

Echolalia Advice

How to help children who are learning to use more single words

- This advice is most helpful for children who use echolalia and are starting to break down their phrases (echolalia) into single words.
- They are starting to use and understand single words.
- They are learning that that each word has a specific meaning and can be used in different situations.

How can I help?

- At this stage, we are focused on supporting the child's use and understanding of **single words**. We do this by **modelling a range of single words** for them.
- You can model new words 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.
- **Name any toys/items** that the child picks up or looks at, so that they can hear the word. Use the word on its own when possible. Try to focus on **comments instead of questions**. For example, instead of pointing and saying, "what's that?", say "teddy". Say the word **several times**.

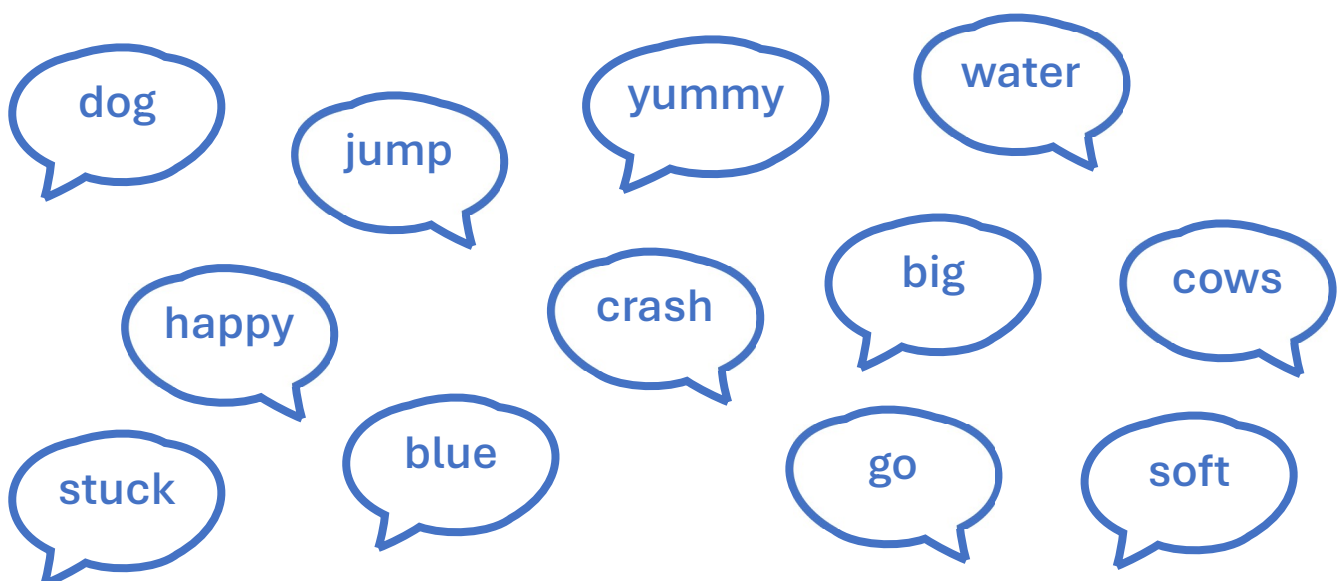


Tips to Remember

- 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. 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 nodding.
- 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!



Here are some examples of comments you might make during Special Time:



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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