

What are word-finding difficulties?

We all know what it is like to have a word 'on the tip of your tongue' – you know exactly what you mean to say, but the word, or name, that you know so well, has completely blanked from your mind. You try to remember what letter it starts with, or word it reminds you of, but it is only a moment later, when you have given up trying, that the word springs back into your mind.

Occasionally, we all slip up on odd words, or muddle two together, e.g. parcar for car park. Children with word-finding difficulties may have this problem all the time. They do not understand what is going wrong and are likely to find communicating with words very confusing and extremely hard work.

Word-finding difficulties are not the same as having a poor vocabulary. Children have knowledge of the words, but they cannot access them easily from their memory.

How You Can Help

Here are some 'tips' for helping your child when they have difficulty thinking of their words.

1. If you think you know the word which your child is struggling to find, you may be able to give them clues in different ways:
 - a) by initial letter sound, 'It's a g.....'
 - b) by description, 'It's made of glass'
 - c) by function, 'We drink from it'
 - d) by location, 'It's found in the kitchen cupboard'
2. Encourage them to cue themselves by using the above methods, e.g. what does it start with? What do you do with it? etc.
3. A child with word-finding difficulties may take longer than expected to
 - a) process what has just been said
 - b) to formulate a response

So remember to give your child plenty of time to respond to your questions.

4. In conversation, it is important that a child is successful communicating rather than finding the precise words. In some cases children may require direct speech and language therapy intervention. Your speech and language therapist will advise you whether this is necessary. Alternatively the speech and language therapist will provide you with ideas and resources to help your child develop these sounds at home/school.

Therapist

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**SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPY FOR
CHILDREN WITH
WORD-FINDING DIFFICULTIES**

**INFORMATION FOR PARENTS,
CARERS AND SCHOOL STAFF**