

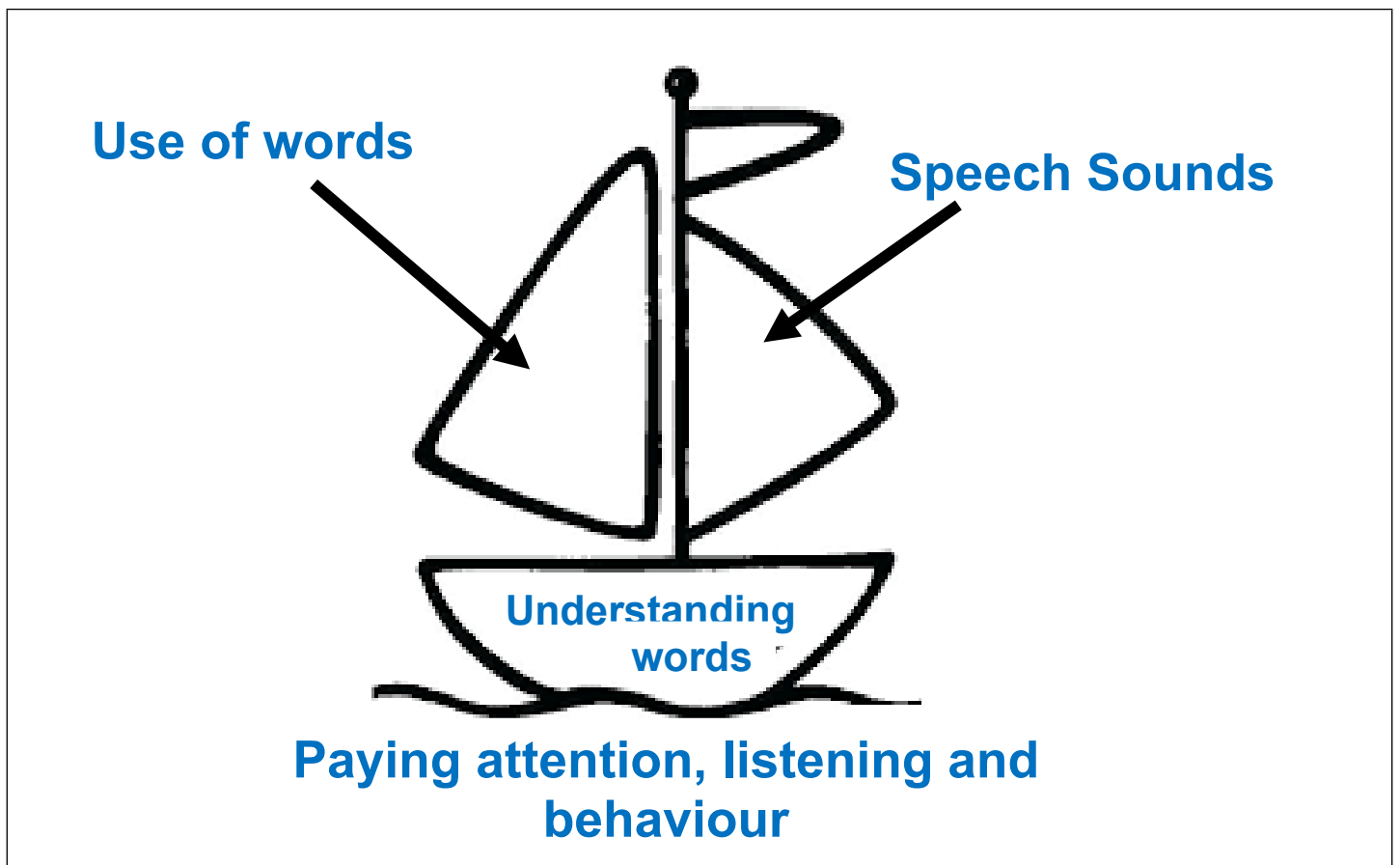
Help Your Child to Understand

Children must understand a word before they can say it. They learn what a word means by watching and listening to you.

You may see that your child knows more words than they can say. This is normal when children learn to talk. If it is hard for your child to understand words, it may be hard for them to learn to say words and sounds.

Here are some ways your child understands words:

- They know the names of things. For example, they can “go to nana”
- They can follow instructions. For example, they can “wave goodbye” or “put the apple in the bin”
- They understand different words. For example “big cat”, “small mouse”
- They understand questions. For example, they know “Where is teddy?”



Here are some ways to help your child understand more words:

- **Use words when you play, read, and do things together.**

For example, help your child learn the word “bath” by saying “bath” at bath time.

- **Use different types of words.**

Children need to know different types of words to learn to talk.

- Name words are words like “dog” and “car”
- Action words are words like “run” and “sleep”
- There are many other types of words. Please see our “Types of Words” handout for more!

- **Ask them to do things**

- Start simple. Ask for one thing at a time. For example, “sit down” or “shoes off”.
- When they can understand more, try longer sentences. For example, “come sit down here” or “take off your shoes and hat”.
- Sometimes you have to show them what to do. Talk about what you are doing while you do it.

- **Be patient.** Give your child time to understand you. They may need you to say or do things many times before they learn.

If you are worried about your child’s talking or understanding, talk to your doctor about a speech pathology referral.