

## STRATEGIES TO USE WHEN YOUR CHILD IS DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND

It can be very frustrating for both the child and the listener if their speech is difficult to understand. Below are some ideas that may help:

- ✓ Repeat back what you did understand and let your child fill in the gaps.  
eg. *"I know you want me to get you something, you want me to get you.....?"*
- ✓ Encourage your child to use gesture, pictures or objects to help you understand
- ✓ Ask them to show you
- ✓ Ask them to give you more information. You can help by asking questions based on the parts that you have understood.  
eg. *"Is that the name of someone in your class?"*  
*"I know you're talking about an animal.....is it a big animal?.....does it live on farm?.....what colour is it?.....what noise does it make?" etc.*  
*"Something happened at school.....did it happen in the playground?.....in assembly?.... ..in class?" etc.*
- ✓ Ask your child to draw what they are trying to say to give you some context of this
- ✓ Talk to your child's school/nursery to find out what they have done that day so you might be able to understand some of what they are talking about.
- ✓ If you cannot understand because they are giving you too much information at once (or are speaking too quickly), reassure them (using a slow pace of speech yourself) that you have plenty of time to listen but could they tell you a little bit at a time. You can then repeat back each part as they tell you, to ensure you are understanding and following.
- ✓ Know your child's sound pattern. This will provide you with a code system that may help, eg. if your child always produces long sounds (such as f/s/sh) as short sounds (such as t/d), or sounds made towards the back of the mouth (such as k/g) as front sounds (such as t/d), you may be able to work out what sounds should be in the words they are saying.
- ✓ Share key words and information with friends, class teacher, playgroup staff etc. Providing information such as the names of family members, pets, favourite toys and details of recent family events, trips etc. that your child may talk about will help others to understand them.

### **IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER:**

- It is not helpful to pretend to understand your child if they are unclear
- When you have worked out the word your child is saying, remember to repeat back the word for them with the correct pronunciation, slightly emphasising the sound they mispronounced. Do not ask your child to repeat the word, simply allow them to hear your correct pronunciation.