



Communication and Language in the Early Years

Ringmer and Lewes Hub Meeting
January 18th 2018

LISTENING AND ATTENTION

Positive Relationships: The Role of the Adult

- ☐ to model good listening
- ☐ to make face to face contact, be at the child's level and make sure you can see and hear each other well
- ☐ to watch and wait, and to follow the child's lead in conversations
- ☐ to value and respond to all children's contributions to respond to children, extending and expanding on what they say as appropriate
- ☐ to give the child plenty of time to respond
- ☐ to use visual cues to support children's listening and attention
- ☐ to explain why it is important to pay attention when others are speaking
- ☐ to support children who find it difficult to 'listen and do' by saying their name before giving an instruction or asking a question
- ☐ to share rhymes, poems, songs and stories from many cultures, sometimes using languages other than English, particularly where children are learning English as an additional language
- ☐ to help children identify rhyme (same sound at the end) and alliteration (same sound at the beginning)

Possible activities for listening and attention:

- ❖ hide and then hunt the ticking clock or musical box. Invite children to hide the object for others to find by listening
- ❖ sound lotto, possibly home-made with the children. Match the sounds to photos of pictures
- ❖ copy rhythms made by clapping, tapping, stamping or a musical instrument
- ❖ place a selection of objects in the circle and tells a story that includes these objects. When you mention one of the objects, children find it and posts it in a box or basket. Invite children to tell the same story back to you!
- ❖ play active games which involve listening for a signal, such as 'Simon Says', and 'ready, steady...go!'
- ❖ continue a sound chain copying the voice sound around the circle, or identify other children's voices when the speaker is hidden
- ❖ musical bumps and musical statues – sit or stay still when the music stops. Extend the activity by calling for a specific statue, such as 'with one hand in the air'

Enabling Environments for Listening and Attention

There are simple ways you can make your environment 'communication friendly'. This might include thinking about:

- Space, light and layout
- Noise levels
- Using visual support for key information
- Clear and consistent routines
- The role of adults in the environment
- How opportunities are planned and created to support communication

Throughout the day provide:

- a welcoming and carefully resourced listening area where children can access recorded books, stories and rhymes, including home languages where possible
- rhyme bags containing books and props. These may be available for children to take home.
- sound lotto
- musical instruments and home made sound makers



UNDERSTANDING



Positive Relationships: The Role of the Adult

- ☐ to give a running commentary on children's play
- ☐ to 'recast' by repeating the child's words back to them and adding a little more
- ☐ to use gesture and non-verbal cues to support language development when introducing a new activity
- ☐ to plan and use vocabulary which is a little more advanced than the child's, introducing new words gradually
- ☐ to talk to children about what they have been doing and help them to reflect upon and explain events, for example 'I saw you sticking this box together with the tube and putting the shiny paper on it. I wonder what that's for?'
- ☐ to give children clear directions and help them to deal with those involving more than one action, for example "Put the cars away, please, then come and wash your hands and get ready for lunch"
- ☐ to help children to predict and order events coherently, by providing props and materials that encourage children to re-enact stories and events, using talk and action
- ☐ to retell stories to focus children's attention on predictions and explanations, such as 'why did the boat tip over?'
- ☐ to offer many open-ended, problem-solving activities, indoors and out

Possible activities: Speaking

- Invite children to choose and use props when retelling stories, songs and rhymes to encourage their understanding and inspire new retellings.
- During storytimes and in role play invite children to predict outcomes, to think of alternative endings and to compare story lines to their own experiences, such as 'what did you do when you were lost?'
- Provide activities that involve a sequence of steps such as making playdough or making a den. Support children to think in advance about what they will do, what they need, and reflect afterwards on what they did. Take photos and sequence the stages together.
- Set up an instrument factory to make a range of home-made shakers, with different containers and lids, and different things to fill them such as sand, pasta, rice, beads. Make a 'how to make' book.

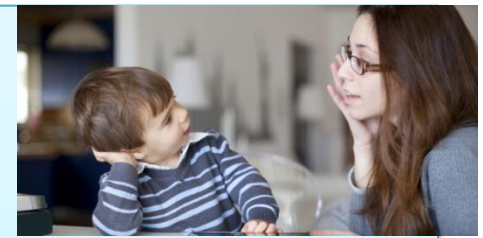


The Learning Environment : Speaking

- ❖ Provide imaginative and varied experiences linked to children's interests that encourage them to ask and respond to questions, such as :
 - collections of curious objects such as locks and keys, a basket of unusual wooden objects, a new type of playdough
 - photo books featuring themselves and people they know
 - foods and other liquids and materials to combine into unusual concoctions and potions
 - mysteries, such as a message in a letter from a lost toy
- ❖ Provide clear, process-based visuals and photographs of activities such as cooking and model-making to reinforce children's understanding.
- ❖ Create displays with children and add to areas such as the block play area and designing and making area.
- ❖ Provide a range of story props, such as pictures, puppets and objects, for children to access to encourage children to explore stories and rhymes, to retell stories and to think about how the characters feel.



SPEAKING



Positive Relationships: The Role of the Adult

- to value all languages spoken by parents, staff and children
- to 'tune in' to children and follow their lead in conversations
- to leave pauses and give children time to think and respond
- to introduce new words gradually
- to extend and expand on what children say
- to give a simple running commentary and use a lot of statements to describe children's actions
- to ask open-ended questions such as 'why', 'how' and 'I wonder what...?'
- to role model conventions of conversation such as listening and turn-taking
- to model the use of language to support social conventions, such as 'would it be all right if...?'
- to model narratives, sequential and descriptive language such as 'first', 'next', 'after' and 'some'
- to model ways of talking to different people, for example a visitor
- to be a lively and inspiring role model by
 - using intonation when reading and telling stories
 - playing with language, such as funny nonsense rhymes
 - taking part in imaginative role play with children, using different voices and phrases for characters

Possible activities

- make dens and cosy corners for talking, provide fabrics, sheets, blankets, boxes and props as resources indoors and out to support this.
- Chatterbaskets or chatterboxes! Invite children to find items for a wicker basket /box to inspire and develop 'chatter' based on particular interests, favourite books or a current imaginative role play context that they are enjoying.
- Create a 'talking table'. Provide high quality unusual and intriguing objects or props as a stimulus for talk, such as unknown fruits or vegetables, an unusual musical instrument, a strange hat, a huge key or a series of tiny footprints.
- Have a news report time with a real or imaginary microphone for the investigating 'journalist'. Invite children to share their news which could be recorded.
- Plan 'showing time' where children are invited to show and talk about something they have made.
- Invite children to use their voices as sound accompaniment to stories and poems. Add sounds to 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt'.
- Tell and read stories involving sound response, for example, 'Peace at Last' by Jill Murphy.
- Plan stories as a focus for talk:
 - acting out a story
 - making masks and puppets for role play
 - sequencing events from a story



The Learning Environment: Speaking

Role play opportunities. Communication and language occur to a high degree during role play, as children express themselves, make plans, discuss ideas, and act out roles.

Children imitate body language, facial expression, gesture, and tone of voice.

Chatterboxes/ baskets/ Talking Tubs for independent access, building on interests of children and their families

Stimulating interactive displays

Telephones – real and pretend - communication tubes outside

A range of small world play developing children's interests and stimulating new interests.

These may be presented in builders trays with different sensory and imaginative bases, including those made by the children. Incorporate ice, sand mixed with glitter, shells, superhero figures, real moss and bark

An environment or scene from a story can be recreated on a large tray such as 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt'

Exciting sensory, water/sand play, for example, setting up an underwater scene in water tray or creating islands in the sand tray.

Display and make books with plenty of photographs of children engaging in activities, for example, group outings

Story sacks including a story book, objects, non-fiction book, game, CD.



Book Areas

Containing:

- comfortable seating
- appropriate storage
- a range of books including non-fiction, story books, board books, cloth books, pop up books, stories from other cultures, rhyming books, books reflecting personal experience, poetry books, alphabet books, dual language books, books reflecting different lifestyles/disability, Big Books, books made by the children, magazines, song and music books,
- displays, for example, about favourite books/poems
- displays of children's work about books
- environmental print
- pictures, posters and photographs
- props linked to stories



Useful Links

www.foundationyears.org.uk

www.bookstart.org.uk

Communication Friendly Spaces www.elizabethjarmanltd.co.uk

www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk

Credits to Brighton and Hove Council Website for the information.