

‘Time to Communicate’ What does it look like in EYFS?

In planning and guiding what children learn, practitioners must reflect on the different rates at which children are developing and adjust their practice appropriately. Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

- playing and exploring - children investigate and experience things, and ‘have a go’
- active learning - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements
- creating and thinking critically - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things. In addition, the Prime Areas of Learning (Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Communication and Language and Physical Development) underpin and are an integral part of the children’s learning in all areas

Communication and Language (Statutory)

The development of children’s spoken language 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. Reading frequently to children, and engaging them actively in stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems, and then providing them with extensive opportunities to use and embed new words in a range of contexts, will give children the opportunity to thrive. Through conversation, story-telling and role play, where children share their ideas with support and modelling from their teacher, and sensitive questioning that invites them to elaborate, children become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures.

Birth to 3 -

Turn towards familiar sounds. They are also startled by loud noises and accurately locate the source of a familiar person’s voice, such as their key person or a parent. Gaze at faces, copying facial expressions and movements like sticking out their tongue. Make eye contact for longer periods.
Use gestures like waving and pointing to communicate. Constantly babble and use single words during play. Understand single words in context – ‘cup’, ‘milk’, ‘daddy’. Watch someone’s face as they talk.
Reach or point to something they want while making sounds.
Understand simple instructions like “give to nanny” or “stop”.

3-4 year olds -

Enjoy listening to longer stories and can remember much of what happens.
Use a wider range of vocabulary
Understand a question or instruction that has two parts.
Sing a large repertoire of songs
Develop their communication, but may continue to have problems with irregular tenses and plurals
Use talk to organise themselves and their play

Reception -

• Understand how to listen carefully and why listening is important. • Listen carefully to rhymes and songs, paying attention to how they sound. • Learn rhymes, poems and songs. • Engage in non-fiction books. • Listen to and talk about selected non-fiction to develop a deep familiarity with new knowledge and vocabulary. Develop social phrases. • Engage in story times. • Listen to and talk about stories to build familiarity and understanding. • Retell the story, once they have developed a deep familiarity with the text; some as exact repetition and some in their own words

ELG -

Participate in small group, class and one-to-one discussions, offering their own ideas, using recently introduced vocabulary. • Offer explanations
• Listen attentively and respond to what they hear with relevant questions, comments and actions when being read to and during whole class discussions and small group interactions.

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