

Children's Speech and Language Therapy Department

Using Negatives 'no' 'not' in Sentences

Some children need help to use words like 'no' and 'not' in sentences. We call these negatives. Children need to be able to use the following negatives:

1. **No** or **not** with **an object word** for example, no hair, no shoes, not a car, not a table.
2. **Not** with **an action word** for example, not running, not reading, not sleeping.
3. **Not** with a **describing word** for example, not big, not smooth, not dry.

Remember when you are using the words 'no' and 'not' it is helpful to **use natural gesture**, such as shaking your head. This can help children both understand and use these words.

Your speech and language therapist may give you some pictures to work on using these words. You can also work on them in everyday situations at home and in school.

You can model these words in daily routines. Here are some examples:

- When it's meal or snack times try commenting; we are eating apples but we have no oranges, we are eating sausages but we have no beans, we are drinking milk but we have no water, my fingers are not round, my peas are not big, teddy is not eating my carrots.
- In play try commenting; there are no big cars, we have no pretend spoons, the car is not driving, teddy is not sleeping, my hands are not wet, the sand is not rough, the painting is not dry.
- At bedtime try commenting; you have no socks on, you are not sleeping yet, your pillow is not hard.

Activities: Model the words in everyday situations and play these games.

Spot the person

You will need: a small group of people such as family or friends.

Look at each other and say for example: "Who is not wearing a jumper?" "Who does not have blue eyes?" "Who is not tall?" "Who is not smiling?" "Who does not have long hair?"

Silly Me Game

You will need: pictures of common objects or look in a picture book together.

Make mistakes. Show a car picture and say, "That's a bus".

You say: "No! Silly me. **That's not** a bus. It's a car"

Look at a picture book and say "I think I can see a car."

Then say 'No! Silly me there is **no car!**'



Washing Game

You will need: a wash basket; clothes (some dirty, some clean)

Sort the clothes with the child.

You say: "Shirt in the wash? No, **that's not** dirty... that's clean." "Socks in the wash? Yes they are **not clean!**"

Guessing Game

You will need: a bag and several common objects
Hide one object in the bag and say "what's in the bag?" Give clues.
You say: "It's round. You can eat it".
Child says: "Apple"
You say: "Good guess."



"That was a good guess. It's **not** an apple, it's an orange"
Take turns to hide and guess.

Sorting Games

You will need: lots of toys or objects to sort. (Different size, colour or shape)
Sort them with the child.
You say: "Is that big? No, that's **not** big." "Is that red? No, that's **not** red, it's green".

Spiders and Snake Game

You will need: Two small houses (use boxes or bowls as pretend houses); spiders and snakes (make card pictures)
Mix up the spiders and snakes. Put half the pile in one house and half in the other house.
You say: "Snakes live in this house" and "Spiders live in this house".
Take turns to see who is in each house.
You say: "This is the spider's house. That's **not** a spider. That's a snake. Go back, snake."

Group Game

You will need: 2 bags – one for you, one for your child. Put your own things in the bags.
Take turns to pull things out of the bag.
If it's yours, keep it and say: "It's a pen. It's mine."
If it's not yours, say: "it's a comb – that's **not** mine".
Take turns until everything is given back to its owner.

Remember it will take time for your child to start to use these words and remember to use them in their sentences. If your child forgets to use the word no or not just model the sentence back to them how it should sound.

Remember to praise your child when they do use their words 'no' and 'not' in a sentence.

