

Inclusive Practice

Under 2's – Early communication



The Early Years Foundation Stage clearly identifies the importance of communication and language in the first two years of a child's life, placing it as one of the three prime areas of learning and development, which “reflect the key skills and capacities all children need to develop and learn effectively” and “are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive”.

If babies are not given models of language and communication from birth, then they are being disadvantaged in all other areas of their learning and development.

TASK 1

Play is crucial for developing children's communication and language skills, as well as supporting their learning and wellbeing.

The National Literacy Trusts offers 10 reasons listed below, for why play is so important.

In pairs, review each point and consider how your current practice aligns. Share examples of how it is evident in your practice and be sure to action plan any areas for improvement.

- Play provides endless opportunities for children to hear and explore the power of their voice, and practice using new and familiar sounds and words.
- Play stimulates cognitive development; it supports language development, enhances problem-solving skills and encourages creativity.
- Play unlocks opportunities for children to practice their home language(s) and encounter new words.
- Play removes barriers, it is inclusive and accessible to all. All forms of communication support play; including facial expression, body language, signing, touch, eye contact and speech.
- Play supports a variety of skills, physical, gross and fine motor, which will also support writing. Active play promotes muscle development, develops imagination, communication skills, and helps coordination and overall health.
- Play enables children to practice, revisit and embed deeper learning through experimentation and repetition.
- Play facilitates natural curiosity, enabling children to make connections, understand what is seen, heard, and experienced in their world.
- Play enables children to develop independence, perseverance and turn taking skills, supporting them to negotiate and build relationships.
- Play provides a safe space for children to explore and learn to manage their feelings, helping them to build resilience and develop empathy towards others.
- Play fosters a love for learning, develops imagination, and helps children grasp concepts in a fun and engaging way.

TASK 2

Watch this short video that discusses the 'Serve and return' strategy: [5 Steps for Brain-Building Serve and Return - YouTube](#)

With a partner, take turns observing one another's interactions with children, and see if you can note some good examples of serving and returning!

Be sure to feed back where there were any missed opportunities and the good examples you observed!

TASK 3

Review the SLC Q cards from the Inclusive Practice section found [here](#). Be sure to focus your attention on the 4 Interaction cards and the 4 Attention and Listening cards, as these are the foundation communication skills that babies and infants will need to first master.

These cards were developed to align with the Leicester's speech, language and communication pathway – more information on the pathway can be found [here](#).

Useful links and resources

<https://www.teachearlyyears.com/under-2s/view/baby-rooms-part-3>

[Supporting babies' early communication skills \(speechandlanguage.org.uk\)](http://speechandlanguage.org.uk)