

Children's Speech and Language Therapy Department

Working with Words

Some children have word finding difficulties. This is when a child finds it hard to find the right word in their memory.

They may say the wrong word:	spoon → "fork"
They may say a word that means the same:	peacock → "feather leopard"
They may say a word that sounds similar:	saddle → "sag"
They might talk about the word instead:	chimney → "it smokes, on a house"

A child with word finding difficulties often has a poor understanding of the words they know. They find it hard to store words in the right places in their memory. It is harder for them to find the right word when they need to.

There is no quick cure for a word finding difficulty.

Therapy aims to help children understand and store words, so that it is easy and quick to find and say them. It also helps them know what to do when they can't find a word.

Children with word finding difficulties often have very set ideas about a word, for example, "you drink from a cup and it's only made of china".

Use this sheet to help you think around words with your child.

Things we need to know about a word

	What else could be used?	Sounds?	
Where used?	- Jug - Glass - Mug - Bottle	- Starts with a 'c' - Has 1 beat - Rhymes with pup	Category or group
- Breakfast - Lunch - Dinner - Teatime - Supper - Saturday etc.			- Household object - Container - China
Different			Where?
- Bucket - Jug - Kettle - Bag - Glass - Potty			- In kitchen - In sideboard - In dresser - On dresser
Looks like?			Do with it?
- Things with handles - Different sizes - With/without saucer - Shiny - No spout - Different shapes			- put tea in - put juice in - put gravy in - crack eggs in - put flowers in
	Made of		
Similar	- China - Plastic - Cardboard - Pottery - Glass - Pyrex - Handle - Bowl	Feels like?	
- Mug - Coffee cup - Beaker - Glass		- Hard - Smooth - Cold - Possible rough if old and plastic - Heavy/light	

Ideas to Help with Understanding Words

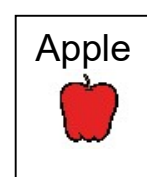
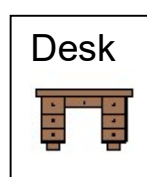
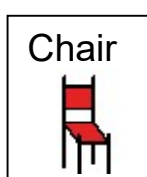
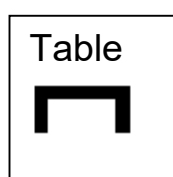
Sorting by Groups

Use objects or pictures

- Start with very different groups e.g. food and animals, clothes and food. Tell your child the names of the groups. Ask your child to sort the other pictures into the right groups.
- Then make the groups less different e.g. vegetables and fruit, hot day clothes and cold day clothes
- When they can do this, let them sort in a new way - can they tell you the group name (e.g. red things and blue things).
- Use more groups. Sort into four groups.
- Sort the same group of pictures again e.g. First sort by what you do with them (e.g., eat/ wear). Then ask them to sort a different way e.g. by colour or where they are found.

This helps a child to:

- ✓ develop different ways of thinking about a word.
- ✓ make different links between words.
- ✓ understand the words
- ✓ store them in their memory.
- When your child can sort in different ways, ask them to name different objects in a group. Ask them to name 'clothes' or 'food'. Make it harder by asking for hot food or cold food or hot day clothes.
- Name 3 or 4 objects and see if your child can guess the group name e.g. banana, apple, orange, cherry (all fruit)
- Odd one out –



Find the odd one out and say why.

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Ideas to Help with Understanding Words

Describing words (or attributes)

Children with language difficulties often have few or set meanings for a word
e.g. a ball – something you kick.

They may not see the other attributes or links to different groups.

Help your child to think of as many things about an object.

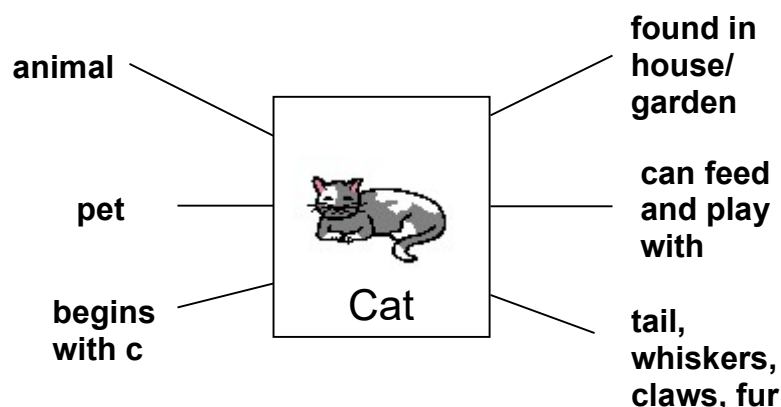
e.g. a ball – you kick it, it's a toy, it's round, it's hard, it's made of plastic etc.

First help your child know what to say.

Help your child by prompting:

1. What do you do with it?
2. What 'group' is it in? (animals, clothes, etc)
3. Where would you find it?
4. What colour is it?
5. What shapes can you see?
6. Does it have any special parts?
7. What letter does it begin with?

Draw a picture to show the links:



Next, help your child learn to describe words by themselves.

Play 'I Spy': you describe the object instead of saying the letter sound.

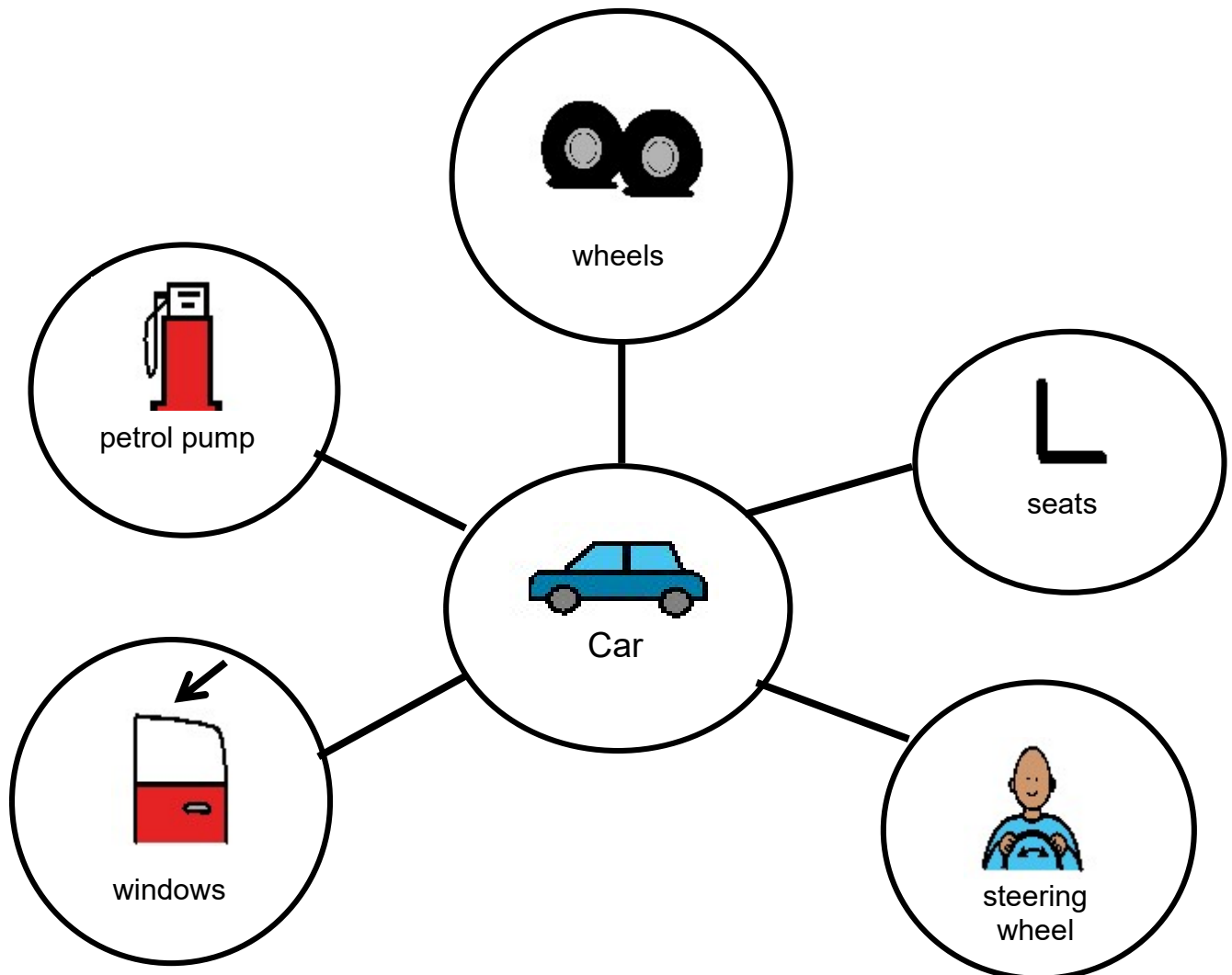
This is a quick and easy way to do describing work.

Think of things that have similar descriptions:

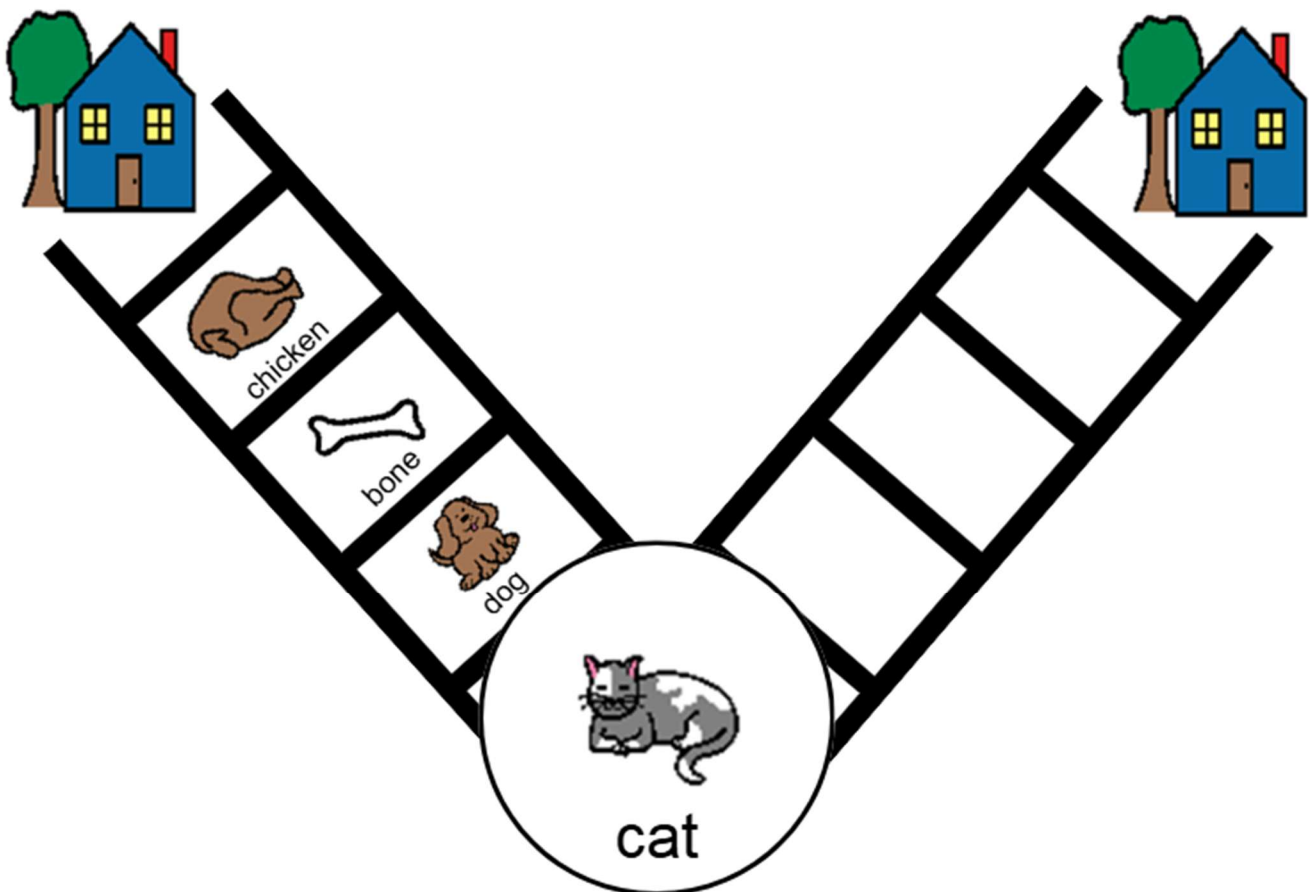
- I spy something that is round - plate, ball, apple, sun, ring
- I spy something that is red – apple, ball, sock

Do these with your child:

- **Book:** Make a describing book - put different descriptions on each page. Draw or stick pictures of 'hard' things on one page, then 'round', 'long', 'smelly', 'cold' things on other pages and so on.
- **Treasure Hunt:** Do a 'treasure hunt' round the classroom/school or home looking for objects that have things in common e.g. red things, soft things, square things.
- **Points game:** Think of as many different parts of an object. Score points.
 - i) example: Telephone: handset, buttons, wire, receiver, bell (get points for each one that you think of)
 - ii) draw each object part by part
 - iii) make and stick on each part
 - iv) do a web drawing to show each part.



- **Word links:** Make word links with attributes.
Take it in turns to think of things which are linked.
e.g. snow → cold → ice cream → chips → fork → spoon → washing up → sink → wardrobe → trousers
- You can do this in a game by drawing the objects on to a game board.



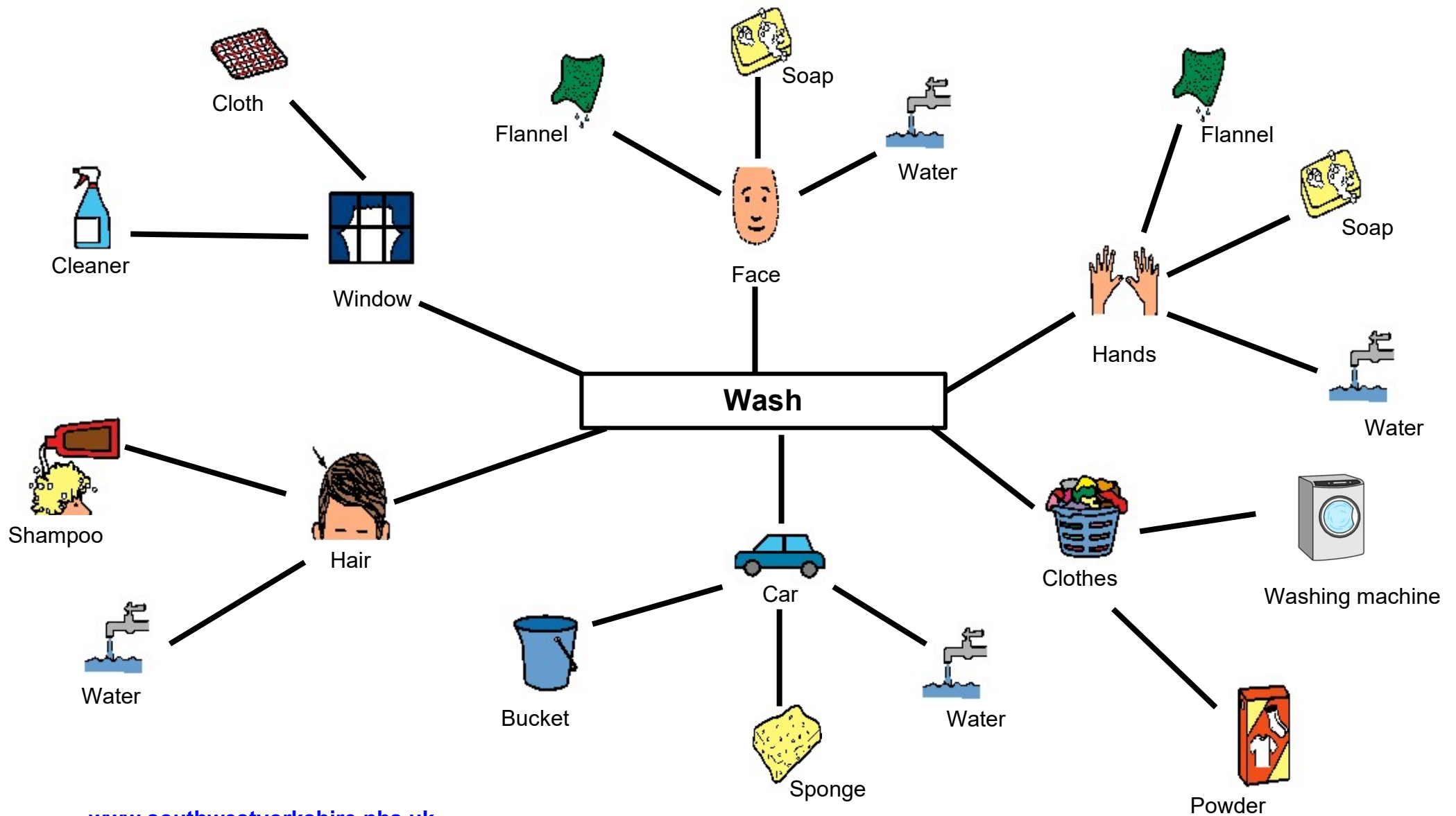
Take turns to draw objects that are linked along the path. The one who draws the most pictures and reaches the house wins.

- **Word webs:** Make drawings together and have more links. This will help your child to think around words and their meanings. These are examples of some drawings.

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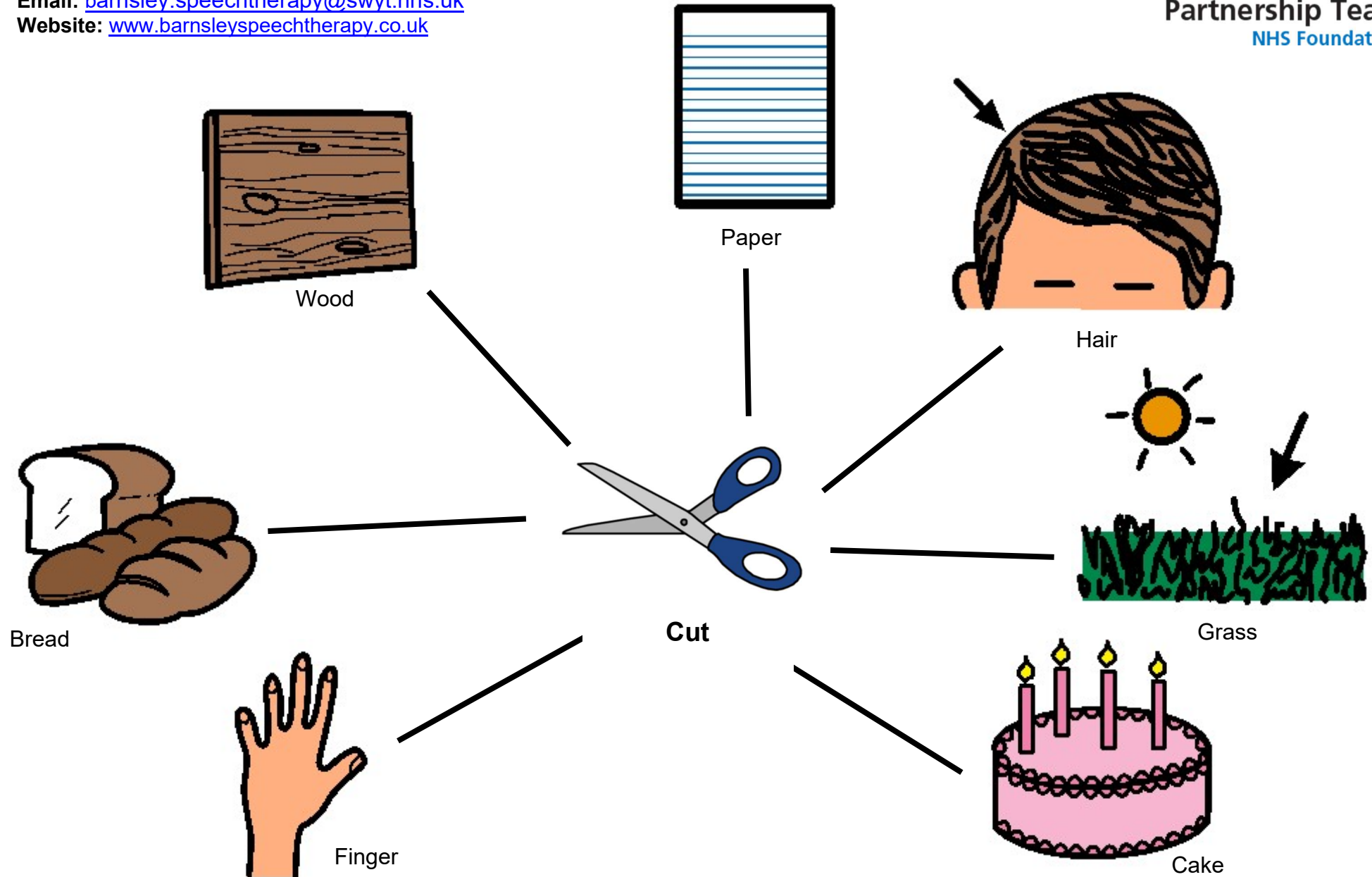
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With all of us in mind.

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