Communication & Language



An Early Years Curriculum Document

The Lilycroft and St Edmund's Nursery Schools' Federation, Bradford

Communication & Language

Core Principles

"The development of children's spoken language (alongside the other prime areas), 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.

By commenting on what children are interested in or doing, and echoing back what they say with new vocabulary added, practitioners will build children's language effectively." **Development Matters 2021**







Listening & Attention (By Age Group)
0-2 Years

We have a calm atmosphere; the environment is neutral and equipped with natural resources. This environment helps babies to tune into their surroundings, listen and respond to sounds around them.

Even very young babies turn to sounds, such as an adult calling their name from across the room, and they will try to locate where the sound is coming from.

Babies react and respond to different intonation in voices becoming quiet and alert to the sound of speech, for example, they notice when adults change between high and low pitch and emphasise different parts of words. An awareness of the rhythms of speech, rhymes and songs allows babies to join in and respond as they listen.

Practitioners get physically close to a baby and make sure that they can clearly see their face and hear them better. They make sure that the baby is looking at them and wants to interact, **enabling them to use all their senses to tune in and respond.**



Practitioners show the baby that they are ready to listen and interact by using eye contact and touch to create shared moments and interactions. Practitioners use a range of facial expressions and lively voices with ups and downs to help babies tune in.
Practitioners encourage playfulness e.g. peek-a-boo.

We imitate/mirror a response to show that we value and notice a baby's contributions e.g. copying facial expressions, body actions and vocalisations.

Practitioners often use gentle voices. This way babies can focus their attention and listen with minimal distractions.
Babies react to sounds by moving their whole bodies.

Babies listen to and enjoy rhythmic patterns in rhymes, songs, and stories, responding with movement and vocalisation. Rhymes, songs, and stories are a core part of our practice with lots of repetition, enabling young children to tune into the familiar.

We carefully consider our environment to ensure it is set up to invite babies to listen and respond to different sounds. We add sensory play resources such as crinkly paper, pebbles in tins and musical instruments, enabling them to experience sounds accompanied by other sensations.

We take children out for walks to the park or shopping as often as possible. During this time, children are exposed to and can hear a much wider range of sounds, that with support they begin to recognise and identify.

Listening & Attention
2-3 Years

At this age, children begin to show real interest in the noises adults make when they read stories. They recognise the pattern in familiar words/sounds/actions and will try to join in. Practitioners continue to use voice intonations, facial expression and body language to engage children's interest and encourage interactions.

The pace the adult reads stories, allows enough time for children to process what they have heard and time to respond. Carefully, well thought through questioning techniques are used to support and reinforce this learning.

We are aware of the needs of all children and use different approaches to ensure that they can engage and participate regardless of the developmental stage that they are at, including children new to English. Children show interest in playing with sounds, songs and rhymes. Practitioners use repetition, rhythm and rhyme with voice intonation to encourage listening, keep children's interest and promote active participation.

We use interesting props and visuals with stories and rhymes which incite children's interest and attention. This is particularly important for children with a hearing impairments, enabling them to use their other senses to support listening.



- Young children have single channelled attention and, when possible the background noise and visual distractions are minimised so that children can focus on the adult and listen to each other. In addition to stories, rhymes and songs we place importance on ensuring that practitioners are engaged in daily back and forth conversations with children, both verbal and non verbal. This shows us that children are actively listening. Adults respond to what the children are saying, modelling language and encouraging children to talk using open ended questions and comments such as 'I wonder... ' 'What if...'. Children enjoy exploring and imitating s
-
- C to li b yday (c tr c
-
- W a "please stop and listen". Children respond to familiar sounds both indoors and outdoors e.g. a knock at the door. Adults leave gaps for children to fill and time for them to anticipate words i.e. in songs or rhymes



Listening & Attention
3-4 Years

Children are able to listen to others in small groups and in one-to-one situations giving more **focus and attention** to what they have heard. **Imaginative scenarios where children take on a role in their play** offer a great opportunity and a real necessity to listen. Practitioners encourage children to listen to each other drawing their attention to what their peers are saying.

Children listen to stories and rhymes with **increased attention**, and are able to **recall** some familiar words and phrases, joining in with repeated refrains.

Practitioners sometimes make mistakes on purpose allowing children to **correct** them. We continue to cue children by using their names first to gain attention, this is particularly important for those with additional needs and communication difficulties.

Children are exposed to a wealth of stories, rhymes and daily conversations through a language rich environment which provides opportunities to have a bank of vocabulary to be able to create their own stories and rhymes.



Children anticipate key events from familiar stories and sometimes offer the alternative ending to a story.

Practitioners are aware of the needs of the children in their class and offer stories and rhymes in languages other than English.

Skilled practitioners are able to use careful questioning and comments to find out how much children are engaged and listening, using open-ended questions, talking about feelings of the characters in the story and **linking the events in the story to children's personal experiences**.

Children can now more easily tune into multiple sounds around them and are able to identify many familiar sounds, such as birds, cars or a tap running. We use objects and instruments to create different sounds so that children are hearing a wide variety. For children with a hearing impairment, it is important to use signs and body language when naming, and describing the sounds.

We encourage children to make and differentiate between sounds that are loud and soft, high and low, modelling and repeating in a range of contexts.

Practitioners encourage children to listen to and follow instructions. Children listen to and copy speech sounds. Adults model being a good listener- giving plenty of processing time to children (10 seconds), listening patiently and avoiding saying words for children. They model active listening- tuning in to what children are saying and responding appropriately. **Children's efforts and ideas are respected, so they feel safe to take risks with new ideas and feel comfortable with mistakes.**

Listening & Attention
3-4 Years

We create quiet spaces suitable for listening both indoors and outdoors. Adults notice and comment when children listen well by describing their good listening behaviour. We play games which involve listening for a signal, such as 'Simon Says'.



We take opportunities to stop and listen carefully to environmental sounds and use a range of words to describe what we hear. For example "the aeroplane is making a low rumbling sound".

Adults plan regular short periods where children listen to each other, such as singing a short song, sharing an experience or describing something they have seen or done.

We offer children the opportunity to recall/retell stories. This encourages them to listen to stories with increasing attention. More experienced children: (how we extend some children)

We provide opportunities for children to recall key events of stories, e.g. repeated phrases, main characters and key events. We talk to children in more complex sentences and provide opportunities for them to follow 2-3 part instructions





Early Phonics

We have a weekly phonics session that follows the Letters and Sounds document. This can be found online at: Letters and sounds-GOV.UK. In addition to this we use other resources i.e. the actions from Jolly Phonics which supports kinesthetic learners.

Autumn 1 - Environmental Sounds

We learn to use our ears to listen to sounds all around us. We name what is making the sound and describe the sound we can hear. We begin to segment words in a simple sentence and count the number of words.

Autumn 2 - Instrumental Sounds

We name and listen to the sounds musical instruments make. We talk about the sounds, copy a given sequence of sounds and differentiate between the sounds of the instruments.

Spring 1 - Body Percussion & Voice Sounds

We use our bodies to make different sounds. We talk about the sounds they are making and follow a sequence of sounds.

This helps us to recognise rhythm (a strong regular, repeat pattern of movement or sound) in spoken words, songs and rhymes. We use our mouths to explore sounds. We create sounds in the environment such as a ball bouncing or the CH sound when moving a small world train.

Spring 2 - Rhythm & Rhyme

We sing a range of familiar nursery rhymes and share stories that have rhyming words. We talk about why words rhyme and complete a range of games such as rhyming pairs. We begin to create our own rhyming strings orally. We begin to segment and blend the onset of the rime e.g. p-in, t-in, w-in.

Summer 1 - Alliteration

(Words that begin with the same sound) We make up alliterative phrases and play a range of games such as 'Silly Soup'. We can identify initial letter sounds in our names and key objects, and begin to segment and blend the initial sound of objects e.g. p-an, p-in, p-at.

Summer 2 - Oral Blending & Segmenting

We play games involving 'toy talk' (oral blending and segmenting). Segmenting is when we break a word down to identify each sound in sequence.

Blending is when we put the sounds and syllables back together to identify the word. We may introduce the first set of graphemes (This is the written form that corresponds to the sound) to ensure children are challenged.

This may involve reading books that contain simple CVC words such as cat or mop. (Consonant-Vowel-Consonant).

We use the Little Wandle reading scheme for children that are beginning to blend and segment.

Understanding
0-2 Years

Children turn when they hear their name or get excited when hearing familiar voices such as an adult greeting them on entry to Nursery.



At this stage, children are beginning to **understand** contextual clues. These include words, sounds and gestures. Specifically, we use Makaton signs to support children's understanding.

Practitioners encourage children to follow the body language of others such as pointing and gestures.



Children respond to simple questions when in a familiar context with a special person, e.g. where's mummy?

Children are beginning to understand single words in context, e.g. "cup", "milk", or "Daddy" and **linking words to their experiences**.

Children can select familiar objects by name and we will encourage children to go and find objects when asked or identify objects from a group e.g. "can you get a cup for your milk?"



Children will **initiate interactions** with others through actions, gestures or vocally. A child may beckon another child to encourage them to play. Children understand different situations and are able to follow routines, events and activities using non-verbal cues.

Children are able to understand simple sentences and instructions when given visual clues and gestures/Makaton signs e.g. "sit on the chair"

Understanding
2-3 Years

Practitioners help children link actions to words, games, songs and rhymes. **They will do this by commenting on what children are doing** e.g. "I can see you are pouring water from your jug". Resources, visual cues and Makaton signs will also be used to support children's understanding. Using props and visuals to accompany familiar rhymes is an example of this.



Children are beginning to understand more complex sentences such as “Take off your coat and put it on the peg" or "wash your hands and dry them with a paper towel". Adults will model how to do these things, talking aloud and describing their actions as they do them. **Self-talk supports children to think and understand.**



Practitioners will help children to understand action words by giving them simple instructions to follow e.g. "Everybody jump!" and will support instructions with actions and modelling as necessary. Adults will **describe what they see children doing which will further aid their understanding.**

Children are beginning to understand simple concepts such as; big/little; fast/slow, which we will illustrate using real examples and those in stories. Adults will support children to make links in their experiences which will support and aid their understanding.



Children respond to questions with two given choices such as "would you like milk or water?" and are beginning to understand who, what, where in simple questions: Who’s that? Where is….? What’s that?

Understanding
3-4 Years

Children will **demonstrate understanding** by selecting the correct object or tool for adult led and self-chosen activities, e.g. "What shall we use to cut the paper?" "What shall we draw with?"

Children show **understanding of positional language** such as under, on top or behind, by carrying out an action or selecting a picture. This is often supported through games or during everyday routines such as tidy up time i.e."please put the spade on the top shelf"

Children respond to instructions with more elements, e.g. "Take your coat off, put it on your peg and wash your hands using soap and water".

Children are developing an understanding of **how and why questions** such as "why do you think that?" or "how is that happening?" **Sustained shared thinking helps children to explore ideas and make links.**

Children show understanding when talking about recent experiences or events e.g. describing the flowers we saw on our trip to the park and **linking this experience to others they have had.** "I saw so many yellow flowers, like in big playground".



More experienced children:
Can follow verbal instructions and stories without needing pictures, props or actions to support their understanding.

Are beginning to understand humour such as jokes or nonsense rhymes shared with both adults and their peers.

Can plan and make decisions about how they might approach a task, solve a problem or reach a goal.

Can describe, using words and signs, how they carried out an activity such as making a model and **review how their approach worked.**

Are able to listen and respond to ideas expressed by others in conversations and share their own ideas and thoughts - **sustained shared thinking with an adult supports children to consider different possibilities.**

Children build on the who, what and where questions and begin to develop an understanding of why and how questions.



Speaking
0-2 Years

We know that strong foundations in a child's home language supports the development of English. Therefore, wherever possible, we learn and use key words in home languages, alongside English so that children are able to **make links between the two.**



Young children begin to create personal words as their language develops. Practitioners communicate with parents to exchange and update information about babies' personal words and signs.
We encourage babies' sounds and babbling by copying their sounds in turn-taking back and forth 'conversations. There are times when adults will be present and listening but remain silent, as this can encourage a baby to initiate communication by looking and vocalising - filling the gap.



We try to 'tune in' to the different messages young babies are attempting to convey, allowing them to take the lead.
Babies use sounds in play, e.g. brrrm for toy car, **making links to what they already know.**
Practitioners share the fun of discovery and value babies' attempts at words, e.g. by picking up a doll in response to "baba".

When babies try to say a word or point, adults repeat the word back so they can hear it modelled clearly. A baby might say "ab" and the adult will respond by saying "yes - ball" passing the ball to the child.



The adults follow the child's lead, talking about the things they are interested in.
Practitioners encourage children to use words to communicate for a range of purposes, e.g teddy, bye-bye, more, yes, no and also to accompany these words with Makaton signs and gestures.

Speaking
2-3 Years

Practitioners continue to follow the children's lead and have fun together while developing vocabulary, e.g. 'Down we go, weeeeee!'
We continue to sing simple songs again and again and again!

Children become familiar with these songs and begin to join in. We leave gaps for them to fill in the words that they know 'Twinkle, twinkle little . . .

Children at this age enjoy **copying familiar expressions** such as 'Oh Dear!' we will repeat such phrases often and use stories to introduce them.

Stories with repetitive phrases and structures become firm favourites of children at this age. We read aloud, often so that children learn and join in with simple repeated phrases.

"Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?'
Speech sounds are also developed using stories, for example, joining in with the noises made by animals or vehicles.

Children use gestures, sometimes with limited talk and signs, e.g. when reaching for a snack saying 'want it'.

Adults build vocabulary by giving choices, e.g. 'apple or satsuma?' and encouraging children to use words to ask for what they have chosen.

Children are shown how to pronounce or use words through the adult responding positively and repeating what they say in the correct way, rather than saying they are wrong.

A child may say 'ig do' and the adult would respond with 'Yes, a big dog'.

At this age children are beginning to put two or more words together, e.g. 'want ball', 'more juice' and we model building sentences by repeating what the child says and adding another word, e.g. child says 'car', the adult offers back 'mummy's car' or 'blue car'. ·

We plan to talk through and comment on some activities to highlight specific vocabulary or language structures, e.g. "You caught the ball", "I caught the ball", "Musa caught the ball". Talking aloud helps children to think and control what they do. **Adults model self-talk, describing their actions in play.**

Parents, whose children are learning English as an additional language, are encouraged to continue to use their first language at home with their children. At Nursery, we support children's use of home language but also use English alongside it so that they begin to **make the connections between the two languages** and develop them both at the same time.

We support the development of speech using a variety of communication strategies, .We use Makaton in our daily practice to support all children, including those who have no speech and whose speech may be unclear alongside those whose speech is developing well.

For children with a hearing impairment, we do our best to use the preferred method of communication being taught at home, such as BSL (British Sign Language).

Children are encouraged to begin **asking simple questions**, e.g. 'What's that?' which empowers them to use language to **get information and find things out.**

At this age children are beginning to use more complex sentences to **link their thoughts**, using words like and or because. Adults encourage longer conversations by following the child's lead and talking about the things they want to talk about. Children talk more extensively about things that are of particular importance to them. Adults will often expand upon what children say by repeating and adding a few more words, helping them to use more complex sentences.

Children are now able to talk about past events. Learning Journals provide excellent stimuli and **enable children to remember and talk about experiences** to their peers and their family.

Practitioners help children to build their vocabulary by introducing new words in the context of play and experiences. We introduce and repeat new words in a range of contexts and encourage children to use them in their own talk

Children are given 'thinking time' in order to decide what they are going to say and how they want to say it. Adults don't jump in too soon or say things for children.

Practitioners talk with children to **make links between their body language, actions, feelings and words**, e.g. "Your face does look cross. Has something upset you?"

Children use talk in **pretending that objects stand for something else in play**, e.g. 'this box is a castle' and to support **imaginative play in role** or with small world characters. Adults join in the play, modelling using expression and intonation making language come to life!





Adults encourage children to **think of their own ideas, and use talk to explain them. Talk is also used to identify problems and try to find solutions together.**

Children make choices about where they want to play, who with and how. Adults encourage them to **explain these choices which supports the planning process and clarifies thinking**.

Adults aim to use more statements to comment on what children are doing and fewer questions. This prevents children being 'put on the spot' and promotes more natural conversation.

When questions are asked, they are 'open questions' with many possible answers, **encouraging further thinking and talking.**

Children are supported to begin to ask their own questions about why things happen or how things work and also to give their own explanations.

By vocalising their thoughts and sharing conversations children are encouraged to **think critically** about their learning. Contributions are always valued and respected which makes children feel safe to **take risks** through talk, building confidence to share their ideas openly.

Speaking
3-4 Years

More experienced children:
Children use language to **imagine and recreate roles and experiences** in play situations such as taking on the role of mum or dad in the Home Corner.

Adults support children to talk about, **organise, sequence and clarify thinking, ideas, feelings and events,** i.e. when playing in the home corner sequence the order of events taking place, 'I need to set the table first, get the food ready and then put it in the oven to cook it.'

Sustained shared thinking enables children to explore their ideas and make links.

Children are supported in leading conversations and adults help them to think about things together. Talk is used to discuss strategies, solve a problem, clarify a concept and extend conversations.

Children introduce a storyline or narrative into their play, e.g. initiate their own play experiences. Use available enhancements to **take on the role of different characters from a core story.**

We support this by asking appropriate, open-ended questions, to further develop language and imagination.

We also model this language and engage in pretend play with children, working alongside them.

The environment is well equipped and resourced to support children's play and additional resources are added as an enhancement to support and develop children's interests





Communication And Language Additional Support

Building Communication and Language skills through real life experiences, playful teaching and responsive interactions is key to learning and development for all children. Adults who know them well, ensure many back and forth conversations at the right individual level, about things that their children are interested in. However, quality first teaching in a language rich environment, for some children, is not enough.

We know that it is crucial that we are able to offer further support to those who need it most. Our staff teams receive regular training in the area of Communication and Language and are fully aware of its importance within the curriculum. We ensure all new staff, apprentices and students spend lots of time with their mentor focussing specifically on Communication and Language.

Mentors explain and model our strategies so that new staff very quickly become competent in supporting children effectively. We have worked closely with Speech and Language Therapists and specialist play workers (BHT) as well as Autism Specialists (Lily) and professionals from the hearing impairment team. We value their expertise and include their strategies in our practice.





An Early Years Practitioner at each school has been trained through the EYPDP (Early Years Professional Development Programme) as Communication Champions and received accreditation in supporting Language and Literacy for 2–4s using Elklan strategies.

This recent (2021) training gave Champions a grounding in current EY research and theory, developed their subject knowledge to enhance the quality of adult–child interactions (including vocabulary building strategies), enabled them to identify children at risk of SLCN and also to confidently engage with parents around their children's learning.

Their training also equipped them to support colleagues and they went on to train their whole teams, enabling both schools to be awarded Communication Friendly Setting status.

Communication and Language Additional Support

Led by our Communication Champions, staff are skilled in identifying the children who may need some additional support. In consultation with families, we devise **'Individual Plans'** to support these children, carefully considering the strategies we feel will work best for them. We have some key evidence based strategies that really work;

VERVE (Video Endorse Respect Vitalise Eyes)
5 minutes a day one to one special time, ideally in a space with no distractions. The child chooses with what and how to play The adult positions themselves at the child's level at an optimum distance for communication. The adult mirrors what the child is doing and/or saying We are not afraid of playing silently - the adult should not speak to fill any gaps.

We wait for the child to look and make the connection that indicates that they are ready to communicate.
Only then does the adult give the child a word for the object they are playing with or the action they are performing. If the child has a go at saying a word but it is unclear, the adult nods approval and repeats the word clearly.

Ch 'og' Ad 'yes, dog' If the child says a word clearly, the adult adds another word Ch 'dog' Ad 'yes, black dog' If the child looks away, the adult stops talking and goes back to mirroring remembering that silence is OK.

These interactions are videoed at least once a week to: show the progress that the child is making enable the adult to see all the things that they are doing well to support the fine tuning of interactions which will even further support the child's improving communication and language skills

Basket Work The child is supported one to one by their key person to complete a series of 3 short structured activities (2 - 10 mins every day). This supports the child to focus, concentrate and work towards an end goal. Key phrases supported by signing are used by the adult to explain the steps i.e. "first basket" "1 more" "finished" The child's name and specific vocabulary and/or short phrases (at the right level for the child) are used by the adult to support each activity.

We work towards the child also using signs and/or words to name the objects they are working with and/or describe or comment on what they are doing. Again, these sessions are videoed at least once a week to show progress and effective practice.

Additional Support for Priority Children
Children identified as being 12months+ behind in Communication and Language with low Wellbeing and Involvement and ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences) affecting their lives become our 'priority children'. These children need more support, one to one time, experiences and interactions, provided by us.

Their key person identifies specific additional experiences such as making playdough or one to one stories that happen regularly. But all adults who work with these children ensure that they are having more high quality responsive interactions and more one to one time, which we know works to build confidence and improve crucial communication and language skills.

Communication and Language Working in Partnership with Families

As in all areas of the curriculum it is vitally important that we work in genuine partnership with the families of all our children to develop their Communication and Language.

Trusting relationships built on respect and understanding are the key to engaging our families in their children's learning and in the life of our schools.

Every family has a Home Visit before their child starts Nursery and immediately we begin to talk to them about the importance of Communication and Language.

We find out a child's preferred methods of communication and about the languages they understand and speak at home. We also speak to families about the stage their child is at with their language and communication and whether this is typical for their age.

It is important that we find out as early as possible if there is a delay, so that we can work with the family to support their child in ways appropriate to them and also to make any necessary referrals to the Speech and Language Therapy and Audiology Teams.



We celebrate the diversity of our school communities and are proud to have children and families and also staff from a range of cultures and backgrounds, who speak many community languages.

A child's first language provides the roots from which to learn additional languages and families are always encouraged to continue to use their home languages to strengthen and support their child's language proficiency.

Having staff who speak the same home language as many of our children and families aids communication enormously, meaning that we are able to understand each other better



Throughout the year we host a range of events that all families are supported and encouraged to attend. Events such as our termly 'Sharing Stories' sessions are an excellent opportunity for us to remind families of the importance of books but also of talking to their children, having as many back and forth conversations as possible and using a wide range of vocabulary.

Our seasonal walks to the park and our trip to the seaside provide opportunities for genuine conversations with families, as well as establishing the positive difference getting out and about makes.

When children and families talk together about the things they are doing, real progress in language and learning is made. For families who are less confident, staff are able to model how to listen, have two way conversations and expand vocabulary.

Better Together Day is an annual event where our families come into nursery with their children to take part in '50 Things to Do Before You're Five' experiences.

50 Things was devised with Communication and Language in mind! The hands on experiences require and inspire communication and talk in all manner of ways and as we experiment, discover and learn together, new words are learned, used in context and remembered.



50 things to do before you're five™

#1 GET TO KNOW YOU
#2 WHERE AM I?
#6 RHYME TIME
7 MAKING MUSIC
8 BUBBLES
#10 SHARING BOOKS
#13 SHOUT AND SHHH
#15 DRESSING UP
#21 GIGGLEBOX
#37 SHOW AND TELL
#39 TALKING SIGNS
#45 WONDERFUL WAITING GAMES
#50 SEA AND SAND



Keena Cummins VERVE Child Interaction

Top tips for helping children's language development:

Don't feel you need to 'teach' your child to talk.
Take all pressure off your child to 'talk' e.g. don't ask them to say 'thank you', 'hello', and goodbye'

Accept whatever they try to say as correct – if your baby says 'ti' and points to a 'cat' – then praise them by nodding and saying 'yes…..cat', if they just point respond by giving them the word they are looking for 'it's a cat'.

Try not to make their talking a focus. Watch what they are doing in play and what they are showing you with their body language. (Facial expressions as well as hand gestures).
Mirror exactly what your child is doing, making sounds, etc.

Listen to what they are trying to say, don't worry if their pronunciation is not 100% correct.
If their speech is unclear – praise their attempt with a nod and then repeat what you know they are trying



Let them choose the activity e.g. banging spoons and saucepans, playing in old boxes, or playing with toys e.g. duplo, playmobile, etc.
Sit in a 'communicative' way – i.e. on the floor with them, opposite, at the same height and nice and close. When they look up they will know you are waiting and listening.
Wait and watch what they are doing, don't interfere.

Watch and wait for them to look at you.
When you feel your eyes meet - (they are ready to listen) - give them a word/name for the object in their hand, or the action they are doing.

If they say a word but it is unclear – nod approval for them having had a try, then say the word clearly e.g. child : 'yu', Parent : 'yes it's a cup'
If they say a word and it is clear, repeat the word and add on another e.g. child: 'cup', adult 'yes….. teddy's cup'.

If they say 2 words that are clear add on another e.g. child 'teddy's cup', adult: 'Yes…….teddy's blue cup'.

If they say 3 words add on another word e.g. 'teddy's big blue cup'……etc. When they look away, then STOP TALKING PLAY WITH SILENCE.

Strategy	Sometimes	Frequently
Letthechildfeelthey havechosen thetoy or activity?		
Sitting wherethey can see my face Opposite Height/level Listeningspace		
Waiting, watching – givingthem extra silence		
Avoidingquestions		
Waitingforeyecontact/body watching		
Copyingor mirroringtheirideas		
Listening/repeating		
Naming		
Addingon		
Reinforcingthem		

10 Top techniques to develop children's Speech and Language

1. Get the child's attention first: Get down to the child's level and engage their attention. Young children can find it challenging to listen and carry on with an activity at the same time. Saying their name first to get their attention encourages them to stop and listen.

2. Give the child time to respond: Children often need time to put their thoughts together before answering. So give them longer to respond than you would with an adult.

3. Use all the senses to help teach new words: Make learning new vocabulary fun and memorable. For example, if you're teaching the names of fruits, encourage the child to feel and smell and taste the various fruits as they learn the words.

4. Build on what the child says to you: Talking very clearly, adding one or two more words to the child's sentence. For instance, if the child says "Look. Car". You could say "Yes, a red car".

5. Use the full range of expressions: Speak in a lively, animated voice and use gestures and facial expressions to back up your words. You'll be giving more clues about what your words mean. This can be very useful if the child is struggling to understand language.

6. Rather than criticise, demonstrate the right way: Praise the child's effort, even if the results aren't perfect. If a child makes an error in a word or sentence, simply say the correct version rather than pointing out the mistake.



7. Use simple, repetitive language: Keep sentences short. Describe what you are doing during everyday activities ("I'm washing a cup"). Repeat your words nice and clearly. Saying things more than once make it easier for children to join in and pick up new words.

8. Imitate the child's language: With very young children, simply imitate their words and sentences. This will show them that you're valuing their words and will encourage them to keep on talking.

9. Be careful with questions: Try not to ask too many questions, especially ones that sound like you're testing the child. The best questions are those that challenge the child to think rather than give an instant answer, like 'yes' or 'no'. Too many questions can block the flow of natural conversation.

10. Make learning language fun! Play around with words, sounds and sentences. Don't be afraid to talk in funny voices or have daft conversations. The more children see you experimenting with language the more likely they will be able to try it for themselves. Experimenting with language is a vital aspect of learning.

Ofsted Outstanding Provider

Ofsted

Read our report

WEBSITE

REVIEWS ★★★★★

Absolute fantastic nursery school! Teachers and staff are very supportive, friendly and always there for parents and children. They provide fun activities indoors and outdoors. My son really enjoyed it here and it has built his confidence. Can't wait to put my daughter in nursery next Sept.
Thank you for everything x

This place is amazing, so inviting from the moment you walk down the street. Staff are lovely and friendly. The children are happy and smiling. The provision and activities are well thought through and educational. The children are learning all the time. Outdoor activity is ongoing in all weathers and staff never complain!
So many opportunities for parents to join in various activities. I love this place. And so does my son! 😊

50 things to do before you're five™

Scan the QR code below to view all activities

Last Reviewed: 27th Maj 2026
Approved By: Sian Hudson - Executive Headteacher
Next Review Due: 28th May 2029