

VOCABULARY SELECTION FOR CHILDREN AGES 5 AND YOUNGER



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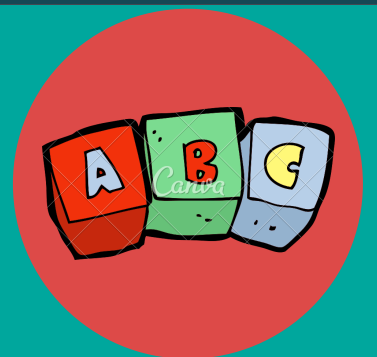


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SLPs must be specific when choosing novel vocabulary words to target. There are many factors to consider during target selection for children with developmental language disorders (DLD).

PHONOLOGICAL INVENTORY

Children are more likely to learn a word if all the sounds in the word are within their phonological inventory. It is important for SLPs to determine "in" and "out" words.



Why ???



Children demonstrate lower comprehension and production of novel words when targets are "out" words.

"In" words contain sounds that are within the child's phonemic inventory.

"Out" words contain at least one sound that is not in the child's phonological inventory.

PHONOTACTIC PROBABILITY

Children learn words with low phonotactic probability better than words with high phonotactic probability.

Why ???

- Low phonotactic probability have distinct, unique sounds that are easier to keep track of
- Words with high phonotactic probability may cause confusion for the child, as they may sound like familiar, known words

OBJECT FAMILIARITY

Children with DLD learn words for unfamiliar objects easier than words for familiar objects.

Why ???

- Children tend to think a new word refers to a new object, causing confusion they learn a specific name for a word they already know. (e.g., learning "Daffodil" is difficult if a child already knows the word "Flower".)
- Teaching the word for an unknown object makes the child aware that they need a word for a new object



WORD CATEGORY

Children with DLD tend to learn nouns more easily than verbs.

- When targeting novel verbs, children with DLD require a higher number of repetitions over more sessions.
- Research suggests that children with DLD are better able to learn nouns and attributes than actions and affective state words
- Some word categories may need to be explicitly taught to children with DLD.



YOU'VE CHOSEN YOUR TARGETS : BEST TEACHING METHODS

Children with DLD show deficits in retention when learning novel vocabulary words.

Research suggests that children with DLD learn better with:

- input variability
- increased exposure to targets
- increased dosage frequency
- more spaced, variable practice

Children with DLD require 2-3x more exposures to learn and retain target words.



Child with DLD



Typical Peer



Numerical data adapted from:

Gray, S. (2003). Word-Learning by Preschoolers With Specific Language Impairment. *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research*, 46(1), 56-67.

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