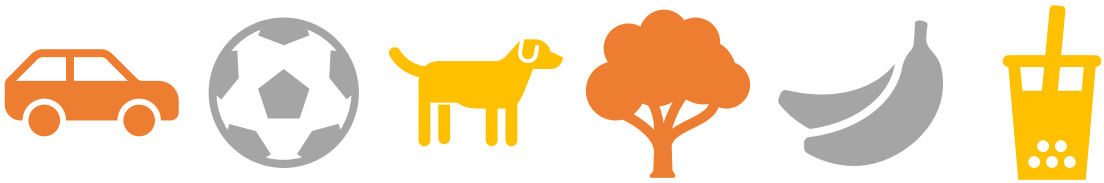
Mapping Words onto Actions

Autistic children and young people have differences in how they communicate. This can be limited use of spoken language.

Most autistic children with limited language have a bigger vocabulary of nouns (or naming words) than verbs (doing words). This is because nouns are easier for them to see, manipulate, and understand.

Most adults tend to label and emphasise nouns. “CAR!! Henry, do you see the CAR?”



Equipping children with different types of words allows them to convey their needs and wants and to express their inner thoughts and emotions.

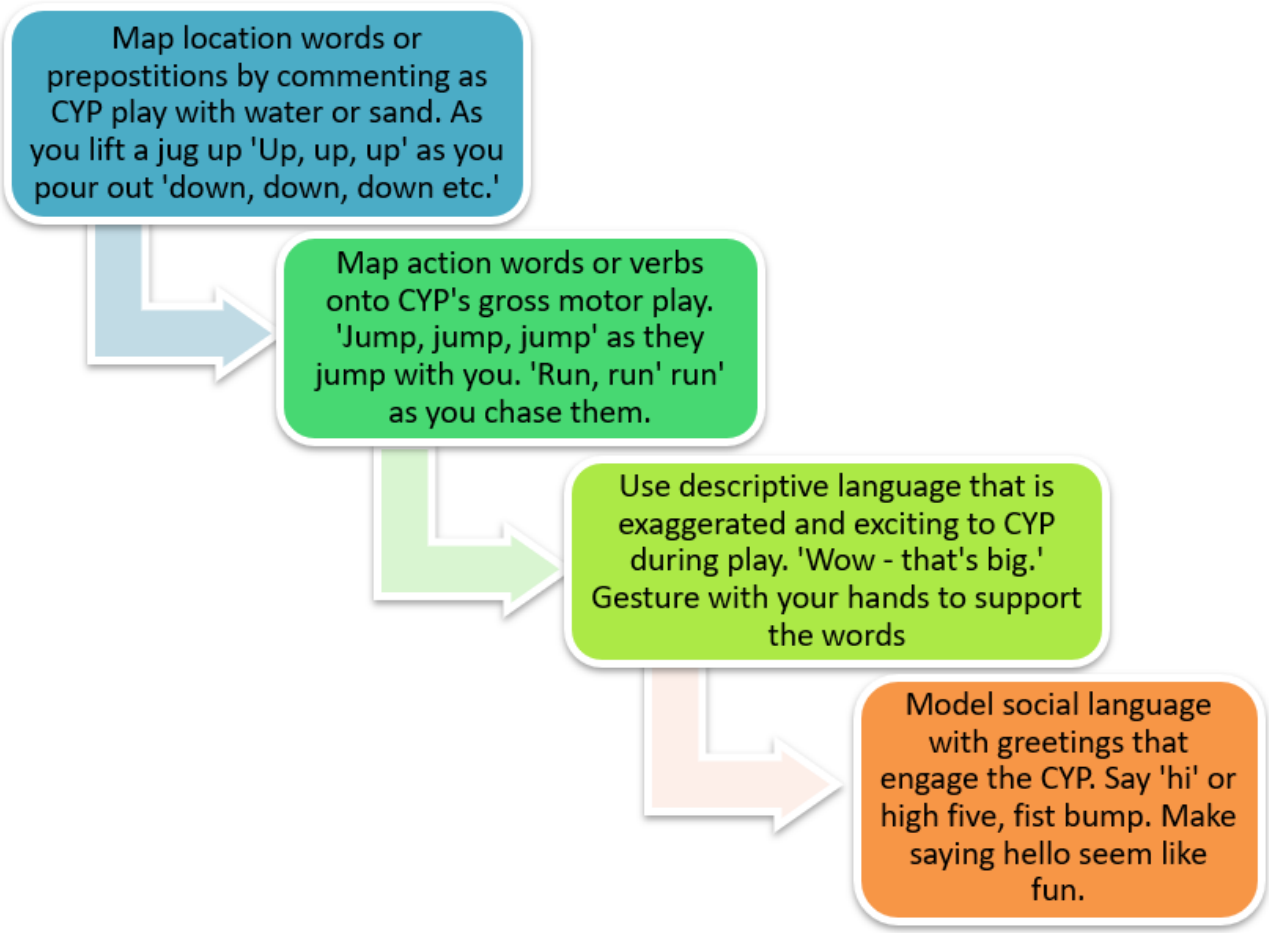
A child’s vocabulary should consist of:

- Action words or verbs (e.g., Eat, sleep, finished)
- Describing words or adjectives (e.g., Big, hot, yucky)
- Early location words or prepositions (e.g., In, there, up)
- Names of people, places, things, or objects (e.g., Mom, truck, park)



- Conversational or social words (e.g., Hi, bye, what’s that?)

How to map words onto an autistic child's play and actions



Tip: Reduce language and focus on the words you want the CYP to learn.