

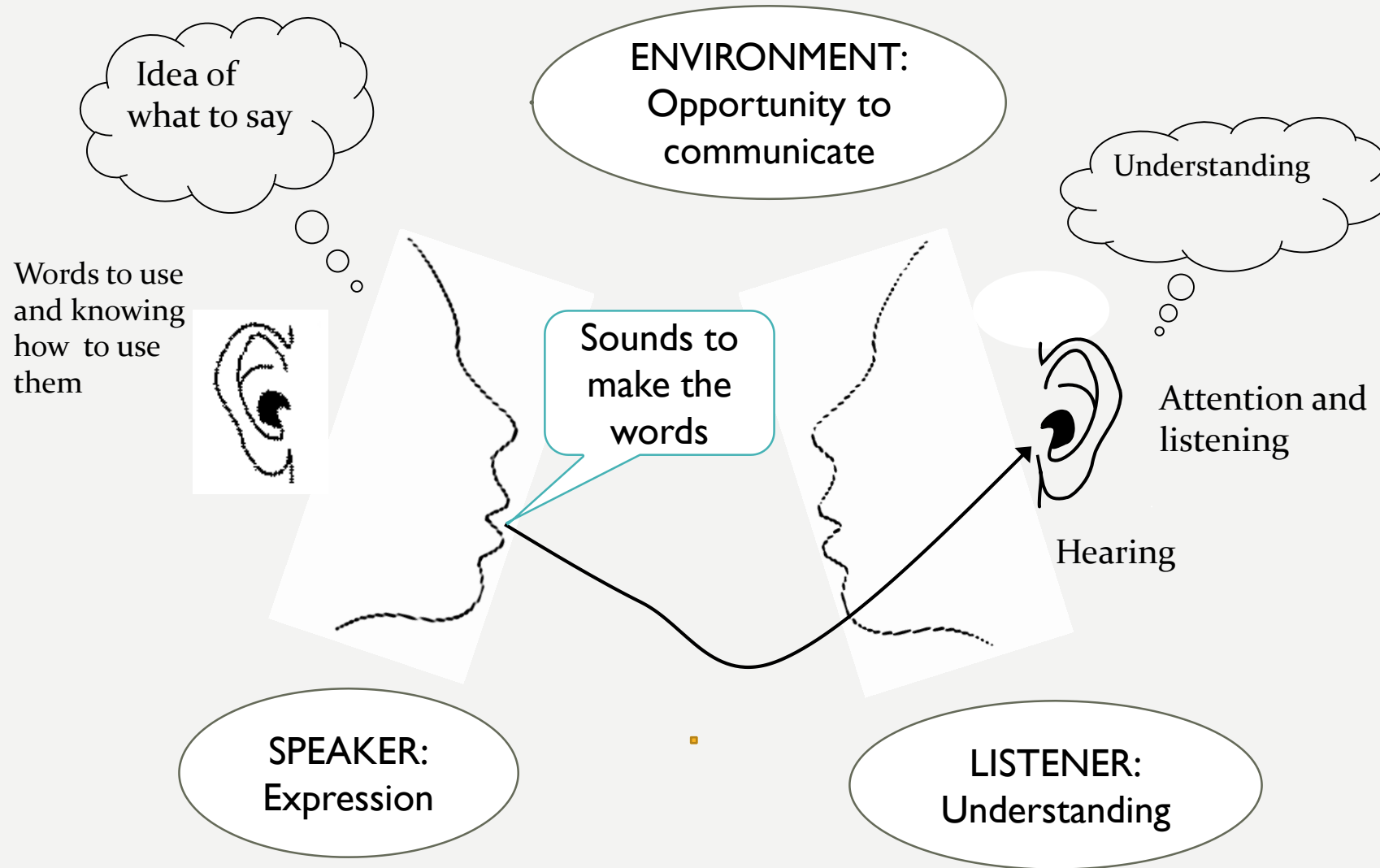
# **WHAT IS COMMUNICATION?**

**THE SKILLS YOUR CHILD NEEDS FOR  
EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION**

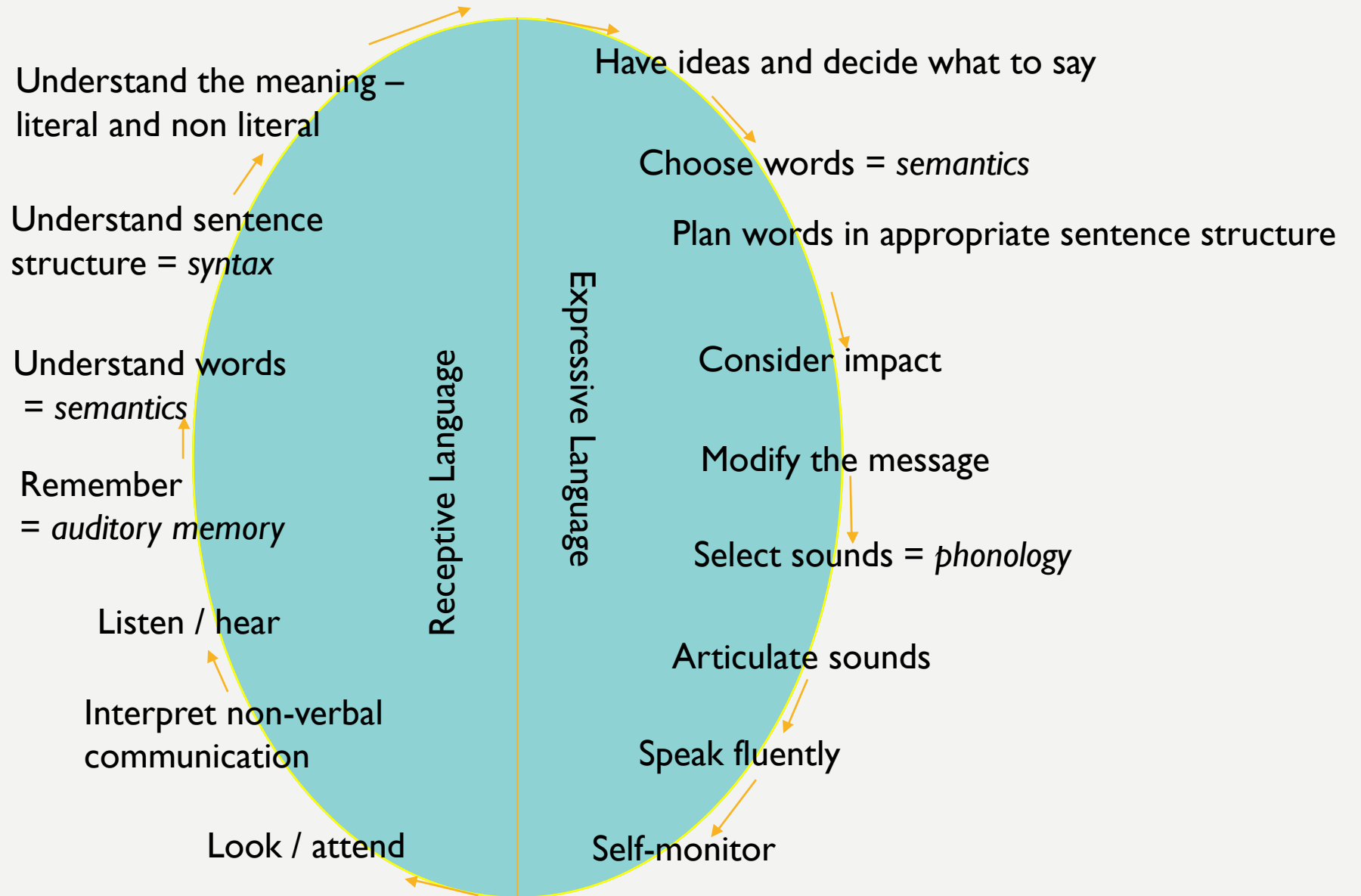
# WHAT IS COMMUNICATION

- Involves the giving, receiving and exchanging of information by any appropriate communication method
- Two-way process, requires someone to 'speak' and someone to 'listen' and respond
- Total communication
  - Is about the best way of communicating with an individual
  - This may not be the same for all the children or young people
  - Forms part of everyday life and/or curriculum

# THE COMMUNICATION CHAIN



# THE COMMUNICATION CHAIN



# SKILLS FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Skill	Importance	Implication for learning
<b>Looking</b>	Helps to focus our attention on the speaker, provides information about non-verbal communication (NVC)	miss important non-verbal communication, misinterpret nvc, difficulties interpreting nvc
<b>Listen and concentrate</b>	listener needs to concentrate on speaker and focus on the right info, filtering out other distractions, needs to be learnt	distracted in busy environments, tune in/out, unable to filter irrelevant info, switch off
<b>Remember</b>	short term memory stores info for short period whilst it is analysed, long sentences may be lost. Long-term memory is the store, accessed when person tries to understand or say a word.	Not able to complete instructions, remembers gist not details. Difficulties making connections with info learnt previously, limited vocab leading to hesitant speech

# SKILLS FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Skill	Importance	Implication for learning
<b>Understand</b>	listener needs to know vocab, concepts, sentence structure, intent, NVC. Needs integration of many different stimuli to be effective	learner may have functional skills but difficulties with abstract and academic language for learning e.g. reasoning, decoding words, copies others to disguise difficulties, avoid tasks
<b>Ideas and decide</b>	speaker has to have ideas, know what is relevant and what info listener needs and how to organise	difficulties generating ideas, copies others; have knowledge about topic but struggles with application for task; difficulties with organisation therefore speech/writing lacks structure/cohesion
<b>Choose words</b>	think and find the right words, need to be able to learn/store new words, imagination and life experience	difficulties understanding/storing info therefore limited vocab or difficulties finding words when needed, over-use of non-specific language

# SKILLS FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Skill	Importance	Implication for learning
<b>Putting words in a sentence</b>	ability to form grammatically correct sentences	struggle to form grammatically correct sentences, avoid frustration of failure and give up
<b>Impact</b>	speak at right time in right way with right context, use appropriate volume, speed, pitch; know how to start, continue, end a conversation	unable to gauge listeners mood, not understanding how what is said impacts listener, may say inappropriate things without realising due to misunderstanding info
<b>Modify</b>	how to adapt message for situation, what to do if not understood	difficulties with subtle aspects of communication, unable to change way they communicates to suit situation

# SKILLS FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Skill	Importance	Implication for learning
<b>Select sounds</b>	how to articulate or say the word, put the sounds in the right order, use muscles of mouth	unclear speech, difficulties with spelling, complex speech processing difficulties
<b>Speak fluently</b>	no stammering/stuttering; speak without stops in middle of sentences	hesitancy, significant fears about certain situations and talking may be tiring/stressful
<b>Self monitor</b>	subconscious check of all of the above with changes made when needed	difficulties realising when not understood, not asking for help as unaware of problem, perceived as impulsive/disorganised



# EARLIEST STAGES OF COMMUNICATION (ROWLAND 1996)

- Four basic reasons for communicating with other people. These are:
  - to refuse things we do not want
  - to obtain things we do want
  - to engage in social interactions (positive/negative)
  - to provide or seek information.
- Early communication will include non-speech vocalizations, facial expressions, eye gaze, gestures, whole body or body part movement.
- Moving on to use symbols including spoken words, manual signs or three-dimensional symbols or objects of reference

# MEANS, REASONS AND OPPORTUNITIES

[Speech and Language Therapy for Children with Autism - YouTube](#)



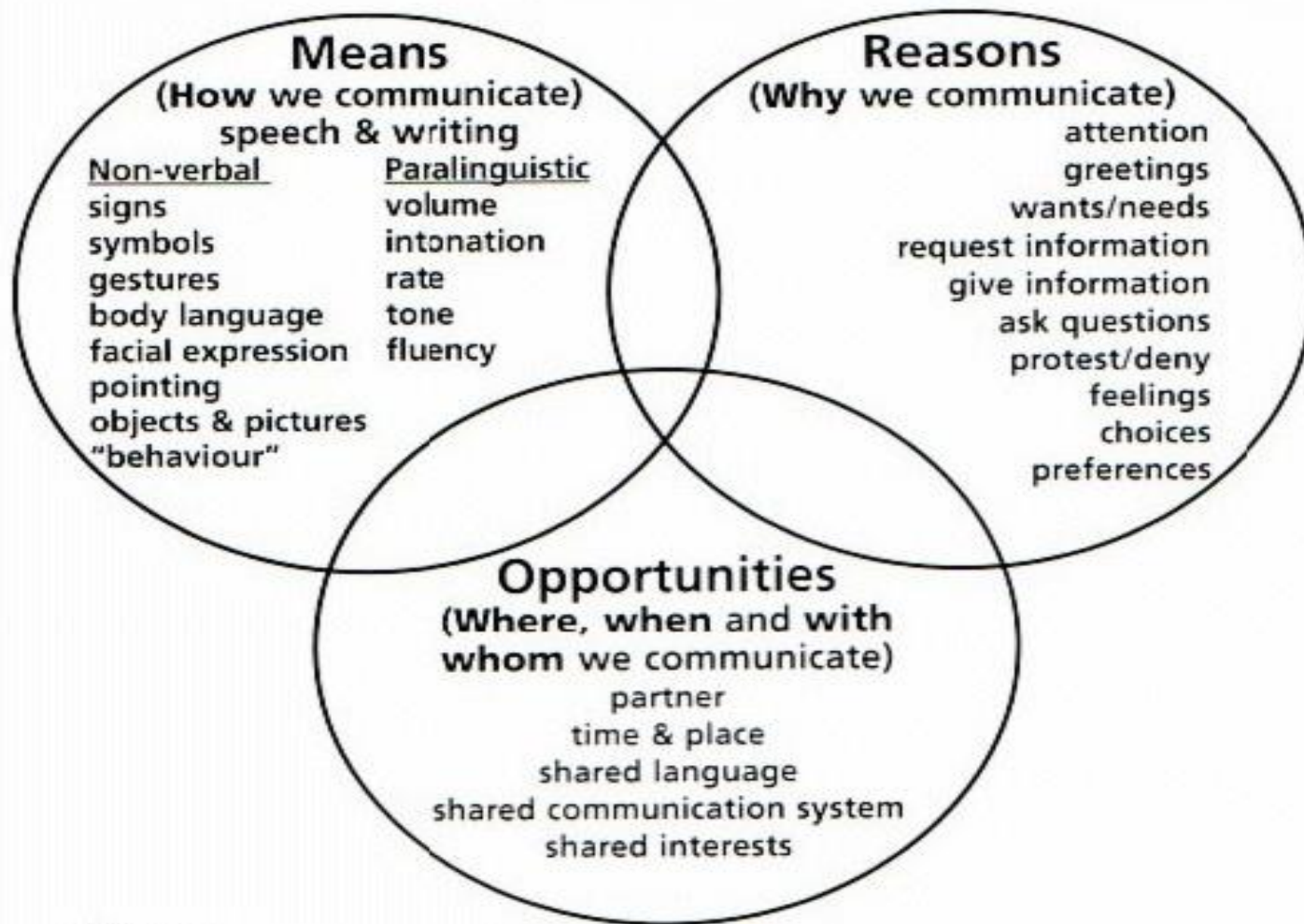


Figure 1  
Means, Reasons and Opportunities: The original model

## MEANS, REASONS AND OPPORTUNITIES

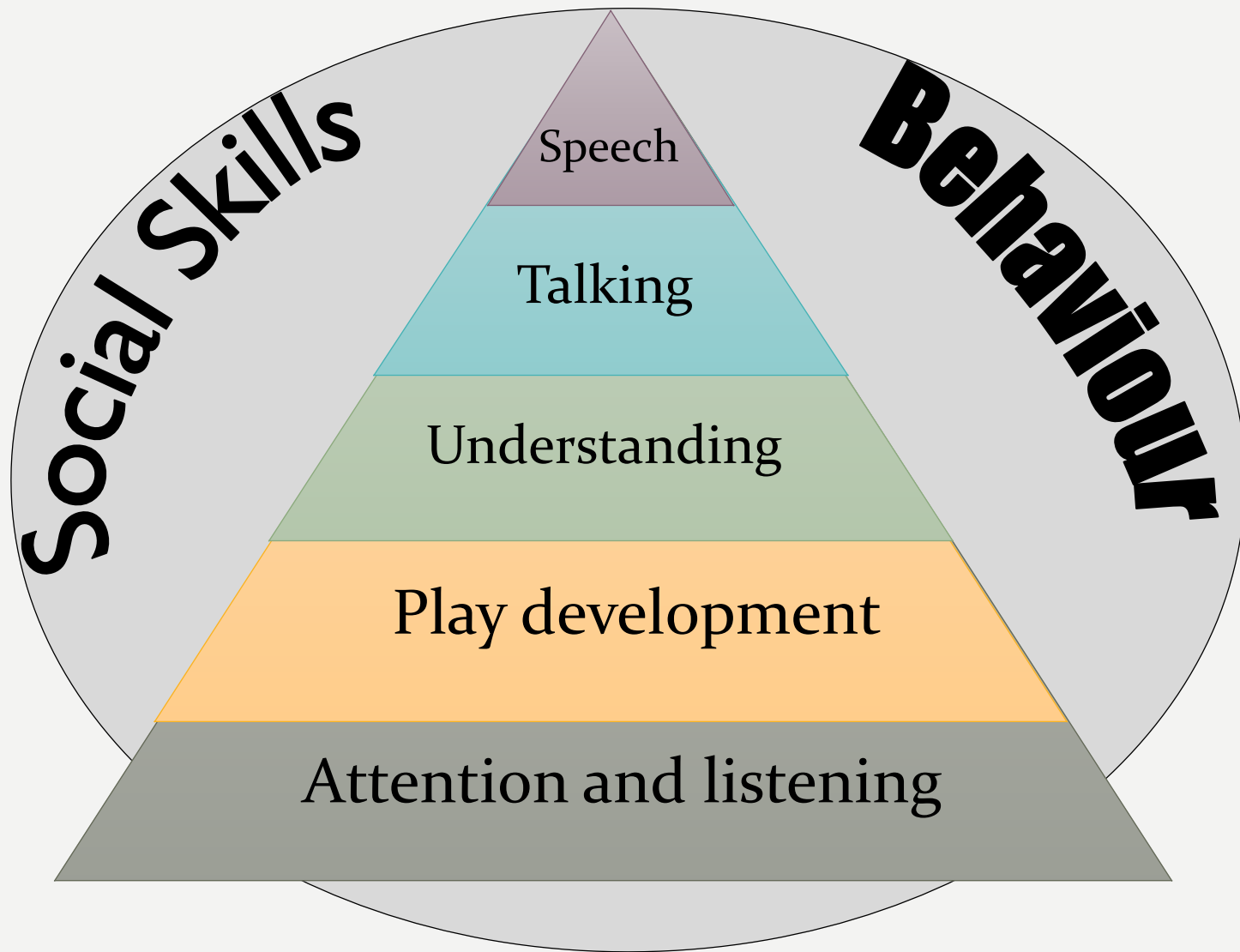
Without shared means of communicating, communication cannot happen

Without reasons, people will not be motivated to communicate

Without opportunities to communicate, communication will not take place

# FACTORS THAT MIGHT IMPACT COMMUNICATION

- Hearing
- Vision
- Memory
- Attention and listening
- Medication
- Motivation and Co-operation
- Generalisation
- Self monitoring
- Physical environment
- Internal state (e.g. emotional, health)
- Problem solving/abstract reasoning
- Decreased social awareness
- Challenging behaviour



Consider:

- How difficult it would be to work on speech sounds or language skills if a child couldn't listen and attend.
- How expressive language could exist without good understanding but would be empty.

### Attention and Listening

- The ability to attend (**look and think**) and listen (**understand what you hear**) to be ready to follow instructions/ information

### Receptive Language

The ability to **understand** what has been said/written, to **follow instructions/** information and to **problem solve**

### Expressive Language

- The ability to **Use** a wide variety of words and sentences to **express ideas**, thoughts and feelings clearly

### Speech

How we **physically make sounds**

### Social Skills

The ability to know **how to use language** in order to communicate effectively with peers and adults e.g. body language, awareness of self and others, being able to understand how others feel

# ATTENTION AND LISTENING

## DEVELOPMENT

- 0-1 year Easily distracted difficult to focus on one activity
- 1-2 years Focused on an activity of own choice not interested in your choice of activity
- 2-3 years Prefers activity of own choosing. To get them to do something you have to stop them playing first and then tell them
- You have to call their name before they will do things
- 3-4 years Will join in an activity of adult or peer choice
- More interested in what others are doing
- Responds quicker to instructions or prompts to refocus
  
- *A child progresses through stages of attention, from being able to concentrate on a task of their own choosing, to being able to accept an adult's presence, an adult's intervention and then being able to take in and understand verbal instructions without interrupting the task.*

## ACTIVITIES

- Watching and tracking objects – (try lights and musical toys)
- Looking at people's faces – (eg during songs and chat – sit face to face and close by)
- Turning to sounds and looking for novel noises, eg. a phone ringing (try bells, mobile phones)
- Waiting and anticipating during turn taking games, eg. “round and round the garden”

# PLAY AND INTERACTION

## DEVELOPMENT

- **0-1 year:** Exploratory play
- Enjoys toys that make noises or toys that ‘make things happen’
- Exploring toys by putting them in their mouth
- Starts to use everyday objects appropriately e.g. brush
- The child has no word for the object yet but through play and exploration they start to develop understanding of what the object is and how it can be used.
- **1-2 years:** Acts out everyday events using teddy e.g. feeds teddy, dolly to bed – child understands that a doll/teddy represents a ‘real’ person. At around 18 months begins to use miniature toys appropriately e.g. brushing a doll with a small brush.
- **2-3 years:** Child joins play sequences e.g. baths doll then puts her to bed.
- **3-4 years:** Using pretend play e.g. dressing up and having imaginative characters

## ACTIVITIES

- It is fun!
- A safe environment to explore and experiment
- Opportunities for giving language
- Precursor to language development
- Looking at faces (be eye to eye)
- Taking turns to make noises, eg. sounds, coughs, laughing
- Anticipating turns in games, eg. anticipating a tickle or an action in a song
- Copying each others sounds, eg. raspberries, vowel sounds, consonant sounds
- Being supported to explore different everyday objects and toys – feeling, looking, listening,
- Understanding cause & effect (try noisy toys or switch activated music or fans)

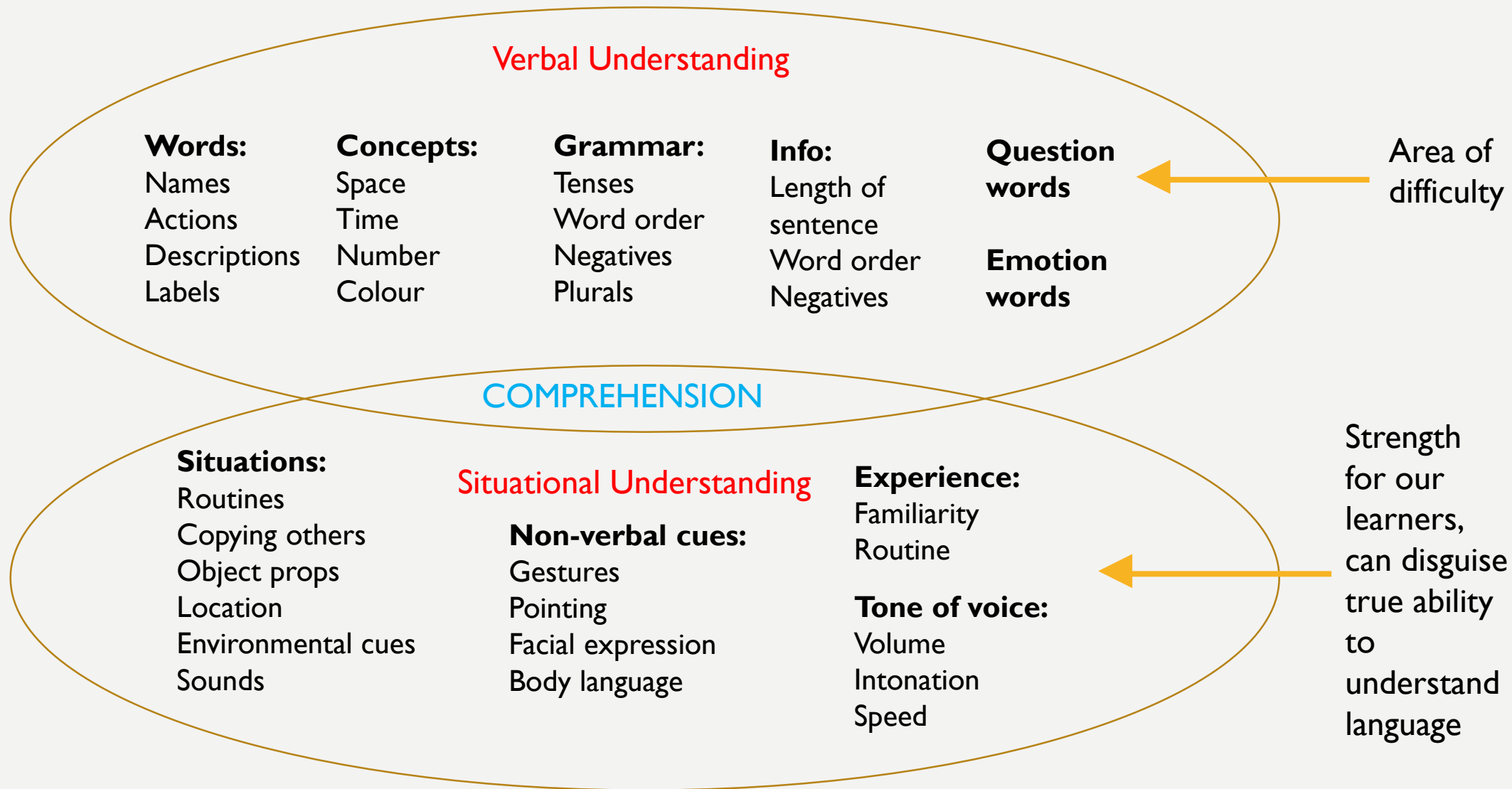
# UNDERSTANDING

- Anticipating from what you see or smell– eg. milk bottle placed in mouth.
- Understanding from the daily routine, eg. after “shoes on” comes the buggy! (keep a predictable routine)
- Understanding objects which are used regularly, eg. being shown nappy means you are going to be changed. (objects of reference)
- Understanding from what you hear, eg. doorbell ringing.
- Understanding from people’s actions, eg. mummy gesturing “up” before you are picked up. (prepare your child before each action with a word + action + show object if possible)
- Understanding one or two everyday words as part of the routine....eg. hear the door close + “daddy’s here!”



# UNDERSTANDING THE WORLD

(ADAPTED FROM CHALLENGING COMMUNICATION BY THURMAN AND SUTTON)



# EXPRESSIVE COMMUNICATION

- Crying vs happy noises
- Smiling and looking
- Cooing and babbling (initially without meaning)
- Pushing away and turning away from objects or people
- Babbling sounds
- Formal gestures, such as pointing, waving, gestures, makaton signs

# THEN EITHER.....

- (i) early words which close family can understand moving on to more single words and sentences that other people can understand or
- (ii) use of formal communication systems such as Makaton signs or picture / symbol systems.

Or a combination of the both.

# SPEECH

Long before children use their first words they are:

- Using their voice
- Practicing sounds (eg. raspberries & speech sounds)
- Stringing more than one sound together, eg. “mmm” “mama” “dama ma da”
- Making sense of how sounds make words and what words mean.

# TALKING TO YOUR CHILD

- Say **less** – 1 word at a time
- **Stress**
- Go **slow** and repeat
- **Show**

(and remember to get their attention first!)

Which 1 (or more) do you need to work on?

Patience is key.

# ALSO REFLECT ON....

- Does my child have enough reason to communicate?

Or do we all anticipate their needs so they never need to practice their communication skills?

# PLAYING WITH YOUR CHILD... O.W.L

- Play together, face to face and follow their lead and join in on their play
- OBSERVE - What do they like playing with? How do they respond when you join in?
- WAIT – Give your child an opportunity to communicate but don't wait too long if your child finds it hard to wait.
- LISTEN - If your child makes a sound then imitate it to show that you are listening and like hearing their voice.

# **THE ADDED EXTRAS:**

**ALTERNATIVE AND AUGMENTATIVE  
COMMUNICATION**



# OBJECTS OF REFERENCE:

- Using an object + word to help child understand what is coming next, eg.

“drink” + show and hold cup.

- Helps children to know what is coming next and to understand single words.

# ON BODY SIGNS

- On body Signs are signals placed on a child's body to give a specific message about events about to take place.
- Often used for children with multi-sensory impairments who find it difficult to prepare for changes in their day
- E.g. tapping on the corner of a child's mouth to indicate they are about to be fed (ideally their fingers but if physical difficulties limit this then use yours)

# MAKATON

- Sign assisted speech (always talk + sign)
- Uses many of the signs of BSL
- Sign key words to support understanding
- Signs last longer than words

BUT! Not all children have the motor imitation skills so may only be used to enhance understanding.

# OBJECT OR PHOTO CHOOSING:

- Holding 2 objects (and later photos or symbols) in front of your child and letting them:
  - eye point
  - reach

Towards the one that they want.

This can later develop into.....

# SYMBOL SUPPORT

- Use of pictorial images to support spoken language
- Can help child to anticipate or understand what is about to happen
- Child can point to symbol/photo to tell you what they want
- Visual timetables – shows activities within a day, now and next
- Visual schedules – detail actions required within an activity
- Choice boards

# PECS

- **Picture Exchange Communication System**
- Use symbols or photos to initiate communication and request motivating objects by physically giving the picture to the adult to request.
- Later sentences can be formed, eg. “I want + crisps”
- Means of expressive communication
- Requires child to have a range of toys/food/activities which are really motivating
- Develops requesting skills

# COMMUNICATION BOARD AND BOOKS

- Expressive tool
- Visual representation of language
- Divided into categories with core vocab pages or sentence starter pages
- Colour coded
- Allows for generation of novel utterances
- Wider scope than PECS
- Increased opportunity for personal vocab re. chatting
- Personalised

# VOICE OUTPUT COMMUNICATION AIDS

- Single (or simple)/choice making devices such as big mack or iTalk2





# UP TO MORE COMPLEX DEVICES...

- VOCAs (accessed manually or with head control or eye pointing)



# HELP AVAILABLE

- If you need additional help or support to develop your young person's communication at home please contact your class teacher or myself:
  - Shelley Soni (Speech and Language Therapist)
- Good luck 😊