

Language Processing in the Classroom

The following strategies can be used in the classroom to assist the child with difficulty processing spoken language. Children with delayed or disordered language processing have difficulty following instructions in the classroom and understanding the information that is presented. Minor adaptations can be made to the classroom routine that can have a significant impact on a child's language processing.

Positioning



The child with language processing difficulties needs to be seated as near to information source as possible. For example, if a child is required to listen to the teacher or another speaker, he should be sitting/standing at the front of the class. If he is required to copy information from the board he should be seated closest to the board and facing it.

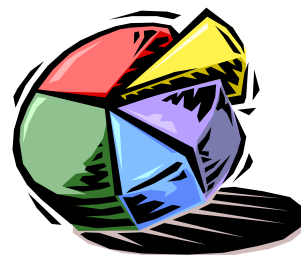
Chunking

Information is more easily processed if it is presented in points or "chunks". This means breaking an instruction down into shorter, simpler steps. For example, instead of saying...

"Everyone, get out your maths books and turn to page 35. Read pages 35 to 40 then answer the questions on the last page. When you're finished bring your books to me and choose an activity from the board."

Try breaking the information into steps...

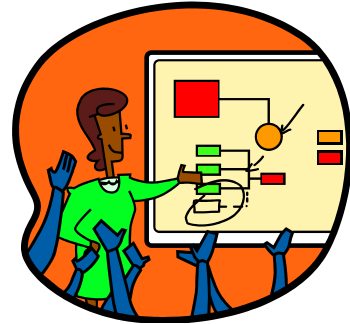
- 1 "First, get out your maths books."
- 2 "Now turn to page 35."



- 3 "Read pages 35 to 40"
- 4 "Finally, answer the questions on the last page"

Visual cues

Information is more easily processed if it is presented in more than one form. Include visual information with spoken information to assist in comprehension. This can take the form of pictures, objects and/or words. In the above example it would be helpful to...



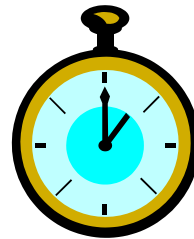
- 1 Hold up the maths book as you refer to it.
- 2 Hold it open at the page you mean so the child can recognise the right page when he finds it.
- 3 Write **key words** up on the board or encourage the child to write down one or two key words that will help him to remember.
- 4 Create a tick chart for the child to tick off activities as he completes them.

Rehearsal

Encourage the child to repeat instructions or information he has heard after he hears them. He can do this out loud or quietly to himself. If he has a chance to say the information himself before acting on it, he is more likely to process and retain it.

Time

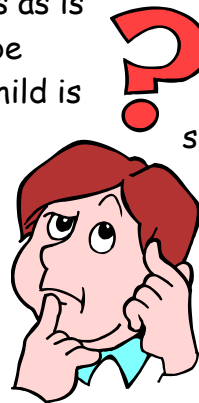
Some children require extra time to process what they hear. Allow the child time to rehearse and process information/instructions before asking any questions of him or expecting him to do what is required.



Distractions



Any distraction will make it increasingly difficult for a child to process language. Ensure the child is positioned as far from distractions as is possible. For example, there should be minimal noise required to concentrate. Ensure he is seated in a position where there are minimal visual distractions.



Seeking help

Part of taking responsibility for learning is seeking help when you are unsure what is expected of you. Children need to be encouraged to seek help and clarify issues. A child may feel uncomfortable admitting that he needs help. A way to avoid this discomfort is to teach key phrases e.g. "can you say again". It is also a good idea to use a 'help card'. This involves having a card placed on the child's desk. When he needs clarification or help he turns the card over so the 'help card' is facing up. The teacher then sees this and attends to the child without him having to ask a question in front of the class. When seeking help the child needs to be encouraged to state what he has understood or processed. He then needs to ask specific questions to meet his needs. For example, instead of saying "what are we doing now?" encourage the child to acknowledge what he has heard...

"I know we are doing our maths now. I can't remember what page to turn to."