Speech Pathology

Using little words in sentences

The little words in sentences hold lots of meaning. Little words such as *the*, *is*, *to*, *for*, and *that* help us to make longer sentences that are easier for others to understand.

To help children use little words in sentences, you can:

Repeat children's sentences and add little words, and Talk about what children are doing and use little words in your own sentences.

Play with little words: Use little words in your play together



Play...with trains and cars

Join in when your child is playing with trains or cars. Repeat your child's sentences and add any missing little words.

Child: Train on track. You: *The* train *is* on *the* track.



At home...at bath time

At bath time, use sentences with little words to talk about what your child is doing.

Child: (*putting ducks into the water*) You: *A* duck *went* in *the* water.



Out and about...at the shops

When you are at the shops, use little words to talk about the groceries you are buying.

Child: Where milk?

You: Where *is the* milk? Let's try *this* aisle.



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 Roberts, A., Rohr, K. & Waiting for Speech Pathology Team. (2018). Using little words in sentences. Bathurst, Australia:

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Read with little words: Visit the library and borrow some books

Where is the Green Sheep? by Mem Fox Hairy Maclary by Lynley Dodd Dear Zoo by Rodd Campbell

Words to grow: Use these words in your day

You can help children use little words in sentences for different purposes. These include: Words about people, places or things: the, a, an, that, this, he, she Words about actions: is, are, was, were, had, got, get, went Words for combining and reasoning: and, but, then, if, so

Learn about little words: Ways to help language grow

When you **repeat what children have said**, and **add little words**, you are:

- Showing you understand what they have said, and
- Showing how their sentences can be clearer.

When you talk about what children are doing and use little words in your own sentences, you are:

- Showing children how to use words in a meaningful way, and
- Helping them to use more little words.

Children do not have to repeat words after you. The more often children hear the little words in sentences as part of their day, the more likely they are to understand new words and use them in their own talking.

Speech pathology key terms: articles, auxiliary verbs, conjunctions, parallel talk, expansion.



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