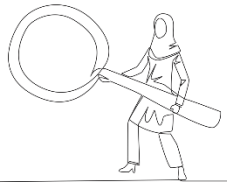
Strategies to support Word Finding Difficulties



Word finding difficulties happen when there is some difficulty retrieving a particular word from memory.

Some word finding difficulties lead to a person saying another word that **sounds** similar instead of the word that they **wanted** to say (like "house" instead of "horse": this can be called a **'phonemic error'**).

Some word finding difficulties lead to a person saying another word with a similar **meaning** (like "jumper" instead of "t-shirt": this can be called a '**semantic error'**).

Or sometimes word finding difficulties can lead to a pause, or a struggle, or saying an easier word such as "thing".

The best time to help word-finding difficulties is **right at the time that you notice them.**

The first step is for you to **notice** that a word-finding glitch happened. This means noticing when a child has used an incorrect or vague word, or when they have paused and are working hard to think of the word they want to use.

When children have difficulties finding the word they want, it is important NOT to just tell them the word. Telling them the word solves the immediate problem in the moment, but it doesn't build up the pathways in their brain to make it easier to find that word next time. So, here's what to do instead.

Each time we make our children do a bit more mental work using their words, their language system grows a bit more.

What can I do to help?

1ST Give the first sound/syllable

(a 'phonemic cue')

The child needs the word '**mouse'** but says '**rabbit'**, so you would cue them by saying **"mou..."**.

2nd Give extra information

(a 'semantic cue')

The child copies "**mou**...", so cue them by giving more information:

"It eats cheese and squeaks"

3rd This one or that one?

(a forced choice)

The child might say "**cheese**" so cue by giving them a choice:

"Is it a mouse or a rabbit?"

These steps may seem simple, but they work! If you can use them often in a kind and supportive way, you will help to strengthen your child's language system to gradually make their word finding difficulties easier.

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