

Autumn Receptive (understanding) Language Goal

Old McDonald Music Basket



You will need:

- **A basket or box.**
- **Some toy animals.** For example, small farm animals or animal teddies.
- **Some music shakers or drums.** Tip: You can make your own music shakers using an empty toilet roll filled with rice and with both ends taped over. You could use an empty lunchbox as a drum!

How does it work?

- This activity can be used for children with lots of different levels of understanding.
- Sing Old McDonald with your child. Remember to use a slow pace so that your child can hear all of the words.
- Use the toy animals and music shakers as props to engage your child. Take a break in between each verse of the song to talk about the animals and to give your child instructions.
- Remember to use lots of language yourself! You are also developing your child's understanding when you:
 - Make comments ("This sheep is soft!")
 - Model key words ("again!")
 - Show what you are talking about using visual supports: for example, hold up animals, act things out, use Lámh sign or point to words on your child's communication device.
- Spend some of the activity working on your child's ability to follow instructions, depending on his/her level of understanding:

Note: An Information Carrying Word (ICW) is a word that carries meaning because there is a choice on offer. For example, the instruction "give me the book", where there is a choice of a book and a cup, has 1 ICW.

- **Own Agenda Stage Goal:** The child will start to engage with the adult and participate in finding animals and taking them out of the basket.
- **1 ICW stage:** The child will follow instructions with 1 Information carrying word (ICW) related to the activity.
- **2 ICW stage:** The child will follow instructions with 2 information carrying words (ICWs) related to the activity.
- **3 ICW stage and more varied instructions/questions stage:** The child will follow more complex instructions such as instructions with 3+ information carrying words, instructions following a sequence, or a variety of questions.

Steps for instructions at each stage:

Start the same way each time. Say "Time to sing Old McDonald" and show the child the Old McDonald Music Basket. Pause in between verses to give some instructions at the appropriate level:

1. **Own Agenda stage:** The goal is that the child participates in the activity by taking an animal out of the basket before each verse. You will name the animal and hold it up or point to it when it is mentioned during the song.
2. **1 ICW stage:** The goal is that the child follows 1 ICW instruction. For example: "Give me the cow" or "show me the sheep" (from a choice of 2 or more animals).
3. **2 ICW stage:** The goal is that the child will follow instructions with 2 ICW instructions. For example, animal + action: "make the cow jump" or "make the dog run" (where there is choice of animals and you are naming an action from a choice of several possible actions).
4. **3 ICW stage and more varied instructions/questions:** if the child can consistently follow 2 ICW instructions. You could try:
 - 3 ICW instructions: For example, animal + action + place: "Make the cow jump on the table" or "make the sheep sleep on the rug".
 - 3 part instructions in sequence: "give me the cow, the pig, and the sheep"
 - Introduce picture books about animals or photos or Youtube clips of animals and ask the child wh- questions relating to the pictures such as "What is she doing?", "What is that?", "where is...?". Remember to make some comments yourself too!

Some relevant Lámh signs:

