

Speech and Language Therapy Activities

Understanding of Language

Speech and Language Therapy Programme

Answering Questions: Blank level 3



These activities will help children practice answering questions that require them to use world knowledge and knowledge of their own experiences to make deductions, interpretations and group information together.

Examples of Blank level 3 questions/instructions:



- Telling a story or describing an event
- Summarising a story
- Making predictions
- Assuming roles - what does a character say?
- How does a character feel?
- Following a set of directions
- Planning and giving a set of directions
- Defining words e.g. 'what does sow. . . mean'

Activities to practice answering questions

These activities aim to help your child answer more complex questions.

Practice these activities for 5 or 10 minutes about 3 times a week! It is best to practice little and often!

1. Directions

a. Do as I say!

As the child to follow commands that involve moving around the classroom or house, e.g. "go and take the register to the office then take this note to year two".

b. Map it out

It is important for a child to follow directions but they should also be encouraged to give directions. Play games where the



child is the teacher and gives either you or others in a group, directions to follow. This can involve having a set of objects in front of them, which they have to ask others to take to various places, or it could be a pen and paper exercise. For example draw a map on a piece of paper. Give your child the map and take turns giving directions e.g. "draw a blue line up to the shop and then turn left along the road and stop at the park".

When you have finished you can compare maps and see if they look the same.



2. Sequencing

Sequencing is a key skill to understanding why ideas fit together and is important for understanding prediction.

See if your child can sequence a short story, or the sequence of events in their day. See if they can summarise information in a picture book.

3. Making predictions

At this level of questioning children should be encouraged to make simple predictions. A few ideas are given below:

a. **Initially, always work from a child's own experience**

Encourage them to predict what is going to happen next during everyday situations e.g. just before the bell goes for lunch

b. **Provide picture cues of all the activities the child is going to do in the day**

Make a visual timetable. Encourage the child to look at the cue cards when they have finished an activity and tell you what is going to happen next

c. **Give forced choice alternatives**

If the child finds it difficult to answer an open ended question then give them a choice of two answers with one of them being correct.

E.g. "what is going to happen next? Are we going to play or going to assembly?"

d. **Ask them what is going to happen to others**

Ask what the teacher might do next



- e. **Use picture sequencing cards**
Leave the last picture out of the sequence and see if the child can tell you what might happen next.
Gradually ask the child to predict things beyond the immediate situations
- f. **Ask them to predict what they might do when they get home/at the weekend**
- g. **Ask them to predict what might happen to characters on the television or in books**

4. Understanding others

Some children have great difficulty understanding how others feel or seeing things from another person's point of view.



- a. **Initially use real situations**
Explain the other person's point of view and how he might feel.
Keep the language as simple as possible
- b. **Some children benefit from drawing or writing down the explanations**
- c. **If the child understands role play...**
Role play can be helpful in exploring situations
- d. **Sometimes it is easier for the child not to be involved**
Act out scenarios with toys so the child can see what happens.
Playmobil is ideal. Discuss how the various characters are feeling and what they could say in the situations.



Some possible situations include:

- Two children are playing with a ball and another child wants to join in. What is he saying? How is he feeling? What do the others think? What are they saying?
- A child is hit in the playground and finds an adult. What does he say? How does he feel? What does the adult think? What is the adult saying?
- One child tells another that she has lost her cat. What does she say? How does she feel? What does the other child say?

You can use books in a similar way. When reading a story book with the child encourage them to think about how different characters might be feeling about what has happened to them. What they might be thinking? What might they say?

Always work from the child's experience. Always act out scenarios that are relevant to your child. Only move to other situations when your child can confidently reason at this level from their own experience.

References

Blank, Rose and Berlin (1978). *The language of learning: the preschool years*. New York: Gurne and Stratton Inc.

Elks and McLachlan (2008). *Language Builders: advice and activities to encourage children's communication skills*. St Maybn; Elklan.