

Handy guide

Communication

For parents, carers, health visitors, public health nurses
and community nursery nurses

Communication

Children are born ready to learn and communicate and language enables children to engage and explore.

Effective communication in early childhood also lays the basis for better personal communication skills and a positive self-esteem in later life.

Clear language

Language is important when entering reception as it enables children to have confidence with their interactions with both adults and their peers.

Effective communication in early childhood also lays the basis for better personal communication skills and a positive self-esteem in later life.

Being understood when communicating their needs, ideas and thoughts by an enabling adult is what counts and you can help prepare them for this.

Do... repeat words back correctly “that’s right. A big Spider!”

Do... play games such as ‘I Spy’ or say “Find me something that starts with the sound...”

Don’t... say “no, not Bider, it’s Spider.” It is important to build on your child’s confidence in a positive way.

About Dummies

Some young children may be less likely to seek out talking opportunities when using a dummy.

They can prevent a child from copying words and sounds back correctly as many speech sounds are made at the front of the mouth.

Children who frequently use a dummy or bottle may struggle to form these sounds and this could result in language development delays.

The more a child speaks with a dummy, the higher risk the child may need long-term speech therapy.

Why? How? What if?

When starting school, children need to communicate their thoughts and feelings with confidence and to respond to questions such as why?, how? And what if?

Play games such as 'Simon Says' where your child follows your directions.

Talk aloud Comment on your actions and your child's actions to help them hear clear, well-formed sentences.

Turn-taking In order to start having quality conversations with people around them, children need to develop their turn-taking skills. This helps to develop listening and attention skills which can go on to help them build positive relationships and friendships.

Listening and attention

When children start school, they will also need to be able to sit and listen or take part in an activity for short periods of around 15 minutes.

They need to be able to **respond to their name** being used. You can help your child to develop their listening and attention skills by using their name when asking for something. For example: "Alfie, can you bring me your book bag please?"

It is important that they are able to go from one activity to another through the use of their name. You can help them by asking questions such as: "Holly can you finish your painting and get your reading book?"

Useful links support at home

 www.hungrylittleminds.campaign.gov.uk

 www.ghc.nhs.uk/our-teams-and-services/childrens-slt/resources

 www.nhs.uk/apps-library/baby-buddy

 www.ican.org.uk

 www.wordsforlife.org.uk

 www.vroom.org

For further information and support, visit your Health Visiting Team website:

 www.ghc.nhs.uk/health-visiting