



## Communication and Language

Why is communication so important?

Learning to talk and communicate with those around us is one of the most important skills we have as human beings and impacts all areas of our lives. In the early years it underpins all other areas of learning and sets children up for an education system which relies heavily upon verbal instruction.

Children need to develop good communication and language skills in order to.....

- Make friends and negotiate with others
- Express thoughts and ideas
- Be able to follow instructions and take on board information
- Learn to read and write

Communication and Language is broken down into three key areas which all work together;

- Attention and Listening - the ability to focus on what someone is saying and listen carefully.
- Understanding - to be able to process what has been said and for it to hold meaning.
- Speaking - being able to express our thoughts using spoken language.



### Communication and language at Busy Bees....

For our youngest children we.....

- model language for them, building and extending on what they say by adding new words.
- introduce simple songs and stories.
- comment on what the children are doing as they play in order to promote their understanding of language.
- keep instructions short and simple focussing on one step at a time. Instructions are accompanied by pictures, Makaton or other gesture in order to reinforce understanding.

As children develop we.....

- support talk to become a powerful means of communication and reinforce the importance of speaking by using the phrase "use your words".

- develop listening skills through a range of listening games, and simple repetitive stories which the children can join in with.
- support an understanding of language extending beyond the here and now, such as how and why questions and prepositions.
- provide simple instructions which have two and then three information carrying words and this is supported during all routines and play situations.
- provide 'communication friendly' spaces where children can sit and talk together.

As children approach school age we....

- encourage children to use talk widely in their play to create roles and stories and to negotiate with their peers.
- introduce children to as many new words, objects and experiences as possible to broaden their vocabulary.
- provide plenty of opportunities for small group discussions to support children's conversation skills, listening to one another and taking account of what others have said.
- Increase the length of time children are encouraged to sit and listen.
- provide more complex instructions involving up to four information carrying words and more than one part.

### How you can help your child at home.....

The most important things you could do are;

Reading and sharing books together - there are a range of books in the Busy Bees Library (located in the entrance lobby) which you are welcome to borrow as often as you wish.

Commentate on what they are doing or what is happening around you when out and about. This helps children to make links between language and experiences.



### Top tips for talking;

Show your child you value what they are saying by getting down to their level and looking them in the eye when they are talking to you. If you don't understand what they are saying ask them to show you rather than keep repeating themselves.

Never criticise your child's grammar or pronunciation. Instead repeat it back correctly for them. Never insist they say it again correctly.

Remember young children process language much slower than adults. Give your child around 10 seconds to respond, count in your head, it's quite a long time. Children need time to think, avoid jumping in too soon to speak again yourself.



Turn off the TV, radio etc when reading or playing with your child. This will help them focus on your voice without distractions.

Children all develop at different rates and your child's key person will be keeping a close eye on their progress in this crucial area. If you have any worries about your child's talking, as with any aspect of their development, please speak to your child's key person or Nikki for further advice.

Further information can be found at.....

[www.ican.org.uk](http://www.ican.org.uk)

[www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk](http://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk)

[www.foundationyears.org.uk](http://www.foundationyears.org.uk)