



Early Years Communication and Language Parent Meeting



Aims of the meeting



- To recognise the importance of communication and language in the EYFS
- To recognise the ages and stages of development of communication
- To develop an understanding of what good communication looks like and how communication and language can be developed
- To share strategies we using in school and share ideas of how parents can help at home
- To share where to get help and support if you are worried about your children's communication and language development

What is communication?





What is communication?



Click on the picture to watch the video

How is the baby communicating with his dad?

What is the dad doing to support this?

Being able to communicate is not just about talking

It's about...

- Getting your own message across
- Expressing your feelings appropriately
- Being able to listen
- Paying attention
- Interacting and playing with others
- Understanding what is being said



These are all fundamental skills a good communicator needs.

Communication is:

talking, waiting, eye contact, body language/non verbal, turn taking, grammar, speech sounds, listening,... etc



How does language develop?



Click on the picture
to watch the video



What does research say?

Vocabulary size relates to academic success

Such correlations between vocabulary size and life chances are as firm as any correlations in educational research.





What does research say?

- *Studies show that once babies begin to understand words their vocabulary increases quickly*
- *by age 1, children recognise about 50 words*
- *by age 3, children recognise about 1,000 words*
- *by age 5, children recognise about 10,000 words*

Having a large vocabulary helps children learn more. Words allow them to make sense of the world around them.

(DFE)

- *The number of words spoken to their children from birth to 48 months, is a **bigger indicator of achievement in Reading and Maths**, at age 10, than parent education, socio-economic status and race.*

(The achievement gap in reading- Rosalind Horowitz and S Jay Samuels)

This is different to being able to word-read the text. Therefore working with children on **understanding words and how they are used** from an early age is key.

*Vocabulary at around age 5-6, is a key indicator of how a child is likely to perform across the curriculum in later life. We also need to build resilience and curiosity so that children are **interested in language and words**. For this reason, establishing a **positive attitude towards and understanding of word power is really important the early years and beyond.** (Closing the vocabulary Gap- Alex Quigley,*

Screen time

Understanding NHS Guidelines

- **Babies and Toddlers (0-2 years):** No screen time, apart from video calls with family.
- **Preschoolers (2-5 years):** No more than one hour per day.



Why the Limits?

- **Healthy Development:** Children need to "sit less and play more" to grow up healthy.
- **Physical Activity:** Too much screen time can lead to a sedentary lifestyle and reduce time spent being active.
- **Social and Emotional Well-being:** Excessive screen use can hinder social-emotional development and impact sleep.
- **Communication and language:** Children do not get the back and forth interaction they need to develop language from a device.
- **Alternative Activities:** It's important for children to spend time on other activities like reading, playing and being outdoors.

How to Manage Screen Time

- **Use Screens Together:** Share screen time with your child to interact and engage with them.
- **Be a Role Model:** Limit your own screen time to encourage healthy habits in your child.
- **Set Boundaries:** Establish rules for when and where screens are used, such as not during meal times or before bed.
- **Choose Quality Content:** Opt for age-appropriate and interactive content rather than passive viewing.
- **Encourage Other Activities:** Provide plenty of opportunities for active play, creative exploration, and reading.

Screen Time - The boy who played outside



What to expect when?



What to expect in the Early Years
Foundation Stage:
a guide for parents

Click on the image to
access this document



Birth to three: Communication and Language

When I am a bit older...

- I can feel really frustrated when I can't make myself understood.
- I am learning to use words and actions to let you know how I am feeling.
- I am learning to have conversations but I often jump from topic to topic.
- I like to join in with pretend play like 'putting the baby to sleep'.
- I can use the speech sounds p,b,m.
- I can pronounce: l/r/w/y f/th s/sh/ch/dz/j.
- I can pronounce words that have more than one syllable such as 'banana' and 'computer'.
- I might pronounce some words incorrectly. It helps me if you reply to what I say using the right words and sounds. I learn from your positive model, without losing confidence to speak.



Birth to three: Communication and Language

When I am a bit older...

- I like to listen to simple stories. I can understand what is happening, with the help of the pictures.
- I can identify familiar objects when you describe them. I can point to the big boat in a book we're sharing. I can get an apple when you ask me to.
- I can understand longer sentences. I can "Make teddy jump." When you say that as we're playing. When you say: "Find your coat." I can do that.
- I can understand simple questions about 'who', 'what' and 'where' (but generally not 'why').



3 & 4-year-olds: Communication and Language

- I like listening to longer stories and I can remember a lot of what happens.
- If I am really busy in my play, I can find it difficult to switch my attention and listen to what you say to me. It helps me if you use my name and say: "Please stop and listen."
- I can use lots of different words. I like to learn new words.
- It helps me if you explain what new words mean.
- I can understand questions and instructions that are more complicated and have two parts, like: "Please get your coat and wait at the door."
- When you ask me questions about why something happened, I understand, e.g. "Why do you think the caterpillar got so big?"



3 & 4-year-olds: Communication and Language

- I know lots of songs and enjoy singing them.
- I can tell you a long story and talk about my favourite books. I know lots of nursery rhymes.
- I am still learning how to use word endings. I might still make mistakes such as 'runned' for 'ran'. Instead of correcting me, please reply and use the right ending, e.g. "Yes, I saw how fast you ran!"
- I am still learning to pronounce some words. These are sounds that I might still find tricky, e.g. j, th, ch, and sh.



3 & 4-year-olds: Communication and Language

- I can use long sentences of four to six words.
- I can use words and actions to explain my thoughts and ideas. I can give my point of view and disagree.
- I like having long conversations with you and my friends.
- When I am playing I talk to pretend: “Let’s go on a bus... you sit there... I’ll be the driver.”



4 & 5-year-olds: Communication and Language

- I understand how to listen carefully, e.g. I make sure I can see the person who is talking.
- I know why listening is important.
- I am learning lots of new words.
- I am using new words that I have learned. I can ask questions to find out more about something I am interested in.
- I can use clear, well-formed sentences to talk about my ideas.
- I can talk about an idea and make a connection to another idea by using words like: 'and', 'or', 'but', 'because.'



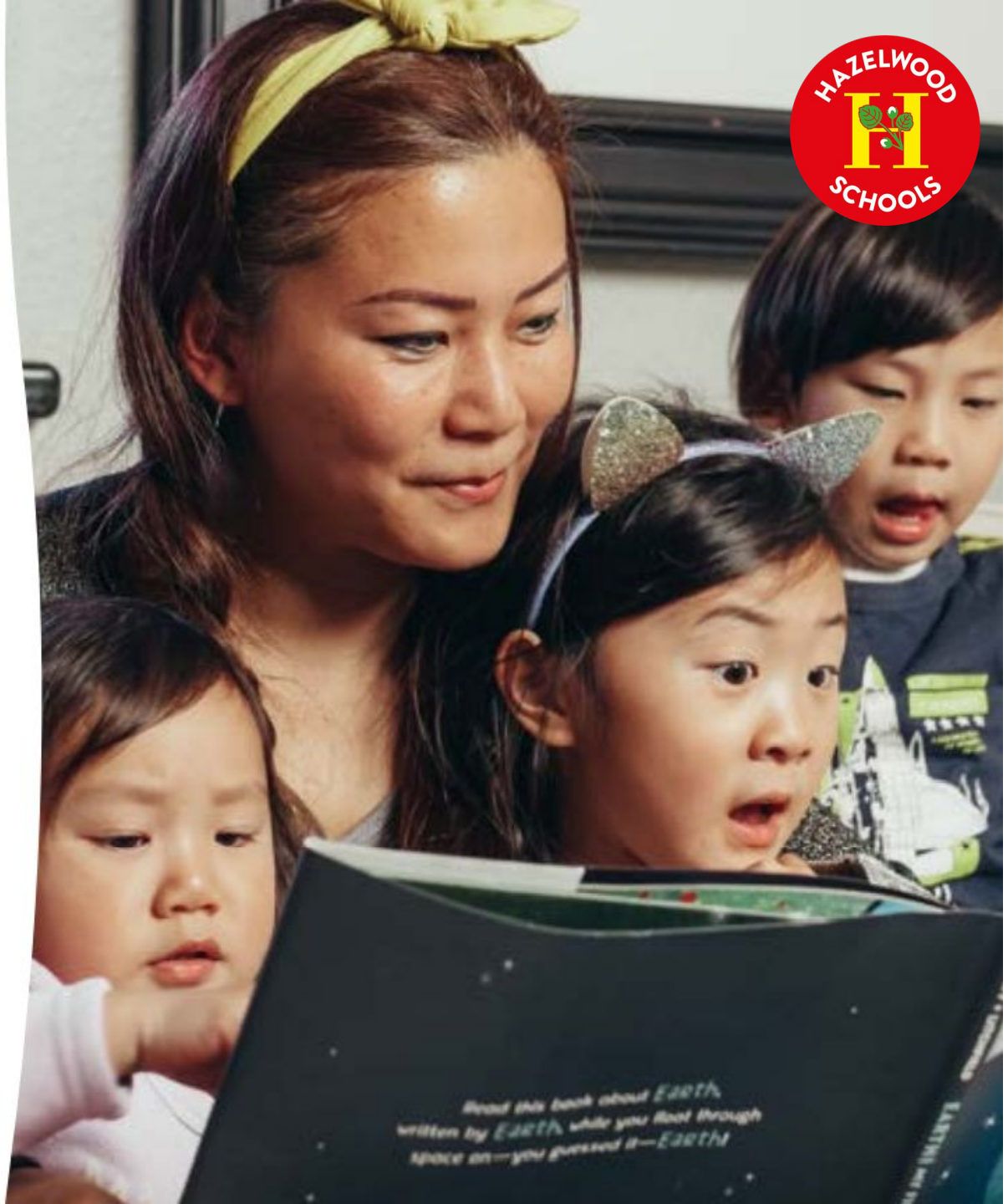
4 & 5-year-olds: Communication and Language

- I can talk about things that I have experienced in detail.
- I can talk about how to solve problems and give explanations about how things work and might happen.
- I can use and respond to social phrases such as when somebody says: “Good morning, how are you?”
- I can retell familiar stories, remember and repeat phrases from these. I can talk about stories in my own words.
- I am using new words that I have learned in lots of different ways.



4 & 5-year-olds: Communication and Language

- I enjoy listening carefully to rhymes and songs and pay attention to the different sounds.
- I enjoy learning rhymes, poems and songs.
- I am interested in using books that give me information, like a book about caring for pets.
- I listen to information books and can talk about what I have learned.
- I enjoy listening and responding to stories at storytime.
- I enjoy listening to stories. I can talk about my favourite and familiar stories.





Communication and Language in the EYFS

Communication and language is one of the three prime areas within the **Early Years Foundation Stage** (EYFS). Each prime area is divided into **early learning goals**, for communication and language these are:

Listening, Attention and Understanding

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Listen attentively and respond to what they hear with relevant questions, comments and actions when being read to and during whole class discussions and small group interactions;
- Make comments about what they have heard and ask questions to clarify their understanding;
- Hold conversation when engaged in back-and-forth exchanges with their teacher and peers.

Speaking

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Participate in small group, class and one-to-one discussions, offering their own ideas, using recently introduced vocabulary;
- Offer explanations for why things might happen, making use of recently introduced vocabulary from stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems when appropriate;
- Express their ideas and feelings about their experiences using full sentences, including use of past, present and future tenses and making use of conjunctions, with modelling and support from their teacher.



Communication and Language Educational Programme

(As set out within the [Early Years Foundation Stage](#) Statutory Framework)

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** they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is **crucial**. By **commenting** on what children are **interested in** or doing, and **echoing back** what they say with **new vocabulary added**, practitioners will build children's language effectively.

Reading frequently to children, and **engaging them actively** in stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems, and then providing them with extensive opportunities to **use and embed new words in a range of contexts**, will give children the opportunity to thrive. Through **conversation, story-telling and role play**, where children **share their ideas with support and modelling** from their teacher, and sensitive questioning that invites them to elaborate, children become **comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structure**

How we support in school?



Supporting children to become better communicators is one of the most powerful things we do as early years educators. **Children who can communicate well can make friends, play, resolve conflicts and tell us how they are feeling.**

- **Building positive relationships** than enable children to develop communication skills. Children thrive on conversation and discussion with people they have a strong relationship with, focused on things they want to talk about.
- **Using visuals** such as visual timetables and visual word banks to support all children - some children need to use the visuals more than others but they support all children's learning and communications
- **Adults really listening to children** - Not rushing talk and taking things slowly
- Introducing children to **new words in meaningful contexts** - instead of saying "let's give out the fruit... say Let's distribute the fruit"
- **Explaining the meaning** of new words using pictures and actions to support
- Provide children lots of opportunities to hear and use new words learnt frequently. **Hearing adults and themselves using the vocabulary.**
- Encouraging children to **speak in full sentences** and **modelling good communication skills**
- Sharing lots of stories with the children - **immersing children in rich language**

How we support in school?



At Hazelwood we use the ShREC approach to interactions:

Sh



Share attention

Be at the child's level. Pay attention to what they are focused on.

R



Respond

Follow the child's lead. Respond to their non-verbal and verbal communications. You could make a brief comment on what they can see, hear or feel.

E



Expand

Repeat what the child says and build on it by adding more words to turn it into a sentence.

C



Conversation

Have extended back and forth interactions. Give children time to listen, process and reply.



Developing Interactions



Click on the picture to watch the video



How can parents support at home?

*“Every seemingly small interaction between a parent and a child is a great opportunity to **fill your child’s world with words**: bath time can be a great time to sing a song together, bus journeys can provide opportunities to talk about what you see around you, and a trip to the library will enable you to choose a book to take home and share together. **Chat, Play and Read.**”*

Jonathan Douglas, Director of the National Literacy Trust





NHS Government Campaign

Get support at Start for Life where you will find ideas and ways you can support your child to [Chat, Play, Read Together](#)

HM Government

NHS

Chat rhymes with cat, hat, and splat. That's so funny, you really make me laugh!

Better Health Start for Life

Chat, play and read together. It sets them up nicely for school.

A campaign poster for 'Chat' featuring a woman and a young boy laughing together. A speech bubble contains the text 'Chat rhymes with cat, hat, and splat. That's so funny, you really make me laugh!'. The poster includes the NHS logo and the 'Better Health Start for Life' logo.

Chat - Every chat you have with your child helps them develop their social skills. Children love it when you chat, play and read with them.

HM Government

NHS

A tent in the living room and a story about a dragon. Who needs a camping trip?

Better Health Start for Life

Chat, play and read together. It sets them up nicely for school.

A campaign poster for 'Play' featuring a man and a young girl looking at a book together. A speech bubble contains the text 'A tent in the living room and a story about a dragon. Who needs a camping trip?'. The poster includes the NHS logo and the 'Better Health Start for Life' logo.

Play - Children's brains are like sponges, soaking up everything around them. And when you play with them, you give their brains a boost.

HM Government

NHS

Wizards, princesses, knights and dragons. This is brilliant!

Better Health Start for Life

Chat, play and read together. It sets them up nicely for school.

A campaign poster for 'Read' featuring a woman and a young girl reading a book together. A speech bubble contains the text 'Wizards, princesses, knights and dragons. This is brilliant!'. The poster includes the NHS logo and the 'Better Health Start for Life' logo.

Read - Reading together is great, and it gives your child's brain a boost, helping them get ready for school.

Strategies for home - Chat!



3 & 4 Year olds (Nursery)

- **Have conversations with me** about things that I am interested in. Encourage me to keep talking by nodding, smiling and making comments.
- **Introduce new words** when we are **playing, eating or when we are out and about.**
- **Explain what new words mean** to me.
- **Talk to me** about things that have already happened (**past tense**) and what might happen soon. (**future tense**)

4 & 5 year olds (Reception)

- **All of the above plus**
- **Talk out aloud, commenting on your actions and mine.** This helps me hear clear, well formed sentences.
- Encourage me to have lots of **back and forth conversations with other children and adults.**



Strategies for home - Play!



3 & 4 Year olds (Nursery)

- Play listening games with me such as ‘Simon Says’.
- Play around with words. Make up fun rhyming sentences with me.
- Role play with me - familiar situations as well as imaginary
- Encourage me to **take turns** and give **shared attention** with you
- Let me help you, cook, tidy up, write birthday cards and shopping lists



4 & 5 year olds (Reception)

- All of the above plus
- Play games with me where I **have to listen to your instructions** such as a treasure hunt, pop up pirates.
- Play games where you give me an instruction like “Can you h-o-p?” I **have to put the sounds of the word together**.
- Encourage me to take **turns** and **give share attention** in a group game

Strategies for home - Read!



3 & 4 Year olds (Nursery)

- Read stories to me **every day**
- Talk about stories with me, what is happening in the pictures?
- Sing nursery rhymes to me and with me
- Give me **time to think** and share my ideas.

4 & 5 year olds (Reception)

- All of the above plus
- Share a wide range of books and stories with me, including non-fiction and poetry.
- Encourage me to read my book to you everyday
- Let me make up stories – you could write them down for me and we could act them out.



Practical ideas for trying at home...



Sensory Bag/Box

What are the benefits of the what's in the sensory bag activity?

- Using descriptive language and talking about how items feel helps **build children's vocabulary**.
- Expanding on what they say encourages them to **use longer sentences**.
- Asking them what they think is in the bag, allows them to **practise the future tense**.
- Asking them how things felt, gives them a chance to **practise the past tense**.
- Letting them guess the item boosts their **thinking and problem-solving skills**.



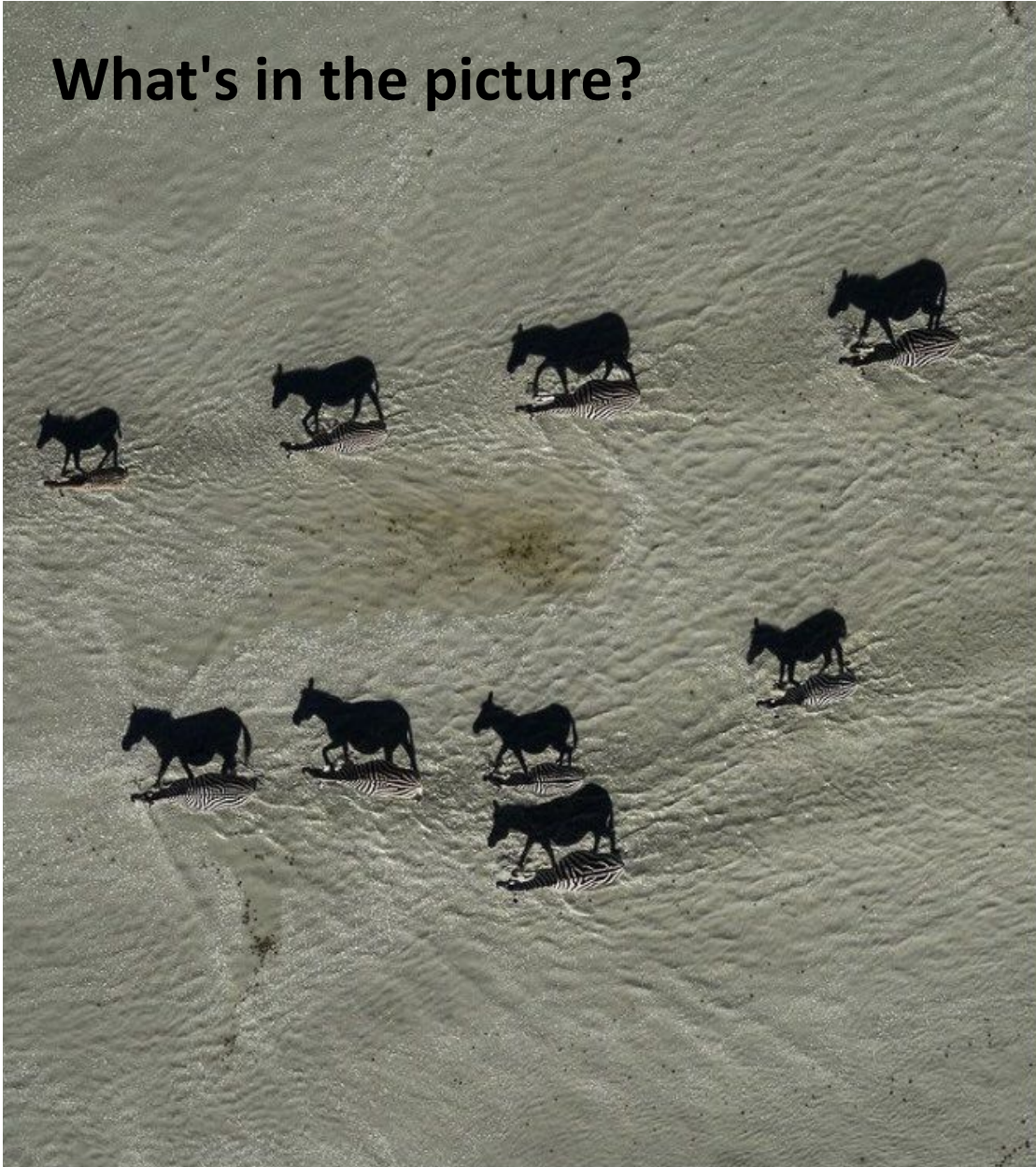
Top tips for using a sensory bag to help language learning

- A sensory bag can be as simple as a **pillowcase or other container** filled with several objects with different textures.
- You may need to introduce the objects first so that your child has seen and touched them and heard what they are called. This will **help them imagine the objects** once you hide them.
- When your child puts their hand in the bag, they will **feel and experience lots of different textures**, which you can talk about together.
- Why not let your child try and guess what's in the bag before taking it out? **Use open questions** (I wonder what it could be? How do you know?) and encourage lots of **descriptive vocabulary**. (it has 4 long legs, it feels very tall. It has a short tail)
- This requires them to use their other senses to identify the object and the word linked to it.
- If they are struggling you **might need to offer choices**. For example, by asking things like, "Is it hard or soft? Is it round or square?"
- Alternatively, you can **bury a few objects in a sandpit or box of shredded paper** to reach in and feel for them.

Practical ideas for trying at home...



What's in the picture?



What are the benefits of the what's in the picture activity?

- Using descriptive language and talking about what they can see **build children's vocabulary**.
- Expanding on what they say encourages them to **use longer sentences**.
- **Using present tense** - what are the animals doing? They are walking...
- **Using imagination and pondering possibilities** - building on what children already know

Top Tips

- Use interesting picture that **spark curiosity**
- You may model describing a picture first
- Listen careful to what you child says, use ShREC
 - **Shared attention** - modeling good listening and down at their level
 - **Respond** - really listen to what they are saying make some comments
 - **Expand** - model correct speech add in new vocabulary
 - **Conversation**- have back and forth exchanges.
- **Use open questions** (I wonder what it could be? How do you know?) and encourage lots of **descriptive vocabulary**. I can see....
- If they are struggling you **might need to offer choices**. For example, by asking things like, "What can you see? I can see some animals... I can see some sand? I wonder where it could be?"

Websites - **Activity Ideas**

[Tiny Happy People](https://www.bbc.com/teleshopping/tinyhappy) is a BBC website designed to help you develop your child's language skills. Explore simple activities and play ideas and find out about babies and toddlers' amazing early development.



English as an additional language (EAL)



Do bilingual children start to speak later than children speaking one language?

Not usually. The evidence shows that all children start to speak around the same time and that young children learn two languages as naturally as learning one.

My child is bilingual will this cause language difficulties?

No – being bilingual alone does not cause language difficulties. What you will notice is that if your child is struggling to learn and use their home language(s), they will also have difficulties learning and using English.

My child is bilingual and mixing up languages. Are they confused?

When children learn two or more languages, they may often use a word existing in one language in the other; especially if they don't know the word in the other language! This is called code-switching. This is the usual way that children use their languages; they literally switch between different languages.

How can I tell if my child has language difficulties?

Your child will be finding it difficult to understand and speak their home language. They may find it harder to understand instructions and may not say as much as other children the same age.

Further Support and ideas - Time together



Parents and children chatting together, singing songs and sharing books in their home language is a fantastic way to support children's development.

The [Time Together](#) booklet is a colourful and easy-to-read guide that is full of suggestions for how parents can support their young child's learning at home. It has been translated into **22 different languages** to support the multilingual families in our community.

Help - Speech and Language Concerns

If you have concerns about your child's communication and language development please speak to your child's class teacher.

Nursery aged children - Parents can contact Early years Speech and Language service (You child's class teacher may have suggested you do this)



Early Years Speech & Language Service



Are you worried about your child's talking?

Would you like to discuss this with someone?

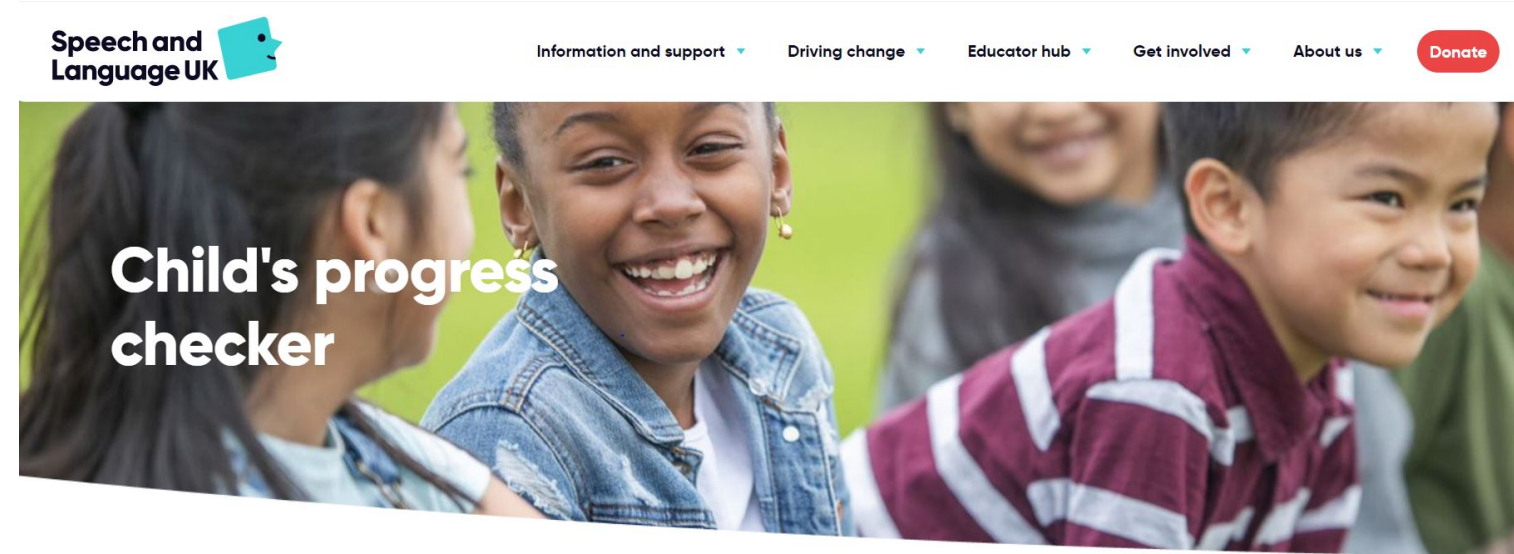
Please call us on **020 8702 5226** – we have a range of options we can offer you



IF YOU DO NOT SPEAK ENGLISH PLEASE ASK SOMEONE TO CALL FOR YOU AND BRING SOMEONE WITH YOU TO HELP.



Help - Speech and Language UK



Home > Talking Point > Child's progress checker

Free resources and services can help with understanding what to look out for, how to get support and even some simple ways you can help your child at home.

Speech and Language advice and guidance to families: [Speech and Language UK: Information and support](#)



Help - Best Start in life

Learning conversations and telling stories: 3 to 5 years -

<https://www.nhs.uk/best-start-in-life/toddler/learning-to-talk/learning-conversations-and-telling-stories-3-to-5-years/>

Your child will start using longer sentences, like "I want a drink now". Chatting with them and talking about what they're doing can really help them to learn new words and how to have conversations.

Chat about your day together and help your child learn by sharing your day too!



Help - Henry programme



Calling all families with children aged 0-5.

Are you a parent/carer living in Enfield with children aged 0-5? If yes, come and join a free HENRY programme that aims to support you and your child's health and wellbeing.

Programmes are designed to support parents and carers of children aged 0-5, helping them build healthier lifestyles and more confident parenting habits.

- ✓ **Parenting Confidence** – Feel more confident in your parenting journey.
- ✓ **Nutrition & Healthy Eating** – Learn about portion sizes, mealtime routines, and nutritious meals for young children.
- ✓ **Physical Activity & Play** – Discover fun ways to be active together as a family.
- ✓ **Emotional Well-being** – Understand the connection between emotional health and family life.
- ✓ **Healthy Routines & Boundaries** – Reduce mealtime stress, screen time battles, and bedtime struggles.

To book on or for more information please contact HENRY@enfield.gov.uk

<https://www.henry.org.uk/for-families/services/healthy-families-right-from-the-start-programme>

Help - Eric



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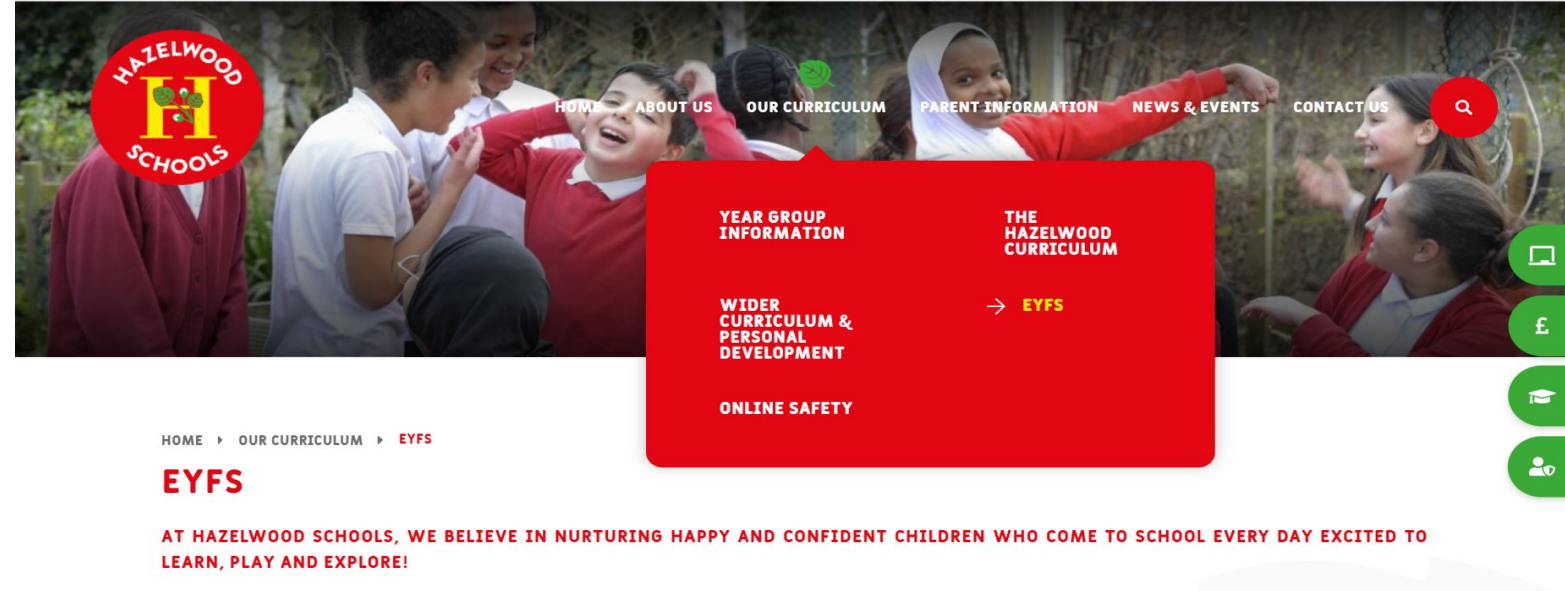
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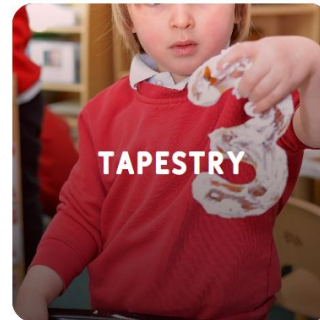
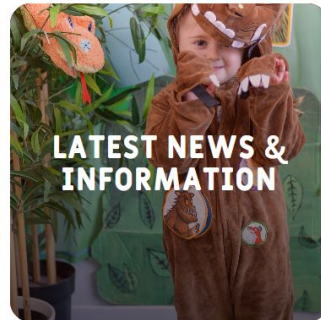
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Help - Our Website

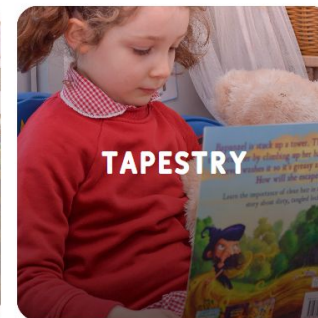
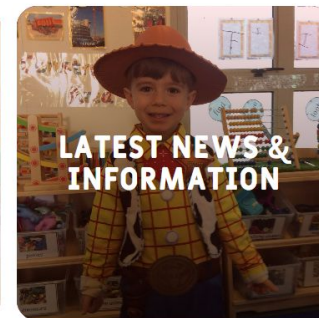


Click here to find out more about the [EYFS](#)



Click here to visit our [Nursery](#) Year Group page

Click here to visit our [Reception](#) Year Group page



Thank you! Any Questions?

