



## Strategies to Support Understanding of Language

- Follow your child's lead and join in their play, this shows that you are interested in them. Having a shared focus allows you to label and comment on things that they are interested in.
- Simplify instructions using less complicated language. Chunk instructions into steps, reducing the amount of information you are giving at any one time.
- ensure that your child is giving you their full attention before giving them an instruction – say their name and make sure they are looking at you.
- Slow down when giving instructions. Try pausing before new information.
- Allow additional time to process information. If the child doesn't respond, follow the 10 second rule
  - wait 10 seconds before giving information again
  - use the same language
- Allow children additional time to plan and express their answers in the classroom.
- Teach active listening strategies, e.g. good sitting, good looking.
- Check for recall and understanding. Use a **Pause, Repeat, Check strategy**: give the instruction, pause, repeat it and then encourage the child to repeat the key information back to you. This will enable them to think about the information long enough for it to be transferred to the long-term memory store.

### In the classroom:

- Pre-teach topic vocabulary focussing on all aspects of the word, e.g. category, function, meaning, where we find it, sound properties.
- Make use of a Communication Friendly Environment. Support spoken language with visuals for example, pointing/showing the child what you are talking about, using **gesture** and **Makaton** signs, use of **pictures/photographs** where possible.
- Encourage children to indicate when they are unsure, e.g. informing adults verbally or through use of the traffic light system.
- Be aware of the child's level of attention and re-focus their attention to tasks where necessary.
- Be aware of the language demands of a whole class activity. Listening in a group can be more difficult for children – make sure that you have the child's attention and that they know that the information is for them as well as the rest of class.