Information Carrying Words

When we talk to children, there are lots of clues in the environment and through an adult's use of body language to support their understanding of what is being said.

Information Carrying Words are the words within a sentence that carry meaning. These are the words that a child has to understand without clues. There are often lots of words within a sentence that do not carry meaning.

In order for a word in a sentence to be considered an information carrying word there must be an alternative choice for them to select.

Examples:

Give me the book

If there are no other options apart from the book, or the adult points to the book whilst saying this sentence, the child does not have to demonstrate understanding or remember any information carrying words. If there are two options available in this scenario eg: a book and a cup, and the adult gives no clues with their body language then this is a 1 information carrying word sentence.

Two information carrying words:

Make the dog run (from a choice of dog and cat)

Three information carrying words:

Give the green apple to Charlotte (from a choice of red and green apples and cars, and a choice of person)

Four information carrying words:

Colour the ball green and the cup blue (from a choice of various items to colour and various coloured pencils)

Be aware of how many important words you give to a child within an instruction. Break down an instruction to emphasise the important words if the child does not follow a lengthy instruction

I Animals
Activities to encourage understanding of three key words

Activity 1

You will need:
- Big and little toy animals
- Toy farm

How to play:
Set up a play scene and talk about the different places that the animals can go, for example, in the field or in the barn. Put 4 animals in front of the child e.g. big cow, little cow, big horse, little horse.
The adult should ask the child to e.g. put the big cow in the field, put the little cow in the barn. Continue in this way with the other animals.

Activity 2

You will need:
- Animal puppets or soft toy animals
- Toy food

How to play:
Explain that the animals are hungry and that you are going to feed them. The adult should ask the child to e.g. give the apple and banana to the dog, give the sausage and biscuit to the cat. Continue in this way with the other food items.

Activity 3

You will need:
- Toy animals
- Places for the animals to hide such as a table and chair

How to play:
Put 3 – 4 animals out in front of the child. The adult should ask the child to e.g. put the cow on the table, put the dog under the chair. Continue with the other animals.

Target words to encourage: dog, cat, cow, sheep, horse, pig, chicken, duck, tractor, trailer, field, barn

*Remember if the child is having difficulties understanding the words you can use a sign to support the spoken word

Extension Activities to encourage understanding of 4 key words
Use big and little animals in activity 3. The adult could ask the child to – put the **big cow on** the **table**, put the **little pig under** the **chair**. You could also use some action words in activity 3 e.g. make the **cow jump** on the **table**, make the **pig sleep under** the **chair**.

Ourselves
Activities to encourage understanding of 3 key word

These activities can be carried out using real objects, toys or pictures

Activity 1

You will need:	How to play:
• Washing line and basket, selection of big and little clothes	Set out the play activity for a washing game. Place 3-4 big and little items in front of the child and ask them to "put the big sock in the basket" or "put the little hat on the washing line".

Activity 2

You will need either:	How to play:
• Teddy/dolly (or two of the child's favourite toys)	If the child is not yet understanding the concepts of big and little you can encourage them to listen for two items eg. "put the jumper and hat on dolly" etc
• Big and little teddy and dolly and clothes for the toys	Place 3-4 items in front of the child and ask them to "put the jumper on big teddy" or "put the trousers on little dolly"

Target words to encourage – arm, ear, eye, nose, mouth, head, leg, hand fingers, tummy, foot and toes, coat, hat, jumper, trousers, socks, skirt, dress, shoes, pants.

*Remember if the child is having difficulties understanding the words you can use a sign to support the spoken word.

Extension Activities to encourage understanding of 4 key words
Sorting real clothes into a big or little box or a big or little basket. For example, "put the **trousers** and the **pants** in the **big basket**"

Dressing up clothes in a circle time activity, for example, "Give some **trousers** to **Oliver** and a **hat** to **Lucy**"

Remember to make sure you have your child's attention before giving an instruction by saying their name.

It is also important to tell your child what each item is called as you put the toy down.