Following Instructions

As your child's language develops they are able to understand more information in an instruction or sentence. Young children may only be able to follow one or two key words and they can get confused and anxious if they do not understand.

As adults, we need to carefully consider the number of information carrying words we use when giving our children instructions. The information carrying words are the ones that your child **really** needs to understand in order to follow the instruction, *e.g. 'Do you see that red coat over there, would you ever hang it on the chair?'*

This sentence has 16 words, but it has <u>three</u> information carrying words which carry the meaning of the sentence.

*'Get the **red coat** and put it on the **chair**.'*

Have a go at the following activities to help develop your child's ability to follow instructions.

Following Instructions—2 Word Level

Collect a dolly and a teddy from your child's toy box. Gather a range of household objects such as a; brush, spoon, keys, book, shoe, ball, cup, etc.

Activity

Sit down with your child and place the dolly and the teddy in front of you both. Give your child instructions with 2 key words, e.g.

'*Give **dolly** the **keys***'

'*Give **teddy** the **ball***'

'*Give **dolly** the **book***'.

Following Instructions - 3 word level

Gather a range of items from around your home.

They can be household items or toys; car, book, spoon, teddy, box, etc.

Activity

Play a game where you get your child to follow your instructions. Give your child instructions with 3 key words, e.g.

'*Put the **book on** the **table***'

'*Put the **car under** the **chair***'

'*Put the **spoon in** the **box***'.

Following Instructions - 4 word level

This is a practical activity which you can practise with your child when you are putting away the shopping.

Activity

- Place all the shopping on the table.

- Talk to your child about all the things which you have bought, e.g. bread, milk, juice, bananas, cereal etc.

Give your child a 4 word level instruction, e.g.

'*Put the **milk** in the **fridge** and the **bananas** in the **bowl***'

'*Put the **bread** in the **cupboard** and the **juice** in the **fridge***'.