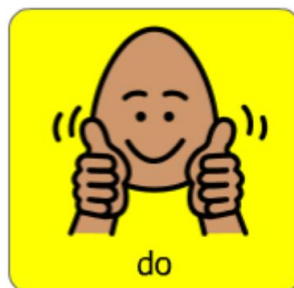




Colourful Semantics

What is colourful semantics?

Colourful semantics is a targeted approach to support children with their sentence building and to teach them about sentence structure. It was developed by Alison Bryan and is now widely used with children experiencing language difficulties.



Who might the colourful semantics approach help?

Colourful semantics works really well for lots of different children and young people. In particular, it can be useful for children who:

- Show real problems with putting sentences together.
- Confuse the order of words within sentences.
- Miss out verbs (action words) or key information from sentences.
- Have a tendency to start a sentence, trail off and then try again.
- Always use the same types of sentences.

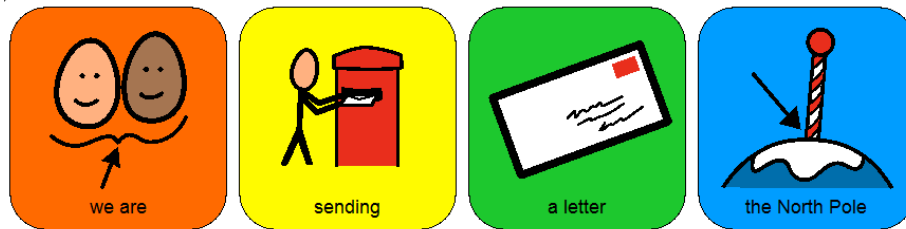
If you're not sure whether colourful semantics might help your child, speak to their Speech and Language Therapist for advice ☺

What is the idea behind colourful semantics?

The approach teaches a child the different parts of a sentence by giving each one a colour and an associated question prompt. The main parts of a sentence taught are:

| Question Cue (to elicit the part of the sentence) | Colour |
|---|--------|
| Who? | Orange |
| What doing? | Yellow |
| What? | Green |
| Where? | Blue |

So, an example sentence might look like this:



Using colours and questions for each element of the sentence means that you can support a child in two main ways:

- Help them to understand different questions by associating them with a colour, e.g. when you're reading a book together you could ask '*who's the story about?*' and show your child an orange question prompt so that they understand what kind of answer you're looking for.
- Help them to build up different sentences by combining different colours together.

The colour coding system makes the approach very visual meaning that it works well for children whose visual skills are a strength.

How do I get started?

Colourful semantics is a targeted language approach so it is best to speak to your child's Speech and Language Therapist about how and where to start. The starting point for colourful semantics will depend on your child's language skills to begin with.

As simple examples:

- If a child only has single words and is not yet building sentences, they may need to start by working on '*who*' only.
- If a child is already using phrases like '*boy eating*', they might be able to start at a higher level with '*who – what doing – what*' sentences.

Practical Tips for using Colourful Semantics

- To begin with, don't worry too much about the smaller grammatical words, e.g. 'the, is, a'. If your child misses these out, just model the sentence back to them with those words included for them to hear.
- If your child has good literacy skills, link colourful semantics into reading and writing tasks too. For example, ask them to colour code the different parts of a sentence in their reading book.

Where can I find out more?

- Speak to your child's Speech and Language Therapist for advice about how and where to get started.