



Handouts for Teachers:

How to Modify Activities for Children with Language Problems

Introduction:

This handout is intended for speech-language pathologists to give to classroom teachers and instructional aides to assist children with language problems. These ideas will help educators understand how to break down and modify classroom activities that may be too difficult for our children with language impairments.



Modifying Classroom Activities for Children with Language Problems

Our children with language problems often struggle with classroom activities due to their difficulties processing, understanding, and formulating the use of language. Here are some simple modifications that you can make in the classroom to help a child who is having difficulty with language.

Children with Auditory Processing Difficulties

These children have difficulty processing information that they hear.

How to Help:

- Repeat or rephrase key information throughout the lesson
- Reduce background noise, seat the child away from heaters and windows
- Use visual aids such as demonstrating new concepts, writing on a white board, etc.
- Break down tasks and instructions into smaller steps

Children with Receptive Language Difficulties

These children have difficulty understanding language in any form (spoken, written, etc.).

How to Help:

- Speak in shorter sentences when explaining things to the child
- Repeat or rephrase key information throughout the lesson. Use simpler words when possible.
- Use pictures to help the child understand new information
- Check for understanding often (ask the child to tell you what they understood)
- Break down tasks and instructions into smaller steps

Children with Expressive Language Difficulties

These children have difficulty using and producing language in any form (spoken, written, etc.).

How to Help:

- Allow children extra time to formulate and produce responses or assignments that use language (speaking an answer or writing a project)
- Provide opportunities for the child to show his understanding in other ways that don't require as much language (drawing a picture, acting something out, creating a diorama, etc.)
- Shorten assignments that require a lot of language output, such as writing assignments or speeches
- Provide alternative ways for the child to get his basic wants and needs met in the classroom, such as by having picture boards with choices of activities or a card he can hold up to ask to use the restroom, etc.

Additional Information:

Each child with speech and language difficulties is different and will have different needs. These suggestions will get you started but work closely with a speech-language pathologist to make sure that all of the child's needs are being met in the classroom.