HOW CAN WE HELP?

Increasing expressive language skills by encouraging choice making

- Offering children choices will help them to learn that they can communicate their needs and have some control over their environment.

- Often you may already know what the child wants (e.g. what they prefer to drink or which toy they enjoy playing with, etc.) but if you give them what they want straight away, they will have no reason to communicate. Offering the child a choice will encourage their communication skills.

- If the child is not yet able to make choices, start by offering them a favourite item and something you know they dislike. If they select the item they dislike by mistake, it is important to give them this to help them learn about making choices.

- Once they understand the idea of making choices, you can try offering them two things that they like.

- When offering the child a choice, use clear and simple language e.g. "Biscuit or apple?" and show them the items on offer. Give the child plenty of time to respond.

- If the child looks at or points to the item they want but doesn't say the word, model the word for them to hear e.g. "Apple, you want apple." If the child uses a single word to make the choice, you can encourage them to link words together by modelling a slightly longer phrase e.g. "Want apple".

Choices can be offered throughout the day, please see just a few examples below:

- At snack time: "Do you want milk or juice?"

- During creative activities: "Do you want red or blue?"

- During P.E: "Do you want ball or hoop?"

- During dressing: "Do you want socks or trousers?"

- During free play: "Do you want <u>lego</u> or <u>cars</u>?"

- During water play: "Do you want <u>cup</u> or <u>boat</u>?"

- At story time: "Do you want <u>Spot</u> or <u>Hungry Caterpillar</u>?"

If you require any further support/advice please contact via the following email

Walsall.slt@nhs.net

In the subject line please state **FAO the Virtual School Speech and Language Therapy Support team** to ensure your message is actioned by the relevant team.