How to develop:

How to develop sequencing skills

What does it mean to sequence information or language?

This is the ability to understand and arrange the order of events e.g. what happened first, then, next, last. This might be in terms of telling/retelling a story, telling/retelling something that has happened in the child's life or even in relation to simple steps within a routine e.g. getting dressed.

This skill is important for a range of reasons e.g. telling stories, recounting events, organisation, giving and responding to instructions.

Strategies

- Use Makaton signs or gestures to support.
- Use other visual information e.g. symbols, photographs, pictures, objects.
- Use a multisensory approach i.e. different sensory elements throughout activities where possible – look, feel, listen, smell etc.
- Generalise the skill to different opportunities/contexts across the day e.g. asking the child the order of steps in a classroom activity such as art, PE, getting ready for lunch.

Activities

Understand first/next/last concepts

Initially use logical, visual steps that your child can follow, e.g. line up animals to go in a house, line up food items to be eaten until the plate is empty, line up clothes to be put on in order. Talk about what is first, next, and last.

Sequence pictures using first/next/last concepts

Use familiar sequences – initially 2-3 pictures only. Act the sequence out first (e.g. getting a drink, getting dressed). Stress the words *first / next / last.* Use visual cues e.g. symbol pictures of each step.

Sequence pictures for a story they have heard

Tell the child a familiar story/act out the story with pictures supporting the sequence of events (2-3 pictures). Ask the child to arrange the pictures to show what happened when.

Recall a story using pictures

Tell the child a familiar story/act out the story with some pictures supporting the sequence of events. Ask the child to retell the story using the pictures to support themselves. Encourage the child to point to the main features within each picture to help them to recall what happened.

Retell a story using objects as a prompt

Use key objects to tell a story. Initially, use pictures and objects, e.g. for pouring a drink use a bottle and cup. Encourage your child to retell the story using the objects.

Recount events in a logical sequence

Encourage the child to use “first”/ “next”/ “last” at the start of their sentences when they are describing something that has happened in their life e.g. at the weekend or something that they have just done.

Provide instructions

To provide opportunity for the child to give instructions to others, sequencing the steps in an appropriate order.