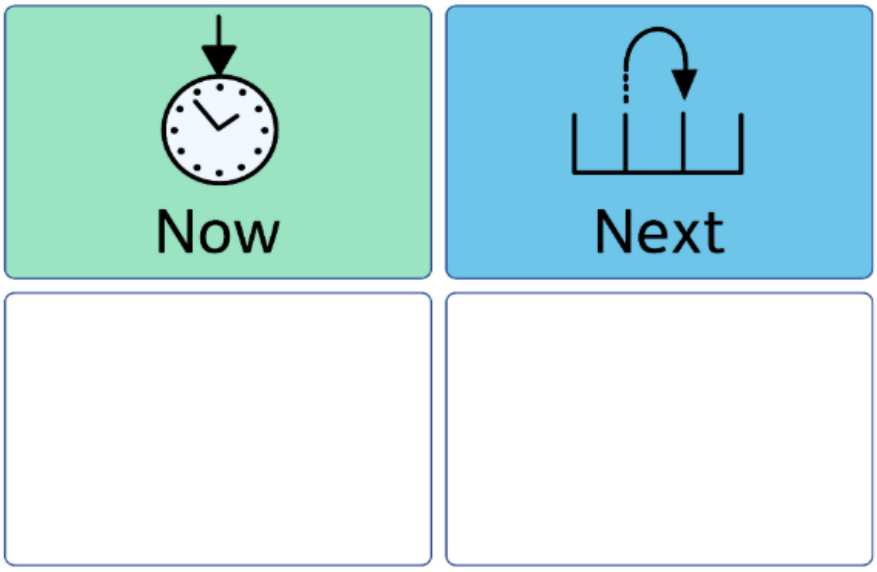
Children who benefit from a now and next board.

- A child who has difficulty finishing one activity and starting another.
- A child who is reluctant to participate in a particular activity.
- A child who has limited attention skills.
- A child with auditory processing difficulties.

How to use a now and next board.

- √ Use a board which has two parts, Now and Next.





√ Place a symbol on each side of the board. The now section is often something the adult has chosen i.e. tidy up/ English.

√ Show the child the board, point to each section individually. Support the child by saying 'English now, choosing time next'. Use signs if possible to support the spoken language. If the child attempts to move away, the adult should prompt the child bringing them back to the board and to encourage them to finish the activity.

√ When the child has finished the activity, reinforce this by pointing to the board and saying 'X has finished' and remove the visual. Ideally this should be placed in a finish wallet.

√ Ideally a child should move the symbols when appropriate, promoting independence. However, this is based on their presentation and they may need an adult to help them move the symbols.

Class visual timetables.

√ A class visual timetable is a visual routine for what will happen throughout the day and activities the children will be expected to participate in. Class visual timetables help support the understanding of what is happening throughout the day and processing of auditory information.

How to use a visual timetable.

- √ Place the timetable at the front of the classroom so that all children can clearly see it. Best practise is that the timetable is on backing paper so that it 'pops out'. Backing paper should preferably be black. It does not matter if the timetable is horizontal or vertical, whatever works best for your classroom.

- √ Use Communicate in print for individual symbols, timetable visuals are on Widgit.

- √ Show the children the timetable at the beginning of each day.

- √ When an activity/lesson is finished, remove the symbol and emphasize it has finished and say what the next activity is i.e. 'English finished (remove symbol), now it's Maths (pointing to Maths symbol)'. When an activity has finished it should be placed in a finished area – wallet, box. This should be clearly labelled with a finished symbol.

- √ Visual timetables are a therapeutic approach following the TEACCH system.

Strategies to Support success.

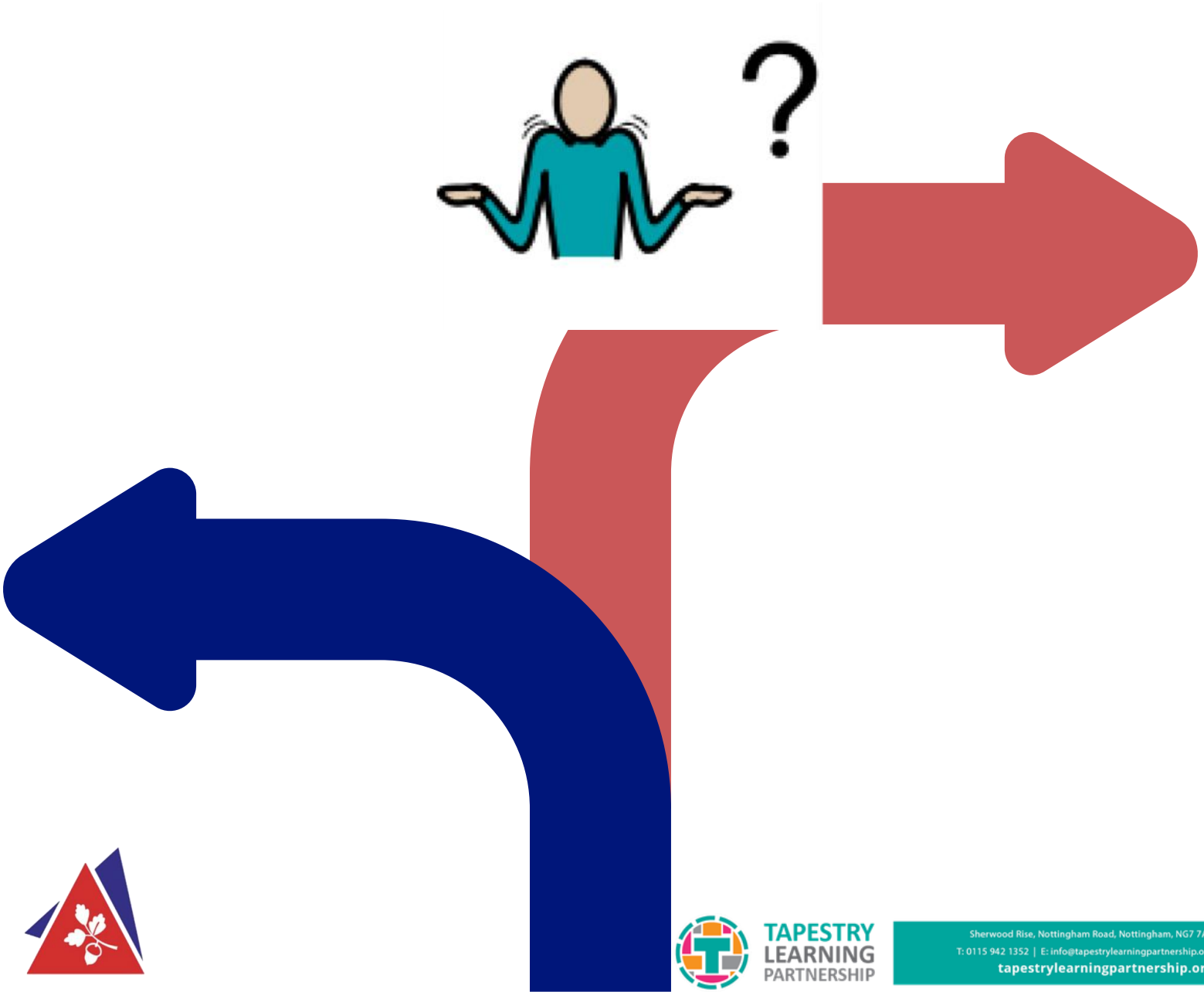
- √ Do not move away from your visual timetable and be tempted to change it throughout the day. Children with SEN will struggle to understand what is happening and could get confused and overwhelmed with the change.

- √ If planning a visit/visitor, talk to the children the day before and let parents know so children can have extra preparation for the next day. They may need a social story if a significant change is going to occur. Please talk to the school SALT regarding this if you are concerned.

- √ If something has been cancelled i.e. the swimming pool is broken and a child needs support understanding the change, place an 'X' symbol on this.

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Understanding and Expression



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What is understanding and why it is important?

√ Understanding is sometimes referred to as **receptive language** or **comprehension**. It is our ability to **listen** to what someone is saying, **recognise/understand** the words and **respond**. Children with difficulty in understanding instructions can present in many different ways. They can;

- Miss out critical steps in a task.
- Be the last to carry out an instruction.
- Appear not to be listening.
- Many children will compensate and mask their lack of understanding by copying their peers or making guesses from the situation they are in.

Expression of language refers to the sentences a child creates, grammar and vocabulary.

What to expect at different ages and stages

3-4 years

- Understand colours (e.g. 'red'), size (big and little), placement (in/on/under) and time (e.g. 'tomorrow').
- Start to be able to answer questions about 'why' something has happened, although this still might be at quite a basic level.
- Use sentences that have at least 4 – 6 words in them, for example 'I want to play with cars'.
- Start to link 2 sentences together by using 'and'.

- Talk about the future and the past. For example, 'I will watch you' or 'I jumped down'. Their sentences aren't exactly like adults' yet, so they may still make some mistakes such as saying 'runned' for 'ran'.
- Answer simple problem-solving questions, for example 'What do you do when you're hungry/cold?'
- Tell a short story about something they have seen or experienced. For example, 'Two boys played with the ball. It went over the fence.'

- Start conversations with you and with other people.
- Use words instead of actions to argue with you or with their friends.
- Ask many questions using words like 'what', 'where', and 'why'.

4-5 years

- Understand longer instructions, containing four to five commands within them. For example 'Find some crayons, sit sown, and draw a picture'.
- Understand and answer questions about simple stories with no pictures.
- Choose their own play mates and play make believe games, such as pretending be Spiderman.
- Take turns in longer conversations and stay on the same topic.
- Understand words like 'first' and 'next' in a sentence. For example, 'First we're going to the shop, next we'll play in the park'.
- Understand words such as 'above', 'below' and 'between' to describe the position of things.
- Use long and detailed sentences. For example, 'We went to the park but we came home because Joe hurt himself'. Don't worry if they still make little mistakes like saying 'sheeps' instead of sheep or 'goed' instead of went.
- Talk about things that have already happened or will happen in the future. For example, 'Yesterday we went swimming'.
- Talk about things they imagine or make up, using words like 'I think…'.

5-7 years

- Follow and remember a story that is told over several days.
- Understand long instructions, for example, 'Put the bricks back in the box, go outside, and find your coat'.
- Learn that the same word can mean two things, such as 'orange' the fruit and 'orange' the colour.
- Learn that different words can mean the same thing, such as 'minus' and 'take away'.
- Understand a wide range of feelings and descriptive words like 'carefully', 'slowly' or 'surprised.
- Talk for lots of different reasons, such as to share complex ideas, to solve problems or to tell jokes.
- Use long sentences and put the right endings on their words, for example 'My teddy likes sit**ting** on a bed because bed**s** are soft**er**'.
- Use words like 'so', 'because' to join their sentences together. For example, 'It's my birthday so I'm staying up late'.

- Can take turns to talk in conversations with adults and children in lots of different situations, either with one person or in a group.
- Understand a wide range of grammatical rules i.e. simple and irregular past tens

8-11 Years

- Use sentences to link their ideas together, make predictions and draw conclusions.
- Use sentences that normally have between 8 and 10 words (although often their sentences can be much longer).
- Can make up a complicated story including lots of information about the characters and what happened.
- Can talk using more advanced words, such as 'massive', 'enormous' or 'huge' instead of 'big'.
- Understand other points of view and show that they agree or disagree.
- Keep a conversation going by giving reasons and explaining choices.
- Start conversations with adults and children they don't know.
- Understand long requests with lots of information in them. For example, 'Please find the stripey bag at the back of the PE cupboard and put it in the big box in the cloakroom'.

NB: The above information from ages and stages has been taken from www.speechandlanguage.org.uk For more information on ages and stages please visit this website of speak to the school SALT.

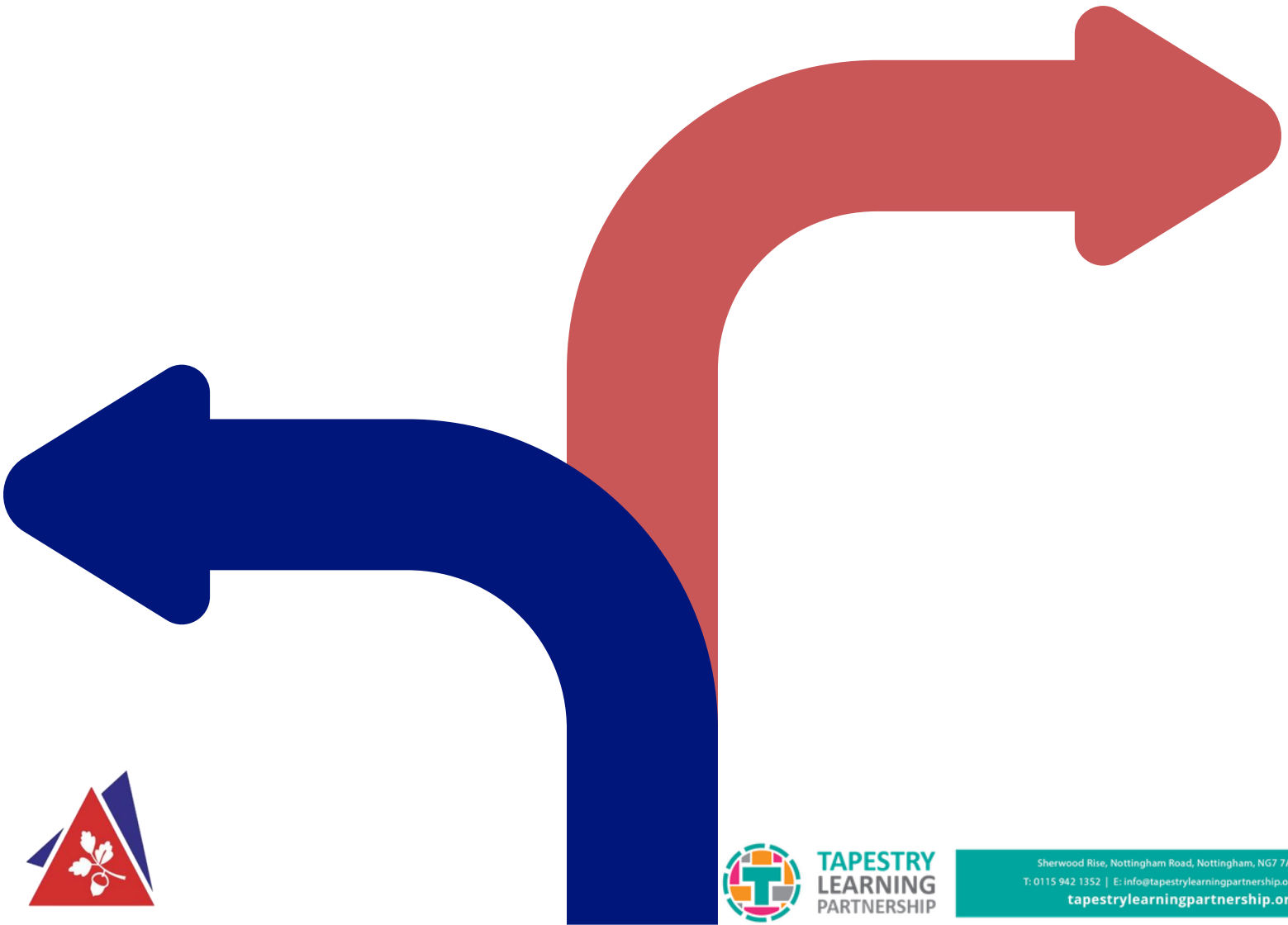
If you are unsure about a child's speech, language and communication levels you should speak to the school SALT. You can also answer yes/no questions on the Child's Progress checker - Speech & Language UK www.progress-checker.speechandlanguage.org.uk which will tell you if there is a concern and can signpost you to more strategies to help.

Useful strategies to understanding

- √ Check you have the child's attention before you start speaking i.e. saying their name, touching their arm or gaining eye contact.
- √ Tell a child what things are called many times (model and label). The evidence is that if you integrate language into someone's day, it will give more meaning and helps children learn language faster.
- √ Slow down your rate of speech, this will give the child lots of time to think about what you have said.
- √ Use simple language, reduce your sentences i.e. instead of 'Bobby go and get a banana' say 'get a banana'.
- √ Emphasise the key words with your tone of voice, this will highlight what is important. You can also do this with written/visual work i.e. 'Bobby look, black cat!'
- √ Use visual aids to support your verbal language i.e. Objects of reference (OOR), symbols, signs.
- √ Give language meaning – create experiences using new language and make it multisensory where possible.
- √ Commenting – Provide running commentary to actions in play, for example, 'you're pushing the car.'

- √ Extending – If a child says a sentence, say it back and extend it so they are hearing new vocabulary or syntax/grammar i.e. they say 'boy eating banana'. The adult then says 'The boy is eating a yellow banana'.
- √ Give choices – model and create opportunities for choices to be made.
- √ Allow processing time – children need at least 10-15 seconds to process new vocabulary.
- √ Don't overwhelm the child with questions. For every one questioned asked, ideally you should be commenting and modelling in 1:4 ratio.

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Communication Strategies	
Commenting	The adult provides running commentary on the child's play.
Extending	The adult models back and extended version of what they heard the child say car i.e. 'car' is extended to 'red car'.
Sentence completion	The adult starts a sentence and waits to see if a child can complete it.
Interpreting	The adult models back the correct pronunciation of a word or sentence.
OWL	Observe Wait Listen
Choices	Create communication opportunities by giving choices.
1:4 ratio	For every question you ask, comment 4X in play.

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Pre-teaching vocabulary

store new words effectively, children need to learn about 3 key areas.

1. Word knowledge/Semantics/Meaning
2. Phonological awareness
3. Kinaesthetic/Visualisation
4.

Word knowledge

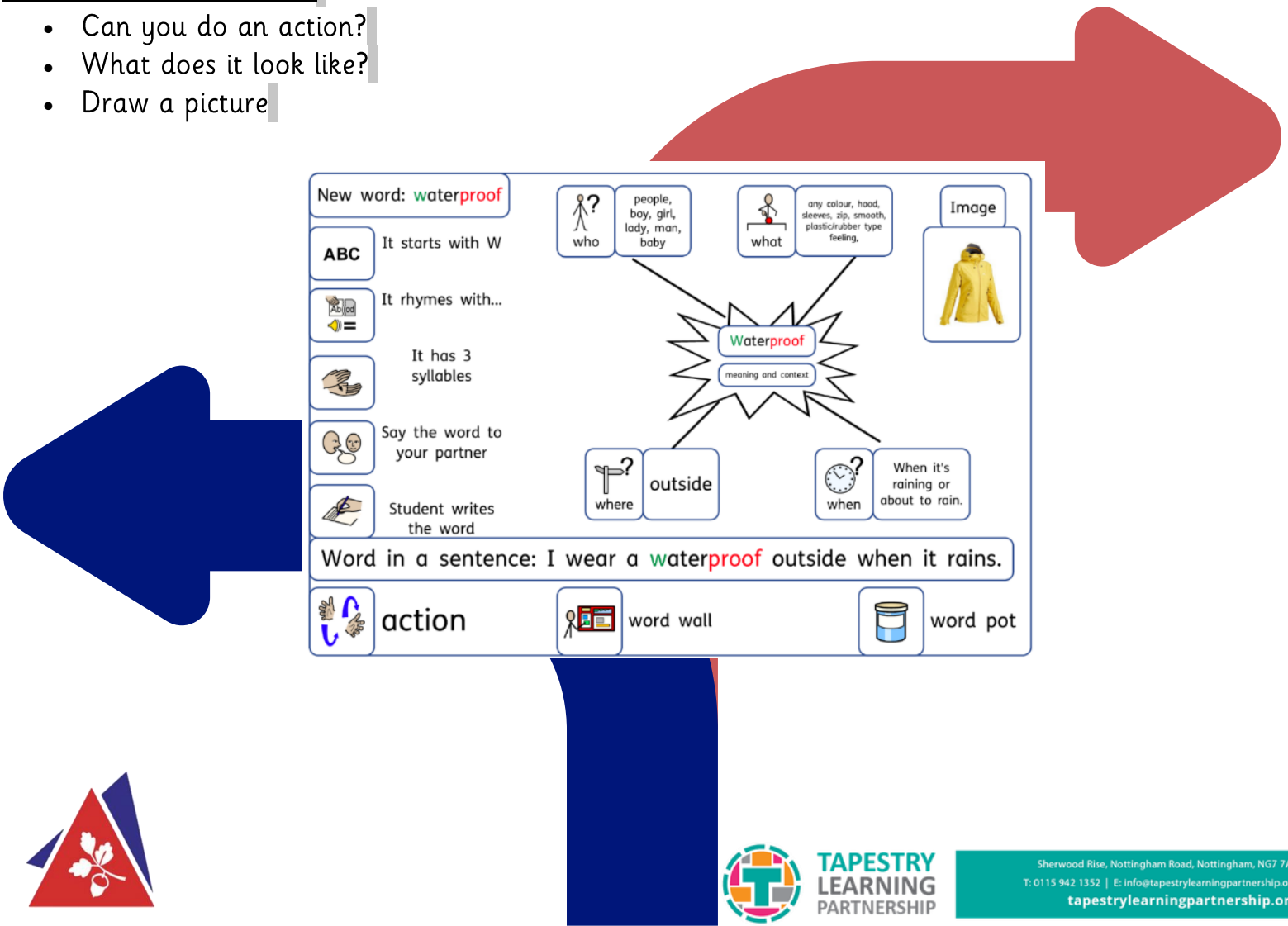
- What is it?
- What do we do with it?
- Where do we find it?
- What sort of thing is it? What group does it belong to?
-

Phonological awareness

- How many beats in the word? (Syllables)
- What sound does it begin with?
- What does it rhyme with?
- Is it a short, medium or long word?
-

Kinaesthetic/Visualisation

- Can you do an action?
- What does it look like?
- Draw a picture



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Staff can also further develop a child's understanding and use of language by colour coding displays, categorising and/or use colourful semantics approach



Objects of Reference (OOR)

- √ OOR are objects that have a particular meaning assigned to them i.e. transitioning to a new topic based activity. They can represent: a spoken word, sign or symbol i.e. Lunch is represented by a spoon, bath time is represented by a sponge.
- √ OOR are multi-sensory, they may be tactile, visual or have a distinctive smell, sound or movement.
- √ They can help a child develop awareness of what is about to happen.
- √ OOR can reduce a child's level of frustration and confusion about what is happening.
- √ OOR are **not** object cues. Object cues are used 'there and then' within a moment to support understanding i.e. a pencil is held up by the teacher and they name pencil, giving it to the child help them to understand they are going to draw in art. A paintbrush is the OOR used to symbolise this is art class time.

Key words

Key words or information carrying words (ICW) enable us to find out how much language a child understands without the support of any visual clues i.e. eye pointing, pointing. A key word is a word that carries meaning, a child **must** understand these words to be able to do what they have been asked.

- Encourage a child to look at you rather than the objects, while you give an instruction.
- Ensure the child is familiar with the names of all the items you will be using.
- For children who you know struggle with understanding, get down to their level on a one to one basis and repeat the instruction.

Keyword	**Age**
1ICW	1yr
2ICW	2yr
3ICW	3yr
4ICW	4yr

If you have concerns about a child's Keyword understanding, please get in touch with the SENCo, Lead SALT TA or the SALT.

Blanks levels of questions

Blanks levels of questioning are questions that are categorised into four different levels, they start with basic questions that ask for simple and concrete responses, which lead up to more complex questions that require abstract answers. Blanks questioning allows us to:

- Ask direct questions at the child's level of understanding thereby ensuring success for the child.
- Support a child's level of understanding and to challenge them at the appropriate level.
- Expose children to questions at the next level to stimulate development in comprehension skills.

Children need to understand and respond to all these levels to function in a year 1 classroom

Typical Development Data

Level 1	Naming things	60% of 3 yr olds understand level 1 and 2	2-3yrs
Level 2	Describing things-answering who, what, where		3-4yrs
Level 3	Talking about stories and events	65% of 5yr olds understand level 3 and 4	4-5yrs
Level 4	Solving problems and answering why questions		5yrs+

Blanks Level 1

Children are required to match their immediate perception to language and respond to simple commands

Type of question	Example
Point to an object	Point to the bulb Pick up the watering canGive me the fork Show me the trowel
Find a matching object	Find me another bulb like this
Name an object	What is this?

Blanks Level 2

Children are still required to match language to their immediate perceptions but they must focus more selectively on the material.

Type of question Function	Example Which do we dig with?
Sentence completion	You water the garden with a.....
Things that go together	What goes with fork?
Sorting and categorizing Give an example (objects in sight)	What else can grow in the ground? Name another plant (object in sight)
Linguistic concepts	Find a black pot, find a big pot, find two pots
Describe a scene	What is happening?
Showing a picture or giving information and asking: Who? What? Where?	'Mum planted the bulbs in the garden' Who planted the bulbs? What did she plant? Where was Mum?

Blanks level 3

Children are expected to make deductions about a situation and be able to make a common link in order to group information together.

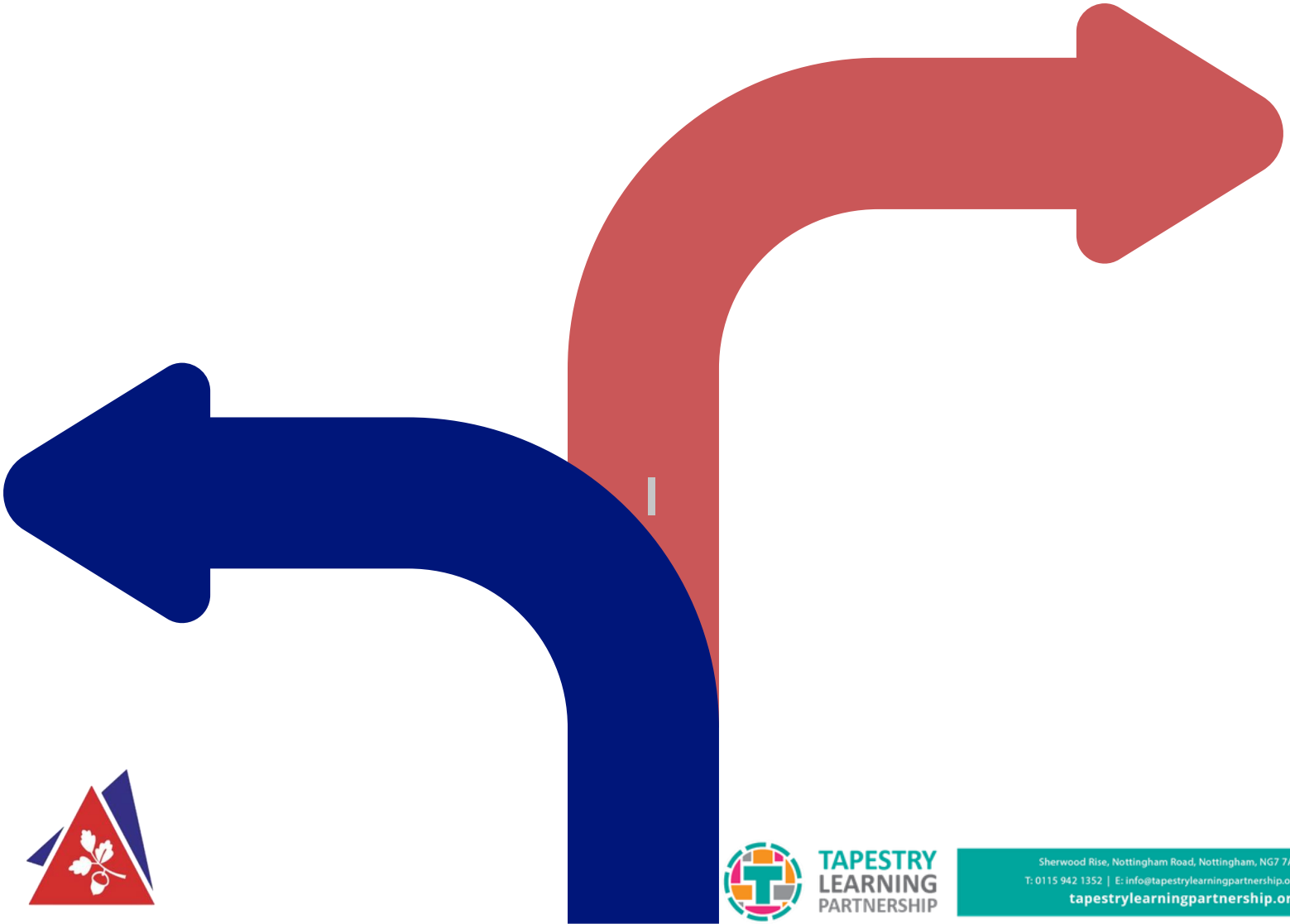
Type of question	Example
Follow a set of directions	Put the bulb in the top, add soil with the trowel and tap it down.
Give another example BUT listen to extraconditions	Find me something else you can put plants in that is not made of plastic.
Narrative/re-telling	
Arrange pictures in a sequence	
Tell a story or describe an event	Tell me how to plant a bulb
Summarize the story in one sentence	What have you done?
Predict	What might happen next?
What does a character say?	(Looking at picture) What does Mum say?
How does a character feel?	(Looking at picture) How does Mum feel?
Define a word	What does 'sow' mean?

Blanks Level 4

Children have to think about the relationships between objects, people and events and give reasons why things happen.

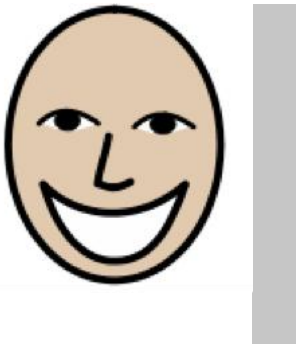
Type of question	Example
Justify a prediction	Why will the bulb grow?
Identify the cause	What made the plant grow?
Solve a problem	What could you do if the plant doesn't grow?
Solve a problem from another person's point of view	What could Mum do if the plantdoesn't grow?
Make an inference from an observation	How can we tell the trowel is old?
Explain why something cannot be done	Why can't we grow a plant without soil?
Select a means to a goal	What do we need to plant a bulb? (Objects not in sight)
Explain the logic of compound words	Why this is called a flower pot?

If you have any concerns regarding Blank Levels please liaise with the SALT.



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Speech

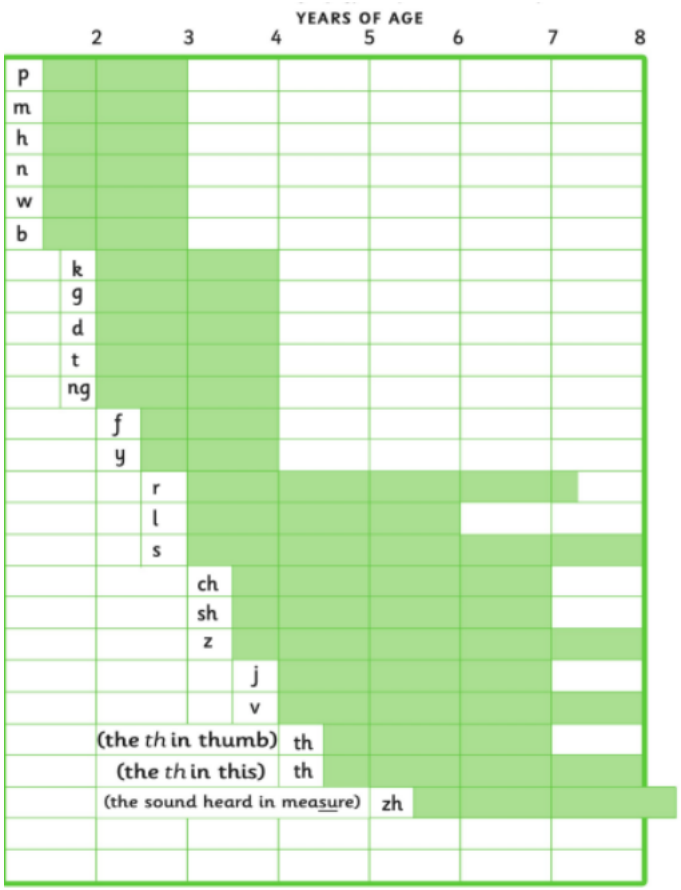


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Speech Sounds

Speech refers to how different sounds are made by the **lips**, **teeth** and **tongue**, these sounds are then put together to make words.
A child may have difficulty physically producing the sounds which is an articulation difficulty or they may have difficulty knowing when to use the sounds within words, this is a phonological difficulty.

Speech Sound Development Chart



NB: The green highlights the range of age when the sound is expected to be present.

Strategies to support a child with Speech Sound difficulties.

- √ Interpretation – When your child mispronounces a word, acknowledge that your child has said the word and where possible provide them with the correct pronunciation back i.e. your child says 'dook mummy, I dan dee de doy', you the adult say 'yes, I can see the toy. It's exciting'.

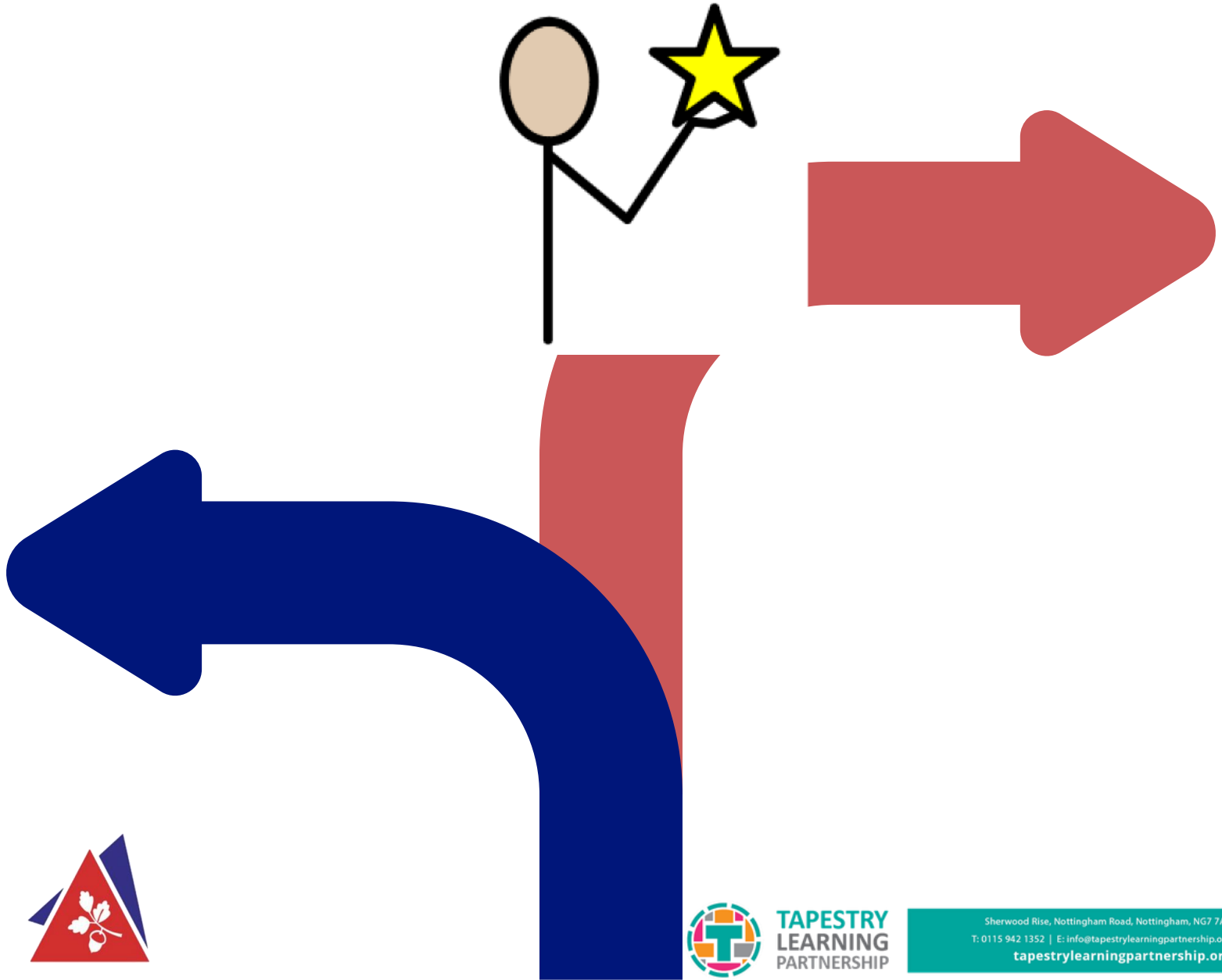
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- √ Let the child use non-verbal ways of communicating i.e. gestures, pointing.
- √ Don't ask a child to copy what you say or try again, this can cause embarrassment or frustration, lowering self esteem and in some cases causing children to become evasive to speech sound input.
- √ Narrow down possible answers, ask the child closed yes/no questions in whole class discussions.
- √ Use a language stimulation board (LSB) to support increasing clarification and practise of motor patterns.
- √ Model sound play – focus on a sound in a simple turn taking games i.e. /p/, say /p/ every time you pop a bubble. Place no pressure on the child to say the sound. But create fun opportunities with expose to the sound.
- √ Work on sound (phonological) awareness skills i.e. rhyming, speech sound discrimination, syllable clapping and sorting games.

<u>Sound Awareness Activities</u>

- **√ Syllable clapping** – you may want to have a feely bag full of different toys or simply have some fun clapping out words within a focused activity or game. There are different ways you can support syllable clapping 1. Listening and identifying how many syllables you have clapped, 2. Copying you the adult model syllable clapping, 3. Encouraging your child to independently clap how many syllables are in a word. Within this should also encourage them to verbalise/name the syllables as they clap them i.e. clap and express ba/na/na. Don't worry if the sounds aren't perfect, you're listening out for the syllable stressing.
- **√ Singing** – singing songs and nursery rhymes are great activities to help build awareness of speech sounds and auditory processes.
- **√ Rhyming pairs** – Rhyme with your child and see if they can identify which sound has changed in the word i.e. key vs. tea. You may also want to play with some simple rhyming games with your child i.e. jigsaws, pairs games.
- **√ Musical instruments** – Have fun using musical instruments to teach different speech sound concepts i.e. loud/quiet, long/short.
- **√ I can hear…** - Get out and about into your local area and comment on what you can hear. You may also want to make this into a simple game such as 'Guess what I can hear'.

Non-Negotiables



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Our Non-Negotiables

Within all classrooms the following three support strategies are expected to be in place:

- Use of a visual timetable to be up and used correctly inline with the TEACCH therapeutic approach. This should be clear and in eyeline of the children. The symbols removed once the activity has finished and placed in a finish box/wallet/tray.
- All staff to be wearing a communication keyring.
- A visual signing station to be up in each classroom i.e. the agreed Makaton signs of your school.

All staff should also have attended Essential Tools in the Environment – Speech Therapy Training. Unpacking the schools non-negotiables; visual timetables, communication keyrings and Makaton signs.

Where to find more information on Speech and Language Therapy

If you want more information on communication approaches used within the Trust or how SALT intervention is delivered, you can read through either policy:

- Communication Approaches
- Speech and Language Therapy
- Read your child's SALT programme for bespoke guidance on targets if they are on the caseload.

Speak to your SALT, SENCo or Lead SALT TA if you have any concerns or questions regarding a child in your class.

Written by: Sherisse Green and Tara Gibson Lead SALT TA (Djanogly Strelley)