



LINDON BENNETT SCHOOL
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SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPY PARENT HANDOUT

How to Model Language

What is Modelling Language?

Modelling language is a natural and supportive way to teach communication skills by demonstrating desired language forms during everyday interactions. Instead of directly instructing a person to use specific words or phrases, we show them how by integrating these forms into meaningful and functional communication. This approach is highly effective for individuals developing language skills, particularly neurodivergent children or those with speech and language delays.



Why do we model language?

- **Promote Language Growth:** Provides opportunities to learn new vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structures in a naturalistic way.
- **Reduce Pressure:** Eliminates the demand for immediate repetition or performance, fostering a positive and low-stress learning environment.



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How do we model language?

Parallel Talk



What it is: When you talk about what YOUR CHILD is doing, seeing, feeling, touching, etc. You use child-friendly language to describe what is happening in that moment. You shouldn't ask your child questions during parallel talk. Parallel Talk is great to do when you are down on the floor playing with your child.

Examples: "You have a car! You pushed the car. Beep-beep! Here comes the car!" "You got your drink. That's your blue cup. Mmm! You're drinking milk!"

Self-Talk



What it is: When you use child-friendly language to talk about what YOU are doing, without expecting your child to respond. You can use this strategy during everyday activities around the house.

Examples: "I am picking up the toys. I put them in your basket. Blocks go in!" "Mommy's making cookies. I'm stirring. I put them in the oven."



Recasting:

What it is: Repeating a word, phrase or sentence the child said but saying it back correctly. This avoids telling the child ‘no we say it like this’.

Example: Child says, “Doggy runned” and the adult models, “Doggy running”



Expansion:

What it is: Building on a phrase by adding more words or information.

Example: Child says, “Ball,” and the adult models, “You’re throwing the ball!”





Tips for Effective Modelling:

KEEP IT SIMPLE

Match or slightly exceed the individual's current language level.



BE CONSISTENT:

Model frequently throughout daily routines.

EMPHASIZE KEY WORDS:



Be aware of your rate of speech and stress important words.



FOLLOW THEIR LEAD:



Build on their interests and actions to keep interactions engaging.

BE PATIENT



Avoid pressuring for immediate responses; language develops over time.



USE VISUALS:

Pair spoken language with gestures, signs, or pictures.ing for immediate responses; language develops over time.





Activities to model language

Use movement and sensory-motor experiences to make language stick

Physical movement and sensory experiences help children regulate and feel ready to interact. This is really important when we are focussing on language and communication too. Movement and sensory experiences also provide fun opportunities for learning language! This might include:

- Swings or the slide at the park
- Building a 'den' out of cushions and blankets at home
- Dancing with your child
- Making an obstacle course at home or in the garden
- Going for a walk

Modelling language (short phrases) in different play and activities

Bubbles

- I love bubbles!
- So many bubbles!
- This is fun
- It's my turn
- Do it again
- Let's pop more



Jumping on a trampoline or bed

- Time to jump
- I'm jumping or bouncing
- This is fun
- I'm so high
- I love jumping
- Let's go (higher or faster)





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On the swing

- Push me
- Let's go (fast, slow, high)
- Time to swing
- Wanna swing?
- Big swing!
- This is fun
- I love the swing
- Let's do it again



Getting dressed

- Time to get dressed
- Let's get dressed
- Let's get (trousers, top, jumper and so on)
- Time for (trousers, top, jumper and so on)
- What's next?
- There's the sock!
- I'm ready!





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Getting ready to go outside

- It's time to go
- Let's go outside
- Gotta get (shoes, coat, hat)
- Let's put shoes on
- Time for shoes
- I need help
- We're ready



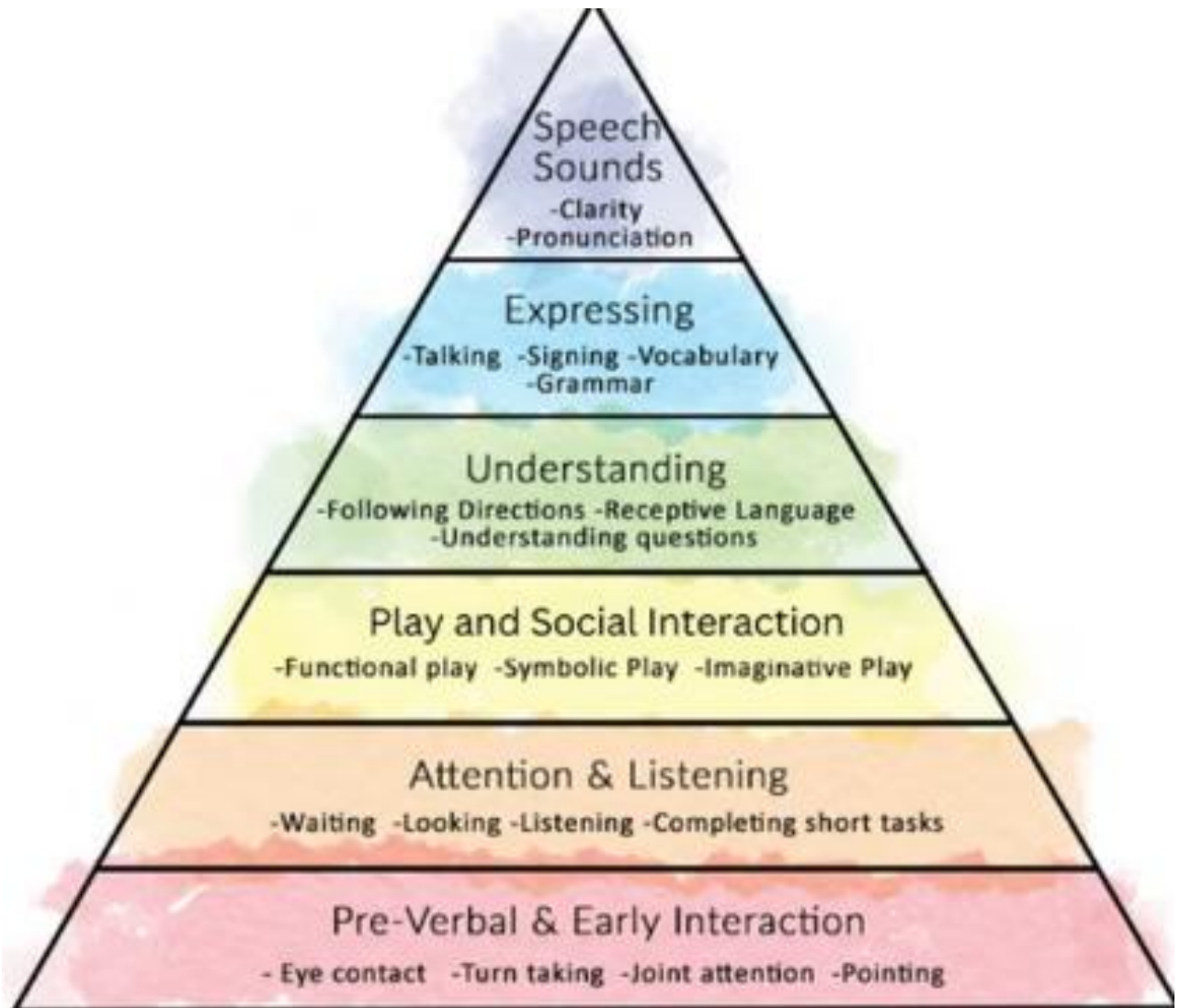
Bath time

- Time for a bath
- It's too hot or cold
- It feels nice
- Let's get clean
- Time to wash (body part)
- I'm splashing
- I love bubbles
- It's so fun





Communication Pyramid:



Modelling language consistently targets:

- Understanding
- Expressing