

## TOP TIPS: HOW TO HELP!



**Use SIMPLE language:** Keep your sentences short. Say, "Food time now." or "Put shoes on."



**SLOW** down your speech and if necessary, repeat exactly what you have said so that your child has time to process and understand what you have said.



**Give them TIME:** Your child may need time to think about what they have heard and time to decide what to say. Give them time to respond, and look at them while you wait.



**COMMENTS not questions:** Asking lots of questions can make a child with SLI feel worried or anxious; listening to and answering questions can take a lot of concentration. They may also feel that there is a right or wrong answer. Make conversation by commenting on what they are doing and what is happening.



**SHOW them the right way:** If your child makes a mistake, instead of asking them to repeat the words correctly, show them that you understand, by saying their word or sentence correctly. If they say, "Her play with me today." you can say, "Yes, she played with you today."



**BUILD on what they say:** Add one or two words to what your child has said. If your child says, "See dog." you could say, "Yes, you saw a dog in the park."



**Offer a CHOICE:** If your child uses very little language, encourage them to make a choice. If they ask for a drink, say, "Orange juice or apple juice?" and wait for their response.



**PLAY:** Play with your child and talk about what you are doing as you play. Say what you see and what you are doing. For example: "I am putting the train on the track. The train is going under the bridge".



**TALK about the pictures:** When reading with your child, talk about what you see in the pictures, it is a great opportunity to extend your child's vocabulary and to notice words they are having difficulty with.



**Take the blame:** If you do not understand what your child has said, ease their anxiety by taking the blame. Say that you couldn't hear very well or apologise for not listening carefully.



**ENCOURAGE and teach:** Praise and show your child how to say that they don't understand what has been said and teach them how to ask what a word means.



**Forced ALTERNATIVES:** If your child doesn't know the name of something or gives the wrong word, (e.g. calling a cherry a strawberry), ask them if it is a cherry or a strawberry? This will give them a feeling of success and enable them to choose the correct word.



**PRAISE:** Always praise your child's attempts to communicate with you. It is important for your child to feel confident and safe enough to make mistakes without criticism.