

Linking Language & Comprehension



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Aims of the workshop:

- To explain why communication and language skills are important
- To share our goals for developing your child's communication and comprehension skills
- To share some techniques that we use in nursery to promote good language development and understanding
- Suggest things you can do at home
- Share with you some useful resources

Why is communication & language important?

- Communication plays a central role in all our lives.

It provides us with:

- a means of sharing our feelings and emotions with others
- a tool for giving and receiving information
- a tool that helps us with thinking and reasoning.

What are we working towards?

By the end of Reception we are looking for skills and development in:

- **Listening and attention:** listening attentively in a range of situations. Being able to listen to stories, accurately anticipating key events and respond to what they hear with relevant comments, questions or actions. To give their attention to what others say and respond appropriately, while engaged in another activity.
- **Understanding:** to follow instructions involving several ideas or actions. To answer 'how' and 'why' questions about their experiences and in response to stories or events.
- **Speaking:** to express themselves effectively, showing awareness of listeners' needs. To use past, present and future forms accurately when talking about events that have happened or are to happen in the future. To develop their own narratives and explanations by connecting ideas or events.

How is this achieved at nursery?

At nursery we provide activities and experiences that

- involve giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment;
- develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves;
- encourage the children to speak and listen in a range of situations;
- are open ended;
- use repetition as a means of learning new words and phrases;
- where children make mistakes with their words or phrases, we simply repeat back and say it correctly.

Role of adult

- **We model listening:** Listening is an integral part of conversation, and the ability to listen is every bit as important as the ability to speak. We show children how to listen by listening carefully our self. As much as possible, we give each child our undivided attention – and if we can't listen at a particular moment, we explain why and promise that we will listen to what they have to say later.
- **We promote listening during group activities:** During group activities, we emphasise the importance of listening when somebody is speaking. If a child is losing their audience, we help them to finish off what they are saying.

TALK techniques that we use

Talking together Being equal partners in communication	Attention and listening Supporting a child's understanding of language and activities	Level of language Adapting adult language to fit the child's level	Keep on commenting Reinforcing and extending a child's language development
<i>How?</i>	<i>How?</i>	<i>How?</i>	<i>How?</i>
Listen more than you talk	Remove distractions	Keep language simple	Comment on what is happening
Involve children in conversation	Look at the child you are talking to	Give one instruction at a time	Give children the right language model
Use visual cues	Say the child's name	Check understanding	Repeat language
Emphasise turn taking	Keep to a routine	Re-phrase information	Wait!
Value what children say	Praise good listening and attention skills		

Our next steps

Over the rest of the year we will be:

- helping to build up their word bank (vocabulary)
- helping them to understand words have meaning
- helping them to put words together in the right order
- understanding and using the social rules of communication.
- developing a love for books and sharing experiences

Ways to help at home

- Talk about what you are doing. This helps develop their language immensely. “First I am going to...then...after...”
- Gesture towards items to help your child make strong connections between words and objects.
- Take time to talk. Discuss your day and theirs. Just the equivalent of 1.5 hours a week increases their vocabulary to 30 million words. (A study in 2014 concluded)
- Don't correct them, reply to what they say and use the words they have mispronounced. “Daddy go work?” “Yes, Daddy has gone to work.” “I swimmmed.” “Yes you swam in the sea on holiday.”

Sharing a book is a great starting point too

- Share a daily story
- Include texts with repeated refrains so your child can join in
- Extend your child's vocabulary by explaining unfamiliar words and concepts and making sure they have understood what it means
- Comment on the pictures "It looks like..."
- Make predictions "I wonder what will happen next?"
- Ask simple questions. "Where is the big boat?"
- Re-read favourites. Encourage them to turn the page. This will help them learn the language and get a feel for being a reader.

Resources

<https://hungrylittleminds.campaign.gov.uk/>



[Brain-building tips for babies and young children.](#)



[Milestones, tips, resources and advice to help support your child's literacy development.](#)



[Resources, support and advice to help your child learn at home.](#)



[Fun activities to help your child build resilience through relationships.](#)



[Find expert guides about developing your 2 to 4-year-old's communication skills.](#)



[Wellbeing kits to help you take care of your family and your mind.](#)



[Simple activities and play ideas to help you develop your child's communication skills.](#)



[Activity packs to help you chat, play and read with your little one.](#)



[Free activities designed for young children with SEND.](#)



Libraries Connected

[Join online rhyme times, story times and events hosted by libraries across the country.](#)



[15 important behaviours that make a huge difference to your child's development.](#)



[Fun, practical tips to support your child to learn through play.](#)



[Support if you are worried about your child's language development.](#)



[Information about children learning more than one language.](#)



[Advice about speech and language therapy.](#)

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Any questions?