

Blank's Levels of Questioning



How are you? What did you do today? What would you like? Where are you going? Why did you do that!? We ask questions everyday but if you have a speech, language or communication need (SLCN) answering questions can be tricky.

To help your child develop their ability to answer questions you can use Blank's Levels of Questioning. These levels were developed by Marion Blank, a psychologist who has studied children's language development for many years. She identified four levels which start with simple, concrete questions and move toward answering more difficult, abstract questions.

Start with the level your child is already at. Once they can consistently answer questions at that level you can begin introducing questions at the next level.

Practice answering the same type of question over and over again in a range of different situations. Give your child time to think of their answer. If they are struggling with a particular question, offer several possible responses so they can hear what they could have said and have the opportunity to answer the question successfully.

Level 1: Naming

These questions focus on things that are in the here and now. They only require you to point or give a very short response. For example:

- What is this?
- Who is this?
- What did you hear?
- What can you see?
- What is X doing?
- Find one like this.

Level 2: Describing

When answering these questions you are still talking about the 'here and now' but you need to look at the information more selectively. You need to think about the function of an object and its qualities/attributes. You will also be able to categorise/group items. For example:

- What happened?
- Where is it?
- What can you do with it?
- Find something that is... (red, big, soft).
- Find something that can... (cut, roll, jump).
- Which one is a... (fruit, farm animal)?
- How are these different?

Blank's Levels of Questioning



Level 3: Retelling/Narrative

At this level you may be talking about things that are outside of your immediate experience. You will be making basic predictions, making generalisations and assuming the role of another person. You will also be using sequencing and describing skills. For example:

- What will happen next?
- What is a... (definition)?
- How do they feel?
- What might they say?
- How do I... (make a sandwich)?
- How are these the same?
- Which one of these is *not*...?
- What else could you use?

Level 4: Justifying

To answer these questions you are using your reasoning skills and drawing on your past experiences. You need to make predictions, problem solve and explain your answer. For example:

- What will happen if...?
- Why did...?
- Why can't we...?
- How did that happen?
- How can we tell...?
- What could we use to...?
- Why is X made of Y?

If you have any concerns about your child's speech, language or communication skills talk to a Speech and Language Therapist.

Website: www.elmslt.com

E-mail: laura@elmslt.com