

Lesson Plan for Answering WH Questions and Increasing Utterance Length

Goals for the child:

1. To increase the length of phrases and sentences.
2. To respond verbally to “what”, “who” and “where” questions.

Materials *(Note: Similar toys can be used if you do not have these specific ones available. Some examples of substitutions include a toy farm and farm animals, a baby doll with accessories, toy dinosaurs with accessories such as rocks, trees, etc.)*

1. Toy people
2. Toy furniture
3. Dollhouse

Activity

The child will be encouraged to formulate 3-word sentences to respond to WH- questions in the context of routine actions and activities represented in play (e.g., playing, eating, sleeping, jumping, etc.).

Target Questions:*(Note: Feel free to modify these questions to the specific toys and materials you have available. It is more important that the child feels connected and interested in the toys than to match your materials specifically to this lesson plan.)*

1. **What** is the boy doing?
2. **Where** is the baby?
3. **Who** is knocking on the door?
4. **Where** is she hiding?
5. **What** is the mommy eating?
6. The door is closed; **what** should we do?
7. The baby is hungry; **what** do you think he wants?

Target child responses:

1. Baby is jumping.
2. Baby in the bathroom.
3. Daddy knocking door.

4. In the box.
5. Mommy eating pizza.
6. Open the door.
7. Baby wants to sleep.

Prompts/Cues:

Verbal Cues:

1. To encourage verbal responses, use a carrier phrase, such as “he is _____[wait for child to fill in the sentence];
2. Repeat the question once or twice with emphasis on the WH question word (e.g., *Where* is she going?);
3. Provide 2 verbal choices and have child choose the appropriate response (e.g., is he jumping or sleeping?). Once he chooses the correct response, represent the action in the play sequence and ask the WH question again.
4. Provide 2 sentence choices so that the child will respond in a complete sentence (e.g., Parent will ask: **The baby is sleeping or the baby is eating?**). Be sure to model the 2 sentence choices in the format that you want the child to respond. Avoid saying, “is the baby sleeping or eating?” in this case, as this will prompt the child to respond using a single word, such as “eating”.

Visual Cue:

1. Engage in free play before asking the child questions. This will help the session flow naturally and motivate the child to connect with the adult without feeling pressure to perform.
2. Represent the target vocabulary (e.g., jumping, baby, kitchen, etc.) using dolls and furniture and then provide a carrier phrase or question repetition. Point to the person, place or thing required to answer the question. For example, if you asked, “what is the baby doing?” and want the child to respond, “he is eating”, you may show the baby eating a food item and provide sound effects for this before asking the question.

Auditory Cue: Provide sound effects for actions and people to call attention to what is being asked (e.g., pretend to bounce the doll on the toy bed and say “boing boing” or “weee” and when child is paying attention, ask “wow! *what* is he doing?”)

Additional Cues:

Narrate the actions and emphasize them by performing them before asking the questions. Name the characters present using comments like, “look! Its the mommy, the baby and the daddy”. This will provide an introduction to all the target elements of the language we want the child to produce in his or her utterances.

By providing these elements in different utterances, we are providing language exposure and enrichment, but not necessarily having the child imitate the exact sentence (as this would not be considered true language). It will still be the child's job to formulate the sentence meaningfully.

You may also want to narrate a small play sequence and invite free play, as mentioned previously, to allow some meaningful ideas to come up before asking questions. Give time and space for the child to comment on or perform his/her own actions. When he/she manipulates toys or objects in play, use these points of interest as a topic of conversation.

The parent/therapist may also hold up the objects required to answer target questions or place them in the field of vision so that the child has an easier time coming up with a sentence or phrase.

Verbal Models: These may be provided by using similar sentence structure with a small variation and then asking the child a question. **For example:** If the parent/therapist asked, "what is the baby eating?", the parent may model the following: "mommy is eating banana", "daddy is eating cake", and then point to the baby doll while anticipating the child's response and see if the child will produce a similar sentence, such as "baby is eating pizza".

When questions are answered successfully by the child, the parent may provide praise by free playing with the toys and giving meaning to the utterance used in order to give greater context and increase comprehension. For example, if the child responded, "baby is eating", the parent/therapist may start to play along with this same theme, making other character eat and commenting on this. This will also give an opportunity for novel ideas to arise and new utterances to be produced naturally and spontaneously.

***Note:** If the child did not seem to understand the directive, you may try to make it easier by using simpler sentences and asking the child to perform less actions. Always praise the child for their efforts. If the child seems overly frustrated, it is recommended to change the activity or try different materials. You can always come back to the lesson later. Lessons are always more rewarding and effective when the therapist/parent has a positive connection with the child.*

****If you enjoyed this activity and would like personalized lesson plans and guidance designed specifically for your child or student, please do not hesitate to reach out and book **parent or educator coaching, language enrichment** and/or **speech therapy sessions**. For more information, visit awesohmspeechtherapy.com or email me at awesohmspeechtherapy@gmail.com. Best of luck!**