

Early Communication

Our early communication skills include attention and listening, awareness of others, taking turns and babble and vocalisations.

Children will develop their early communication skills in lots of different ways, in their own time. They might have their own preferences around these, and we should respond when they show us their preference.

Here are our **five top tips** to help a child with their early communication:

1. Accept all forms of communication

Children will always communicate in the way that is easiest to them. While they are developing their skills we should accept all the different ways they might communicate a message. This might include leading you by the hand, eye pointing, crying or reaching.

2. Notice how and why children communicate

Take a bit of time to notice children's communication. Notice how they let you know something. Then consider why this is important to them. This can help you respond to their needs.

3. Notice what motivates a child

We prefer to communicate about things that are important to us. Notice what motivates and interests a child. You could then find ways to do these more often.

4. Try to keep a routine, it's stressful when you don't understand

Routines help give us a sense of predictability. When we are familiar with a routine we know what is likely to happen next. This can help us to feel more confident in a situation. Routines don't rely on understanding lots of words or sentences. Even if understanding words is tricky a routine can help a child understand what is likely to happen. This might help them to join in more.

5. Use objects, or pictures, to back up what you are saying

Using some visuals, like an object, can help a child to understand more. It might be tricky to understand the words said, but a child might know what an object represents. For example: showing a child a toothbrush helps them to understand it's time to brush your teeth. Remember to say the words at the same time as showing a child the object. Over time this will help them to understand what the words mean as well.



You can check out our video talking about our five top tips to support children with their early communication skills.
Scan the QR code.