

## Word Finding Difficulties



Word finding difficulties occur when a child knows what they want to say but cannot access the correct vocabulary. Many children develop quite sophisticated coping strategies so it is sometimes difficult to identify.

Sometimes he/she may:

- Take a bit longer to 'find' the word, so may pause or add in a phrase such as "um...you know..."
- Describe the word e.g. "it's a big white thing you put things in, in the kitchen, it's very cold...freezer"
- Not be able to retrieve the word at all
- Produce a word which is linked in meaning (knife instead of fork) or sounds similar (cork instead of fork), or they may use non-specific words such as thing, something, that, it...

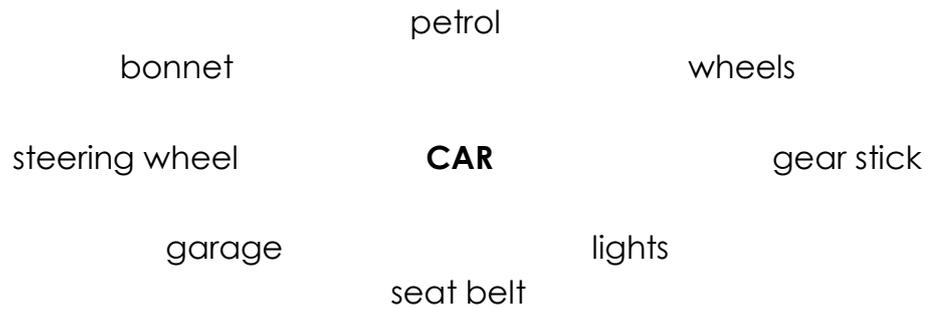
### Strategies to help with word finding difficulties

- Ask the child to describe the object by function or attributes e.g. what is it used for? What does it look like? What colour is it? etc. If they start to describe naturally, point that out as a good strategy to use.
- Point out that everybody has word finding difficulties at times and that these things might help:
  - Describing the word until you think of it
  - Taking time to think
  - Try using another word that means the same
  - Making a picture of the object/idea in your head (visualising)
  - Using gesture
- If you know the word they are trying to find, prompt with the first sound e.g. does it start with 're...' (remote control) but give the child plenty of time to think first.

### Games/Activities:

- **I spy** (with a difference) - "I'm thinking of something you can see in the room, I'll describe it, you tell me what it is. It's yellow, it's round..." Swap over, so another person has a go at describing. To make it harder, describe objects outside the room, e.g. "I'm thinking of something you would find in the kitchen ...it's round...it's green...you eat it...it's a fruit..."

- **Give me 5!** – Challenge each other to think of 5 items/objects that have a shared feature, for example:
  - 5 things that fly
  - 5 things that are made of wood
  - 5 things that you can climb
  - 5 things you can eat
  - 5 things beginning with 's' ... etc.
- **Word Webs** – Think of as many words as possible that are related to a central theme:



- **Opposites** – “snow is white, coal is.....”, “fire is hot, ice is....”, “elephants are big, ants are....”, “a cactus is spiky, a blanket is....” etc.