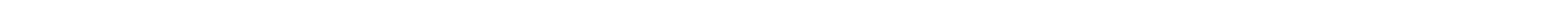




# The Early Communication and Language Journey





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# Communication is everybody's responsibility!

**“We need everyone to understand speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) better. Only through having greater awareness of SLCN and their impact on children and young people's life chances, will we raise the profile of SLCN and ensure these needs are prioritised.”<sup>1</sup>**

Bolton Start Well works with the early years workforce, parents and professionals to support children at risk of speech and language delay, as early as possible or as soon as the difficulty becomes apparent.

Communication is everybody's responsibility and Bolton Start Well has developed 'The Early Communication and Language Journey', as an essential tool to assist the monitoring and assessing of early communication and language development and to support parental and professional understanding.

Bolton Start Well has worked with different professionals across the borough on the key messages contained in this resource around early communication and language development. Contributions have been sought from Bolton Health Visiting, Food and Health and Oral Health Teams, Integrated Working Team, Bolton Multi-agency Screening and Safeguarding Service (MASSS) and Achievement Cohesion and Integration Service (ACIS).

## The Bolton Early Years Communication and Language Pathway

**“Identifying and supporting children's speech, language and communication needs accurately and early leads to fewer issues later on. Too many children are not receiving the intervention they need to help them make adequate progress.”<sup>1</sup>**

Bolton health, education and children's services have worked as a multi-agency team to develop an Early Communication and Language Pathway which describes the assessment tools, interventions and actions to support children at each age and stage of the Greater Manchester Early Years Delivery Model. It shows a graduated response from universal support for all children to specialist services for the smaller number of children who need this level of support. The pathway should be referred to whenever concerns arise around a child not achieving age related expectations. Discussions with parents and other professionals known to the child should then be the cornerstone of any progression within the pathway.

The pathway is specifically designed for children with low to moderate communication and language difficulties. Children who have communication and language difficulties in the context of additional global and/or social interaction difficulties or complex disability should be supported through the appropriate Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) pathway.

<sup>1</sup> Bercow: Ten Years On (2018)

## The Early Communication and Language Journey Resource

The Early Communication and Language Journey Resource is an essential tool which will support parents and professionals to understand early communication and language development. This shared understanding of typical development will support the early identification of any emerging needs which can then be addressed to enable children to reach their full potential and go on to be school ready and life ready.

The Early Communication and Language Journey Resource is divided into seven age band sections with identified communication and language milestones. These are summarised in the overview of Communication and Language Development on page 26. The full Communication and Language Journey is shown in a parent friendly form on page 5 and is also available as a poster.

### Within each age band section there is detailed information including:

- A parent friendly summary given in a poster style
- Explanations about each aspect and suggestions about how adults can support children's learning and development
- If you have concerns around a child's communication and language development then further assessment and intervention using the WellComm toolkit should be completed in line with the Communication and Language Pathway



# The Early Communication and Language Journey

## 0-5 years



By age 5 the size of my vocabulary is a strong predictor of how well I will do throughout the rest of my school life.

**by 60 months, The Skilled Communicator**

- I still enjoy listening to stories, songs and rhymes and may even make up my own
- I can understand describing words and ask the meaning of words I don't understand
- I enjoy conversations and I am able to use longer sentences including linking words like "and" or "because"
- My speech sounds are not fully developed yet
- I am able to concentrate in larger groups and understand rules in conversations and games
- If I am given sugary foods and drinks they should be limited and only given at mealtimes
- I need to brush my teeth last thing at night and at one other time of the day

**by 48 months, The Questioning Communicator**

- I can stop what I am doing and listen when I hear you talking
- I can understand a wide variety of words including colour, number, size and describing words
- I ask more complicated questions and can retell a story
- I am able to say more speech sounds but still have difficulty saying a few e.g. r, l, j, sp, bl, gr
- I can be sensitive to other children's emotions and will comfort them if they are upset
- I like to try different types of fruit and vegetables
- Encourage me to spit after brushing my teeth, but do not allow me to rinse my mouth out as this helps to maintain fluoride concentration level

**by 36 months, The Developing Communicator**

- I can pay attention when you say my name and I am able to understand what's said without being shown
- I can understand simple questions that start with "who", "what" or "where"
- My speech is becoming clearer, although I may stammer when thinking of what to say, and still have difficulty with some speech sounds
- My coordination has improved; I want to try more things on my own but may ask for help
- I enjoy imaginative play, exploring my feelings and re-acting my experiences with friends
- Encourage me to hold a small jug and pour my own drink at family mealtimes
- I need to visit the dentist every six months

**by 24 months, The Innovative Communicator**

- When you sing rhymes, I can join in with the actions and sounds
- I am starting to understand lots of words, more than 200!
- I am using 50 single words and putting two word phrases together e.g. 'mummy's shoe', 'teddy's eyes'
- I am improving my fine motor skills and co-ordination, this helps with walking, talking and drawing
- I can get frustrated if I'm not being understood or getting what I want
- I like to try new things to eat and join in family meal times
- I need you to help me brush my teeth twice a day using a smear of toothpaste

**by 18 months, The Attentive Communicator**

- I can listen and respond to simple instructions
- I can understand more words than I can say
- I am able to point to familiar named pictures in a book
- I can use 10 or more single words and gestures to express my needs
- I love being with adults that I know well, playing and talking together, it's fun!
- I enjoy sharing mealtimes with my family
- Try to keep my dummy for nap time only

**by 12 months, The Early Communicator**

- I need my mummy to eat healthily whilst I'm growing inside her
- I begin to hear from 15 weeks in the womb
- Talk to your bump
- Now I have arrived I like quiet time when I can see and hear what is happening without too much commotion
- I am beginning to understand that when I cry you cuddle me
- I like to babble to myself and I can make different sounds when you speak to me
- I use a different cry to let you know I am hungry
- It's really important that familiar people speak to me often
- I like to look for faces that I know and copy them
- I only need water or milk to drink

**by 12 months, The Early Communicator**

- Quiet times during the day help me to listen
- Use the same words and actions again and again to help me learn
- Talk to me about what I see and hear - I need to know the names of things
- Copying is one of the first steps to help me learn to talk
- Respond to me, take turns in having a conversation with me and give me time to respond
- I like to explore food and texture
- As soon as my teeth start to come through, you can brush them

As soon as I am born I am ready to learn!

Your health visitor will be completing an ages and stages questionnaire with you around 9 months.

Try to keep my environment quiet so I can listen to what you are saying.



# The Early Communication and Language Journey

## 0-6 months, The Early Communicator



Around six months, ask your health visitor for more information on when and how to introduce solid foods and when to offer your child a daily vitamin supplement. You may qualify for free Healthy Start vitamin drops.

**Social skills**

- I like to see what people near me are doing
- I like quiet time when I can see and hear what is happening without too much commotion
- Playing games with me helps to develop the connections in my brain



**Physical skills**

- I love it when my mummy/daddy are close to me and I can see their face so I can copy it
- I love looking at faces; I can see best from 20cm so hold me close
- I like to look for faces that I know



**Talk and speech sounds**

- I like to babble to myself and I can make different sounds when you speak to me
- Sometimes I cry differently to let you know how I am feeling
- Look at me and talk to me gently in a soft voice
- Talk to me as much as possible in short sentences



**Oral health**

- As soon as my teeth start to come through, you can brush them
- I enjoy watching you brush your teeth and singing songs to make this a special time
- I only need water or milk to drink



**Understanding**

- I start to know that my name belongs to me when you say it
- I am usually calmed by a familiar voice
- I am beginning to understand that when I cry you cuddle me
- I get very excited when I hear your voice



**Listening and attention**

- In the womb I begin to hear from 15 weeks and can hear people around my mummy by 24 weeks
- I can distinguish between my mother tongue and a foreign language when I am born
- It's really important for people close to me to speak to me and recognise when I've had enough
- I like it when my daddy uses different sounds in his voice



**Feeding and eating**

- I need my mummy to eat healthily whilst I'm growing inside her
- Breast or formula milk provides me with all the energy and nutrients I need to grow and develop in my first six months of life
- I know how much milk I need so let me decide when and how much; stop feeding me when I show signs that I have had enough

**Wait until I can:**

- Sit up and hold my head steady
- Coordinate picking up and putting food into my mouth all by myself
- Use my tongue to move food to the back of my mouth and swallow food properly before offering me solid food

**Talking to your bump is really important.**



# The Early Communication and Language Journey

## 6-12 months, The Early Communicator



At 12 months, it's normal for me to eat more on some days and less on others. If you provide the food, let me decide how much I want to eat and accept when I have had enough

### Social skills

- I love playing games which we can play over and over again
- I like playing 'peek a boo'
- Respond to me, take turns in having a conversation with me, give me time to respond



### Physical skills

- I may wave and point to communicate my needs
- Copying is one of the first steps to help me learn to talk
- I like to explore things by putting things in my mouth



### Talk and speech sounds

- My voice is changing. I like to play with the sounds I can make with my mouth
- Talk to me about what I see and hear, I need to know the names of things
- I use a range of different sounds and tone in babble, e.g. 'ma, ma', 'ba, ba', 'da da'

### Oral health

- Try to only give me my dummy if I really need it, for nap time or if I am really upset
- Before I am 12 months old take me to the dentist
- Try to switch my bottle to a free flow feeder cup. Milk and water are the best drinks for me



### Understanding

- If you use the same words and actions again and again in the same activity, then I can learn what words mean e.g. 'all gone', 'bye, bye', 'clap hands'
- I may stop and look when I hear my own name
- I am starting to understand daily routines and may join in if you encourage me e.g. I may raise my arms if you ask me to when you are helping me dress



### Listening and attention

- I can locate voices/noises with accuracy
- Quiet times during the day help me to listen
- It's hard for me to listen when there's background noise so turn off the television and radio when playing and talking with me



### Feeding and eating

- From six months gradually offer me a range of mashed foods and soft finger foods to explore alongside my milk
- By seven months I will be having a regular routine of three baby-sized meals a day including mashed family foods with lumps and soft finger foods
- By 10 months my three meals will include chopped family foods and finger foods
- I will want to explore different textures and feed myself using my hands or a spoon with help
- Avoid adding salt and sugar to my foods

Your health visitor will be completing an ages and stages questionnaire with you around 9 months.





## Listening and attention

### What to look for?

- Recognises different sounds and voices
- Will stop and look at you, if you call their name
- Can focus on an object but is easily distracted

### How can other adults support me?

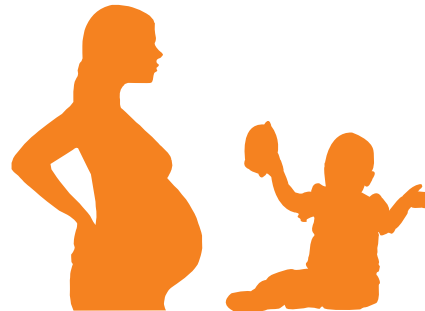
- Play games with your baby such as peek-a-boo
- Babies like to listen to your voice and this encourages them to stop what they are doing and listen to you
- Use a scarf or your hand to hide your face. Games like this encourage communication and concentration

# The Early Communicator

(by 12 months)

**Is interested in people and toys, they respond to talk and send messages using sounds, looking, pointing and actions.**

**EYFS Link:**  
**Birth-11 months, 8-20 months**



## Understanding of language

### What to look for?

- Recognises frequently used words, e.g. 'all gone', 'daddy', 'mummy' and own name
- Can follow simple commands supported with gestures, e.g. hold your hand out and say "give mummy teddy"
- The baby is using objects appropriately, e.g. can use a brush they find on their hair

### How can other adults support me?

- Use actions when you say words to your baby. Wave as you say "bye bye" and sing songs such as "wind the bobbin up". This helps them to understand the words, and encourages them to join in
- Tell the baby in your care what you are doing as you get them dressed, or change their nappy. Give them eye contact so that they can watch and copy your facial expressions

## What I need to provide:

- Regular opportunities to talk with parents about the experiences and activities that will support the child's learning. For some children this may include WellComm activities
- Attentive practitioners with good interaction skills to tune into baby's needs and communication skills
- Key person to meet the communication and language needs of their babies throughout the day, e.g. nappy changing, feeding, comforting, and supporting routines
- Exploratory play – mouthing, shaking, hitting (object against floor, wall), examining, feeling/rubbing, dropping (and looking), throwing
- Sensory activities, e.g. treasure baskets which contain different textures for babies to explore, sharing texture books, playing people games like tickle games and 'peek a boo'
- Opportunities to make choices using real objects
- Quiet periods throughout the day and a quiet environment to enable children to hear your voice
- Opportunities to share books, sing songs and rhymes

## Talk and speech sounds

### What to look for?

- Uses a range of different sounds and tones in babble, e.g. ba, ba, ba, and ma, ma, ma
- Sends messages using sounds, actions and pointing
- May have a few single words, but these may not be clear

### How can other adults support me?

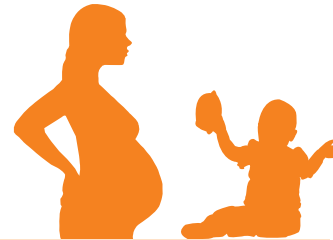
- Spend lots of time with your baby playing and talking with them
- Copy the sounds that your baby makes, take turns to have a conversation. Babies make lots of different sounds and noises
- Babies learn language through play. It's important to come down to their level, to play, listen and talk with them
- Spend individual time with the babies in your care

# The Early Communicator

(by 12 months)

**Is interested in people and toys, they respond to talk and send messages using sounds, looking, pointing and actions.**

**EYFS Link:**  
**Birth-11 months,**  
**8-20 months**



**Remember** to record all the support that you are giving the baby. You may need this evidence in the future if progress isn't made and further specialist support is needed.

## Social skills

### What to look for?

- Able to take turns in conversation, 'babbling back to an adult'
- Smiles and laughs, when other people smile and laugh
- Watches your face when you talk to them

### How can other adults support me?

- Spend lots of time with a baby in your care, cuddle them and let them snuggle into you so that they can watch your face
- Let them take turns with you copying the movements that you make with your mouth
- Give them time to respond, this could take 10 seconds

## Consider using:

If you and the family have concerns about the child's development, speak to the setting's Communication Champion and the baby's Health Visitor to coordinate the use of the WellComm Toolkit.

- ICAN – Babbling Babies activity cards
- Think about Information Carrying Words (ICW)

## Look out for:

- ELKLAN Speech and Language Support courses, 'Quicker Communication', 'Lets Talk with Under 5s'
- Adult/child interaction/video mentoring
- WellComm Toolkit Training

# The Early Communication and Language Journey

## 12-18 months, The Attentive Communicator



Now I am exploring the world around me talk to me about all that we can see, hear, touch and do.



**Physical skills**

- I get excited when you mention things I enjoy such as dinnertime or bath time
- I can reach and point to things I want whilst making speech sounds
- I am able to point to familiar named pictures in a book
- I like to do activities which I like to do



**Social skills**

- I love being with adults that I know well, playing and talking together, it's fun!
- I can be determined and I like to get my own way
- I like playing alongside other children; I love to copy what they do
- I'm learning to take turns with adults



**Talk and speech sounds**

- I can use 10 or more single words and gestures which my family understand
- I can use words and gestures to express my needs
- You can help me to use more words by giving me the word for an object when I point to it e.g. "teddy" or "banana"
- The more times I hear you say the word, the better chance I will have of saying it when I am ready



**Oral health**

- Milk and water are the only safe drinks for my teeth
- Please don't give me sugary food and drinks
- I should visit the dentist every six months
- Try to keep my dummy for nap time only



**Understanding**

- I can understand single words in context
- I can understand more words than I can say
- You can help me to understand more words by talking about the pictures in books or objects you see
- Remember to use short sentences with me. This will make things easier for me to understand

Try to keep my environment quiet so I can listen to what you are saying.



**Feeding and eating**

- I will be having a regular routine of three toddler sized meals a day including chopped family foods and finger foods that I can feed myself
- It's normal for me to eat more on some days and less on others. Let me decide how much to eat and accept when I have had enough
- Allow me to explore new foods and textures without any pressure to eat them. I might need to try some foods a number of times before I like them
- At 12 months I can now drink full fat cow's milk instead of infant formula



**Listening and attention**

- I enjoy listening to songs and rhymes
- I enjoy sound making toys and objects
- I can listen and respond to simple instructions
- I am able to concentrate for short periods of time, however I'm easily distracted



## Listening and attention

### What to look for?

- Can focus on playing or listening to you but not both at the same time
- Interested in music, may have a favourite song
- Listens and responds to simple information or instructions

### How can other adults support me?

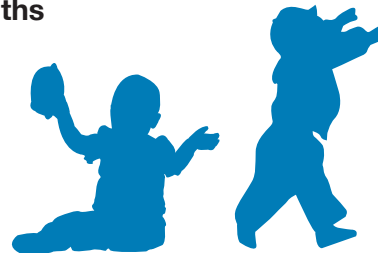
- Play a simple hide and seek game together, hiding teddy under a blanket saying “where has teddy gone?” Give them lots of opportunities to stop, listen and look around when you say “where’s teddy?”
- Play “ready, steady, go” with games using bubbles or rolling a ball. This encourages young children to listen and take turns. Always ensure that you are down on their level making eye contact

# The Attentive Communicator

(by 18 months)

**Is interested in listening but is easily distracted, able to understand and use single words and gestures to communicate and enjoy being with familiar people.**

**EYFS Link:**  
**8-20 months,**  
**16-26 months**



## Understanding of language

### What to look for?

- Understands more words than they can say
- Understands one word at a time supported by gestures
- Understands simple phrases, e.g. ‘coat on’, ‘dinner time’

### How can other adults support me?

- Share picture books together
- Talk about the pictures in books or objects you see using short sentences
- Encourage them to point out the items that you have named together

## What I need to provide:

- Regular opportunities to talk with parents about the experiences and activities that will support the child’s learning. For some children this may include WellComm activities
- Attentive practitioners with good interaction skills to tune into young children’s needs and means of communication
- Key person to meet the communication and language needs of their young children throughout the day, e.g. nappy changing, feeding, comforting, and supporting routines
- Relational play – young children will start to bang two objects together. They may place objects into another, place objects on top of another, take rings off/on stacks and build towers of two cubes. Range of activities, posting, sharing hardcover or lift the flap books
- Simple and repetitive language is important. Rhyme plays a major part in speech development as it helps young children understand the pattern of speech, while repetition can build memory skills and encourage participation
- Provide a range of resources e.g. building blocks and stacking games, tea set, push along toys, simple pretend toys: cars, planes, trucks, dolls, toy phone, sand and water play, simple inset jigsaw, outdoor play
- Opportunities to make choices using real objects and pictures
- Quiet periods throughout the day and a quiet environment to enable young children to hear your voice

## Talk and speech sounds

### What to look for?

- Using 10 or more words and gestures. The words may not be clear
- Using pointing and gestures alongside words, e.g. saying teddy and pointing to ask for it
- Uses long babble strings with various tones and facial expressions

### How can other adults support me?

- When a young child points to an object tell them what it is e.g. “banana” “teddy”. When they try and say a word, say it back to them so that they can hear the name of the object clearly
- Offer young children choices throughout the day e.g. at snack time offer them two choices “would you like a banana or a yogurt?”. Show them the choices giving them time to respond then repeat the word back to them “you would like a yogurt”

# The Attentive Communicator

(by 18 months)

**Is interested in listening but is easily distracted, able to understand and use single words and gestures to communicate and enjoy being with familiar people.**

**EYFS Link:**  
8-20 months,  
16-26 months



**Remember** to record all the support that you are giving the young child. You may need this evidence in the future if progress isn't made and further specialist support is needed.

## Social skills

### What to look for?

- Enjoys taking turns in play
- Enjoys simple pretend play, e.g. talking on the phone
- Still likes the comfort of a familiar adult

### How can other adults support me?

- Engage in your child's play. Young children will enjoy a familiar adult joining in with them and copying them in their play
- Young children are beginning to use toys to pretend they are something else, such as pretending teddy is a baby. Join in with them
- Talk about everything that you are doing when you play together e.g. “I'm feeding teddy” “teddy's dinner has all gone”

## Consider using:

If you and the family have concerns about the child's development, speak to the setting's Communication Champion and the child's Health Visitor to coordinate the use of the WellComm Toolkit.

- ICAN – Babbling Babies activity cards
- ICAN – Toddler Talk activity cards (from 18 months)
- Introduce some of the 'Language through Listening' activities, e.g. eye contact, turn taking
- Think about Information Carrying Words (ICW)

## Look out for:

- ELKLAN Speech and Language Support courses, 'Quicker Communication', 'Lets Talk with Under 5s'
- Adult/child interaction/video mentoring
- Elklan 'EYBIC Word Pack' Early Years Based Information Carrying Words
- WellComm Toolkit Training

# The Early Communication and Language Journey

## 18-24 months, The Innovative Communicator



Look out for information from your child's Health Visitor and Nursery about their two year progress check.



### Physical skills

- I am improving my fine motor skills and co-ordination, this helps with walking, talking and drawing
- I am beginning to follow your body language such as pointing, gestures and facial expressions



### Social skills

- I am interested in conversation and I am beginning to understand about giving and waiting for answers
- I can play turn taking games, like rolling a ball, backwards and forwards with an adult
- I like to play alongside other children
- I can get frustrated if I'm not being understood or getting what I want



### Talk and speech sounds

- My speech is becoming clearer when asking for things I want e.g. food and toys
- I am using up to 50 single words
- I may miss out or swap some speech sounds e.g. k, s, sp, gr and bl
- I can use two word phrases e.g. 'mummy's shoe', 'teddy's eyes'



### Oral health

- I need to brush my teeth twice a day using a smear of toothpaste
- I don't need sugary foods and drinks between meals
- I only need milk or water to drink



### Understanding

- I am starting to understand lots of words, more than 200!
- I may understand you if you use short sentences or simple instructions, without visual cues
- You can help me to understand by talking about what I'm doing rather than asking lots of questions. It's then easier for me to link the words you use to whatever I'm doing

From 18 months to 6 years I need to learn eight new words a day!

### Feeding and eating

- I will be having a regular routine of three toddler-sized meals a day including chopped family foods and finger foods that I can feed myself
- It's normal for me to eat more on some days and less on others. Let me decide how much to eat and accept when I have had enough
- Allow me to explore new foods and textures without any pressure to eat them. I might need to try some foods a number of times before I like them
- I can now drink full fat cow's milk as a drink instead of infant formula



### Listening and attention

- When you sing rhymes, I can join in with the actions and sounds
- I find it difficult to listen to you when there are lots of distractions, help me by turning off background noises
- Say my name first when you are talking to me, then I know to listen to you



## Listening and attention

### What to look for?

- Able to focus on an activity of their choosing
- May need to touch them or call their name to get them to listen to you
- Begins to listen to other's conversation

### How can other adults support me?

- When sharing books and songs together it is very important that there are no other distractions
- Ensure that you use different tones in your voice to capture their attention and make stories and songs fun
- Use different props to enhance singing and story time such as sock puppets

# The Innovative Communicator

(by 24 months)

**Focuses on things that interest them, can understand more than they say and are using two word phrases. They are playing more with toys but can get frustrated if not understood or don't get their own way.**

**EYFS Link:**  
**16-26 months,**  
**22-36 months**



## Understanding of language

### What to look for?

- Understands around 200 words
- Able to understand simple instructions without visual clues
- Understands two word phrases

### How can other adults support me?

- Children need a language rich environment to support understanding
- Comment on what children are doing rather than asking them questions; this gives children time to understand and respond
- Play a simple game together that allows children to follow simple instructions and gives them a greater understanding of “who” “what” “where”

## What I need to provide:

- Regular opportunities to talk with parents about the experiences and activities that will support the child's learning. For some children this may include WellComm activities.
- Attentive practitioners with good interaction skills to tune into children's needs and means of communication
- Key person to meet the communication and language needs of children throughout the day, e.g. nappy changing, feeding, comforting, and supporting routines
- Resources to support symbolic play – such as a banana becoming a phone, a box becoming a car
- Opportunities for pretend play; feeding self with cup and/or spoon, making eating sounds, brushing hair or washing self. Support to extend their play with dinosaurs/teddies – e.g. feed them with cups/spoons, comb/brush their hair, wash them, make them walk or jump
- Range of resources, teddies, dinosaurs and dolls, large toy vehicles, pretend toys e.g. tea parties, shops with pretend food, painting, chunky crayons/pencils for mark making
- Opportunities to make choices using real objects and pictures
- Quiet periods throughout the day and quiet environment to enable children to hear your voice
- Regular opportunities to share books, rhymes and songs with lots of repetition

## Talk and speech sounds

### What to look for?

- Uses two words together in sentences e.g. 'more juice' and asking simple questions, e.g. 'where's daddy?'
- Uses at least 50 single words
- Substitutes sounds they cannot say, e.g. 'tar' instead of 'car' or 'tun' instead of sun

### How can other adults support me?

- Give children lots of opportunities to extend their vocabulary by commenting, adding words and using new words
- When you are playing together use words to describe what they are doing
- Wait for them to respond, repeat and expand on what they say. So if a child says "car" you can say "mummy's car"

# The Innovative Communicator

(by 24 months)

**Focuses on things that interest them, can understand more than they say and are using two word phrases. They are playing more with toys but can get frustrated if not understood or don't get their own way.**

**EYFS Link:**  
**16-26 months,**  
**22-36 months**



**Remember** to record all the support that you are giving the child. You may need this evidence in the future if progress isn't made and further specialist support is needed.

## Social skills

### What to look for?

- Becoming frustrated if not understood
- Engages in lots of pretend play
- Plays alongside other children

### How can other adults support me?

- Share books together often. Interactive books with flaps and different textures make these times fun and enjoyable
- Make dens from sheets and blankets and play with your children, talking about what you are doing and extend their language
- Children are beginning to make friends. Observe how they play with others
- Follow their lead and don't direct their play

## Consider using:

If you and the family have concerns about the child's development, speak to the setting's Communication Champion and the child's Health Visitor to coordinate the use of the WellComm Toolkit.

- ICAN – Toddler Talk activity cards (from 18 months – 3 years)
- Language through Listening
- Think about Information Carrying Words (ICW) 1 – 2 word level

## Look out for:

- ELKLAN Speech and Language Support courses, 'Quicker Communication', 'Lets Talk with Under 5s'
- Adult/child interaction/video mentoring
- 'Language through Listening' training and materials
- Elklan 'EYBIC Word Pack' Early Years Based Information Carrying Words
- WellComm Toolkit Training



# The Early Communication and Language Journey

## 24-36 months, The Developing Communicator



Are you entitled to receive 2 year old funding? Check with your Start Well Centre or Health Visitor



**Physical skills**

- I want to try more things on my own but may ask for help
- I can stop what I am doing and listen when you say my name
- My coordination has improved and I can join in with all the actions in a song or rhyme



**Social skills**

- I can join in conversations within small group activities
- I can play in a group with my friends
- I enjoy imaginative play e.g. reenact my experiences with friends
- I am beginning to express how I am feeling using words



**Talk and speech sounds**

- I can use up to 300 words and can use three to five word sentences
- I am beginning to ask lots of questions
- My speech is becoming clearer, although I may stammer when thinking of what to say, and still have difficulty with some speech sounds



**Oral health**

- I need a smear of toothpaste on my toothbrush
- I should visit the dentist every six months
- I only need milk or water to drink



**Understanding**

- I can understand simple questions that start with "who", "what" or "where"
- I can understand prepositions, in/on and under and other describing words
- You can help me to understand by talking about what I'm doing rather than asking lots of questions. It's then easier for me to link the words you use to whatever I'm doing

Have you been involved with your child's progress check at 2? Ask your health visitor or nursery for more information. Please share your child's red book.



**Feeding and eating**

- I will be having a regular routine of three toddler-sized meals a day including chopped family foods and finger foods that I can feed myself
- It's normal for me to eat more on some days and less on others. Let me decide how much to eat and accept when I have had enough
- Allow me to explore new foods and textures without any pressure to eat them. I might need to try some foods a number of times before I like them
- If I am a healthy weight and eating well, I can now move from full fat to semi skimmed milk as a drink



**Listening and attention**

- I can pay attention when you say my name
- I listen to stories you tell me and talk about them later
- I am able to understand things by listening to adults talking without being shown



## Listening and attention

### What to look for?

- Able to follow adult led interaction for a short time
- Able to concentrate in small groups
- May still need you to call their name to gain their attention

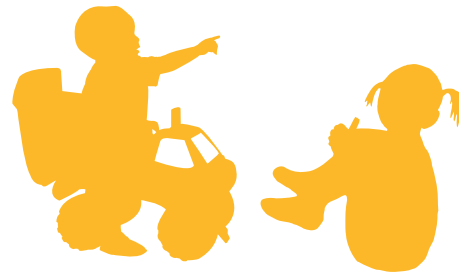
### How can other adults support me?

- Give children lots of opportunities to share books and understand simple instructions
- Children at this age are beginning to understand questions using 'what', 'who' and 'where'. Practise these when sharing books together
- Sing songs and rhymes that encourage your children to join in and recognise the sounds

# The Developing Communicator (by 36 months)

**Is able to enjoy short stories and can understand some describing words, is using more words in sentences and enjoys playing alongside other children.**

**EYFS Link:**  
**22-36 months,**  
**30-50 months**



## Understanding of language

### What to look for?

- Understands simple 'who', 'what' and 'where' questions
- Able to understand three word requests (Information carrying words), e.g. 'give teddy the big banana' with choices for each word and no visual clues
- Able to understand simple concepts, big, little, in, on, under, wet, dry, dirty, clean and some colours

### How can other adults support me?

- Give children opportunities to follow simple instructions
- Make a sandwich together and talk about what you are doing so that they begin to understand
- Children are beginning to remember instructions and information for longer
- Give the children opportunities to use words such as "big", "small" and bring this language into their play

## What I need to provide:

- Regular opportunities to talk with parents about the experiences and activities that will support the child's learning. For some children this may include WellComm activities
- Attentive practitioners with good interaction skills to tune into children's needs and scaffold their language skills
- Opportunities to play alongside other children. They will learn through copying their peers and adults
- Provide time with adults to share simple story books, with flaps and repetition. Introduce traditional tales
- Range of resources to support imaginative play: small world toys, such as playhouses, sets of toy figures, dolls, cars, garages, play kitchen, acting out routines with dolls, teddies, jigsaw, small bricks, smaller mark making materials
- Opportunities to make choices using objects/pictures
- Quiet periods throughout the day and a quiet environment to enable children to hear individual voices

## Talk and speech sounds

### What to look for?

- Using three to four words in sentences and questions
- Speech becoming clearer but may still substitute sounds
- Longer sentences which may be less clear
- Using action and describing words

### How can other adults support me?

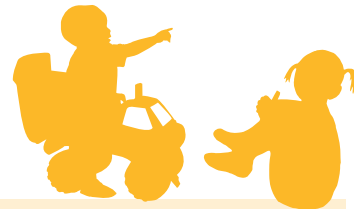
- Provide your children with a language rich environment
- Give children lots of opportunities to talk with you
- Children like to talk about lots of different things, about what they are doing or what they have done. Describe to children what they are doing and name the objects that are playing with
- Add words to children's sentences to show how words fit together

# The Developing Communicator

## (by 36 months)

**Is able to enjoy short stories and can understand some describing words, is using more words in sentences and enjoys playing alongside other children.**

**EYFS Link:**  
**22-36 months,**  
**30-50 months**



**Remember** to record all the support that you are giving the child. You may need this evidence in the future if progress isn't made and further specialist support is needed.

## Social skills

### What to look for?

- Able to wait for turns
- Plays alongside other children and able to share toys when asked
- More imaginative play developing

### How can other adults support me?

- Encourage children to join in with each other
- Children need to feel comfortable and secure before they can join in with others
- Let children choose what they want to play with to develop their self-confidence and self-awareness

## Consider using:

If you and the family have concerns about the child's development, speak to the setting's Communication Champion and the child's Health Visitor to coordinate the use of the WellComm Toolkit. Remember to mark this on the insert page in the child's red book when reporting the progress check at 2 years.

- ICAN – Toddler Talk activity cards (from 18 months – 3 years)
- Think about Information Carrying Words (ICW) – 2 – 3
- Think about Blank – Level 2
- Language through Listening

## Look out for:

- ELKLAN Speech and Language Support courses, 'Quicker Communication', 'Lets Talk with Under 5s'
- Adult/child interaction/video mentoring
- Language through Listening training
- Elklan 'EYBIC Word Pack' Early Years based Information Carrying Words
- WellComm Toolkit Training

# The Early Communication and Language Journey

## 36-48 months, The Questioning Communicator



**Don't forget**  
I need my preschool booster!



**Talk and speech sounds**

- I am able to listen and respond to questions about things that I have done and retell a simple story
- I ask more complicated questions like "when" and may also begin to ask "how" questions
- I am using longer, more complex sentences but may make some errors e.g. runned, mouses
- Sometimes I stumble over my words, I have so much to say and the words don't always come out right (my friends do this too)



**Physical skills**

- I am able to say more speech sounds but still have difficulty saying a few e.g. r, l, j, sp, bl, gr



**Social skills**

- I enjoy playing in small groups and making up my own games and stories
- I can be sensitive to other children's emotions and will comfort them if they are upset
- I am able to take turns and share unprompted with other children
- I can use words to disagree with adults and friends



**Oral health**

- Encourage your child to brush their teeth twice a day
- Encourage them to spit after brushing but do not rinse, to maintain fluoride concentration level
- The dentist will apply 'fluoride varnish' at least twice a year so don't forget your check up!



**Understanding**

- I can understand a wide variety of words including colour, number, size and describing words
- I also understand language related to time and when things have happened in the past, are happening in the present or will happen in the future

**If I am learning five new words a day at nursery I need to learn three new words a day at home.**



**Feeding and eating**

- I will be having a regular routine of three toddler-sized meals a day including chopped family foods and finger foods that I can feed myself
- It's normal for me to eat more on some days and less on others. Let me decide how much to eat and accept when I have had enough
- Allow me to explore new foods and textures without any pressure to eat them. I might need to try some foods a number of times before I like them
- I will enjoy helping to shop for foods, setting the table, pouring my own drinks and being involved with preparing simple meals



**Listening and attention**

- I find it difficult to attend to more than one thing at a time; however, can shift my own focus of attention
- I can stop what I am doing and listen when I hear you talking
- I will enjoy listening and talking to you about our daily events during family meal times

## Listening and attention

### What to look for?

- Enjoys listening to longer stories and able to answer questions about the story
- Able to pay attention in slightly larger groups
- Able to change their own focus of attention

### How can other adults support me?

- Talk about a story that you have read together and ask simple questions
- Children are beginning to understand simple 'why' questions

# The Questioning Communicator

(by 48 months)

**Is able to swap their attention between an activity and a speaker, can understand sequences and is able to use longer sentences, though all words may not be clear. Is able to play with a group of children often making up stories.**

**EYFS Link:**  
**30-50 months,**  
**40-60 months +**



## Understanding of language

### What to look for?

- Able to understand colour, number and time related words
- Able to understand two part instructions and questions
- Able to understand emotions and feelings

### How can other adults support me?

- Give children longer instructions to follow that enable them to carry out a simple task in their everyday activities
- Share books together spending time to talk about and retell the story asking open ended questions and wondering what might happen next

## What I need to provide:

- Regular opportunities to talk with parents about the experiences and activities that will support the child's learning. For some children this may include WellComm activities
- Attentive practitioners with good interaction skills to tune into children's needs and scaffold their language skills
- Provide opportunities for using symbols in play – e.g. shapes, letters and colours
- Opportunities to play more co-operatively together and take turns with other children, e.g. making dens, playing in the role play areas, dressing up and making mud pies
- Range of resources, mark making materials, picture jigsaw puzzles, more traditional stories with puppets and props to support retelling and play
- Small imaginative play resources
- Opportunities to make choices using pictures, or named options
- Quiet periods throughout the day and quiet environment to enable young children to hear individual voices

## Talk and speech sounds

### What to look for?

- Uses longer sentences and able to sequence them together e.g. "I had pasta for tea then played in the garden"
- Uses grammatically correct sentences though may have difficulty with irregular words e.g. runned, mouses, eated
- Speech mostly clear however still has difficulty with consonant clusters e.g. spider, blue, grass, school and sound e.g. th, r, j, ch
- May stammer when talking

### How can other adults support me?

- Encourage children to think of words that belong to the same category, for example as many different animals or forms of transport you can think of.
- Make up a story together, think of a character, where does he live, where will he go today?
- Talk to children about things they have done and where they went yesterday
- Play around with words and sounds, e.g. think of words that begin with the same sounds

## Consider using:

If you and the family have concerns about the child's development, speak to the setting's Communication Champion and the child's Health Visitor to coordinate the use of the WellComm Toolkit.

- ICAN – Chatting with children activity cards (3 – 5years)
- ICAN – Ready Steady Talk activity pack
- Nursery Narrative
- Think about Information Carrying Words (ICW) 3 – 4
- Think about Blank – Level 3

# The Questioning Communicator

(by 48 months)

**Is able to swap their attention between an activity and a speaker, can understand sequences and is able to use longer sentences, though all words may not be clear. Is able to play with a group of children often making up stories.**

**EYFS Link:**  
**30-50 months,**  
**40-60 months +**



**Remember** to record all the support that you are giving the child. You may need this evidence in the future if progress isn't made and further specialist support is needed.

## Social skills

### What to look for?

- Able to play co-operatively with two to three other children
- Able to wait when others are talking
- Able to initiate conversations
- Able to plan games with others

### How can other adults support me?

- Encourage children to use talk to organise themselves and play
- Give children lots of opportunities to play with their friends in a secure environment
- Provide them with materials that allow them to use their imagination e.g. using cardboard boxes and pieces of fabric to let them build things with their friends

## Look out for:

- ELKLAN Speech and Language Support courses, 'Quicker Communication', 'Lets Talk with Under 5s'
- Adult/child interaction/video mentoring
- Elklan 'EYBIC Word Pack' Early Years based Information Carrying Words
- Language through Listening/Nursery Narrative training
- WellComm Toolkit Training

# The Early Communication and Language Journey

## 48-60 months, The Skilled Communicator



If I am learning five new words at nursery or school each day, I need to learn three new words at home!



**Physical skills**

- My sounds are not how you say them yet, I can't always manage sounds like th, r, ch and j and joined up sounds like scr



**Talk and speech sounds**

- I am able to use longer sentences including linking words like "and" or "because"
- I enjoy conversations about what I am doing, what has happened and might happen in the future
- I can use my words to take on different roles in my play, negotiate with people and problem solve



**Social skills**

- I am able to concentrate in larger groups
- I am able to understand rules in conversations and games
- I am developing a sense of humour and enjoy jokes
- I may be able to help my friends to be friends again if they fall out or get cross with each other



**Oral health**

- I need to brush my teeth last thing at night and at one other time of the day
- Continue to supervise tooth brushing until I am 7 years old
- If I am given sugary foods and drinks they should be limited and only given at mealtimes



**Understanding**

- I can understand instructions containing sequencing words (first, after, last)
- I ask the meaning of words I don't understand
- I can understand describing words: soft, loud, fast, smooth
- I may understand "why" and "how" questions
- I am able to identify items from a description

I'm going to be starting school soon which is a big change for me. Let's keep talking about what is happening and how I am feeling.



**Feeding and eating**

- I will be having a regular routine of three small meals a day plus two healthy snacks if needed
- I will be making healthy choices about what to eat at school and feeding myself
- It's normal for me to eat more on some days and less on others. Let me decide how much to eat and accept when I have had enough
- I will enjoy helping to shop for foods, setting the table, pouring my own drinks and being involved with preparing simple meals



**Listening and attention**

- I am able to listen and continue with an activity at the same time
- I am able to listen and identify sounds within words
- I still enjoy listening to stories, songs and rhymes and may even make up my own



## Listening and attention

### What to look for?

- Able to listen and continue with a task without stopping
- Able to ask relevant questions or make relevant comments in relation to what they have heard
- Enjoy listening to stories and rhymes and will start to make up their own

### How can other adults support me?

- Encourage children to listen to longer instructions, but remember children need time to think before responding to questions and instructions
- Play listening games like 'Simon says' this encourages children to listen and copy the action. Activities like this encourage children to turn take. Playing a treasure hunt game together helps children to follow instructions

# The Skilled Communicator

(by 60 months)

**Can listen while continuing an activity, is able to understand longer instructions and can use language to solve problems though may still have difficulty with some speech sounds. Enjoys complex imaginative play with groups of children.**

**EYFS Link:**  
**40-60 months +**



## Understanding of language

### What to look for?

- Able to understand 'why' questions
- Able to understand the concept of time (past, present and future)
- Understands adjectives such as thin, smooth, narrow etc

### How can other adults support me?

- Encourage children to listen as you share stories together. Talk together at the end of the story about what happened
- When tidying up or going to do an activity give them simple instructions to follow such as "put your shoes in the basket", "can you go and put your coat on, then go out to play?"
- Use language with children that describes sequences such as 'first', 'next' this encourages children to understand and use this language "First we will play in the park, next we will go to the shops"

## What I need to provide:

- Regular opportunities to talk with parents about the experiences and activities that will support the child's learning. For some children this may include WellComm activities.
- Attentive practitioners with good interaction skills to tune into children's needs and scaffold their language skills
- Opportunities to use language skills within play e.g. role play, storytelling, games with simple rules, particularly towards the end of this stage
- Opportunities for children to play co-operatively, take turns and play group games
- Opportunities for developing emergent writing and recognition of everyday signs/words
- Opportunities to retell stories
- Opportunities to make choices using pictures, or named options
- Quiet periods throughout the day and a quiet environment to enable children to hear individual voices



## Talk and speech sounds

### What to look for?

- Uses long well-formed sentences that are easy to understand
- Able to use some irregular past tense words
- Able to use language to solve problems
- Uses most consonant sounds though may struggle with three consonant clusters e.g. scribble, string

### How can other adults support me?

- Introduce new words and phrases to help them to continue learning
- Think of lots of different words that mean a similar thing
- When sharing a story together ask them how they think the story will end
- Make up silly rhymes with children like “cat”, “bat” and “hat” or silly sentences like “lovely Lucy likes lumpy lettuce”

# The Skilled Communicator

(by 60 months)

**Can listen while continuing an activity, is able to understand longer instructions and can use language to solve problems though may still have difficulty with some speech sounds. Enjoys complex imaginative play with groups of children.**

**EYFS Link:**  
40-60 months +



**Remember** to record all the support that you are giving the child. You may need this evidence in the future if progress isn't made and further specialist support is needed.

## Social skills

### What to look for?

- Engages in complex imaginative play with groups of children
- May help friends if they are upset
- Takes turns in much longer conversations

### How can other adults support me?

- Organise activities where children have opportunities to join in with group conversations and games
- Have lots of opportunities for children to take part in imaginative play
- Provide opportunities for children to develop different roles within play
- Explore vocabulary relating to emotions through stories, songs and other group activities

## Consider using:

If you and the family have concerns about the child's development, speak to the setting's Communication Champion and the child's Health Visitor to coordinate the use of the WellComm Toolkit.

- ICAN – Chatting with children activity cards (3 – 5years)
- Think about Information Carrying Words (ICW) 4 – 5
- Think about Blank – Level 4
- Reception Narrative

## Look out for:

- ELKLAN Speech and Language Support courses, 'Quicker Communication', 'Lets Talk with Under 5s'
- Elklan 'EYBIC Word Pack' Early Years based Information Carrying Words
- Reception Narrative training
- WellComm Toolkit Training

## What to look for?

### What to look for?

- Able to be selective about what they need to listen to and are able to integrate listening with other tasks
- Able to understand how words can be linked by what they mean as well as how they sound and look
- Able to use more complex grammar though may still make some errors
- Able to recall experiences or tell stories which include more detail and have words and events in the right order
- Able to talk about things that are not directly linked to themselves or that they're not interested in
- Becoming more 'grown up' in their social interactions, can use different styles of talk with different people
- Use their language skills to support their reading, writing and spelling

# The Skilled Communicator and beyond (60 months+)

**EYFS Link:**  
**40-60 months +**

**Remember** to record all the support that you are giving the child. You may need this evidence in the future if progress isn't made and further specialist support is needed.

## How can other adults support me?

### How can other adults support me?

- Attentive practitioners with good interaction skills
- Teach new vocabulary; link words to those they already know, ask if they have heard the word before, play around with how the word looks and sounds, talk about opposites, add adjectives or adverbs
- Give time for children to think and respond to questions. This may take up to 10 seconds
- Encourage longer sentences to explain, or retell stories
- Encourage an ethos of asking for clarification, saying when they don't understand or are struggling
- Quiet periods throughout the day and a quiet environment to enable children to hear individual voices

## Consider using:

- Think about Information Carrying Words (ICW) 5
- Think about Blank – Level 4
- WellComm Toolkit can be used up to the age of 6 years
- Reception Narrative programme

## Look out for:

- Elklan 'Speech and Language support for 5 – 11's'
- WellComm Toolkit Training

# Communication and Language Development Overview

Stages	Listening and attention	Understanding of language	Talk and speech sounds	Social skills
<b>The Early Communicator by 12 months (1 year)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Turns towards a familiar sound then locates range of sounds with accuracy. e.g. looks towards the door when they hear it open</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognises parent's voice and begins to understand frequently used words such as 'all gone', 'no' and 'bye-bye'</li> <li>• Stops and looks when hears own name</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initially uses cries to communicate</li> <li>• Gradually develops speech sounds (babbling) to communicate with adults; says sounds like 'baba', 'nono', 'gogo'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gazes at faces and copies facial movements, e.g. sticking out tongue</li> <li>• Increasingly aware of other people and taking turns in interactions using babble</li> </ul>
<b>The Attentive Communicator by 18 months</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interested in music and singing</li> <li>• Easily distracted by noises or other people talking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding of single words in context is developing, e.g. 'cup', 'milk', 'daddy' (shown by looking at the object/person)</li> <li>• The child can understand more words than they can say</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progresses from using babble to around 10 single words, although these will often not be very clear</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Likes being with familiar adults and watching them</li> <li>• Developing the ability to follow an adult's body language including pointing and gesture</li> </ul>
<b>The Innovative Communicator by 24 months (2 years)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Starting to focus on an activity of their choice, although finds it difficult to be directed by an adult (likes to do own thing rather than what the adult wants)</li> <li>• Using the child's name helps them to attend to what the adult says, e.g. "Ben, drink juice" "Aysha, coat on"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By 24 months, understand simple instructions without visual cues, e.g. "Get mummy's shoes", "Put your bricks away", "Tell dad tea's ready"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using up to 50 words and is beginning to put 2-3 words together</li> <li>• Frequently asks simple questions, e.g. "Where's my drink?", "What's that?"</li> <li>• Uses speech sounds p, b, t, d, m, n, w</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gradually able to engage in 'pretend' play with toys e.g. gives dolly a cup of tea</li> <li>• Is frustrated when unable to make self understood</li> </ul>

# Communication and Language Development Overview

Stages	Listening and attention	Understanding of language	Talk and speech sounds	Social skills
<b>The Developing Communicator by 36 months (3 years)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follows adult led interaction for a short time e.g. staying with an activity started by an adult such as planting seeds or making a greetings card</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understands simple “who”, “what” and “where” questions but not “why”</li> <li><b>Blank Level 2</b> e.g. “Who’s putting on their coat?” “What’s happening?”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses more than 100 words including descriptive language, space, function</li> <li>Has problems saying: l, r, w, y, f, th, s, z, sh, ch, j</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expresses emotions towards adults and peers using words and actions</li> </ul>
<b>The Questioning Communicator by 48 months (4 years)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enjoys listening to stories, however can only focus on one thing at a time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understands more complex questions or instructions with two parts, e.g. “Get your jumper and stand by the door”</li> <li><b>Blank Level 3</b> e.g. “What will happen next?”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses sentences of 4-6 words, e.g. “I want to play with cars”, “What’s that thingy called?”</li> <li>Has problems saying: r, j, th, ch, sh</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understands turn taking as well as sharing with adults and peers and can initiate conversations</li> </ul>
<b>The Skilled Communicator by 60 months (5 years)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is now more flexible when attending to something and can listen whilst doing</li> <li>Responds to an instruction even when involved in an activity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understands instructions containing sequencing words, ‘first...after...last’</li> <li><b>Blank Level 4</b> e.g. “Why do we need our wellies on?”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses well formed sentences and is easily understood by adults and peers</li> <li>Speech sound errors: th, r</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Takes turns in longer conversations and uses language to gain information, negotiate, discuss feelings/ ideas and give opinions</li> </ul>

# Appendix

## **Appendix 1: The Role of the Communication Champion - suggested good practice**

This role description aims to support leaders and Communication Champions to ensure that the role of Communication Champion is effective for the setting or staff teams and has the desired impact on children's communication and language learning and development needs. This good practice guidance clearly defines the role and responsibilities of the Communication Champion and supports them to consider their continued professional development needs by undertaking The Communication Trust – Speech, Language and Communication Framework (SLCF) to identify their key strengths and areas for further development.

## **Appendix 2: Five Golden Rules for Communication**

These are the basic skills in which all practitioners need to be confident to utilise throughout their practice as guided by the Communication Champion. Leaders and managers should be confident that these skills are embedded throughout their setting to ensure practitioners' interactions with children support communication and language development. These good interaction and golden rule strategies should be embedded in everyday practice.

## **Appendix 3: Guidance for supporting children learning English as an Additional Language (EAL)**

## Appendix 1

# The role of the Communication Champion – suggested good practice

“Anyone working with children and young people has the confidence, skills and knowledge they need to enable all children to communicate to the very best of their ability”

### The Communication Trust strategy 2013-2017

Speech, language and communication skills are essential for the development of a child’s learning and their social and emotional wellbeing. It is important that the nominated Communication Champion has the appropriate skills and knowledge to be able to support other staff in the setting or team to meet the needs of all children. Successful Communication Champions will have full support of the management team and will have a leadership role within the workplace. They may have time allocated to fulfil the role.

### What the role involves:

- Ensure communication and language is embedded in all planning for all children across the whole setting or caseload
- Commitment to attend the termly Communication and Language briefings
- Commitment to keep their knowledge current through attending briefings like the termly Communication Champion briefings
- To contribute to sharing best practice, develop case studies/networking with others
- Embed peer observations focusing on good practitioner interactions with children and promote peer to peer observations
- Provide regular training to staff team, sharing expertise and developing quality interactions for all children
- To be highly skilled in observing children’s learning and identifying next steps in their communication and language development. Are able to support other staff to identify if children are not working at age related expectations
- Use the WellComm toolkit to track the progress of children in the setting, monitor the effectiveness of any interventions and supply data to the Local Authority on request
- Liaise with SENCO/Literacy coordinator/Senior Leadership Team if required for identified children
- Facilitate joint working with parents/carers to enhance children’s communicative opportunities within the home learning environment

### Essential criteria for a Communication Champion:

- Minimum Level 3 qualification (preferably EYP/T or QTS) or equivalent qualification in a relevant profession
- Undertaken ELKAN accredited speech and language course
- Enhanced knowledge and competence in identifying and supporting early communications and language delay
- Complete The Communication Trust – Speech, Language and Communication Framework (SLCF) to the Enhanced stage

The Speech, Language and Communication Framework (SLCF) can be used as a self-evaluation online audit tool and is available at [www.talkingpoint.org.uk/slcf](http://www.talkingpoint.org.uk/slcf) This identifies the key strengths of the Communication Champion and further areas for continued professional development.

Appendix 2

# Five Golden Rules for Communication

- 1 Eye to Eye**  
Get down on the child's level so you can see their face and they yours  
*Sit on the floor with your child or sit the child on your knee*
- 2 10 seconds**  
Wait 10 seconds, watching and listening to give the child a chance to take a turn  
*Count to ten slowly in your head*
- 3 A or B**  
Offer choices as often as possible throughout the day. Show and name the alternatives  
*For example "Do you want apple or banana?"*
- 4 Actions speak louder than words**  
Use actions, facial expressions and tone of voice to help children understand and make new words stand out.  
*For example, mime having a drink from a cup to your child for "drink" whilst saying "you want a drink?"*
- 5 Model and extend**  
Whatever stage a child is at repeat what they do or say and add one word.  
*For example, child points to car, you say "car", child says "car", you say "red car", child says "red car", you say "yes, big red car"*



### Appendix 3

# Guidance for supporting children learning English as an Additional Language (EAL)

Young children learning one language at home and another in their early years setting need to use their home language as much as possible. Throughout this guidance it is presumed that the child's mother tongue will be encouraged and used throughout the suggested activities and stages of development. All children need to feel a sense of belonging. It is vitally important that children feel their bilingualism is valued and that they see it as the advantage that it is.

## Children learning English as an Additional Language (EAL) may go through the following stages:

- A silent period – When first exposed to a new language a child may go through a 'silent period'. They may understand some aspects of the new language but not use it. This is quite normal and typically lasts between 6-12 months. When children go through the silent period, this can affect the use of their home language as well as the new language. This results in some children going through a phase when they are reluctant to use their home language in certain situations. This is a normal part of the language learning process
- Code mixing – It is normal for the child to mix the new language and their home language in one sentence – this is known as 'code switching'
- Lots of grammatical errors, e.g. 'a car yellow'

It is important that information on the child's skills in their home language is sought from parents/carers. Parents should be encouraged to continue to speak to the child in their home language; this builds a firm foundation for the second language. Without this foundation, both first and second language can be delayed or disrupted.

## Signs that a child may need additional support may be:

- **Simultaneous learning:**
  - Less than 20 words (combining both languages) by 2 years
  - No use of word combinations by 2 years (both languages from birth)
- **Sequential learning:**
  - Lack of normal milestones in first language (second language after home language)
  - Prolonged phase of not talking
  - Difficulty in retrieving words

When using the WellComm toolkit with EAL learners refer to the guidance in section 4 of the handbook (page 22)



## Strategies to support children with English as an Additional Language (EAL)

- Try pairing the child with another that you know to be friendly and caring
- Check pronunciation of the child's name, make sure everyone can say it correctly
- Don't expect or insist on speech too early. Listening time is vital for the child to tune into the new language
- Use non-verbal cues and materials
- Be careful of misinterpreting facial expressions, gestures, body contact and personal space, which varies from culture to culture
- Encourage the child to play with others you know to be supportive and understand the task they are doing – learning is often by imitation
- Use of puppets is particularly valuable
- Show the child pre-school routines with simple accompanying language – greeting, name of helpers, toilet, how to access drinks etc
- Work in partnership with parents to establish a list of words which the child uses at home in their home language (write them phonetically to help your pronunciation) and encourage adults to use these in the setting

“There is no subject called English as an Additional Language, which is why there is no recommended course book. EAL learners are learning the same subjects as everybody else. Pupils from English-speaking families, however, are learning it through their first language. EAL is about helping young children to learn, even though the curriculum is not being delivered in their first language”

### **NASSEA 2015**

For more information please refer to the new NASSEA EAL Assessment Framework – which incorporates the Early Years Foundation Stage. This resource helps practitioners to observe, document and accelerate the ways bilingual children start to use English as a tool for learning in nursery/school, and then continue to develop their use of English through other subject areas. For further information visit: [www.nassea.org.uk](http://www.nassea.org.uk)

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# Notes



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**For more information or support please contact**

Bolton Start Well Service

Tel: **01204 338149**

email: **[boltonstartwell@bolton.gov.uk](mailto:boltonstartwell@bolton.gov.uk)**

website: **[www.boltonstartwell.org.uk](http://www.boltonstartwell.org.uk)**



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