

Strategies to Support Unclear Speech in the Classroom

Suggestions to Help Understand the Child

1. Find out more about the child and what s/he is likely to talk about.

A discussion with a parent or carer could provide the following information:

- Names of family members and child's friends
- Who s/he plays with and what they like to do.
- Regular visits, e.g. grandma's or auntie's house.
- Child's interests.
- Favourite TV programme
- Things s/he talks about at home
- (please see SALT questionnaire)

(If parents understand why you want the above information they are usually quite happy to provide it).

2. A quiet environment and time to listen to the child are probably the two key things, which help you to understand him/her.
3. Encouraging the child to say more: e.g. tell me again in a different way; use of gestures/signs showing what s/he is talking about.
4. Taking time to interact with the child in a situation where you know what they are talking about (e.g. looking at books) will help you 'get to know' what their speech is like. A shared context will help you to understand what the child is saying and will help you to 'tune-in' to their speech.
5. Use friends as interpreters, children often understand each other easily!

**It is always more difficult to understand the child when information is out of context, i.e. when you do not know what the child's topic is.
To help with this:**

6. Home/school books can be useful. Parents write what the child has done at the weekend and school write anything interesting that has happened during their school day.
7. For news/talking time it can be helpful for the child to have a point of reference to talk about, e.g. an acorn if s/he has been on a walk, a photograph of grandma, etc.

2012 Calderdale & Huddersfield NHS Trust. All rights reserved.