



St Francis CE Primary School

Strategies used in the EYFS to
support Communication and
Language interaction

Strategies to support Listening and Attention



These are the children who may find following instructions and transitions to adult led activities very, very difficult.

Remember – Listening and Attention is hard work, particularly if you have a speech and language delay or if English is not your first language.

Parallel Play

- Get down to the child's level and copy what they are doing, including copying any noises, babble, or words that they may say.
- Mirror the child's body language as closely as possible. If they lie on the floor, you do too. If the child is pushing a car backwards and forwards across the floor get another car and do exactly the same thing. If they stop moving, you stop. When they start to move again, you move again. Keep copying closely.

This is a simple but incredibly powerful way to encourage social relationships and communication. Children start to understand that the actions and sounds that they make have an impact on someone else and this feels good.



Anticipation games

Ready, Steady, Go!

Choose a resource or activity that the child is interested in so that motivation is high; rolling cars or balls down a slide, pouring sand/water in a wheel, blowing bubbles, singing songs e.g. round and round the garden and pause before tickling

Once the game is established, wait for a response from the child before saying 'Go'.

This could be the child giving you **eye contact**, **making a sound** or **saying a word**.



Turn taking games

- Turn taking games can be played in lots of ways; posting items, rolling a ball, rolling cars down a ramp, tipping sand into a container with a spoon.
- Choose a resource or activity that the child is interested in so that motivation is high e.g. cars, balls, sand, water, etc.
- Initially play with one adult and one child, 'My turn,' 'your turn.'
- Use the language of turn taking e.g. 'Zahra's turn', 'Mohamed's turn.'



Group times



- When working with two and three year olds keep adult led activities, including singing and rhyme times, short. 10 minutes of quality is better than 20 minutes of stress and struggle.
- The smaller the number of children in the group, the easier it is for children to concentrate.
- It is easier for children to concentrate when group activities are led in a quieter area of the setting.
- Support children's attention by keeping things visual. Add props such as toys and puppets or picture symbols to represent songs and rhymes. Add sign and gesture to support children's understanding of language.

Strategies to support Understanding

This is the aspect of communication and language that is the most important. It is the foundation upon which interaction and communication is based.

Choices

- The communication partner increases the opportunity to communicate by giving a controlled 'either/or' choice, e.g. 'Milk or water?' Hold up real objects or pictures.
- The child may show their choice by reaching out, pointing at or by making a sound to indicate their choice.
- When the child has made their choice the communication partner models the choice e.g. 'milk.'



or



- Give children **time** to process what has been said to them. Once a question/ request/ instruction has been asked, count to 10.
- **Visual prompts-** pictures of resources, visual timetables, photos on a keychain/ lanyard e.g. of coat
- Keep **instructions simple and precise and positive** e.g. Walking inside” rather than “Don’t run”.



Strategies to support Speaking



Descriptive commentary

- The communication partner provides a running commentary of what the child is doing as they do it.
- The communication partner keeps their language simple and repetitive.
- The communication partner adds sound effects to the play e.g. 'moo', 'brum'. This is particularly important if the child is not yet using words.



Recasting



- The adult supports sound production by repeating back to the child clearly and correctly what they have said e.g. Child: “ilk please” Communication partner: “Milk please”
- Recasting can also be used to support children’s grammar e.g. Child: “I goed shop” Communication partner: “You went to the shop”
- **Do NOT ask the child to repeat a word back to you again. It is enough for them to hear you saying the word clearly and you may damage the child’s confidence if you correct them in this way.**

Match plus one

- Count the number of words that the child uses and add a word to extend the language e.g. if the child says “cat” you could say “cat gone” or “cat running”. If the child says, “Mummy car” you could say “Mummy’s red car.”



- Add verbs e.g. ‘running’, ‘eating’, ‘sleeping’ as these are essential language ‘building blocks’, from which children can later build longer, more complex sentences



Resources to support Early Language

- Collections of small world resources; farm animals, wild animals, under the sea, dinosaurs, etc.
- Collections of vehicles, images of vehicles and non-fiction books about transport .
- Collections of open ended heuristic play/treasure basket resources; keys, chains, bath plugs, different types of containers, natural materials, etc.
- A collection of different sized boxes and containers with lids to put 'surprises' inside.
- A collection of things that spin and go round; salad spinners, spinning tops, cogs, wind up torches
- Collections of old mobile phones and landline phones.
- Puppets and resources to support singing and rhyme sessions.
- Images to represent songs and rhymes to support singing and rhyme sessions, laminated and put on a mat or board and musical instruments.
- Guttering/tubing of different lengths to go alongside balls and wheeled toys inside and outside.
- A collection of picture books that are interactive with buttons, noises and textures to stimulate.
- Touch and exploration games.
- Picture books that encourage children to join in with and anticipate actions and noises e.g. 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt' by Michael Rosen, 'Walking through the Jungle' by Julie Lacome, 'Noisy Farm' by Rod Campbell, 'Dear Zoo' by Rod Campbell. (Core Stories)
- Mug trees and kitchen roll holders with resources that can be stacked e.g. napkin rings, hair , scrunchies, bangles
- 'Cause and effect' toys that pop up, make noises, have lights that flash etc.