

Echolalia Advice

Helping children who are mainly using delayed echolalia

- This advice is most relevant for children who are using whole set phrases or 'chunks' of speech (delayed echolalia).
- They might use the same phrases over and over.
- They may have learnt the phrases by repeating them from other people, videos, or songs.
- The child has linked a meaning to each phrase, but it can be hard for other people to work out the meaning.

How can I help?

- At this stage, we are focused on building up the child's 'library' of phrases. We do this by **commenting on what is happening** and modelling a range of helpful phrases for them. We are **modelling the phrases** that will be helpful for them to learn.
- You can model new phrases at any time, but it's also helpful to put aside 10-15 minutes for '**Special Time**' **play sessions** where you can focus on modelling language. During this time, you should watch the child's play and then **join in** with what they are doing.
- Try to avoid telling the child how to play or asking questions; they are leading the 'Special Time' session.
- Have a look at the examples table on the next page for ideas of helpful phrases to model.



The information in this advice sheet is based on the Natural Language Acquisition framework (Marge Blanc MA, CCC-SLP) and training provided by Alexandria Zachos, MS, CCC-SLP/L. For more information and resources, visit: <https://www.meaningfulspeech.com/>

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Types of communication	Examples of useful phrases to model
Commenting Describing the world around them.	"It's stuck!" "It's really tall!" "Look at this!" "This one is pink". "There's another ..." "There's a ..."
Help Asking for help	"I need help!" "Help me please!" "Fix it please!"
Transitions - Requesting a new activity - Talking about what's going to happen next. - Explaining that the current activity is over.	"What's next?" "Time for..." "It's ... time!" "Let's do some ..." "We did it"
Shared joy Saying that they are enjoying an activity.	"I love it." "This is fun!" "That's so cool!" "I'm so happy"
Protests - Saying no. - Telling someone that they are feeling uncomfortable or overwhelmed.	"I don't like it". "Stop doing that". "That hurts my (arm)". "I don't want that". "It's too (noisy)". "That is too (bright)". "I need space"
New situations	"This is new" "I feel worried". "I feel excited"
Expressing wants and needs	"I want some ..." "I need some ..." "I feel hungry". "We need more ..."

Tips to Remember

- Make sure that the child can hear you whilst you play – reduce background noise (e.g. TV, radio, YouTube) as much as possible.
- Make sure you are following the child's lead. We are not forcing them to sit at a table, to play in a particular way, or asking them to repeat things from you. Children learn best when they are doing things they enjoy.
- Acknowledge what the child says to show them that you are listening – even if you are unsure of the meaning. You can do this by repeating what they say or by smiling and nodding. 
- Model new phrases in lots of different situations and places. For example, if your target phrase was “Let's do some ...” then you could say:
 - “Let's do some climbing” at the park,
 - “Let's do some painting” at home,
 - “Let's do some reading” at bedtime.
- Model the phrase exactly as you want the child to say it. They may repeat exactly what is said to them so it's important to speak as if you were them. For example, if you can see that they need help with something, say “I need help”, rather than “you need help”.
- Cartoons and YouTube videos often engage children so well because they use exciting and interesting tones of voice and ‘sing-song’ speech – you can do this too! 
- Rephrase questions into comments. Instead of “What do you want to play?” use a statement like “let's play!”. Rather than “What's that?” say, “it's a ball”.