

Joining words together

As children develop a wider range of single word vocabulary, we want to try and support them to put words together. Usually children will be using around 50 single words before starting to combine words into 2-3 word phrases.

The following ideas can generate opportunities for joining words together. During these activities aim to use modelling, commenting and expanding to show children how to do this.

- **Modelling** means that you are showing a child 'how' to use language by linking the word to a real life object, action, concept or feeling
- **Commenting** means you are adding meaning to words by talking about what you are doing in real life situations
- **Expanding** is listening to what your child says and adding another word to it to show them how to put words together

Don't forget to use lots of **repetition** and **pausing** too so that children have time to listen and respond to what you have said.

Activity ideas

- **Lights, camera, action!** Take photos or videos of the child and key people doing different actions. Look back on them together and encourage them to talk about what happened. They could maybe show and tell another person (a friend or relative), either face to face or over the phone/ video call.
- **Action pictures** – find pictures of people/ characters doing different actions. Look at the picture and encourage the child to talk about what's happening. You might need to help them by starting off the sentence, e.g. "the boy is...". You can make this more fun by playing a game alongside, e.g. fishing, pop up pirate (place a sword on top of each picture) etc.
- **Simon says** – Take it turns to give instructions in a Simon Says style game, for example, "clap hands", "stamp feet", "nod head" and "brush teeth".

- **Bubbles** – Encourage the child to request bubbles in different ways. For example: “big bubbles or little bubbles?”, “bubbles up or bubbles down?”, “bubbles on your feet or bubbles on your hands?” or “pop bubbles or kick bubbles?”. Remember to use gesture/ signs too to help them with these ideas.
- **Animals actions** - Use toy animals and model them running, jumping, sleeping and flying. Take it in turns with the child to make the animal complete an action and see if they can name it, for example “cow jumping”, “pig flying” or “horse sleeping”.
- **Obstacle Courses** - Set up an obstacle course and tell the child where to go, e.g. under the table, on the chair, on the swing or under the slide. Use gesture and sign to support the child’s understanding. Take it in turns so they can give you instructions too.

Children learn through play so remember to have fun and model language while you do so!

