

Teaching and Learning

Child development - Communication and language



“The development of children’s spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children’s back – and – forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The number and quality of the conversations of the conversations they have with adults and peer throughout the day in a language – rich environment is crucial.”

Development Matters 2021

There are many ways of assessing and supporting children’s communication and language development. Effective practitioners assess what is going on in many ways, and one of the most effective is to observe, and then to respond to what you see and hear – an observation on its own is of no use if it doesn’t make you respond!

Early Years Statutory Framework 2021

TASK 1

Working with a partner, try and decide which age band the milestones below best fit into. Sort them into the following categories:

6 months, one year, 18 months, 2 years, 3 years, 4 years, and 5 years.

Use this document to check your answers: [tct univspeak 0-5 update.pdf](#)
[\(speechandlanguage.org.uk\)](#)

- recognise the names of familiar objects, things like ‘cup’ and ‘bowl’, ‘teddy’ and ‘mummy’
- use longer sentences and link sentences together, E.g. “I had pizza for tea and then I played in the garden”
- make sounds, like cooing, gurgling, and babbling, to themselves and with other people
- understand some simple words and short phrases. These are usually things they hear a lot during the day, such as ‘coat on’, ‘drink’, ‘shoes’, ‘bus’, ‘in your buggy’, ‘dinner time’, ‘all gone’
- use talk to take on different roles in imaginative play, to interact and negotiate with people and to have longer conversations

- understand longer instructions, such as “put on your coat and get your bag” or “where’s mummy’s coat?”
- be asking simple questions such as “what that?”, “who that?”. They might do this quite a lot

Now check your answers using the guidance.

TASK 2

Working with a partner discuss the following observation notes using the Universally Speaking development tool, reflect on the child’s stage of development.

Communication Observations Child observations from 4-week period

Child B is aged 2 years and 10 months.

- “When in the garden, B found a snail on the steps. She turned to another child and said ‘look it’”
- When sharing a story B was asked, ‘where did the teddy go?, she then smiled, pointed to the teddy on the bed and said ‘leepin now’ (sleeping now)”
- During song time, B joined in with the actions and sang familiar words e.g. ‘lap, lap lap, (clap, clap, clap)”

- When told it was time to tidy up ready to go outside, B began putting her trainers in the basket and went to fetch her coat.”
- When asked to wash her hands and sit at the table for snack. B followed instructions correctly.”

Next, consider the following questions:

- Using the Universal Speaking Guidance, what age and stage do you think Child’s B is at?
- Does B understand instructions?
- Does B understand frequently used words such as ‘all gone’, ‘no’ and ‘bye-bye’?
- Does B recognise and point to objects when asked about them?
- Is B able to develop conversations, often jumping from topic to topic?
- Does B use the speech sounds p, b, m, w?
- Does B Understand simple questions about who, what and where? (But generally, not why)
- How do you know? What more might you need to do to unpick this? How can you respond accordingly to support B further? Do you need more information?

TASK 3

Visit [Early Childhood Language Development | Key Strategies \(highspeedtraining.co.uk\)](https://highspeedtraining.co.uk/early-childhood-language-development-key-strategies) which provides 8 key strategies to use to encourage children to develop their communication and language in the early years and reflect on your practice.