

ONTARIO ASSOCIATION FOR FAMILIES OF CHILDREN WITH COMMUNICATION DISORDERS



D: Helping your Child Communicate The Difficult-To-Understand Child

Some children may be difficult to understand. Strategies which may facilitate communication include:

- Pay close attention to their communication attempts.
- Respond as soon as you can so that communication attempts are encouraged. It gives the child feedback that what he/she has to say is important.
- Encourage the child to repeat information. (Tell me again.)
- Repeat back portions of the message that were understood and have the child fill in. (The boy saw a _____.)
- Ask key questions (Kate went where? or Joel said what?)
- Watch the type of questions you ask. If the child is difficult to understand, questions requiring shorter responses may facilitate success.
- Have the child provide additional information (Tell me more about it.; Tell me more about your party.)
- Have the child 'Show you' or 'Take you there'.
- If you understand what the child says, do not ask him/her to repeat in order to correct pronunciation or grammatical errors.
- Once the message is interpreted, repeat it back to the child - this provides an appropriate model.
- Use others in the child's environment to help you fill in details (eg. parents, assistants, other children)
- Sometimes you may need to acknowledge that you do not understand and that you will try again next time.