

## Colourful Semantics

Colourful semantics is an approach created by Alison Bryan. It is aimed at helping children to develop their grammar, by linking the structure of a sentence (syntax) and its meaning (semantics).

### What is Colourful Semantics?

Colourful semantics reassembles sentences by cutting them up into their thematic roles and then colour codes them.

The approach has 4 key colour coded stages to 'show' the structure of a sentence. There are further stages for adverbs, adjectives, conjunctions and negatives.

1. WHO - Orange
2. WHAT DOING - Yellow
3. WHAT - Green
4. WHERE - Blue



This image of a colour strip is an example of a child working at level 4. The approach helps children to organise their sentences into key levels. The approach is used in stages and helps children develop language and vocabulary in addition to grammatical structure. It can be used to help (1) children who are starting to develop language and have limited vocabulary, and (2) confident talkers who struggle to organise the grammatical content of their sentences.

### Why use Colourful Semantics?

There are a range of benefits to using this approach, including (but not limited to):

- Encouraging wider vocabulary;
- Making sentences longer;
- Helping children to answer questions or generate responses to questions;
- Developing use of nouns, verbs, prepositions and adjectives;
- Improving story telling skills;

- Can be transferred to written sentences and written language comprehension;
- Can be carried out individually or in small groups.

## Who can benefit from Colourful Semantics?

The approach can be used for one to one therapy with children with a range of Speech, Language and Communication Needs, including (but not limited to):

- Specific Language Impairment;
- Developmental Delay or Disorder;
- Autistic Spectrum Condition;
- Down Syndrome;
- Literacy difficulties.

## Who can deliver Colourful Semantics?

Colourful semantics can be delivered by teachers and support staff who have received training and advice from a Speech and Language Therapist to support their use of the approach.

## Evidence for Colourful Semantics

Studies have shown that the colourful semantics approach is a useful approach when working with children (Bolderson, Dosanjh, Milligan, Pring & Chiat, 2011).

## References

Bolderson, S., Dosanjh, C., Milligan, C., Pring, T. & Chiat, S. (2011). Colourful semantics: a clinical investigation. *Child Language Teaching and Therapy*, 27, pp.344-353.