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Tips for Teachers to Help Children with Language Disorders: Phonemic and Semantic Cues

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Background Information:

There are many students in our schools receiving Speech-Language Pathology (SLP) services; however, not all these children have articulation disorders. SLPs also work with children who have difficulty with language skills. Language disorders often accompany difficulties such as attention deficit disorder, learning disabilities, and intellectual disabilities. Children who have sustained a physical injury, such as a closed head injury, or have perceptual difficulties, such as hearing impairment, may also have difficulties learning language.

Receptive language disorders affect a student's understanding of spoken or written language. Students with receptive language disorders may have difficulty with skills such as following directions, reading and auditory comprehension, auditory processing, sequencing events, and visual relationships. Receptive language disorders can affect academic performance and contribute to disruptive classroom behavior.

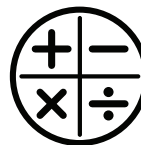


Expressive language disorders affect a child's spoken and written language. Children with expressive language disorders may have difficulties with vocabulary (e.g. word finding, word meanings, categorization), grammar, story telling, and syntax (i.e. word order and sentence production).

The purpose of this Handy Handout is to provide the classroom teacher with cueing strategies to help a student with language impairment within the classroom setting.

PHONEMIC CUES:

Children with language disorders may have difficulty labeling an object or remembering a name. This is similar to the feeling of "having it on the tip of your tongue." A phonemic cue helps the child produce the word quicker! Simply give the child the first sound of the word:



Math Example: $2 + 2 =$ (cue "four" by saying the sound "f...")



History Example: The Declaration of Independence was signed in...(cue 1776 by saying "s...")



Science Example: The gas humans breath is...(cue "oxygen" by saying "ah...")



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SEMANTIC CUES:

Semantic cueing is a technique that allows the educator to give a student additional clues to arrive at an answer. For example, you are doing a brainstorming activity to name as many words as possible that relate to transportation. The children name things like: "train," "car," and "bike." You could prompt a student by saying... "What do we ride in the air? It's big and has wings. It's a _____." Educators use semantic cueing daily!



Here are a few ways to give a semantic cue:



1. **Sentence Completion:**
"You put juice in a _____." (cup)
"The day before Thursday is _____." (Wednesday)



2. **Providing attributes:**
"It's red. It's a fruit. It grows on a tree." (apple)
"It's furniture. It has four legs. You eat meals at it." (table)



3. **Opposites:**
"Not up, but..." (down)
"The opposite of new is..." (old)



4. **Combined with phonemic cues:**
"It's up in the sky. It's hot and yellow. The 's...'" (sun)

These cues can benefit the entire class; however, they are especially helpful for a child who needs additional help due to a language disorder. Phonemic and semantic cues replace giving the child the answers. Use these cues in written form to help with homework.

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