

Pragmatic language



Pragmatic language is what we call our 'social' language.

It involves three different things:

Using language in different ways (e.g. saying hello vs requesting a drink).

Changing language to suit the person or situation (e.g. talking differently to a baby than a teenager).

Following the 'rules' or etiquette for conversations and telling stories.

When we talk to people, we usually use a few unwritten 'rules'.

These include:

- Looking at the person who is talking, or who you are talking to
- Taking it in turns to talk when having a conversation with someone
- Staying on the topic of conversation
- Using body language and facial expressions appropriately
- Understanding and using personal space
- Being able to talk about a variety of topics (e.g. not always wanting to talk about only trains or animals).

Remember that no one is the perfect talker all the time, and it is normal for children to have trouble following these 'rules' sometimes.

Also remember that the 'rules' might change for people of different cultures or backgrounds.

You can help your child to talk socially.

Try to:

- Role-play different situations or conversations with your child. Sometimes social skills will need to be directly taught rather than being simply 'picked up'
- Show the child what you mean. Sometimes it is easier for them to 'see for themselves' rather than be told
- Practise social skills or remind your child about them at home, rather than 'in the moment'
- If your child is having trouble with pragmatic language or seems to behave inappropriately for their age in certain situations, it might be worth seeing a speech pathologist.

For more information, visit:

- <http://www.asha.org/public/speech/development/PragmaticLanguageTips>
- <http://raisingchildren.net.au/>



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