What Is Communication and Language?

- Communication and language is an **essential building block** that impacts all areas of development and learning.

- Communication and language includes listening, speech, language and understanding.

Listening

- Listening is an **active process** of **hearing** and **understanding**.
- Children will hear sounds and **learn to interpret** and **respond** to them.

Speech

- Speech refers to the way **sounds are produced**.
- Speech production involves **coordinating the muscles in the mouth and throat** to create sound.
- These sounds will be used to **express needs, thoughts, feelings** and communicate with others.

Language

When referring to language, there are two elements:

- **Receptive language (understanding)**: the ability to **understand spoken language and respond to it appropriately.**
- **Expressive language (talking): using words, gestures and simple phrases or sentences** to express **wants, needs and feelings**.

Communication

- Communication is the way in which we **interact with others** and how we **receive/pass on information or messages**.

- The '**dance of communication'** can take many different forms, such as through **gestures and movement**, **facial expressions**, **spoken or written words** or **noises**.

Why Is Communication and Language Important?

From two children's communication and language skills are **rapidly developing** as they **increase their vocabulary** and **ability to express themselves**.

This helps them to:

- initiate and develop longer conversations with others;
- exchange information in an organised sequence;
- develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills;
- develop their self-confidence, independence and self-esteem;

twinkl.com

Why Is Communication and Language Important?

- communicate emotions, interests and preferences - vital skills as children prepare for transitions and form new relationships/attachments;

- play cooperatively and enjoy participating in pretend play with friends;

- express their creativity, imagination and develop their own narratives;

- develop firm foundations for other learning to build on.

twinkl.com

Implications of a Lack of Communication Skills

At this age, children's communication and language skills are often **becoming more advanced** and are **crucial to their holistic development**.

Lack of opportunities to develop communication can cause difficulties with **social interaction** and **self-regulation** which could result in low **self-esteem, low self-confidence and frustration**.

Our role is to **developing and nurturing language skills** and support each child's communication journey.

Understanding Language

Children between two and four years old may:

- understand and use a wider range of vocabulary;
- ask lots of questions;
- understand describing words and use them for different things;
- understand a range of concepts;

Understanding Language

Children between two and four years old may:

- understand a phrase, instruction or question that has two or three parts;
- respond to simple questions, answering appropriately;
- understand others' emotions as they pick up on facial expressions and body language cues;
- remember a simple story with pictures and answer questions about it.

Talking

During this stage, children aged three to four may:

- begin to develop clearer speech;
- join in with and remember favourite rhymes;
- use longer sentences;
- join sentences together;
- join in with a conversation;

Talking

During this stage, children aged three to four may:

- ask lots of questions using a variety of question words;
- use a variety of pronouns correctly;
- tell a simple story;
- use talk while in role during imaginative play.

Speech Sounds

Between the ages of two and four, children may:

- use many speech sounds, including ‘k’, ‘g’, ‘ng’, ‘f’, ‘s’, ‘h’;
- sometimes miss sounds off the ends of words;
- make speech sound errors or omissions when talking;
- use future and past tense;

Speech Sounds

Between the ages of three and four, children may:

- experience difficulties with irregular tenses and plurals;
- have difficulties producing some sounds;
- show awareness that some words start or finish with the same sounds.

Communication ideas

Different ways to increase communication with your child

Sounds
any sound your child enjoys, repeat it with them, make a game out of it. Extend the sound into other sounds they like. Maybe it is a train noise, maybe it is a hum. The idea is to go into their world to help the come into ours

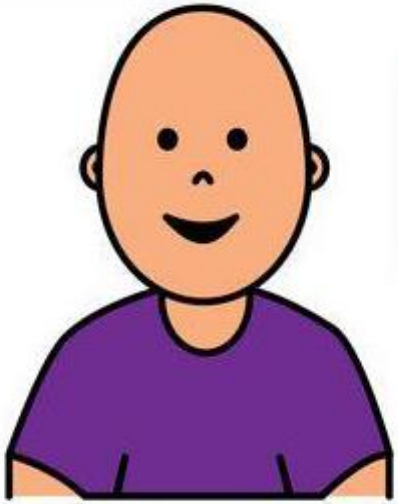
Tablets and i-pads
While I think that sometimes an ipad or tablet can inhibit communication, I also feel that there are some great communication tools on them. I would limit their use though.

Visuals
Many kids with ASD are such visual thinkers. Why not use images to help them communicate

Stories
Reading to your child every day is important, it fosters a love for language. You could also write your own stories about your weekend adventures filled with pictures of your child. You could also take turns in making up stories

Body language
Your body can speak volumes, let it dance, move, flap, spin and twirl. Exaggerate any body language you may usually use, add it to your regualr speech. Think playschool

Art and drawing
Sometimes it is easier to draw how you feel or how your day was than to say it, especially when you don't have the language to express it yet



Music and rhythm
Some days language is just too difficult. Why not express yourself through music? There is a rhythem they can feel with their whole body. Sing, dance play an instrument

Expressive language
I am not talking about expressive and receptive language, I am talking about putting a lot of expression in your voice. Speak with enthusiasm and excitement.

Makaton signs and sign language
You don't need to know a lot of signs to assist in effective communication, just the basics. The trick is to use them consistently, along side regular speech

Exaggerated facial expressions
Have you ever watched an American sitcom without the sound, especially the comedies? Watch their faces. This is what you want to achieve when trying to engage your child

Echolalalia
This is a word of phrase is repeated with out much understanding of context. Use that language to capture your childs attention

the little black duck
www.thelittleblackduck.com.au

Supporting at home

Five Tips to Improve Communication Skills at Home

1) **Give Wait Time**: Wait 5-10 seconds for your child to answer your question before jumping in. This gives your child more time to process what he or she wants to say.

2) **Model/Repeat New Words**: Repeated exposure to new words will help your child expand his or her vocabulary.

3) **Ask Open-Ended Questions**: Open-ended questions are answered by more than, "yes," or, "no." These questions ask your child to expand their thinking and attempt to use more vocabulary.

4) **Read, Read, and Read Some More**: Read books, read signs, read anything! The more your child is exposed to language, the quicker they will understand it.

5) **Turn Off the T.V.**: Less screen time will help your child interact with family members more. Turning off the screen helps children use their imaginations and learn to entertain themselves.

Ms. Jocelyn

Activity ideas

Play-based activities

•**Pretend play:** Engage in imaginative play like playing "house," a "Teddy Bear's picnic," or a pretend "shop". You can also use puppets or stuffed animals to have conversations.

•**Build and create:** Use blocks to follow their directions, or provide toys like cars and trains to make sounds like "choo choo" or "beep beep".

•**Sing songs and nursery rhymes:** Music and rhythm are excellent for memory and language learning. Sing and act out songs to help them learn new words and phrases.

•**Play games:** Incorporate simple games like "I Spy" or "What's in the Box?" to practice speech sounds and descriptions.

Everyday activities

•**Talk during daily routines:** Narrate what you are doing, such as "I'm hanging these clothes to dry" or "Let's put the napkin on the table".

•**Grocery shopping:** Talk about the items you are buying, their colors, shapes, and sizes.

•**In the kitchen:** Discuss the food you are preparing, including its taste, texture, and color.

•**Getting dressed:** Name body parts and clothing items. You can turn it into a game, like "Where is Teddy's nose?".

Reading and storytelling

•**Read together:** Make reading a fun, interactive experience by asking questions about the story, characters, and what might happen next.

•**Encourage participation:** Allow them to turn the pages and help you fill in words from a familiar story.

•**Create a reading environment:** Have a cozy reading area with accessible books to encourage a love of reading.

Tips for interaction

•**Follow their lead:** Talk about what they are interested in and get down to their level to show you are listening.

•**Expand on their words:** When they say a word, repeat it and add more information. For example, if they say "train," you can say, "Yes, it's a big red train!".

•**Model language:** Show them how to answer questions and have a conversation flow naturally.

•**Allow for pauses:** Give them time to respond. They may not always have the right words, but they will still try to communicate.

Activity ideas

https://www.famly.co/blog/10-simple-communication-and-language-activities

https://www.hacw.nhs.uk/childrens-speech-and-language-resources/

https://send.eani.org.uk/sites/default/files/2023-07/Play%20Activities%20to%20Support%20Communication%20and%20Interactions.pdf

Thank you

Thank you for listening – any questions?