



### What is it?

- Commenting is when you talk about what a child is actually doing. It is not about telling them what to do next or asking them questions.
- Commenting is where you watch the child play, and you provide a verbal commentary of what they are doing.
- It is a strategy used with children who have social communication differences.
- Some children may have no or limited language, others may have language but use it inappropriately or not purposefully.

"Sand"  
"digging"  
"bucket"



"Sophie pouring"  
"Sophie digging"  
"Sophie bucket"



"Sophie push truck"  
"Red truck push"  
"Green truck goes fast"  
"Sophie pushing truck slow"

### Why use it?

- Commenting is a good way of teaching and developing children's use of language. If you talk about something a child is involved in, they are more likely to listen and understand what you mean.
- It can encourage them to try new words.
- It can help extend their vocabulary.
- It can promote their spontaneous use of communication during play.
- Many children find listening to language difficult and may not respond to adults. Commenting helps children to listen and pick out the key words of the instruction.



## Steps to success

- When using commenting it is important to tailor the language to the child you are working with.
- Try to use between 1-2 key words when using commenting or instructions.
- Key words are basically the words from the sentence you need, words which give the instruction – E.g. “Sophie, can you come and sit down at the table ready for snack”. “Sophie come, sit, snack”.
- Reduce the sentence to two smaller instructions for the child.
- When giving an instruction try to use the child’s name which will help them listen and tune in to the language. E.g. “Sophie come sit” – instruction. “Snack time” - commenting
- When using commenting try to maintain your cheerful tone. You can be quite animated, be enthusiastic, speak quietly or loudly, speak slowly and then fast.
- The more enjoyable language is to a child the more interested they become and may attempt some sounds or even words.
- Follow the child’s eyes and talk about what they are looking at.
- Sit back and watch the child for a minute. Wait and see what they decide to do before you start talking.
- Join in with the child’s play and talk about what you are doing.
- When asking a child a question, try giving them a choice of two answers. In this way you are giving them the words they need to answer. Also helping them to understand the question.
- Try not to ask too many questions which can be answered with ‘yes’ or ‘no’. These do not encourage the child to use more words.

## Don't I already do that?

- Commenting is all about following the child’s lead.
- Adults are usually the ones taking the lead, it can be difficult to stop asking questions or making suggestions.
- Be spontaneous, stay flexible and build in short periods of time during the day to have a go at **commenting**.
- Remember- Have **FUN!**

## Further Information

<https://library.sheffieldchildrens.nhs.uk/language-strategies-commenting/>

