

**Using Questions/ Instructions**

**Children are questioned constantly. Children with SLCN will have problems understanding the language used in questioning, giving instructions and in their verbal reasoning. If we know the level of a child’s ability to understand and answer questions, we can make sure that our questions are at the right level for the child. This will support learning, behaviour, confidence and self-esteem.**

**Adults use questions to find out:**

* **What has been remembered**
* **To encourage listening, thinking, concentrating, reflection**
* **To find out how a child is feeling**
* **To check learning**
* **To find out what has happened**

**The right question at the right time is a powerful thing. The wrong question can lead to the wrong answer and the wrong consequences for the child.**

**Practical classroom strategies**

* Ask genuine questions (not questions you know the answer to)
* Ask questions when you feel a child says or does something that you feel can be expanded on
* Focus on the child and follow the child’s lead
* Understand the order of questions/ difficulty of comprehension

**Finding the right questions to ask**

* Assessing a child’s understanding of questions/ instructions and verbal reasoning will identify where the problems are and allow you to modify your questions and instructions, allowing the child to succeed
* BLANK LEVELS will help. SALTs will assess Blank Levels and refer to them in reports
* You can use them too. Child needs to answer 80% of questions at a level to be functioning at that level
* Asking the right level of questions for SLCN children is vital in all situations, especially in managing behaviour in and out of school and learning
* Moving a child on an getting an incorrect answer? Ask the question again and model the answer

**BLANK LEVELS**

Educational Psychologists Blank, Rose and Berlin created a framework of questions at 4 levels in 1978.

These are BLANK LEVELS

(Examples from ELKLAN Language Builders McLachlan and Elks 2012)

Level 1: Naming

Child has to match what he sees to what he is hearing.

Naming: a s ‘point to the bulb’ Pick up the spade’ ‘Show me the watering can’

Finding a matching object: ‘find me another bulb like this.’

Naming an object: ‘What is this?’

Level 2: Describing

Child needs to focus on objects or situations in more detail, describe and determine how things are different.

The descriptive language helps a child understand simple stories or describe simple pictures

Questions that ask: ‘Who/what/ where? / Which do we dig with? /What else can grow in the ground? / What is happening? / Find a black pot/ Where did you plant that bulb?’

Level 3: Re Telling

Child can use language to restructure thinking. Child can make deductions or generalisations about a situation. Child can make links between information and group information together. They will be able to:

Follow a set of instructions with extra conditions; ‘find me something else that you can plant a bulb in that is not made of plastic’

Tell a story or describe an event; ‘tell me how to plant a bulb’

Summarise in a sentence; ‘what have you done?

Predict; ‘what might happen next?

Tell you how a character feels based on what they have said; how did I feel when we were gardening?

Define a word; ‘what does bulb mean?

Level 4: Justifying

Child can give reasons why things happen.

Justify; ‘why will the bulb grow?’

Identify the reason; ‘what made the plant grow?’

Solve problems; ‘what would you do if the plant does not grow?’

See things from another persons’ point of view; ‘what would x do if this did not work?

Infer; ‘how do you know this watering can is old?’

Select; ‘ What do we need to plant a bulb?’ (objects out of sight)

Explain logic of compound words; ‘ why is this called a flower pot’