

How to...

Help a child to understand and to use a wider range of verbs (action words)

Verbs are important to help children with building sentences and describing everyday events. Children may use verbs like 'going' and 'doing' in place of more specific words – the following activities will help them to understand and to use a wider range of verbs.

- **Everyday:** During everyday activities and play, talk about actions e.g. “Spiderman **is eating!**” Talking about actions while they are being carried out will help the child to link the word with the action
- **Posting:** Make a post-box out of an old shoe box. Put 2 or 3 action pictures in front of the child. Start by asking the child to find the action you say e.g. “Eating” or “Sleeping”. Once they are more confident, you could take in turns to describe the pictures before posting them e.g. “The boy **is sleeping!**”
- **Teddy Time:** Using a teddy, carry out various activities including *sitting, eating, drinking, jumping, running, clapping, waving, washing, brushing* with him. Whilst you are making teddy do these, model language to the child, for instance say “Teddy’s **brushing** his hair” or “teddy’s **drinking** milk”. Once the child becomes more confident, they might be able to tell you what is happening, using action words
- **Books:** Share books and talk about what is happening in the pictures, focusing on actions e.g. “The boy **is climbing** the tree!” See if the child can take a turn to tell you about the pictures – you can model back to show them how to use verbs when needed
- **Video:** Video the child, an action toy or a puppet carrying out a range of actions. Replay the video – pause it after each action and name the action. As the child’s understanding improves, they may be able to name the action for you!
- **Lotto:** Use action pictures to make a pairs or a lotto board – start by naming the actions for the child as you play. As their understanding develops, they may be able to name the actions themselves
- **Obstacle course:** Set up an obstacle course in your garden or house and give your child instructions including verbs such as “**Jump** on cushions”, “**Crawl** under blanket” and “**Run** around table”. If the child is enjoying this and becoming confident, ask them to direct you and see if they can use the verbs modelled
- “Put the book and the boat on the table”
- “Put the book and the boat on the table”

Additional information:

For further information please contact Paediatric.services@acecic.nhs.uk or call ACE paediatric services on 01206 588100

Additional resources:

<https://www.talkingpoint.org.uk>

<https://www.gl-assessment.co.uk/products/wellcomm/>

<https://www.elklan.co.uk/under-5s/early-language-builders>

<https://www.twinkl.co.uk/>

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