

# Working on Pragmatic/Social Language at Home


If your student is working to improve his/her pragmatic/social language skills... (Pragmatic language refers to the use of appropriate communication in social situations: what to say, how to say it and when to say it). Exact pragmatic language skills targeted in your child's IEP may vary, but may include things like: various conversational skills, adapting communication for the setting, nonverbal communication skills, etc...

## CONVERSATIONAL SKILLS

Taking part in a conversation doesn't come naturally for every individual. Things like taking turns while talking, introducing a new topic, staying on topic, rewording something when misunderstood, or reading nonverbal cues can be difficult.

## NONVERBAL LANGUAGE

An individual with pragmatic disorder may not use or recognize nonverbal language such as personal space, eye contact, facial expressions, body posturing, etc.

Practice these skills by reminding your child what good nonverbal communication looks like. 

## MODELING AND TALKING ABOUT THINGS THAT DON'T COME EASY

You as a parent you can help your child by discussing with him/her these areas that are difficult for them. Pick an activity once a day to work on these skills for a short time. Talk with your child about how people in a show/movie or a book communicate. When playing a game or having a conversation practice these hard areas with your child. You can model these skills while pointing them out to him or her. Role playing with them can be a fun and effective way to work on these skills.

Have fun with your kids! These can be a great way to spend time together. Try and do at least one activity a week.

## Abstract Language

Abstract language is the ability to gain meaning from things that are not said, or "said" in a different way. There are many types of "abstract language": inferential/figurative/implicit/non-literal language. These can be worked on by:

- reading and talking about a comic strip. What did the characters say and what did they really mean.
- watching a Pixar Short. What is really being communicated in the show and what is it that makes it funny.
- telling a joke and discussing why it is funny. Talk about the 'literal meaning' vs. the 'abstract meaning' that makes it funny.

Talk with your child about how they can best communicate in a given situation. What would be the expected behavior (ex. When you greet a family member who is coming to visit we look them in the eye when we say hellos. Or...We shake hands when meeting a new doctor but not when we say hello to the grocery clerk.)