

A guide about word finding difficulties in children

What is word finding difficulty?

Sometimes children have trouble thinking of the word they want to say whilst they are talking.

Children with this difficulty may:

- use the wrong word e.g. says playstation when they mean television
- muddle up the sounds in words, e.g. say “sceletope” when they mean “telescope”
- seem to have a word “on the tip of their tongue” but can’t quite remember it, and might use “thingy” or “you know” instead.

Why is it important?

Word finding difficulty can make it difficult for the child:

- to get their message across clearly
- to get their message across quickly
- to remember what they want to say while they are trying to think of a word.

How you can help

- If your child uses the wrong word, help them to think about the difference between the word they used and the word they wanted to use. For example, if they used “lion” for tiger, explain that “it’s like a lion but it’s stripy”.
- If your child muddles up sounds in long words, help him to practise the word. Say the word slowly and clearly for them and ask them to repeat it until they are able to say it correctly.
- If the child is struggling to think of a word, encourage them to describe the word they are thinking of.

You can also help by playing the following games with your child:

- “Give us a clue” or 20 questions.
- “What is it?” Put a number of small objects into a bag and ask your child to choose one and to describe it for you to guess. If the object they chose was a banana they could describe it:
 - By giving the category name: “it’s a fruit”.
 - By telling you what it looks like: “it’s yellow, long and thin”.
 - By telling you where we find it: “it grows on trees in hot countries”.
 - By telling you what we do with it: “you can eat it”.
- Help your child to think about which is the most important information to give.
- Note down during the week the long words which your child has difficulty saying. At the end of each week, look through the list and practise them again with them. This will help fix them in their memory.

Further information

The following websites have further information for parents and staff:

www.literacytrust.org.uk/talktoyourbaby

www.talkingpoint.org.uk



Contact us

Please contact your Speech and Language Therapy Department if you have any queries or concerns regarding the information in this leaflet.

Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley

Phone: 01474 360685

Tonbridge, Tunbridge Wells and Sevenoaks

Phone: 01732 376814 or 0300 123 7004

Maidstone and Malling

Phone: 01622 742326

Canterbury, coastal, Thanet and rural Swale

Phone: 0300 123 8112

Or visit www.kentcht.nhs.uk and follow the link to Paediatric Speech and Language Therapy.

Customer Care Team

If you have a query about our health services, or would like to comment, compliment or complain about Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust, you can contact the **Customer Care Team**.

Phone: 0300 123 1807, 8am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

Please ask if you would like the team to call you back

Text: 07943 091958 **Email:** kcht.cct@nhs.net

Address: Customer Care Team, Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust, Trinity House, 110-120 Upper Pemberton, Eureka Park, Ashford, Kent TN25 4AZ **Web:** www.kentcht.nhs.uk

If you would like this information in another language, audio, Braille, Easy Read or large print, please ask a member of staff.

You will be asked for your agreement to treatment and, if necessary, your permission to share your personal information.

Leaflet code: 00261

Published: April 2015

Expires: June 2018

Page 2 of 2

