



SEND Support Services: Information Carrying Words (ICWs)



Age Range: 2-9 years

Who can use this: Parents/Teachers/TAs,
following guidance from a Speech and
Language Therapist

When to seek extra support:

- If the child or young person gets frustrated and says they don't understand
- If they become withdrawn
- Should you feel your child is not making progress

Who needs this?

Children who:

- are not following instructions
- are not talking much
- struggle to play with their friends

Your Speech and Language Therapist will advise where your support should begin

What can you do?

Working with children/young people who struggle to understand can be challenging, here are some things you can do:

- Work at the right level for your child
- Avoid giving extra clues by looking/pointing at objects when giving an instruction
- Make sure you have their attention before giving any instruction
- Give the whole instruction at once
- In time let your child give the instruction so that they practise their talking
- Short daily sessions work best
- Keep activities short, motivating, fun!
- Use lots of praise and positive reinforcement
- Be creative with your choice of activities - try putting instructions in the context of a story

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ICWs carry MEANING. They are the number of words in a sentence that have to be understood in order to carry out an instruction - many of the words we speak are not necessary in order that we are understood.

0 ICWs

- Put on your hat (when you are holding out your child’s hat for them)
- Hang up your coat (when they are standing by the coat hook)
- Let’s stir the cake mixture (when baking together)
- Put the spoon in the cup (playing with a tea set)



Your child understands because they have the situation/context to help them see what is being said and there are no obvious choices

One ICW

Give your child a choice now:

- In the sandpit with a bucket and spade Ask, “Find the **bucket**.”
 - Making a pizza have a choice of toppings (sweetcorn, pepperami) Say, “Find me the **pepperami**.”
 - You can use verbs here too. Take a teddy OR a doll. Ask the child to, “Make teddy **jump**/sit/run/sleep/eat.”
 - Or use containers e.g. (playing with the farmyard - horse/cow and trailer), “Say, put the **horse** in the trailer)”



2 ICWs

Now give your child two choices with a doll/teddy:

Introduce body parts: e.g., “Where’s **teddy’s/dolly’s head**/ear.”

Use the actions: Say, “Make **teddy/dolly run/jump**.” (or...**hop**/sit)

And the containers: “Put **teddy/dolly** in the **basket**/box.”



3 ICWs

Now we can make the instructions harder by **adding in more objects**



So, following the farmyard theme, set out a trailer and truck plus sheep, pig, horse and cow.

Your instruction could be, “Hide the **sheep** and **pig** in the **trailer**.”

Child had to understand **sheep** (not horse) and **pig** (not cow) and **trailer** (not truck)

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FACEBOOK: <https://m.facebook.com/speechandlanguage/?ref=bookmarks>



At 3ICWs we can begin to include ‘**concept**’/describing words.

MAKE SURE YOUR CHILD UNDERSTANDS THE DESCRIBING WORDS/CONCEPTS

- Size: Using the teddy and doll idea, set out a large and small teddy, a large and small doll

Ask, “Where’s the **big**/small **doll’s**/teddy’s **hands**/face?”

- Colour: Using the farmyard scene, set out brown and black cows, black and brown horses plus the trailer and truck

Say, “Hide the **brown**/black **cow**/horse in the **trailer**/truck

- Number: Have a range of beads and buttons of different colours

Suggest, “Thread **two**/three **pink**/yellow **beads**/buttons.”



4 ICWs

At 4ICWs

Using the teddy and doll idea, set out a large and small teddy, a large and small doll, a towel and a sponge

- Ask, “**Wash**/Dry **big**/small **teddy’s**/dolly’s **feet**/legs.”

Following the farmyard theme using cow, horse, pig, sheep, trailer, truck, lorry, shed

- Say, “Hide the **cow**/horse in the **trailer**/lorry and the **sheep**/pig in the **truck**/shed

! Remember to put back all the equipment after each turn so that the ICWs remain the same.

Other activities to try:

One ICW:

Kim’s Game: Put out a range of objects on a tray. Your child has a few moments to look and remember (time dependent upon their age). Cover the tray with a cloth and remove an item. Ask your child, “What’s missing?”

Jigsaw: Same thing can be done whilst playing with an inset jigsaw

Having a picnic: with different foods (bread, cake, etc.) Ask, “Pass me the bread.”



2 ICWs:

Farmyard set: Make the **cow**/pig run/**eat**

Hide the teddy: Hide teddy **in**/under/on the chair/**bed**/table

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Having a picnic: Teddy/doll; two different foods. Say, “Give **doll**/teddy a **cake**/pie.”

3 ICWs:



In the playdough: dough, large/small cutters of different colours Ask, “Can you cut a **big**/small **red**/blue **star**/circle.” With rollers and different colours of dough. Say, “Roll out **three**/four, **blue**/yellow **sausages**/snakes for me.”

Colouring Sheets: (see resources below): Colour the **clown's**/monster's **hat**/teeth **green**/blue

Links and useful suggestions for more ideas and information

- www.twinkl.co.uk - have a range of resources for ICWs
- Language Steps Stass Publications - ISBN 978-1-874534-29-7
- Black Sheep Press Barrier Games Worksheets/Barrier Concepts Lotto boards
www.blacksheepress.co.uk

The possibilities available are as broad as your imagination and limited only to what you can find in your home/setting.

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