

# Speaking and Listening, the first steps to Early Reading

Engaging children in everyday conversation and valuing their communication is essential.

Listening and responding positively to young children enables them to think, respond and feel valued in conversation.

Understanding the development of language skills enables staff to plan, support and scaffold children's developing speaking and listening skills effectively.

Staff use observations to identify children's achievements and plan next steps for learning.

Practitioners identify and support individual children's developmental needs in language.

Practitioners support children's to build a good stock of words, learn to listen attentively and speak clearly and confidently.

Adults recognise their role in modelling, commentating and supporting children's speaking and listening skills.

The learning environment supports speaking and listening.

- Are all adults taking time to talk with children?  
Do you incorporate what children tell you in planning?
- Do adults allow children the time they need to think and respond in conversation?  
Do you ensure that listening to children is an ongoing part of valuing each individual child?
- Do all staff understand children's language development?
- Do practitioners plan time to observe children during child-initiated and adult-led activities and interpret these observations to inform future planning?
- Do staff plan activities which are developmentally appropriate for children?  
Are all staff aware of the needs of children with language difficulties or English as an Additional Language so that they can provide support during all parts of the session/day?
- Do you plan singing, music, rhyme and story activities.  
Does planning regularly identify new vocabulary to be introduced?  
Does the learning environment offer rich opportunities for children to listen, speak, read, write and rapidly increase their stock of words?
- Do practitioners provide exciting, multi-sensory, interactive and differentiated activities to support speaking and listening?
- Do staff members observe children's attempts at communication and model language and through children's play.  
Are adults commentating and thinking aloud whilst playing alongside children?
- Do you provide quiet areas, puppets, props, interesting resources which stimulate discussions and promote listening independently. E.g. treasure baskets, CD players, tape recorders etc.