

Echolalia Advice

Helping children who are 'mixing and matching' their phrases

- This advice is most relevant for children who use echolalia and are starting to break down their learnt phrases into smaller chunks.
- You might notice that they are starting to 'mix and match' parts of their echolalia into their own new phrases.
- The child may also 'trim down' a longer phrase. For example, trimming down "Let's get out of here!" into "Let's get out!".

How can I help?

- At this stage, we are focused on helping the child to develop their new skills of '**mixing and matching**' and '**trimming down**' their phrases. This helps them to make their phrases fit the situation.
- When they say a phrase, you can show them how to 'mix and match' part of the phrase or trim it down. Try to keep the intonation (melody) of the phrase the same.
- Repeat what they have said but change or miss out part of the phrase. You can also 'mix and match' things that you say.
- You can use these strategies 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 next page for examples of how to 'mix and match' phrases.

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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How to 'Mix and Match'

This strategy is all about 'mixing and matching' and 'trimming down' a child's learnt phrases. Here are some examples of how to do this:

If the child says:	Then you can say:
"We did it!"	• "We did a puzzle!" • "I did it!" • "We did it so well!" • "We finished it!" • "Did it!" • "We did a good job."
"Let's go play!"	• "Let's go outside." • "Let's go play dinosaurs." • "Let's go!" • "I want to go play." • "Let's go to the park."
"Hurry up Peppa"	• "Hurry up car!" • "Hurry up Jack!" • "I need to hurry." • "Let's hurry up!"
"It's so much fun"	• "Playing is so fun." • "The sand pit is so fun." • "It's so tall!" • "It's so great!"
"I want to go home"	• "I want to leave now." • "Let's go home." • "I want to do something else."

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 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”.