

Receptive Language Support

Parent Advice Sheet – Age 5-6

What Is Receptive Language?

Receptive language is the ability to understand spoken words, sentences, and instructions. At age 6, children are expected to:

- Follow multi-step directions
- Understand questions and stories
- Recognize and respond to vocabulary
- Grasp concepts like time, size, and position

Children with receptive language difficulties may struggle to follow instructions, understand questions, or process spoken information.

Why Receptive Language Skills Matter

- **Following Instructions:** Children need to understand verbal directions like “Put your coat on” or “Line up quietly” to participate in classroom routines.
- **Understanding Lessons:** Whether it’s story time, counting, or science exploration, children must grasp what the teacher is saying to learn effectively.
- **Social Communication:** Receptive skills help children interpret what peers are saying, respond appropriately, and engage in cooperative play.
- **Emotional Regulation:** Understanding language helps kids recognise and manage emotions — both their own and others’ — which is key to classroom harmony.
- **Literacy Development:** Before children can read or write, they must understand vocabulary, sentence structure, and grammar — all rooted in receptive language.

What Happens When These Skills Are Weak?

Children with receptive language difficulties may:

- Struggle to follow multi-step instructions
- Seem inattentive or distracted

- Give unusual or off-topic answers to questions
- Have trouble engaging in group activities or listening to stories

How Teachers Support Receptive Language

Teachers use visual aids, gestures, repetition, and simplified language to help children understand. Activities like storytelling, songs, and games also reinforce comprehension in fun, engaging ways.

In short, receptive language is the “input” side of communication — and without it, children can’t fully participate, learn, or connect with others in the classroom.

How You Can Help at Home

1. Keep Language Simple & Clear

- Use short, direct sentences: “Put your shoes in the box.”
- Speak slowly and pause between ideas

2. Check Understanding

- Ask your child to repeat instructions back to you
- Use yes/no or choice questions: “Do you want juice or milk?”

3. Use Visuals & Gestures

- Point to objects, act things out, and use facial expressions
- Create picture schedules or charts for routines

4. Give Extra Time

- Allow time for your child to process what you’ve said
- Avoid repeating too quickly—wait, then rephrase if needed

5. Read & Talk Together

- Read books slowly and ask simple questions
- Talk about what you see during daily routines: “Look, the dog is jumping!”

Fun Activities to Boost Understanding

Activity	What to Do	Skills Practiced
“Follow the Leader”	Give simple actions to copy: “Touch your nose, then clap”	Listening, sequencing
Story Time	Read books and ask “Who?”, “What?”, “Where?”	Comprehension, vocabulary
Colour Hunt	Ask your child to find objects by colour or shape	Word understanding, attention
Toy Sorting	Sort toys by size, colour, or type	Concepts, categorization
Simon Says	Use clear commands with gestures	Listening, following directions
Treasure Hunt	Give clues to find hidden items	Understanding instructions

Conversation Starters

- “Can you show me the big spoon?”
- “What do we do after brushing teeth?”
- “Point to the animal that lives in water.”

Quick Tips

- Repeat and rephrase often
- Use real-life situations to teach new words
- Be patient—understanding takes time and practice