

Section 7.9 - Understanding and using pronouns: 'his' and 'her'

Book Page 143

Why is this important?

'His' and 'her' are used to signal that something belongs or relates to a man/lady, boy/girl (or male/female animal) previously identified in a sentence (e.g. the boy wears 'his' shoes, the girl likes 'her' new bike).

What to do

- Find a catalogue or magazine and cut out a picture of a boy and girl – there are also many commercial products available.
- Cut out lots of pictures of clothes and toys. Try to find similar items (e.g. a girl's coat and a boy's coat; a bike for the girl and one for the boy).
- Divide the clothes and toys between the boy and the girl. Ask the child to find:
 - 'His hat.'
 - 'Her shoes.'
 - 'Her bike.'
- If the child chooses the wrong picture:
 - Praise the child: 'Good try.'
 - Repeat the question emphasising the pronoun: 'You've found the girl's bike, that's *her* bike; can you find *his* bike?'
 - If there is no spontaneous correction, guide the child's hand to the right picture repeating the pronoun: 'This is the boy's bike, it's *his* bike.'
- When the child is consistently choosing the right person/picture, reverse the roles so that the child is asking you to find 'his coat', etc.

Step up

- Encourage the child to say whether items are 'his' or 'her' things. Use a phrase to guide or give a choice, e.g.
 - 'This is the boy's hat so it's (pause) ... hat.'
 - 'Is this *his* hat or her hat?'
- Introduce more difficult pronouns (e.g. 'they'/'their').

Step down

- During everyday routines, emphasise 'his' and 'her'. For example, when getting ready to go out:
 - Adult: 'Well done. James has put *his* coat on; now mummy is putting *her* coat on.'
- There are lots of opportunities at home (e.g. washing 'his'/'her' face during bath-time, putting 'his' socks away whilst sorting out the washing).
- Start by using one of the pictures only (e.g. just the boy) and talk about all 'his' things. When the child has mastered this, move onto just the girl and 'her' things. Then re-introduce both the boy *and* the girl and start again with 'his' and 'her'.
- Use 'his' and 'her' when looking at books (e.g. 'Look, that boy is wearing *his* scarf').

