

Word Finding Difficulties



Word finding difficulties occur when you are unable to find the word you want to use when you are talking.

Our brain is like a big filing cabinet and all the words that we learn are sorted into different groups and these groups are linked together, e.g. a cat could be in the group called 'pets' with other animals such as dog, but also in the group 'cats' with other cats such as a tiger.



The more you use and think about a word, the easier it will be to find this word when you need it. Some people have weaker links between words and the groups they store them in which means it is not always easy to select the word that they want to use.

What strategies can help a child with word finding difficulties?



Different children may find different strategies helpful – you can ask your child which strategies work for them – Try some of the strategies listed below:

- Children who find it hard to find words will need extra time to talk. Give the person the time they need to say what they would like to say.



- If you think you know what the word is, you can give a choice, e.g. 'is' it guitar or violin?'

- If you think you know the word, you could use a gesture, mime or an action.



- If you think you know the word, you could give the first sound, or first part of the word, e.g. 'are you thinking of 'spi...' (spider)?'

- Ask your child to show you the item they are talking about (if this is possible).



- You can ask your child to tell you about the word they are thinking of. Some questions you could use are:

- Where do you find it?
- What does it do?
- What does it look like?
- Can you think of another word for it?
- What category does it belong to?

