

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.