

## CRITICAL ELEMENTS SCAVENGER HUNT

### USING PLAY TO TARGET USE OF MULTIPLE CRITICAL ELEMENTS

#### THINK ABOUT . . .

Critical elements are pieces of information, presented auditorily, that a child must hold in their working (short term) memory. A child is given a set of materials (small or large, based on the child's abilities), and asked to listen for which piece(s) to choose. For example, for a new listener, I might put out a heart sticker and a flower sticker, and give the direction, "Put on the flower sticker." That represents one critical element from a set of two choices. For a more advanced listener, I might have a set of hearts, flowers, and stars of all different colors and sizes. For this child, I would ask, "Put on the large purple star," which represents three critical elements (size, color, shape) from a large set.



#### ACTIVITY

- 1- You are going to attempt to use multiple critical elements from a large set of items such as (items in a toy bin, pantry, fridge, cupboard, art bin, other house locations, etc.) to send your child on a scavenger hunt.
- 2- This could look like: *I want you to find a \*red, \*square, \*oven mitt \*in a drawer (in comparison to one or 2 more oven mitts) OR, a \*small, \*blue, \*spoon (compared to other spoons that differ by 1-2 elements).*
- 3- Refer to \*Helpful tips to create more scavenger hunt directions catered to your environment.
- 4- It is typical to start with very small sets and directions of 1-2 critical elements, then progress through increasing set sizes, critical elements per direction, and concepts to stretch the child's auditory memory and language skills.
- 5- Every child is different, so work with your child to see if you can increase the critical elements as you go and follow their lead.
- 6- If applicable, you can take turns directing each other on a "house hunt" and aim to find \*10 items each.

#### MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Anything in your house! 😊

#### PREPARATION:

- 1- It might be easiest to come up with a few directions before starting the activity, to make sure your directions are clear to the child.
- 2- E.g., locate items in your cupboard/in the room and use list below to come up with 1-2 critical elements to describe the item.

#### VOCABULARY:

- Colors
- Shapes
- Prepositions
- Size words
- New locations
- Ordinal/Temporal

\*See Below for examples

#### HELPFUL TIPS:

Basic concepts include, but are not limited to (in rough order of difficulty):

- Color (if applicable, be sure to expand beyond primary and secondary colors to include new vocabulary like lavender, teal, magenta, etc.)
- Size (again if applicable, use giant, tiny, large instead of just big vs. small)
- Shape (yet again, an opportunity to expand to more complex shape-related vocabulary)
- Specific locations (toy bin, pantry, fridge, cupboard, other house locations, etc.)
- Prepositions (ask the child to look for items over, under, beside, between, below, etc.)
- Letters on the item (find an object with the letter \* \_\_\_\_)
- Ordinal/Temporal (giving multi-part directions using words like first, second, last or before/after)

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