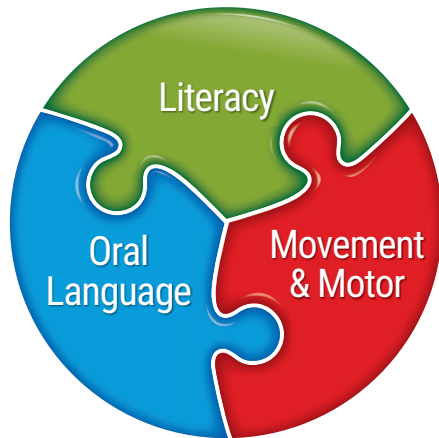


# Supporting the Understanding of Questions



When asking a child questions it's important to support and teach them what the question means and how you want them to answer it.

If a child has difficulty understanding a question:

1. Repeat the question using visual cues to support (eg: pictures and gestures)
2. Rephrase the question or ask it in a different way
3. Give two alternative for the child to choose between
4. Model the correct answer

## Example

Adult asks: What colour is it the elephant?

*Student doesn't respond*

Adult asks: I can see elephant's ears are pink.  
What colour is his body?

*Child doesn't answer.*

Adult asks: Is he grey or orange?

*Child responds: orange*

Adult models: He's grey. The elephant is grey.

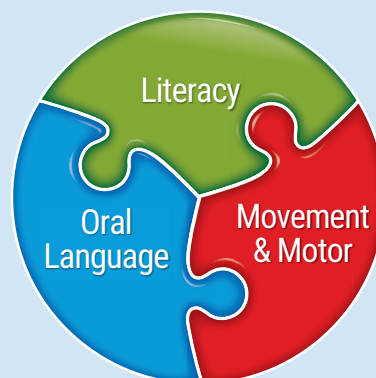


## When to refer to a Speech Pathologist?

The production of news and narratives is more cognitively and linguistically demanding than the participation in a conversation. In a conversation, speakers have the support of partners to organise and maintain the discourse. When news telling and narrating, speakers **MUST** independently organise and maintain extended discourse.

### Observations Which Constitute A Potential Speech Pathology Referral

- A child needs continual support to structure the news and/or story.
- A child finds the task cognitively demanding.
- A child's speech is hesitant, filled with pauses and incomplete sentences.  
(The child may show visible frustration from limited expressive language ability.)
- A child fails to provide the listener with specific information.  
(E.g. forgetting to explain the people or character's actions.)
- A child has difficulty sequencing or ordering events correctly.
- A child does not specifically name characters or people.  
(and instead uses general terms of reference such as it, he, they ...).
- A child's vocabulary lacks variety or when the child is unable to apply appropriate vocabulary.
- Towards the end of Foundation year, a child overuses "and" and "and then" to join sentences.  
A child should also be using more complex joining words such as next, last, so, but, ...
- Grammatical and tense errors are present in the child's language.



## Children with language delays will frequently suffer from anxiety when presented with written tasks.

To maximise a student's written output and to minimise the anxiety experienced in the writing process students with language delays typically require:

- Planning sheets to assist in the generation and structuring of their ideas/thoughts.
- Additional planning time to generate and structure their ideas/thoughts.
- Adult support to orally generate and structure ideas/thoughts. Sentence starters and target vocabulary words can be supplied to assist the process.
- Reduced expectations due to the fatigue and anxiety experienced (e.g. students could be asked to complete the introduction, problem, character's thoughts/feelings and plan instead of a full narrative.)
- Written tasks should ideally be completed in stages.  
(E.g. "Today we will plan and write the introduction and the problem in a story and tomorrow we will add the character's thoughts/feelings and plan.)

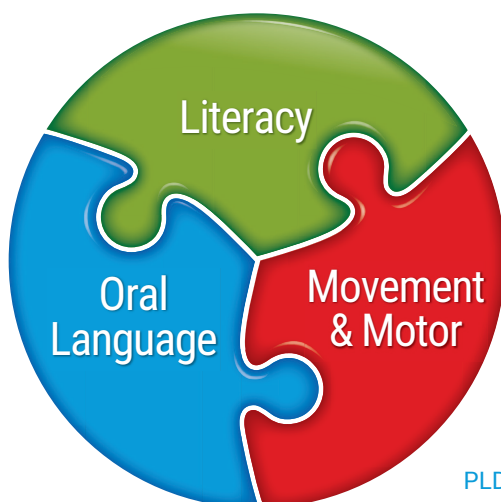
## The issue of spelling in the context of written tasks.

It is important to keep in mind that students with language delays will rarely be able to focus on the language (i.e. generation and organisation of ideas) and spelling demands of writing simultaneously.

To overcome this, it is suggested that students progress through the following stages:

- **Stage 1:** Plan and structure ideas orally.
- **Stage 2:** Complete the written task.
- **Stage 3:** Finalise the written piece by editing.

Editing is best facilitated when students are trained to write on one line and miss one or two lines so that there is visual space to make changes and improvements to their original writing attempt.



PLD's programs that develop the above skills can be viewed by searching the codes:  
Pbr4, Pbr5, Mc3, Mc4, Mc5, Mc6, Mc8 available from [www.pld-literacy.org](http://www.pld-literacy.org)  
[mail@pld-literacy.org](mailto:mail@pld-literacy.org) Phone: +61 (08) 9227 0846

See our Copyright Terms of Use at <https://pld-literacy.org/copyright>

Select a book to be the focus for the week.

## Day 1

- Adult reads the story to the child(ren).
- Adult asks some questions about the story.

## Day 2

Adult explains to the child(ren) that this time, rather than reading the text, the adult will look at the pictures and retell the story in his/her own words.

## Day 3

Together the adult and children retell the story: (i.e. the adult retells one page, then a child retells on page, then the adult retells on page...).

## Day 4

- Child(ren) look at the pictures of the picture book and retell the entire story independently.
- If the child(ren) is unable to do this, the adult needs to offer some assistance.
- However, if the child(ren) experiences significant difficulty retelling stories after repeated exposure it is advisable to make an appointment with a Speech Pathologist to check on the child's overall language development.

Over an 8 - 12 week period the task of story retelling should greatly improve. Children should provide more information about the story, use more complex sentences, more complex vocabulary and retell stories with much greater confidence and ease.

Why is the skill of narrating so important?

Narrative is highly correlated with literacy success.

