

Communication, Language and Literacy

Requirements

Children's learning and competence in communicating, speaking and listening, being read to and beginning to read and write must be supported. They must be provided with opportunity and encouragement to use their skills in a range of situations and for a range of purposes, and be supported in developing the confidence and disposition to do so.

Aspects of Communication, Language and Literacy

Communication, Language and Literacy is made up of the following aspects:

Language for Communication – is about how children become communicators. Learning to listen and speak emerges out of non-verbal communication, which includes facial expression, eye contact, and hand gesture. These skills develop as children interact with others, listen to and use language, extend their vocabulary and experience stories, songs, poems and rhymes.

Language for Thinking – is about how children learn to use language to imagine and recreate roles and experiences and how they use talk to clarify their thinking and ideas or to refer to events they have observed or are curious about.

Linking Sounds and Letters – is about how children develop the ability to distinguish between sounds and become familiar with rhyme, rhythm and alliteration. They develop understanding of the correspondence between spoken and written sounds and learn to link sounds and letters and use their knowledge to read and write simple words by sounding out and blending.

Reading – is about children understanding and enjoying stories, books and rhymes, recognising that print carries meaning, both fiction and fact, and reading a range of familiar words and simple sentences.

Writing – is about how children build an understanding of the relationship between the spoken and written word and how through making marks, drawing and personal writing children ascribe meaning to text and attempt to write for various purposes.

Handwriting – is about the ways in which children's random marks, lines and drawings develop and form the basis of recognisable letters.

What Communication, Language and Literacy means for children

- To become skilful communicators, babies and young children need to be with people with whom they have warm and loving relationships, such as their family or carers and, in a group situation, a key person whom they know and trust.
- Babies respond differently to different sounds and from an early age are able to distinguish sound patterns. They use their voices to make contact and to let people know what they need and how they feel.
- All children learn best through activities and experiences that engage all the senses. Music, dance, rhymes and songs support language development.
- As children develop speaking and listening skills they build the foundations for literacy, for making sense of visual and verbal signs and ultimately for reading and writing. Children need varied opportunities to interact with others and to use a wide variety of resources for expressing their understanding, including mark-making, drawing, modelling, reading and writing.



How settings can effectively implement this area of Learning and Development

To give all children the best opportunities for effective development and learning in Communication, Language and Literacy practitioners should give particular attention to the following areas.

Positive Relationships

- Help children to communicate thoughts, ideas and feelings and build up relationships with adults and each other.
- Give daily opportunities to share and enjoy a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books, rhymes, music, songs, poetry and stories.
- Allow children to see adults reading and writing and encourage children to experiment with writing for themselves through making marks, personal writing symbols and conventional script.
- Identify and respond to any particular difficulties in children's language development at an early stage.



Enabling Environments

- Plan an environment that is rich in signs, symbols, notices, numbers, words, rhymes, books, pictures, music and songs that take into account children's different interests, understandings, home backgrounds and cultures.
- For children who may need to use alternative communication systems provide opportunities for them to discover ways of recording ideas and to gain access to texts in an alternative way, for example through ICT.
- Provide time and relaxed opportunities for children to develop spoken language through sustained conversations between children and adults, both one-to-one and in small groups and between the children themselves. Allow children time to initiate conversations, respect their thinking time and silences and help them develop the interaction.
- Show particular awareness of, and sensitivity to, the needs of children learning English as an additional language. Use their home language when appropriate and ensure close teamwork between practitioners, parents and bilingual workers so that the children's developing use of English and other languages support each other.



Learning and Development

- Link language with physical movement in action songs and rhymes, role-play and practical experiences such as cookery and gardening.
- Show sensitivity to the many different ways that children express themselves non-verbally, and encourage children to communicate their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a range of expressive forms, such as body movement, art, dance and songs.
- Develop children's phonological awareness, particularly through rhyme and alliteration and their knowledge of the alphabetic code.
- Develop children's awareness of languages and writing systems other than English, and communication systems such as signing and Braille.

What do I do next?

- **Welfare requirements** are explained in full in the *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage* booklet.
- **Areas of Learning and Development** including effective practice, planning and resourcing at different stages are detailed in the *Practice Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage* booklet and on the CD-ROM.
- **Early Support** information is available on the CD-ROM under areas of Learning and Development.
- **Research and resources** are available on the CD-ROM.

