

# HOW CAN WE HELP AT HOME? KS3 & KS4

## Strategies to Support Word Finding & Vocabulary Difficulties

Children/Young People (CYP) can struggle to learn and use new words. They need to hear a new word many times in different situations before they learn to understand and use it meaningfully themselves. During the Secondary School years young people are exposed to a large amount of curriculum specific vocabulary that is covered at a rapid pace in lessons.

Some things that you may notice if the CYP is struggling to learn and/or use new words:

- The CYP may complain that they do not understand instructions in the classroom
- The CYP may use sentences that do not make sense
- The CYP may use words like 'thingy', 'it', 'that' and 'you know', For example: *"Give me the thingy", "Where is it?"* instead of *"Give me the tangerine"* and *"Where is the marker?"*
- The CYP may frequently use the wrong words (e.g. 'chicken' for 'turkey' or 'toothbrush' for 'toothpaste')

The following ideas are ways to support vocabulary development at home:

- The school may set up an individual word book to encourage the retention of new vocabulary learnt in lessons. You can practise these words at home with the CYP. Adding pictures into the word book can help to reinforce vocabulary.
- Check the CYP understands the meaning of specific words. For example: *"What does budget mean?"*, *"What word means someone who breaks into other people's houses?"*
- If the CYP struggles to think of the correct word, see if they can give a description of the word or tell you what letter/sound the word starts with. For example: *"The wooden things that go on walls and you put books on them"* or *"The shed that is on the side of a house that a car goes in"*.
- If you know the word that the CYP is thinking of you can give them the first sound, for example, *"oh you mean the sh..."* to help the child to respond with the target word.

- If you know the word the CYP is trying to say, provide a meaning clue (e.g. for 'cat' – 'it's an animal', 'it drinks milk', 'it purrs')
- Encourage the CYP to use a dictionary or internet search engine to look up word meanings
- If you notice that the CYP has not understood a word, take the opportunity to teach it to them there and then, it helps to learn new words in real life situations. Encourage the CYP to write the word down in their word book
- The CYP may use 'Mind Maps' at school to learn new topic vocabulary – encourage the CYP to talk to you about them
- Any guessing game that you play at home will support the CYP's vocabulary development. For example, 'Twenty Questions'.
- Odd One Out Games – the CYP picks the odd one out from a group of words (e.g. 'London', 'Wales', 'Scotland', 'England').

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

[walsall.slt@nhs.net](mailto:walsall.slt@nhs.net)

In the subject line please state **FAO Virtual School SLCN Support** to ensure that your message is actioned by the relevant team.