

Introduction

Action words, or verbs, are a critical piece of the vocabulary puzzle. Researchers believe that verbs play an essential role in language learning and use (Conti-Ramsden & Jones, 1997). Children increase control over their environments when they learn to use verbs to comment, make requests, and share experiences. Many of children's first two-word phrases include action words (e.g., "want ball"). Verb referents are often fast and fleeting, so children with Specific Language Impairment (SLI) are likely to experience difficulty learning new verbs, particularly when they are exposed to new words incidentally (Oetting, 1999). In early childhood years, children with SLI use general all-purpose verbs (e.g., "do"), make semantic verb errors, and have verb repertoires that are less diverse than that of their peers (Loeb, Pye, Redmond, & Richardson, 1996). Because these difficulties with verb learning may persist (Conti-Ramsden & Jones), direct instruction is often necessary to augment verb acquisition. *Preschool Vocabulary Cards: Actions* is designed for direct teaching of high-frequency, age-appropriate verbs, using 240 engaging, full-color pictures.

References

Conti-Ramsden, G., & Jones, M. (1997). Verb use in specific language impairment. *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research, 40*, 1298-1313.

Loeb, D.F., Pye, C., Redmond, S., & Richardson, L.Z. (1996). Eliciting verbs from children with specific language impairment. *American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology, 5*, 17-30.

Oetting, J.B. (1999). Children with SLI use argument structure cues to learn verbs. *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research, 42*, 1261-1274.

Suggestions for Use

- Target receptive vocabulary by presenting a selection of cards (fewer cards = simpler task) and ask the child, "Who is...(insert action)?"
- Target expressive vocabulary by asking the child to name the action pictured on a card or give a sentence describing what is happening on the card.
- Help the child categorize cards into actions people perform and actions animals perform, or into actions children perform and actions adults perform.
- Ask the child to demonstrate pictured actions.
- Have the child find pictures of things he likes and dislikes to do.
- Talk about the multiple meanings of verbs (e.g., "take off").
- Discuss pictured objects in relation to the child's personal experience. This will increase the chances that the child will recall and use the word in appropriate circumstances.
- Teach various verb tenses by altering the stimulus words and providing scaffolding (e.g., "Yesterday the dog barked").
- Provide multiple opportunities to practice vocabulary words, as this has been shown to aid learning new words (Gray, 2003).
- Modify terminology to fit the child's language level (e.g., say goodbye→say bye-bye; pick up→lift; bark→woof).