**Reduced Language**

**What is reduced language?**
Reduced language involves adjusting the way we speak to reduce the amount of information in a sentence by doing this; it will help your child to understand what you are saying.

**Why would I reduce my language?**
There is controversy regarding whether we should reduce our language when speaking to children (Van Kleeck et al, 2010). However the fact remains that we all reduce our language when speaking, at one time or another e.g.
- Someone asks ‘What are you doing’ you could reply ‘eating’ You would not reply ‘eat breakfast’

*Rule of Thumb:*
When reducing your language you should **reduce the amount of information** in the sentence but **do not eliminate the cues** that allow children to understand exactly what you are saying.

**How do I reduce my language?**
Think of the four ųSśà: Say Less, Stress, Go Slow & Show

**SAY LESS**
Talk to your child at his level of understanding. Use short, consistent label for items your child is interested in.

**STRESS**
Exaggerate the words; this will emphasise the important words and help keep your child’s attention.
Pause between the words you are emphasising, you can say the sentence as you usually would and then repeat it with pauses to make the main words stand out. Remember to use the natural rhythms in your voice.

SHOW

Show your child the object that you are speaking about, show them with actions and gestures as well (e.g. fast→ move arm/body with car).

Additionally:

- **Reduce your language** according to the child’s level of understanding; (for example, if your child is beginning to understand use single words, adjust the length of the sentences according, Fey, 2008).

- **Use consistent vocabulary with your child** (e.g. do not use ‘brick’ one day and ‘block’ the next day).

- **Include the ‘small bits’** (i.e. if it’s tidy-up time say the full sentence e.g. ‘put teddy in the box’ or ‘teddy in box’).

- **Give one order at a time** and gradually increase it according to your child’s level of understanding (e.g. ‘put teddy in box’ instead of ‘it’s time to tidy up, put teddy and the box in the box’).

- **Don’t forget the four S’s**

**Useful resources:** [www.thehanencentre.org](http://www.thehanencentre.org)

References:

