



Reading Communication Friendly Setting Reflection Tool

“A communication friendly environment should make communication as easy, effective and enjoyable as possible” (ICAN)

Early years practitioners in Reading were asked to share their tips for creating a communication friendly environment which supports the **learning and development** of all children’s speech, language, and communication. Their responses are collated below and can be used as reflection points for early years settings.

A Unique Child	Positive Relationships	Enabling environment
<p>All Practitioners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Understand the development patterns of speech, language and communication and the different rates in which children learn. ✓ Know that the development of spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. ✓ Have opportunities to train, learn and develop their knowledge in relation to communication and language. ✓ Find out children’s communication starting points during initial visits. ✓ Identify when children may need different or additional support. ✓ Adapt their approach in response to the need of the individual child. ✓ Know when children speak language(s) other than English. ✓ Use a few key words in a child’s first language and celebrate multilingualism in the setting. ✓ Encourage families to use their own language at home for cultural and linguistic reasons. ✓ Ensure the routine enables children to have long periods of uninterrupted play with lots of time for conversations and to react to spontaneous events i.e. snowfall and visitors. ✓ Provide short instructions supported by visuals and real objects to help children understand what to expect and when. ✓ Maximise opportunities to encourage communication within the routine i.e. nappy changing and mealtimes. 	<p>Practitioners Prioritise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Developing relationships with children and the whole family. ✓ Providing accessible advice to families to support the learning and development of children’s speech, language, and communication in the home environment. ✓ Engaging with children on their level using eye contact and the child’s name to focus attention. ✓ Responding warmly to children, providing them with their full attention and demonstrating a genuine interest. ✓ Speaking sensitively to shy or unsettled children offering reassurance and use transition items to support when necessary. ✓ Tuning in to any nonverbal and verbal communication. ✓ Using simple language which is inclusive, repetitive, exaggerated in tone supported with gestures and signs. ✓ Processing time, ensuring that children have lots of time to respond. ✓ Conversation turn-taking and active participation. ✓ Providing positive commentary and introducing new vocabulary to build on children’s existing language. ✓ Modelling language with enthusiasm and animation. ✓ Sharing stories and songs throughout the session. ✓ Talking to children about their interests, photos and memories encouraging them recall and retell. ✓ Skilful open-ended questions to help children to extend their thoughts and vocabulary i.e. I wonder... and can you tell me...? 	<p>Practitioners Ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Lots of natural light with few visual distractions. ✓ Displays are purposeful, low level, interactive and encourage communication. ✓ Plenty of soft furnishings to improve indoor acoustics. ✓ The layout is organised, any equipment in boxes are clearly labelled with pictures or symbols. ✓ There are predictable resources where children can repeat and build on ideas and language over time. ✓ All background sounds are for a purpose only. ✓ Access to quiet and cosy communication spaces i.e. dens and tunnels. ✓ Face to face play opportunities. ✓ Resources reflect and support the current interests of the group. ✓ Opportunities for group activities with a similar goal which promote communication and teamwork. ✓ A good selection of high-quality books which represent the interests, culture and diversity of the children. ✓ Opportunities to engage in pretend play on a small and large scale inside and out. ✓ A wide range of new vocabulary is introduced using real items and first-hand experiences. ✓ There are photographs/symbols to support actions i.e. washing hands and pouring a drink. ✓ Opportunities for open ended play and endless communication possibilities i.e. loose parts and dress up. ✓ Access to treasure baskets, authentic resources, and sensory experiences.

Notes

Useful resources

BFFC EY and SEND Training and Network Programme - [BFFC-CPD-Programme-2022-2023-.pdf \(brighterfuturesforchildren.org\)](#)

BFFC Early Years SEND Strategies - [Under 5s with SEND - Brighter Futures For Children](#)

Speech, Language and Communication Framework - [The Speech, Language and Communication Framework \(SLCF\) - SLCF - The Communication Trust \(slcframework.org.uk\)](#)

Supporting children learning English as an additional Language - [supporting-children-learning-english-as-an-additional-language.pdf \(ican.org.uk\)](#)

Vocabulary learning for Early Years - [Vocabulary for Early Years Practitioners August 2016 \(ican.org.uk\)](#)

Scaffolding Language - [Using scaffolding to help children's language \(ican.org.uk\)](#)