


Communication and Language

"The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children's back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial."

Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage 2023 (DfE)



If you can't
say it, you
can't read it
or write it

"Spoken language underpins the development of reading and writing. The quality and variety of language that pupils hear and speak are vital for developing their vocabulary and grammar and their understanding for reading and writing."

English National Curriculum DfE (2013)

Developing Communication and Language Skills

Children need lots of opportunities to have conversations with you and to hear you modelling language and introducing new words. They learn language better when they're engaged with things that fascinate, challenge, and excite them. Children need to hear and say new words often to strengthen the connections in their brains and to keep building their vocabulary.

Rhymes and rhyme time:

Rhyming helps children to break words down and to hear the sounds that make up words in preparation for reading and writing.

Did you know?

If children know eight nursery rhymes by the time, they are four years old, they are usually among the best readers by the time they are eight?

So why not sing songs and have a rhyme time with your child every day?

Try making up your own songs and rhymes. Use rhymes with actions and props. Draw children's attention to rhyming words as you sing.

Working Together

Early Years

Home & School

st Mary's



Importance of Talk

Learn. Grow. Achieve. Flourish.

Talking with your child

Talk to your child when you're playing together, walking together and in the car.

Have fun with nursery rhymes and songs, especially those with actions.

Encourage your child to listen to different sounds, such as cars and animals. This will help your child's listening skills.

Gain your child's attention when you want to talk. Say their name and wait before talking.

Increase vocabulary by giving choices, e.g. "Do you want juice or milk?"

Talk about things whilst doing them e.g., when you're unpacking the shopping.

Listen carefully and give your child time to finish talking. Take turns to speak.

Always respond in some way when your child says something.

Help your child to use more words by adding to what they've said, e.g., if they said "ball" you might say, "Yes, it is a big, red ball."

If your child says something incorrectly, say it back the right way, e.g., "Goggy bit it." "Yes, the dog bit it, didn't he?"

Try and have special time with your child

GAMES to support talking

I Spy:

I spy is a guessing game where one player (the spy) chooses an object within sight and says to the other players ...

"I spy with my little eye something beginning with...", naming the first letter's sound of the object. Other players attempt to guess this object.

Odd One Out:

Begin by naming three items – two that are connected in some way and one that is not (you can make this as easy or as hard as you wish, depending upon the age and interests of your child) and ask your child to choose the odd one out.

E.g. "Train, bus, hair" it is easy to identify the odd one out.

Shopping List - I Went to Market:

How to play: Take turns to add imaginary items to a shopping list. Before you add yours, you must recall all the items on the list so far. e.g., "I went to the market and bought apples...I went to the market and bought apples and bananas..."

Connecting Words

How to play: Take turns saying a single word. Each word must somehow be connected to the word before. Go as fast as you can! **Example:** "Tree", "Leaf", "Green", "Paint", "Wall", "Clock", "Hands".

Talk about books and pictures

Use LEARN to talk about a book

Look at the pictures together.

Encourage your child to talk by letting them start the conversation.

Ask questions about the story.

Remember to talk about things your child is especially interested in.

Never rush remember to pause.

Nouns and Verbs

Nouns are the names of objects, people and places. E.g., Slough, pencil, carrot etc.

Verbs are action or doing words. e.g., brushing, cutting, writing etc.

A great way to start is by helping your child learn new action words for things they do every day, such as brush, wash, wipe, eat, and drink. Say the word for the action over and over again as you do it in your daily routine.

Here's what you might say as you practice teaching your child verbs:

"Open" while opening the cereal box.

"Pour" when pouring the cereal into a bowl.

"Stir" to stir the porridge.

"Scoop" when scooping ice cream out the box.

Guess the verb – Act out an action and ask your child to guess what the verb is.

Guess the noun – describe the object and your child guesses it.

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