



Using little words in sentences

The **little words** in sentences hold lots of meaning. **Little words** such as *the, is, to, for,* and *that* help us to make longer sentences that are easier for others to understand.

To help children use **little words** in sentences, you can:

Repeat children's sentences and **add little words**, and

Talk about what children are doing and use **little words** in your own sentences.

Play with little words: Use little words in your play together



Play...with trains and cars

Join in when your child is playing with trains or cars.

Repeat your child's sentences and add any missing **little words**.

Child: Train on track.

You: *The* train *is* on *the* track.



At home...at bath time

At bath time, use sentences with **little words** to talk about what your child is doing.

Child: (*putting ducks into the water*)

You: *A* duck *went* in *the* water.



Out and about...at the shops

When you are at the shops, use **little words** to talk about the groceries you are buying.

Child: Where milk?

You: Where *is the* milk? Let's try *this* aisle.



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Read with little words: Visit the library and borrow some books

Where is the Green Sheep? by Mem Fox

Hairy Maclary by Lynley Dodd

Dear Zoo by Rodd Campbell

Words to grow: Use these words in your day

You can help children use **little words** in sentences for different purposes. These include:

Words about people, places or things:	<i>the, a, an, that, this, he, she</i>
Words about actions:	<i>is, are, was, were, had, got, get, went</i>
Words for combining and reasoning:	<i>and, but, then, if, so</i>

Learn about little words: Ways to help language grow

When you **repeat what children have said**, and **add little words**, you are:

- Showing you understand what they have said, and
- Showing how their sentences can be clearer.

When you **talk about what children are doing** and use **little words** in your own sentences, you are:

- Showing children how to use words in a meaningful way, and
- Helping them to use more **little words**.

Children do not have to repeat words after you. The more often children hear the **little words** in sentences as part of their day, the more likely they are to understand new words and use them in their own talking.

Speech pathology key terms: articles, auxiliary verbs, conjunctions, parallel talk, expansion.