



Key messages for Loving Language

For children's wellbeing, positive relationships and for the growth of language and communication is essential to have interactions that are **loving, enjoyable, back and forth** and **language rich**.

Loving, nurturing relationships are central to attachment and wellbeing. Babies and children feel safe and cared for when adults are responsive to their emotional needs and promote positive, loving, nurturing relationships.

Top Tips

- Be intentional about spending quality time together with your child doing things you both enjoy and chatting about what they are interested in.
- Respond to your baby or child's communication in positive, supportive ways responding to their needs and feelings.
- Praise and encouragement are so important at all ages, use positive language and be specific about what they have done that makes you proud.
- Work as a team with your child to achieve tasks together-let them help with the housework think of fun things you can play with and make together.
- Loving touch such as cuddles, high fives and tickles is important for bonding at all ages.

Enjoyable interactions in everyday routines and fun play experiences are when children learn language and communication best. When children are interested in the activity and motivated to communicate a message, they have the opportunity to learn how to take turns and use language and communication.

Top Tips

- Include your children's interests in play and interactions.
- Get face-to-face and on your child's level.
- Follow your child's lead- observe, wait and listen to your child's message.
- Join in the play your child's way, get your own toys and imitate their actions.
- Interactions that are fun and energetic can be balanced with calming, enjoyable activities like quieter songs and cuddling up to look at a book together.

Back and forth interactions mean we aim for good turn taking between the children and adults. Studies have shown that the more children participate in back and forth interactions with their caregivers, the greater impact on their language skills. Creating opportunities to allow babies and young children to take a turn in communication also learning of intentional communication and the key early interaction skills they need as a foundation for language development. Turns children take may be loving, facial expressions, gestures or other body language, making sounds and in time using their own words and sentences.

Top Tips

- Create opportunities for your child to lead the interaction by observing their interests, waiting for them to initiate communication and listening to their message.
- Create opportunities for your child to take a turn by pausing in interactions during everyday routines, for example, pause during people play (activities that are more fun with other people).
- Use people play such as peekaboo and tickles with younger children and games like chasing and hide and seek with older children.
- Use songs with movement such as "row row row your boat", "pop a little pancake," "ring a roses".
- Use people toys like bubbles and puppets to encourage back and forth interactions.
- Create opportunities for back and forth turns when looking at books together-lift the flap and touchy feely books and interactive for younger children to follow your child's lead when talking about the pictures.

Language rich- Once loving, enjoyable, back and forth interactions are established, the optimum environment for language learning has been created where adults can add quality language. Highlighting language appropriate to the child's stage of development will increase the child's understanding and teach words and sentences they can use to express their own needs, wants, opinions and stories as they grow.

Top Tips

- Highlight new language by using short sentences and stressing the key words.
- Show children what you mean as you talk, using objects, pointing, gestures, pictures.
- Use Makaton signs while speaking to help children understand and learn words.
- Expand the language your child uses by repeating and adding one or two words.
- Repeat back the correct version of any words your child does not say clearly.
- Create opportunities for imaginary play following your Child's lead, use real objects as well as toys and model new ways children can pretend and imagine.
- Extend the topic by adding describing words, explaining how and why, and talking about the past and future. Using photographs of your child enjoying a day out or completing activities at nursery are a great way to talk about the past with your child.
- Talk about feelings in your child and others, act out these feelings in role play and with toys, label them in real-life situations, encourage your child to talk about how they feel and help them learn the words to do this.

Top Tips for Communication in the Early Years



Get face-to-face and on a children's level. This allows you to see what your child is interested in and communicate with you and also allows your child to see and hear your communication for language learning.



Observe what the child is interested in.

Wait for the child to communicate with you (this can be with or without words).



Listen to their message and be responsive to their communication.

Top Tips for Communication in the Early Years



Join in children's play their way.

Follow children's lead by imitating their actions and communication.

Add new language following your child's lead at the child's language level.



The best games for interaction don't need toys! Play people games such as 'peekaboo', 'chasing', 'hide and seek' with young children. Share songs and rhymes with actions, such as round and round the garden, row row your boat, ring a roses.



Support understanding by using visual information such as signs, gestures, pointing and pictures alongside spoken information.

Top Tips for Communication in the Early Years



Highlight short, simple language, showing children what you mean and repeat repeat repeat.

Expand children's words and sentences by adding one or two words or ideas to what they have said. For example, if the child says 'digger', the adult can repeat back 'push the digger' or 'a big digger'.



Share books together. Follow the children's lead by allowing them to choose the book and creating opportunities for them to talk about the pictures and fill in the words.



Remove distractions as much as possible when you are having talking and listening time with children (for example, turn off/put away screens and music).