

Modelling

What is it?

The term has two meanings-

1. providing a 'model' or example, all the time, of how to communicate.
2. 'modelling' or showing a child an example of a specific language or speech 'target'.

All children are language learners, part of their speech and language development is innate and part of it is learnt through the modelling of people around them. Parents are young children's main speech and language models. When a child makes a mistake with a speech sound or grammar it should be repeated back to them correctly so that they hear good examples.

Modelling is also relevant to children that use an Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) system e.g. communication boards or books. All children need to see how to communicate using a communication system in real conversations, meaning you need to model to the child how to use their AAC system.

How to use it?

Modelling verbal communication requires:

- an unhurried speech rate
- clear speech
- short sentences
- appropriate vocabulary
- more repetition and re-stating than you would use if you were talking to another adult

When modelling verbal communication, it is important not to repeat the incorrect speech sound or grammar to the child as they need to only hear good examples. It is most powerful to model multiple corrections to the child. Do not pressure your child to repeat the correct word or sentence after you.

Examples of good modelling:

1. Child: I like his punny pace.
Adult: I like his funny face too. It's a really funny face. A funny face.
2. Child: I maked my bed.
Adult: I made my bed.



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Modelling AAC:

- Point to symbols or press symbols on an AAC system as you speak to reinforce your spoken message.
- You do not need to point to/press a symbol for every word in your sentence, it is ok to just point to/press symbols for the key words in your sentence.
- By modelling symbols in everyday situations, you will help the child to learn what these symbols mean, where the symbols are on the AAC system and how they can be combined to create messages.

Top tips for success-

- Modelling should be provided without without criticism, without interrupting the 'flow' and without getting in the way of listening to what the child is saying.
- Model without expecting your child to copy or respond to everything you model. They will gradually learn from your models over time but they may not show they are taking it in straight away. That's ok, keep modelling!
- Every time you model, it will get easier. The most important thing is to start!
- Speech and language development is a gradual process, expect your child's progress to be gradual.

Further training / information –

Links for videos-

Modelling AAC:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mXj1Btf0qFw&list=PL6PwooUigtIAXUMGoVE3N41a6le8mdKHU&index=1>

Modelling speech:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YhYMiSLoomc>