

AREAS OF LANGUAGE

At South East Metro Language Development Centre we focus on developing students' language across all the areas of language. Although these areas may be separated for teaching purposes, they all work together to allow us to communicate effectively. You may hear your child's teacher mention the following terms and see them in your child's Individual Language Plan.

COMPREHENSION

The understanding and interpretation of information. This may include understanding: instructions, concepts (e.g. big/small, long/short) and questions.

SEMANTICS

The ability to understand word meanings and the links, or associations, made between words. It also includes how we use this knowledge to express our ideas. Another aspect of semantics is the storage and organisation of information. New information or words need to be stored in a way to allow us to easily access it when we need it again. Our brains organise this information into groups, or categories, with many links between the words – almost like a filing cabinet!

NARRATIVE

The ability to talk about real or fictional events in a logically sequenced way. Narrative includes: giving instructions, telling or retelling a story, and having a conversation. It provides a way of making sense of experiences and everyday happenings; constructing our world in words.

SYNTAX

The ability to organise words into sentences that are grammatically correct. We also need to use the correct word forms in our sentences, this includes: pronouns (e.g. he, she, they), word endings (e.g. regular past tense –ed, regular plurals –s), connecting words (e.g. and, but, because) and verb tenses (e.g. past, present, future).

PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS

The ability to tune into, manipulate and reflect on the sounds of language. This includes being able to: identify the words in a sentence; identify the syllables in words; and rhyming. It is a key skill that children need in order to be successful at reading and writing.

PRAGMATICS

Also known as social skills. It refers to a range of skills that are required for the social use of language and our interaction with others. We need to use language for a variety of purposes and must be able to adapt it so suit the situation or person we are talking to. Pragmatic skills include: maintaining appropriate eye-contact, body language, facial expressions, turn-taking and staying on topic during a conversation.

Acknowledgements:

- * What is a Language Disorder? - West Coast Language Development Centre (2013)
- * Resources developed by SEMDLC Outreach Service