

# the school years toolkit

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## Expressive language

You have been directed to this Advice Sheet for strategies to help children who have difficulties with expressing themselves verbally.

Expressive language is the way we put words together into phrases and sentences to express meaning. It includes aspects such as word order, use of small function words such as "of", and "are" and word endings, for example those that signal plurals and different verb tenses.

Expressive language development follows a recognised sequence. If a child's expressive language development is following this typical progression but at a slower rate than their peers, they have an expressive language delay. If they are not following this progression, their expressive language is considered to be disordered.

If you have used this Advice Sheet and not seen improvement after three to four months, please contact CYPIT.

### What you may see

In the class, the child may:

- Use the main content words and miss out many of the small function words
- Struggle to express their ideas clearly, pausing and revising what they have said
- Use incorrect word order and, as a result, distort the meaning of what they are saying
- Use a limited range of verb tenses, for example just the present tense
- Sound immature compared with their peers, for example "Me do that"
- Use grammatically correct phrases but not join these together with conjunctions or joining words such as "and" or "because"
- Make errors in their written language that mirror their expressive language or, sometimes, errors that are not present when they are speaking
- Have difficulty telling a coherent narrative, for example a piece of news or retelling a story
- Over use grammatical rules such as past tense "ed" as in "falled" or plural "s" as in "mouses" when their peers are no longer doing this.

## Section 5 **advice** sheets

### Strategies and advice

- Repeat the child's language using the correct sentence structures. This checks that you have understood their meaning and provides them with a good model.
- Expand what they have said a little, for example if the child says "Man walking", the adult says "Yes, the man is walking home".
- Give the child extra time, if necessary, to express their ideas and avoid finishing their sentences for them.
- Use picture sequences to develop their narrative skills. Ask them to put the pictures in order and then say one or two sentences about each picture to produce a coherent story.
- Explain grammatical rules and allow them to have plenty of practice. Explain any exceptions to the general rules.
- Use writing frames to help the pupil plan their written work.

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### Suggested Resources

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- Primary and Secondary Inclusion Developmental Programme for Teaching and Supporting Pupils with Speech, Language and Communication Needs
- Early Language Builders – ELKLAN, [www.elklan.co.uk](http://www.elklan.co.uk)
- Language Builders – ELKLAN, [www.elklan.co.uk](http://www.elklan.co.uk)
- Secondary Language Builders – ELKLAN, [www.elklan.co.uk](http://www.elklan.co.uk)
- Language Builders for post 16s – ELKLAN, [www.elklan.co.uk](http://www.elklan.co.uk)
- Language Steps - Amanda Armstrong STASS 44 North Rd, Ponteland, Northumberland, NE20 9UR (tel: 01661 822 316)
- Black Sheep Press resources for speech and language – Black Sheep Press, 67 Middleton, Cowling, Keighly, W Yorks. BD22 0DQ [www.blacksheepress.co.uk](http://www.blacksheepress.co.uk)
- Developing Baseline Communication Skills - Winslow Press - as above
- Teacher Net - An interactive resource to support head teachers, leadership teams, teachers and support staff [www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications)