

Describing

Describing is a way to build a child's expressive language skills. It is an important skill for building specific language and to support children who have word finding difficulties. Teaching children to describe an item can help a listener guess what they are talking about, if they are having trouble finding the specific word.

The following questions can be used to guide children in providing specific information:

What does it look like?

What do you do with it?

Where do you find it?

How does it feel?

Take pictures (e.g., in a book, printed out, cut from flyers) or objects from around the house (e.g., teddy bear, fork, train). Lay the pictures out and take turns playing a guessing game. One person asks the questions above to try to guess which picture the other person is thinking of.

For example:

What does it look like?- *it has four legs*

What do you do with it? - *take it for a walk, play with it*

Where do you find it?- *in a house*

How does it feel?- *soft*

Is it a dog?- *yes!*

Using Barrier Games to Describe

Putting a barrier between you and your child is a useful tool to help them learn to describe items. You can use any "wall" that you cannot see through to put between the child and parent. Use something that is not distracting to the child, like a plain piece of cardboard that is folded to stand up.

Choose a few items that you can find two of that are the same. Household items work best (e.g., hair brush, spoon, toy cars, etc.). Place one of each item on either side of the barrier, in front of each listener so that each person has a matching item on the other side. Make sure you don't peek! Take turns asking the questions above to get enough information to guess what the object is. If this is too easy, you can ask your child to describe the object without asking them the questions. After 3 questions/clues the listener can guess the item you're talking about.

To make this task more difficult, you can choose items which you know your child cannot identify by name so they don't have any other choice but to describe it.

You can say:

“We are going to play a guessing game. Each person needs to give 3 clues to the other person. Then you can guess what it is! “

(place items out in front of each person so that the child sees they are matching items- then put the wall up)

“Listen to 3 things I’m going to tell. First it is an animal. Second it is furry. Third it says “meow. Can you guess which one that is?”