Strategies used at the BJS Federation of schools to help children with speech and language difficulties

INPUT

Children with Speech and language difficulties (SLD) may have difficulties with any one of three input processes: hearing, vision and/or attention to what is being said

Gain and keep the child's attention, call their name first – tell them whether you want them to 'look' or 'listen' before you begin to ask a question.

Try to be at an appropriate distance and on the same level as the child, particularly if the information is important

Be aware that background noise, visuals and environment can be highly distracting.

Remind the whole class about good listening behaviours and positively reinforce at all times

Familiarise children with new vocabulary before you use it so that they can understand your lesson.

Help children develop the ability to ask for help. Model and encourage the use of specific strategies e.g. I need more time/ please say that again.

PROCESSING:

Children with SLD may have difficulty with one or many parts of processing, e.g. memory, comprehension, vocabulary, conceptual understanding or knowledge, reasoning, life experience, word retrieval, grammatical understanding or confidence with different social rules/situations

Give clear, unambiguous messages by using short, simple sentences

Break the sentence up into shorter chunks if you can, with time for processing

Repeat if necessary, without getting cross

Ensure that the key vocabulary is being understood and emphasise the key words

Slow your rate of speech slightly and use gestures and visuals e.g. pictures and drawings if it will help

Throughout all topics, introduce vocabulary specifically and carefully, with scaffolding to support its acquisition

Provide practise for receiving, processing and outputting information such as memory lists, listen-and-do activities, *following instructions in games etc.*

Encourage children to rehearse to help them remember i.e. saying it over and over.

OUTPUT

Children with SLD may struggle to get their own ideas out because of sequencing, fluency, speech production or social difficulties

Avoid anticipating the child's response, let them speak for themselves and don't interrupt

Give the child your whole attention while they are speaking and give non-verbal encouragement, e.g. nodding and smiling

Extend the child's utterances by modelling a fuller sentence, but don't push them to repeat it back

Avoid anticipating needs, create opportunities for the child to communicate to get what they want (give puzzles to be solved, like asking them to colour but without giving pens)

When you ask questions, try to make them open, rather than closed, so that the emphasis is on quality of information required back

Give the child opportunities to lead and to direct, e.g. by taking messages

Encourage use of strategies to support communication and reward effort by taking responsibility – e.g. "Help me to be a better listener"

Help the child with poor speech by being clear with your *own speech- model initial and final constants, clap out syllables.*

Model a slow rate of speech and use pauses- it's likely children will mirror this.