



**SCOTTISH
COCHLEAR IMPLANT
PROGRAMME**

First words

Tips to support language
development



What are information carrying words? (ICWs)

Information carrying words are the important words in a sentence that a child needs to understand in order to follow an instruction.

When we talk to children, we often give them lots of clues without realising it.

For example, if you say, “Give me the cup,” and there is only one cup in front of your outstretched hand, your child doesn’t actually need to understand the words.

They can use the situation (the cup + your gesture) to work out what to do. But when there’s more than one option, your child has to listen more carefully.

An example

If you place a car and a cup in front of your child and say:

➡ “Give me the car.”

Now they need to understand the word car to get it right—this means they are listening at a one information carrying word level.

They use one key piece of information to follow the instruction.





Tips for getting to one word level

Step 1

Build joint attention by:-

- playing games, like Peek-a-boo
- rolling a ball back and forth
- looking and talking about the pages in a book together

Step 2

Encourage vocalisations by:-

- using symbolic sounds during play. Animal sounds are appealing to babies/ toddlers.
- playing Ready steady Go games – where you wait for the vocalisation for ‘Go’

Step 3

Pair words with objects/sign:-

- Name/sign objects which are part of your child’s routines, like cup, milk, up
- Keep language simple and repetitive
- Vocally highlight the words you want your child to learn. Babies love a sing-song voice





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Step 4

Encourage your child to use the word by:-

- Offering choices – do you want an apple or banana? Pause and wait to give your child a chance to ask. Reward any attempt at the word and repeat the word back to your child to allow them to hear it again.



Step 5

Use functional and consistent language to allow your child to hear words many times.

- Use words, like more, again, up , bye bye

TIPS

- Use every opportunity to develop your child's language, like dressing time to talk about their clothes/ body parts
- Imagine what your child would say if they could and model the language for them.
- If they look to the ball, you could say, 'It's a ball. Let's roll the ball. Daddy catch the ball.' This gives you child many opportunities to hear the word.