

# Improving language skills



## I want more!

It can often be challenging to maintain the focus of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The key to maintain interest is to encourage their participation in activities they find especially enjoyable.

“More” is a word frequently used by children and this can be useful when applied to activities like bouncing, swinging or rolling a ball, as well as to food and toys. “More” is an essential word for satisfying want or need.

**The following activity can be tried to teach the word “More” to a non-verbal child.**

1. Choose a food item that the child enjoys eating, such as fruit snacks.
2. Have the child sit across from you at a table. Place one treat in front of the child and a large pile of treats in front of you.
3. After the child has eaten their treat, hold up another one. Clearly say “More.” Give them another treat and repeat a couple of times.
4. Next, hold up the treat and wait for them to say “More.” If the child is finding the speech aspect of the task challenging then choose a token or picture to represent the word “More” or use a hand sign to represent this word.
5. When the youngster is saying “More” appropriately in this context then expand it to include other activities that they want.

Find out more at [www.witherslackgroup.co.uk](http://www.witherslackgroup.co.uk)

# Hints & Tips

**As you promote a child's language skills, keep the following tips in mind:**

- Remember that some children with autism have trouble understanding verbal instructions. If possible, give the activity instructions in a variety of formats.
- Introduce these activities gradually to avoid overwhelming the child. It is best to work on one language-related game at a time.
- Make language activities fun and full of praise, no matter how small the progress. This is hard work for the child, even if you are making it fun.
- Read often and for long periods of time. This exposure to language is important for all children and essential for youngsters with autism.