Making Communication Fun

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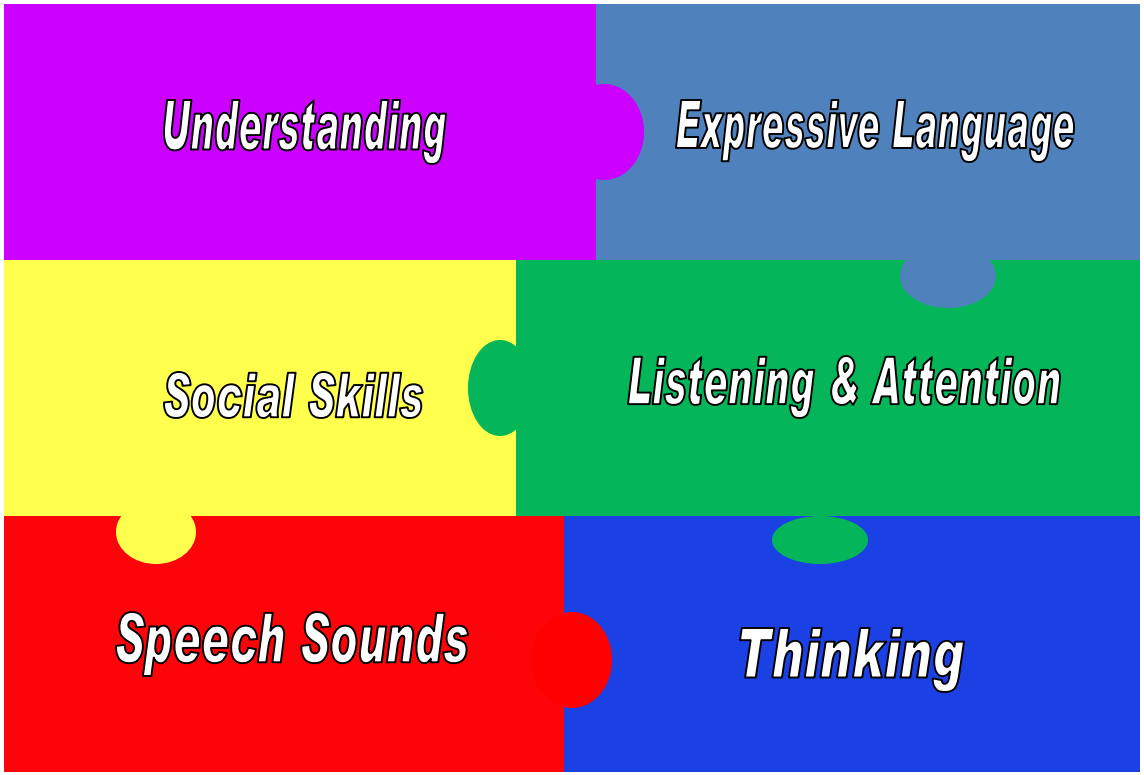
What makes up

Communication?

Communication Skills:



"Learning to talk means much more than learning the right words.

It means learning to recognize feelings.

It means learning to understand thoughts

It means learning to be a person and how to connect with another person"

(Ayala Manolson- It Takes two to Talk, A Parent's guide to Helping Children Communicate)

Learning to Communicate:

- Communication development **starts before birth.**

- **A child doesn't learn to communicate by himself.** He learns through **involvement with his world.**

- Throughout childhood, but particularly in the early years**,** **Parents** are the **largest part** of that world**,** and therefore have **a fundamental role in Communication development.**

The Early Years…

- Important time for **brain development**
- **Quality** of early experiences contributes significantly to children's **success in life**
- Children need to **develop social skills**:
  - To establish and maintain effective relationships
- Children need to **develop language skills**:
  - To communicate effectively with others
  - To enable learning of knowledge and skills

The Parent's Role:

- **Parents** play a **fundamental role** in the development of children's communication skills

- *A report published in 2006 identifies that the home environment has **as much impact** on a child's development as school.* *Reference: Wood, C. and Caulier-Grice, J. (2006) Fade or Flourish: How Primary Schools can Build on Children's Early Progress Social Market Foundation*

- Children need interaction that is **enjoyable**, **frequent** and **happens over an extended period of time**

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The Parent's role:

- We are our children's **first and foremost model** of a good communicator!

- What does a "**good communicator"** look like?

A Good Communicator:

- Someone who….
- Listens
- Responds to what you say
- Looks at you
- Doesn’t interrupt
- Is interested in what you’re talking about
- Doesn’t ask loads of questions all the time

The Reality….?

"The greatest gift we can give our child is help in learning to communicate and connect with his world. But each of us may have to face the frustration and discomfort of trying to communicate with a child who is unable, uninterested, or impossible to understand. Under stress, even caring, reasonable parents can become frustrated and angry, and even turn into screaming maniacs. Communication with our children can bog down or break down, consuming our time, our energy, and even worse leaving us feeling ineffective"

(A Manolson, ITTTT)

What are the barriers to effective, enjoyable communication with our child?

How can we begin to overcome these barriers and make communication Fun?

Some Helpful Principles ……

(based on "The 3 A's" of the Hanen Language Program)

Get to know your child

- No two children, whether they have a communication difficulty or not, develop communication in the same way or at the same rate. Try not to compare!
- Taking the time to carefully observe our child; what they enjoy, how they see the world, how they play and interact can open up a wealth of understanding about and connection with them.
- In our desire to care for, entertain and teach our child, our natural instinct can be to take over; talk for them, anticipate what they need before they ask, organise them. This can limit our child's opportunities to explore communication and develop their skills.

The 1st A : Allow…

Helps you to tune into your child; lets them show you where they're at with Communicating

As parents, the time we spend with our children, and our care for them gives us endless opportunities to observe them carefully and to know and understand them better.

By letting ourselves at times "sit back" and allowing our children to lead in an interaction or shared situation we are better placed to know the communication level they are currently at, and adjust our own behaviour, language and expectations accordingly.

"Minding the gap" between our language and expectations, and our child's communication and ability levels is one of the quickest ways to reduce frustration and resistance, and reclaim the joy of communicating with our child.

Observe :



- ✓ Their focus of attention – what interests them
- ✓ Facial Expressions
- ✓ Body Language
- ✓ Pitch, volume, duration of sounds

Wait :

- ➢ Try not to take over!
- ➢ Wait for their communication – however small (remember non-verbal
- ➢ communication too)
- ➢ Try not to always answer for the child, or test their knowledge, or conduct conversation using controlling language.
- ➢ Give them opportunities to respond in their own way.

Listen:

- ✓ instead of filling the gaps with talking
- ✓ attentively so we hear what our child is actually saying, and how they're choosing to say it at the moment
- ✓ so our child knows they have our attention and it's a safe place to try and communicate.

Find out your child's communication level

(Early Language Stages)

Discoverer

- *Child makes interests and needs known through their body language and simple sounds.*
- *We can expect: cries, looks, smiles, screams, vowel-like sounds, changes in voice, changes in skin-tone, movement of body.*

Communicator:

- *Child becomes more interested in people and things, and their facial expressions and gestures become easier for us to understand.*
- *We can expect: facial expression, movement towards objects/people, variety of consonant and vowel sounds, ability to focus on objects and people.*

First-Word User

- *Child can connect and interact with us more easily. They direct more and more effort towards trying to get our attention, help or approval. They start to look to us for information.*
- *We can expect: pointing at specific people/objects, nodding/waving, acting out what they mean, making sounds that stand for words, maybe some single words/signs, combining eye-gaze, vocalisation and gesture.*

Combiner:

- *Child begins to use words and/or signs/symbols consistently, in addition to non-verbal communication.*
- *We can expect: frequent use of single words/signs, combinations of words (may be difficult to understand), combinations of 2 or more words/signs/ symbols in phrases or sentences.*

Sentence-User:

- *Child is able to link phrases into longer sentences and link sentences into stories. Child is able to use verbal or symbol/signed language to talk outside the "here and now"*

The 2nd A : Adapt…

Sharing a moment is the key to communication. You can share the moment with your child in many ways, e.g:

- Being face to face
- Imitating your child's actions, sounds or words
- Interpreting your child's attempts to communicate
- Waiting with anticipation for them to take a turn
- Commenting on what's happening

Model Conversation

this can happen with or without words!

- Conversation with a **"Discoverer"**

e.g. Layla, mum and the rattle

- Conversation with a **"Combiner"**

e.g. Katie and the shoe

The 3rd A : Add Language & Experience…

It really does ***Take Two to Talk***. Our children ***need our help*** to make meaning out of what they experience, and ***learn the tools of communication.***

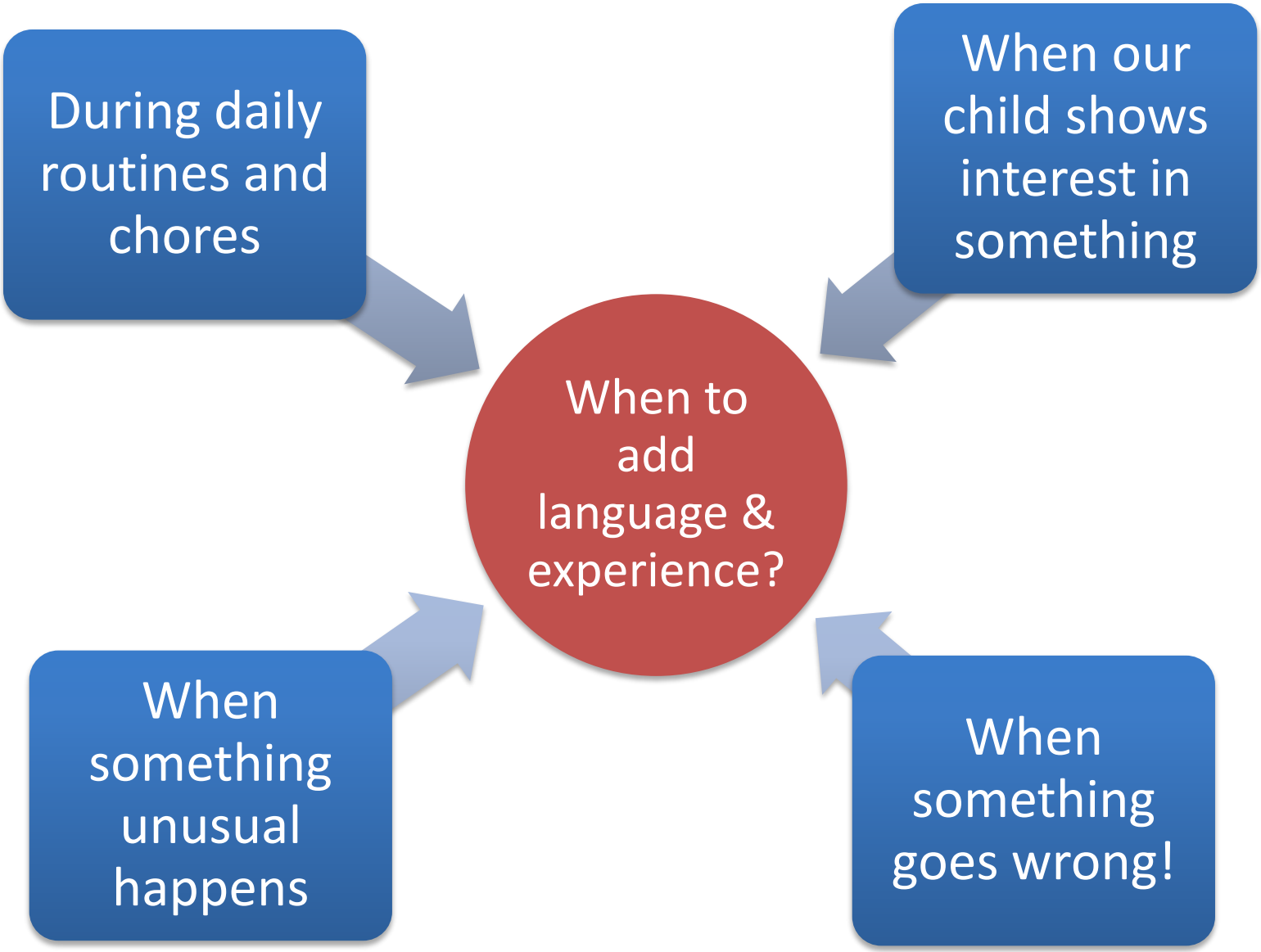
We need to give our children ***the opportunity to hear new words/see new signs*** (many times before he will be able to use it), and then ***opportunities to practice using*** them

We will need to **emphasize and repeat** many times before the new information/word becomes **established.**

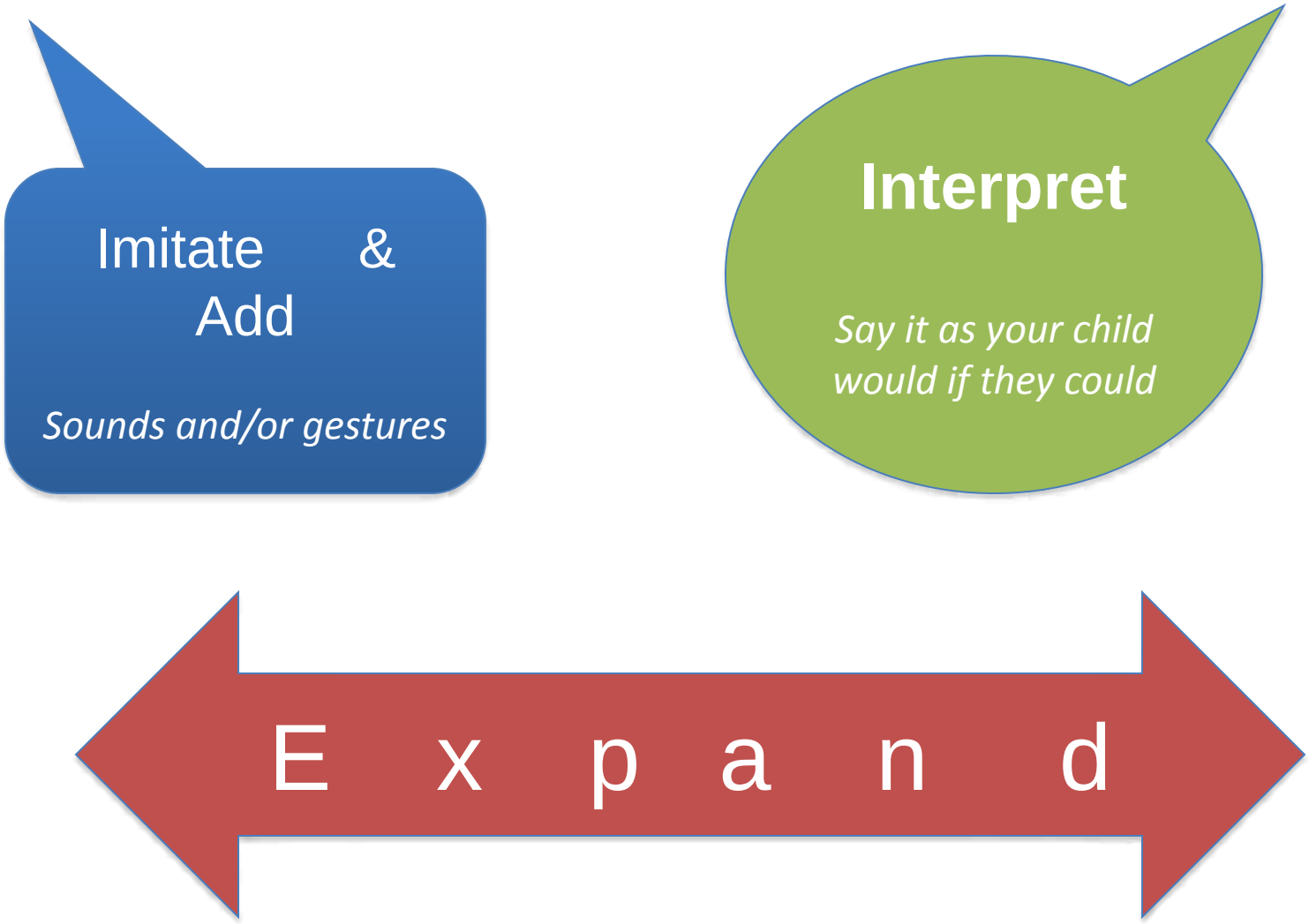
We need to be realistic about what to expect, according to our child's abilities.

Learning language takes time and progresses in stages as follows:

FROM	TO
Hearing Words	Understanding Words
Random Movement	Recognisable Gesture
Not imitating	Able to imitate
Using Gestures to communcate	Using sounds to communicate
Imprecise sounds	Sounds like the real word
Words	Phrases and sentences
Incorrect grammar	Correct form


During daily routines and chores
When our child shows interest in something
When to add language & experience?
When something unusual happens
When something goes wrong!

How to add Language & Experience:



E x p a n d

- It’s easy to get stuck in a pattern of **how we talk** to our child, especially during the early stages of Language development

- When we expand on the messages that our child gives us :

  - It helps our child **understand more** about the experience

  - It helps our child learn to say **new words**

Label:

"That's a car!"

Explain:

"Daddy goes to work in a car"

Describe:

"That car is going too fast"



Talk about feelings:

You really like going in grandad's car"

Pretend:

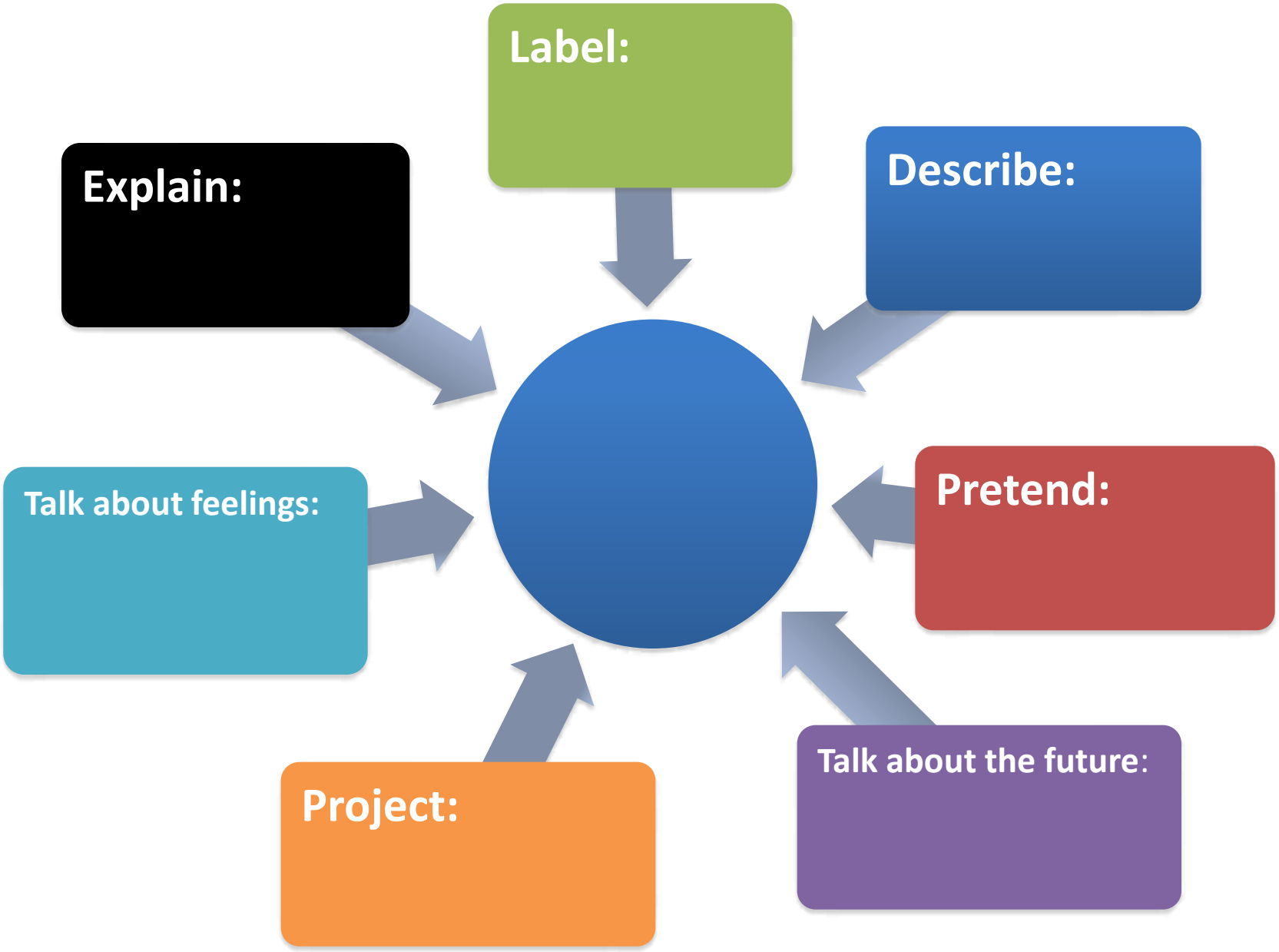
"Let's push this chair like a car"

Project:

"When you're a big girl, maybe you can drive a car too"

Talk about the future:

"Tomorrow we'll go driving in Daddy's car"


Label:
Explain:
Describe:
Talk about feelings:
Pretend:
Project:
Talk about the future:

Have fun playing the "3A Way" with your child!

- The **power of play** for building communication skills, whatever age, whatever stage…
- Play is **social and fun**
- Play encourages **taking turns**
- Play is **easy to respond to**, even without words
- Play involves **repetition**
- Play uses **all the senses**
- Play can involve toys or objects, or simply **you and your child**, your bodies and voices.

Golden Time

- **Time** with your child (preferably 1:1) focusing on Play and Communication
- **Minimise distractions** & background noise
- Get down to **same physical level** as your child
- Have items of **interest to your child** – old favourites or something new & interesting
- Try to **Play the 3A way** – **Allowing, Adapting and Adding.**
- See what happens!

Fun with Music

- Children learn to **respond to music** very early on, even in the womb.
- Through music play and activities, children **learn pre-language skills** naturally; **listening**, **paying attention**, **concentrating, anticipating what comes next, taking a turn, following instructions.**
- Becoming familiar with **rhythm** and **melody** is hugely beneficial for communication development

Sharing Books

- Books offer children the chance to **experience objects, actions and events** that are constant
- Builds **attention** and **concentration**
- Offers natural opportunity for **joint attention, repetition, imitation, labelling, expanding** and **taking turns**
- Use existing books, or **create your own** using photos or objects

Advice & Resources for Parents

- www.afasicymru.org.uk
- www.ican.org.uk
- www.talktoyourbaby.org.uk
- www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/something-special/
- www.makaton.org
- www.talkingpoint.org.uk
- Language & Play
- Local Library Services

Say hello to your new baby

Talking to your baby from day one will help the two of you get to know each other, and gives your child a great start in life.



© Posy Simmonds

- Babies just a few minutes old, if content and alert, will seek out faces and look at them intently. Try slowly opening your mouth or sticking out your tongue – your baby may copy you.
- As soon your baby is born she will recognise and turn to the sound of your voice. From birth your baby is listening, so keep talking.
- Babies are born with a wide range of emotions: from birth their faces will light up with pleasure. Your baby's facial muscles will soon develop, enabling a full blown smile.
- When your newborn is in the mood to chat he might move his mouth a lot, as if he is talking. Answer your baby by saying something like, "That's a good story you're telling me."
- As the weeks go by, your baby will look at you for longer and make little cooing sounds. Have a conversation by copying her sounds.
- Games are a great way to talk together. You don't need any toys, just each other. Count your baby's fingers and toes or play tickling games.
- Sing to your baby, even if you don't think you sound great. Your baby will love hearing your voice, and any song will do.
- Like adults, babies don't always feel like being social, especially if hungry, tired or uncomfortable. Respect your baby's need to take time out.

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Talk To Your Baby

Dwedwchy helo wrth eich babi newydd

Bydd siarad â'ch babi o'r cychwyn cyntaf yn eich helpu i ddod i adnabod eich gilydd, ac mae'n rhoi dechrau gwych mewn bywyd i'ch plentyn.

- Bydd babanod ychydig funudau oed yn unig, os ydyn nhw'n fodlon ac yn effro, yn chwilio am wynebau ac yn edrych arnyn nhw'n astud. Ceisiwch agor eich ceg yn araf a rhoi eich tafod allan – gallai eich babi eich copïo chi.
- Cyn gynted ag y bydd eich babi wedi ei eni, bydd yn adnabod swn eich llais ac yn troi i'ch wynebu. Mae eich babi'n gwrando o'r adeg pan gaiff ei eni, felly, daliwch ati i siarad.
- Caiff babanod eu geni ag ystod eang o emosiynau; o funud eu geni, bydd eu hwynebau'n dangos balchder. Bydd cyhyrau wyneb eich babi yn datblygu'n fuan, a'i alluogi i wenu'n llawn.
- Pan fydd eich babi newydd aneddig yn awyddus i sgwrsio, gallai symud ei geg, fel pe bai'n ceisio siarad. Atebwch eich babi trwy ddweud rhywbeth fel, "Wel, dyna stori dda sy' gen ti."
- Wrth i'r wythnosau fynd heibio, bydd eich babi'n edrych arnoch am gyfnodau hwy ac yn gwneud synau cwan bach. Siaradwch â hi trwy gopïo ei synau.
- Mae gemau yn ffordd wych i siarad â'ch gilydd. Does dim angen teganau; dim ond chi'ch dau. Cyfrwch fysedd a bysedd traed eich baby, neu chwaraewch gemau cosi.
- Canwch wrth eich baby, byd yn oed os nad ydych yn meddwl eich bod yn swnio'n wych. Bydd eich babi wrth ei fod yn clywed eich llais, ac mi wnaiff unrhyw gân y tro.
- Yr un fath ag oedolion, dydy babanod ddim bob amser yn hoffi bod yn gymdeithasol, yn anwedig os oes eisiau bwyd arnyn nhw, os byddan nhw wedi blino neu'n anghyfforddus. Parchwch angen eich babi i gael seibiant.

Welsh translation produced with support from the Basic Skills Strategy for Wales.

Quick tips may be photocopied. For more information visit www.talktoyourbaby.org.uk
Talk To Your Baby is an initiative of the National Literacy Trust.
Reference: *The Social Baby* (2000), Lynne Murray and Liz Andrews, The Children's Project, Richmond.

Talk To Your Baby – quick tips

對你的嬰兒說話 – 基學提示

Dummies and talking

Babies like to suck, so dummies can help soothe at bedtime or when your baby is tired or cross. But regular and extended use of a dummy can create problems with your child's speech.

- Try to wean your child away from dummies, preferably by 12 months.
- Make a clean break – throw away the dummy over a weekend, or at a time when you have support. Most babies and toddlers will fret for no more than two or three days.
- Dummies prevent babies from babbling – an important step in learning to talk, so only use them at set times, like bedtime.
- When your baby cries he's trying to tell you something, so try to find out what's troubling your baby first, and use the dummy as a last resort.
- Remember, learning to talk can be tricky, so toddlers need lots of practice. A dummy will discourage your toddler from chatting with you, which she needs to do to develop her language skills.
- If your toddler is still using a dummy, always ask him to take it out before you talk to each other.
- Never dip your baby's dummy into anything sweet. This can cause tooth decay.



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橡皮奶頭和說話

嬰兒喜愛吮吸，所以橡皮奶頭幫助把嬰兒哄睡，或者當嬰兒疲倦或脾氣不好時候可使他安靜下來。不過如果經常和長時間使用奶頭，這對你孩子的說話能力會引起問題。

- 說法使你的孩子不再使用橡皮奶頭，最好是 12 個月大左右。
- 徹底戒除使用 – 不妨在一個周末或當你得到幫助時候棄用奶頭。大多數嬰兒和小孩因此而煩躁只兩三天而已。
- 奶頭妨礙嬰兒牙牙學語 – 這是學習說話的重要階段，所以只宜在規定時間使用，例如睡眠時候。
- 當你的嬰兒啼哭時候，他是想告訴你某事，所以你應當先找出什麼原因，只使用奶頭為最後辦法。
- 記著，學說話可能需要技巧的，所以小孩需要做許多的練習。奶頭會阻礙你的孩子跟你說話，而他需要這樣的練習使能夠培養自己的語言能力。
- 如果你的孩子仍然使用奶頭，每當你們一起說話時候，一定要叫他將奶頭取出。
- 切勿把奶頭沾上任何甜的食物，這樣會引起蛀牙。

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Making the most of television

Like adults, children sometimes feel tired or stressed and want to relax by watching television. Used in the right way, television can be beneficial. But too much can be harmful, so it's important to find the right balance.

- Try to limit your child's daily TV time to no more than half an hour for under-twos and an hour for three to five-year-olds. This will give you time for important activities like playing.
- Always turn off the TV when no one is watching because constant background noise can distract you and your children from playing, listening and talking to each other.
- Try to limit your child's viewing to programmes that have been designed for her age-group.
- Allow your child to watch the same video or DVD again and again. This can be better than television as the repetition and familiarity of words and phrases make it easier for children to learn from them.



- Don't put a television in your child's bedroom. This gives you less control over what and how much television he watches. If your child does have a TV in his room, make sure it is closely monitored.
- Try to watch TV or videos together so you can talk about what happens.

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Talking with your baby

Learning to talk is one of the most important and complex skills your child will accomplish. It seems to happen naturally, but in fact you have a very important role to play. The more you talk to your baby, the more you enable her to become a good talker and a confident, happy child.

- Talk about what you're doing throughout the day – when you're bathing or feeding your baby, or changing her nappy.
- Talk about the things you see on the way to the shops, or at the supermarket. Try to talk about the things your child shows an interest in.
- Talk in the language that you know best. It doesn't have to be English.
- Look at your baby as you talk and give him time to respond to your chatter.
- Answer your baby's noises and babbles.
- Cuddle up together and read a favourite book or talk about the pictures.



- Have fun with nursery rhymes and songs, especially those with actions.
- Listen carefully and give your toddler time to finish talking.
- If your toddler says something incorrectly, say it back the right way e.g. "Goggy bited it." "Yes, the dog bit it, didn't he."
- Try to watch TV together so you can talk about what happens.

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Sharing songs and rhymes

Babies love songs and rhymes, especially hearing the sound of your voice. And they're a great way to help your child's talking and listening skills.



- Your voice is your baby's favourite music so sing to her, even if you don't think you sound great. Your baby won't judge you.
- Turn off the TV or radio so your child can hear your voice.
- You don't have to sing 'baby' songs - it can be the latest chart music. If you like the song, your baby will enjoy it too.
- Don't worry if you don't know any nursery rhymes. Sing the songs you do know and visit the library to borrow rhyming books or tapes.
- Look at your baby as you sing or chant and see how he reacts to different parts of the rhyme. Can you see his fingers wriggle?
- When your baby is tired or upset try singing a favourite song, slowly and quietly, to comfort her.
- Young children learn best through play, so make songs and rhymes fun. Change the sound of your voice, make up some actions or add your child's name or the names of family and friends.
- When your baby or toddler joins in, show that you've noticed by giving lots of encouragement.
- Even if your toddler is just beginning to talk, listen to his reaction to the song or rhyme.

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Sharing books with your baby

Sharing books is a wonderful way to help your child learn to talk, and it's the ideal opportunity to share a cuddle at the same time.



- Find a quiet place. Turn off the TV or radio so there are no distractions.
- As well as reading the story, talk about the pictures. If there's a picture of a dog, talk about a dog that you know.
- Give your child time to respond to your chatter.
- Don't put any pressure on your child to name the pictures, but if she copies your words, praise her and say the words again for her.
- Visit your library for different books – it's free to join. Don't worry if books get damaged; libraries understand that this sometimes happens.
- Don't read for too long. Young children get bored quickly so little and often is best.
- Let other grown-ups – grandparents, carers and older brothers and sisters – join in too.
- It's good to share favourite books again and again. Repetition helps children to understand and remember the language they hear.
- Remember, you're not teaching your child to read. You learn to talk a long time before you learn to read, and book sharing is a wonderful way to help your child's language development.

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Playing with your baby

Play is the main way that babies and toddlers learn about the world. With your help, it's also a wonderful way to support their language development.

- As a parent, you are your child's best playmate so try to spend time every day playing together.
- Newborns love physical play, especially when you gently tickle their face or count their fingers and toes.
- When your baby gets a little older and stronger, offer her lots of toys or things that are safe to go into her mouth, and talk about the objects for her.
- Make lots of play sounds to go with what's happening, like "brmm, brmm" as you push a car along. That way, your child will hear different speech sounds and learn that listening to voices is fun.
- Your baby will love hearing the same little rhymes and stories, and playing games like peek-a-boo, over and over again.



- You don't need lots of toys to play – your baby can play with safe, simple things around the house. But toy libraries offer toys on loan for free or a small fee. For your nearest call 020 7255 4604.
- As your baby gets older, don't try to teach him anything during play. He will learn best if he chooses what to play and you follow his lead.

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Talk to your baby in your own language

The best way to help your child learn to talk is to talk to him as much as possible in your own language - it doesn't have to be English. That way, your child will learn to talk confidently, and will be ready to learn English when he starts at nursery or school.

- Talk to your baby in your own language about what you're doing together – when you're bathing or feeding your baby, or changing her nappy.
- Have fun with rhymes, poems and songs in your own language.
- Tell your child stories in your language. Encourage him to join in with the storytelling.
- Try to find books written in your language for your child, or try making your own.
- Encourage your child to play with children who speak the same language as she does.
- Don't laugh or tease your child because of his accent or if he makes mistakes.



- Talk to your child about what she did at playgroup or nursery in your language. If she uses English words repeat what she said using your language. But do not correct her or make her use your language.
- Help your child feel proud of your language. If he speaks more than one language, teach him the names of the languages.

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Talk To Your Baby is an initiative of the National Literacy Trust.
Reference: *Bilingual Children: a guide for parents and carers* (1994), Foufou Savitzky, South Bank University, London

Beginning with sounds

How to play

Tell this story to your child. Stress the *"m"* sound and ask your child to say *"mmmmmm"* when they hear a *"m"* sound. Practice at the beginning – just say *"mmm"* and wait for the *"mmm"* back.

If your child needs an extra clue, rub your tummy when you say *"m"* sounds. This will help your child focus on the sound they should be listening for.

"Munching Monsters



There were four Munching Monsters. Their names were Mike, Milly, Mary and Martin. Between them, they had many munching friends. All the monsters loved munching. They munched on a Monday and every morning and for every mealtime. Their favourite foods to munch are marzipan, margarine were mashed potato. All mixed up together – yuk!"

Learning about sounds in words is an activity that begins the journey towards reading and writing. This game will also help your child to become a better talker.

TIP: You can play this game with any sound. Longer sounds like "s", "f" and "m" are best because you can make them more obvious when you are talking.

OTHER IDEAS:

- Tell a story about a "sizzling sausage" or a "funny farmer" while you are travelling or waiting somewhere.
- Stick pictures of things that begin with the same sound on a page. Write a word beginning with the same letter underneath e.g. "a cute carrot" or "a wet wellie".

Find the colour

How to play Look for things together that match the colours on this page. Name the colours but don't worry if your child doesn't know them yet. You saying the names of the colours will help your child to do the same, when they are ready.



At pre-school, your child will probably be learning colour names. Before they can do this, they will need to be able to match things of the same colour. This game involves plenty of movement and will definitely help with this early skill.

TIP: If your child is learning a new colour name, let them put items of that colour on a table or tray over a few days. All the family can join in!

Games with sounds – things that rhyme


cat


moon


house


hat


spoon


coat


mouse


boat

How to play

Explain that rhyming is when two words sound nearly the same, like *"cat"* and *"hat"* or *"dog"* and *"log"*. Say the words on this page to your child. Help them to point to words that rhyme. Ask *"Do these rhyme – spoon/boat?", "Do these rhyme – mouse/house?"*

Pre-school is a lot about getting ready for school. School will involve learning to read and write. This game starts this journey by helping your child to learn about sounds in words.

TIP: Singing with your child helps teach them about rhymes. Point out the rhyming words in the song or leave off the last word e.g. "Humpty Dumpty sat on the wall, Humpty Dumpty had a great..." When your child puts in the missing word, you can say "That rhymes – wall and fall, they rhyme".

Some children may not be ready for this game yet, so don't force it, but return to the game when they are a bit older. Once your child understands rhyming, you can have fun on journeys making-up words that rhyme with each other – even made-up words work, e.g. donkey, stonkey.

Looking for bears



How to play

Tell your child that you are looking for bears. Let them know that you need to tell someone else where they are hiding. Ask your child to tell you the hiding places, instead of just pointing to the bears. Help by saying, *"Look, the bear's in the tree".*

This game encourages children to give more information and build longer sentences in order to describe where the bears are hiding. The game also helps your child to learn about position words. The first position words are "in", "on" and "under". It will take your child a little longer to learn words like "in front of", "behind" or "next to".

MAKE YOUR OWN VERSION: Close your eyes and ask your child to hide one of their toys somewhere in the room. Open your eyes and ask them to describe where the toy is, without pointing.

Ollie's shopping bag



How to play Make up a story about Ollie going shopping, or use this one. Ask your child to remember what's in Ollie's bag.

"Ollie went to the corner shop. He bought a tin of beans and put it in his bag. Then he bought some cheese and put that in his bag. Next he bought a magazine. Ollie got on the bus and went home. But, oh no, he'd left his shopping bag behind. Can you help Ollie remember what's in his bag?"

This game will help your child to deal with more than one piece of spoken information at a time. At pre-school, the helper might say, *"Wash your hands and then sit at the table"* so children need to remember and act on two pieces of information. It takes time to get good at listening and holding information in your head. Playing *"Ollie's Shopping Bag"* is a great way to build this core skill.

TOO EASY? You can increase the number of objects in Ollie's bag. You can also take turns at being the storyteller and the person who remembers. When your child is telling the story, they are still developing their memory.

TOO HARD? Cut out pictures of items for Ollie's shopping bag. Tell the story and show each picture as you say the name, then turn it over. If needed, use the pictures again to help your child remember. Or make up a story with only one item, then two and so on.

MAKE YOUR OWN VERSION: You can make up a story about almost anything; for instance, a dog going for a walk and seeing different things along the way or a visit to the seaside.

Communication Books





Use family photos, digital pictures of child's favourite food, toys, activities etc to make communication purposeful and meaningful

Visual Timetables:

Help children to understand when certain activities will take place or when an activity has finished



Games used in Therapy:

Lotto



Feely Bags







Posting Games:





Puppets:

