**9: Using Language/Expressive Language**

**EYFS Communication and Language Development ELG 03: Speaking**

Ages and stages of using language (Expressive language)

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| **Age** | **Using language (Expressive language)** |
| By 6 months | Babbles for attention. Reduplicated babble e.g. ‘dada’. Uses body language.  Words = 0 |
| 12 months | Babble that sounds like words. First words closely related to child’s own world and functional needs. Words = 1-3 |
| 18 months | Single words, mainly object names.  Vocabulary used in a variety of ways to convey different meanings.  Words = 5-20 |
| 2 years | Using 2 word phrases e.g. ‘want juice’, ‘mummy drink’.  Using simple action word/sign e.g. ‘jumping’, ‘drinking’.  Asking questions ‘what’s this?’, ‘where’s…?’  Words = 50+ |
| 2 ½ years | Using 3-4 word phrases and simple sentences.  Starting to use past tense e.g. ‘me falled over’  Words = 200+ |
| 3 years | Using 4-6 word sentences  Able to use simple position words/signs e.g. ‘in’, ‘on’ and describing words/signs e.g. ‘big’, ‘little’.  Asking ‘who’, ‘what’, ‘where’ questions.  Words = 500-1000 |
| 4 years | Uses 5-8 word sentences.  Asking ‘how’, ‘why’, ‘when’ questions.  Using future tense e.g. ‘I’m going to jump’.  Words = 1000-1500 |

Knowles, Masidlover (1982) Derbyshire Language Scheme. Cooke, J Williams, D (1985) Working with Children’s Language Oxon: Winslow Press

**9.1: How to develop early babble**

Learning to make sounds is important in learning to communicate and talk. Children will use sounds before using words.

**Activities/strategies to develop early babble:**

* Sit the child on your lap facing you so they can see you when you:
* Sing nursery rhymes
* Look at picture books together
* Play hand games/finger rhymes e.g. ‘Pat a Cake’, ‘This Little Piggy’, ‘Round and Round the Garden’
* Have cuddles and tickles
* Talk about what you’re going to do today
* Play ‘Peek-a-Boo’
* Sit on the floor and play with a toy together. Use lots of enthusiasm and simple sounds and language related to what they are doing or looking at to capture their interest.
* Copy any movements or sounds that the child makes. Gradually the child should begin to respond and become an active partner in play.
* Stop every now and again to watch what the child is doing. For example, whilst playing peek-a-boo, pause after each turn; if they make a sound which you could interpret as them wanting to play again, say ‘again’. This is an important use of communication.
* Choose an exciting toy, such as a pop-up toy, the child likes. When they vocalise, make the toy work.
* Copy the sounds/vocalisations the child makes, such as coughs and yawns, as well as babble. Pause and give them time to repeat the sound back and then do it again.
* Play with balloons, blowing them up and letting them go. Copy the sound they make.
* Use sounds in play e.g. ‘mmm’ when eating, ‘ahhh’ when hugging a teddy, ‘uh-oh’ when toy cars crash, animal noises, ‘brrm’ for cars, ‘knock, knock’ on a door.
* Make silly faces and sounds when looking in the mirror together.
* Use microphones, boxes, tins, cardboard tubes which echo or make interesting sounds when you vocalise into them.
* Pop bubble wrap or bubbles in the bath/water tray and make the sound e.g. ‘pop’.
* Sing action songs which have fun sounds e.g. ‘Row the Boat’: ‘…if you see a crocodile, don’t forget to scream! **Aargh!**’**, ‘**Five Fat Sausages’: ‘…one went **Pop!’**

**9.2: How to develop early requesting skills**

Target: **The child will request an item by using a non-verbal method e.g. looking/gesturing.**

**The child will request an item by using a verbal method e.g. saying a sound or single word to request the item.**

In order to achieve this, we must be giving the child a reason to communicate. Set up situations which encourage the child to communicate: a child is much more likely to communicate if they a reason for doing so. The situations will be slightly different for every child and will be dependent on their interests, but here are a few ideas:

**Children need to have a reason to communicate...**

* At early stages of communication we expect children to reach, look or use body language to show what they want e.g. a child rocks their body to show they want more ‘Row the boat’ song.
* At later stages children use gestures or words/signs to show what they want e.g. a child says ‘go for the adult to activate the spinning top.

**Situations which give your child a reason to communicate…**

* **Hard to operate**: use toys/objects where the child needs your help to make them work. For example:
* Balloons need an adult to blow them up or operate the balloon pump
* Bubbles need an adult to blow through the wand
* Wind-up toys and spinning tops need an adult to activate them

**WAIT** for the child to communicate (e.g. looking at you, pointing or saying a sound) then model the word e.g. ‘bubbles’.

* **Put favourite things in view but *out of reach*:** the child will need your help to get the object/toy**.** For example:
* Place a favourite toy on a high shelf where the child can see it but cannot reach it
* Put favourite toys inside clear plastic containers that are hard to open e.g. a screw top container

**WAIT** for the child to communicate (e.g. looking at you, pointing or saying a sound) then model the word e.g. ‘car’.

* **Give things bit by bit:** keep hold of thebits in a box or bag and give only one bit to begin with so the child has a reason to request more. For example:
* **With toys:** some toys are easy to give out bit by bit because they have lots of pieces. If yougive the child puzzle pieces, Lego, stacking rings or train tracks one-by-one, they will have repeated opportunities to ask you for the things they want.
* **With snack food:** cut food into pieces; for example, cut a banana into slices or break a biscuit into pieces and give the child one bit at a time so that they will have several chances to request more.
* **Give all but one:** give the child all but one of the things that they need for an activity. Hold that one thing out of their reach but within view and wait for the child to request it. For example, give them a piece of paper but hold onto the crayons, or give them the bubble wand but hold the pot of bubbles.

**WAIT** for the child to communicate (e.g. looking at you, pointing or saying a sound) then model the word e.g. ‘car’, ‘banana’, ‘crayon’.)

* **Choices:** when you let the child make choices, you allow them to send a message to you and express their preferences.

Start with easy choices: the easiest choice is between two items: one thing they like and one thing they dislike. Hold up the two choices in front of them and ask:

‘milk or juice?’

‘ball or painting?’

‘Row the boat or Twinkle, Twinkle?’

**Top Tips…**

* Pictures or objects to represent songs are really useful when giving a choice.
* Get the child’s attention by *naming* and *showing:*

e.g. tickling game: say ‘tickles’ as you wiggle your fingers

bubbles: show them the bubble pot and say ‘bubbles’

* Be face-to face: get down to the child’s level. It is important for them to be able to see your face and for you to be able to see how they communicate.

**Name**

**Date Target Set:**

**Outcome: Achieved = 2 Partially achieved = 1 Not achieved = 0**

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**9.3: How to develop verbal choice making**

Target: **The child will make a verbal choice.**

Please ensure that the child understands choice making before supporting them to make a verbal choice: see Section 8.1 for guidance.

Give the child the chance to choose between two options. Choices are really useful in all sorts of situations and they give the child a chance to communicate their ideas and wishes, with support, in a natural situation. Encourage the child to choose regularly in many different situations; for example, at mealtimes, when getting dressed, during play, choosing a video.

**Making choices gives the child an awareness that they can influence what happens around them.**

* When you’re playing together ask ‘book or train?’ showing the child the items as you say them.
* At snack/lunch/tea time, offer the child a choice of things to eat e.g. ‘apple or banana?’, showing the child the items as you say them.

By doing this, you are modelling the vocabulary that the child can learn and start to use. It’s fine for them to just point at first, but as they become more familiar with choosing, they may try to say a word/sign to make a choice.

**Don’t assume that you know what the child wants**. For example, when giving them a drink, offer a *choice* e.g. ‘juice or milk?’ Show them the drinks as you say them and accept the way they communicate.

* If they look at one for longer, respond by saying ‘juice….you want juice’.
* If they attempt to point to one of them, *label* their choice by saying ‘juice….you want juice’.
* If they attempt to say something *interpret* what they say and *model* it correctly. For example, if they say ‘duice’ you could say ‘juice…you want juice’.

It doesn’t matter how repetitiveyou are!

**Name**

**Date Target Set:**

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**Please ensure that the child uses a wide range of single words before working on putting two words together. See section 7 for advice on how to develop this.**

**9.4: How to develop putting two words together**

Target: **The child will put two words together.**

**Strategies:**

* Comment on what the child is looking at or doing using two words/signs e.g. ‘kicking the ball’, ‘another car’.
* Extend the child’s language by adding a word/sign onto what they say; for example, if they say ‘baby’ you could say ‘baby’s sleeping’.
* Model two word phrases in a range of situations; for example:
  + tidy up time: ‘car in’, ‘puzzle in’ or ‘bye bye car’, ‘bye bye puzzle’
  + snack time: ‘more banana’, ‘more crisps’
  + posting game: put objects/pictures in a box and say ‘cat’s gone’, ‘apple’s gone’
* When you have repeated the activities a couple of times, pause when you would have modelled the phrase and allow opportunities for the child to fill in the gaps.
* Offer choices e.g. if the child says ‘more’, you can ask ‘more apple or more banana?’ If they say ‘apple’ you can model ‘more apple’.
* Offer choices within games e.g. give a choice about what teddy can do, such as ‘make teddy jump or make teddy hide?’ If they say ‘hide’ you can model ‘teddy hide’ then when he is hiding, you can model ‘teddy is hiding’.
* Use highly motivating activities to model the word/sign for ‘more……’; for example, ‘more biscuit’, ‘more bricks’. Pause to give the child an opportunity to use the words/signs.

**Name:**

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**9.5: How to develop using person-action-object sentences**

Target: **The child will use person-action-object sentences.**

**Examples of person-action-object sentences include:**

• ‘The boy (person) is riding (action) his bike (object)’ 
• ‘The lady is drinking juice’ 
• ‘Mummy is painting a picture’



**Strategies:**

* Show the child action pictures and encourage them to describe what’s happening. Extend the child’s language e.g.  
   Child: ‘cow’s eating’

Adult: ‘yes, the cow’s eating *grass’*

* Use choices to support verbal communication and extend responses e.g. ‘is the girl *kicking* the ball or is the girl *washing* the ball?’
* A photo book of the child and other familiar people carrying out different actions could be created. The pictures can then be used for discussion.
* If the child’s sentences are incomplete or they use the incorrect word/sign order:
  + Repeat back the sentence with the correct word/signs for them to hear
  + Ask the child questions to encourage them to give more detail e.g. who? what? where? and then model back the sentence.
* Use pictures (e.g. flashcards, books, magazines) to talk about what is happening.
* Use games such as fishing, skittles, what’s in the bag, posting games using picture cards to talk about what is happening.
* When the child is playing, model the target language e.g. ‘teddy’s eating a banana’.
* Use everyday activities to model the target language e.g. ‘Mummy’s washing the clothes’.
* Favourite characters:
  + Make a range of pictures to represent your child’s favourite characters e.g. teddy, Superman, Peppa Pig (you could draw these, take a photo, cut them out of a magazine). Make a second set for some common action word/signs e.g. sitting, sleeping, jumping, brushing. Make a third set for common objects around the house e.g. chair, bed, hair, dog.
  + Put the pictures into three piles and encourage the child to choose a picture from each pile and lay it down on the floor e.g. ‘Peppa Pig’, ‘brushing’, ‘hair’ then make the character perform the action as you say it. You can encourage the child to carry out the action and you can say what is happening, pointing to the pictures as you do so. You can create silly sentences e.g. ‘Superman is brushing the bed!’

**Name**

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**9.6: How to develop the use of pronouns**

Target: **The child will use the correct pronouns for ‘he’ and ‘she’.**

**Strategies:**

* Model the pronouns throughout the day e.g. “the girl is drinking…. *she* is drinking”, “Daddy is running…. *he* is running”.
* Use books to highlight the difference e.g. ‘Yes it’s Superman. Superman is a man…we say “he is flying”’, “Yes it’s Wonder Woman. Wonder Woman is a lady…what’s *she* doing?’
* Dressing game with girl and boy pictures: cut out pictures of a boy and girl and different items of clothing. Put the items of clothing in a bag and ask the child to draw one out. Name the item. Ask the child ‘Who wants the sock?’ If they just point, model the word/sign for them e.g. ‘oh, *he* wants the sock’.

You can use this approach in other play such as having a picnic for the girl and boy e.g. ‘*she* wants the sandwich’.

* Girl/boy action pictures: use pictures of boys and girls and play games e.g. pairs, lotto, hide and seek, skittles (place pictures under the skittles). Take turns to describe what is happening in the picture e.g. ‘*he* is sleeping’.
* Model back the correct use of the pronoun if the child makes an error; for example if they say ‘he is eating’ you could say ‘it’s a girl….we say “*she* is eating”’.

**Name:**

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**9.7: How to develop the use of regular plurals**

Target: **The child will use regular plurals.**

**Strategies:**

* Play a pairs game with two sets of matching pictures e.g. “one cat, two cats”. Emphasise the ‘s’ sound at the end when you are talking about more than one item.
* Make a book with pictures of one object on one page and on the facing page many identical or similar objects. This will give the child a visual clue as they talk about each page e.g. ‘car’, ‘cars’.
* Use words/signs such as ‘lots of’ to help reinforce the plurality e.g. ‘one bus’, ‘lots of buses’.
* Model plurals for the child e.g. ‘let’s put on your shoes’, ‘I can see lots of butterflies’.
* If appropriate for the child’s age, explicitly show through writing that we use ‘s’ at the end of the word when there is more than one item.
* Drawing games:
  + Draw a person: ask your child to draw eyes, ears, legs, hands, arms.
  + Draw under the sea: ask your child to draw crabs, sharks, shells, whales, dolphins, seals.
  + Draw the sky: ask your child to draw butterflies, flies, birds, clouds, helicopters, planes, stars.
  + Once your child has drawn these ask them to tell you what they have drawn and listen out for the plural ‘s’. Model it for them if necessary; for example, if they say ‘I drew eye’ you could say ‘yes, you drew eyes’.

**Name:**

**Date Target Set:**

**Outcome: Achieved = 2 Partially achieved = 1 Not achieved = 0**

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**9.8: How to develop the use of negative: ‘no’ with an object**

Target**:**  **The child will understand the negative ‘no’ with an object.**

**Strategies:**

* Throughout the day, model the use of ‘no; e.g. ‘daddy’s got *no* shoes on’, ‘there’s *no* jam left’.’ ‘*no* coat!’. Initially, you can shake your head as you say ‘no’ to provide an additional visual cue and then phase this out over time.
* Look through books together and talk about ‘who’s got no……’ See if they can find the one with ‘no……’ e.g. ‘which boy has *no* cake?’
* Get two favourite characters, such as teddy and Spiderman. Choose a few everyday objects, such as a hat, socks, ball, spoon. Give the object to one of the characters; for example, put the hat on Spiderman. Ask ‘who’s got no hat?’ and see if the child can find the one with no hat. If they point to the one wearing a hat, say ‘Spiderman’s got a hat [and point to it], who has *no* hat?’ If this is difficult then show the child ‘look, teddy’s got *no* hat’.
* Draw some objects with items missing, such as a house with no door, a dog with no tail. Talk about what’s wrong e.g. ‘oh, there’s *no* door’.

**Name:**

**Date Target Set:**

**Outcome: Achieved = 2 Partially achieved = 1 Not achieved = 0**

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**9.9: How to develop understanding the negative ‘not’**

Target:**The** **child will understand the negative ‘not’.**

**Strategies:**

* Use ‘spot the difference’ or ‘what’s wrong’ pictures to introduce the meaning of the negative ‘not’ e.g. ‘this one is spotty….this one is *not* spotty’.
* Use books to talk about what is not happening e.g. “Bob the Builder is *not* smiling….he’s sad”.
* Talk about what is happening throughout the day e.g. ‘he’s *not* eating….he’s drinking’.
* Show/draw pictures and describe to the child what each picture does not have e.g. ‘this house does *not* have a door’, ‘this teddy does *not* have a coat’, ‘this bath does *not* have a tap’.

**Name:**

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**9.10: How to develop the use of regular past tense**

Target: **The child will use the regular past tense.**

Regular past tenses add ‘-ed’ to the end of the action word/verb e.g. played, washed.

**Strategies:**

* Model the use of the past tense for the child throughout the day e.g. ‘you *painted* a picture’.
* Model the correct phrase back to your child when necessary; for example, if they say “I jump” you say ‘yes, you *jumped*’.
* After playtime/lunchtime ask the child what they played with and model the past tense back to them if they are unable to use it.
* Read a story and then ask the child to help you retell it with the pictures from the book. For example, you could say ‘then the Gruffalo ……….’ then pause and give them the opportunity to say ‘…*walked* into the forest’. Model the correct word if necessary.
* Play Simon Says and after completing the action comment on what the child has just done e.g. “you *hopped* really far’.

**Name:**

**Date Target Set:**

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