



Activities for home

Remember: Activities don't have to break the bank! There are so many resources that could be used to develop children's early language skills that you may already own, be able to source at a low cost e.g., charity shops, or be able to find in your local environment, for example: natural resources like pinecones, conkers, and leaves.

➡ There are so many activities that you can do at home to promote children's communication and language skills. Following children's interests in play is a well-known strategy to boost engagement levels and increase children's attention span. When planning activities to do at home always think about what your child's recent interest is. For example: Trains, dolls, role play, dress up.

➡ **Child interest ideas:** Role play with pans, spoons, bowls etc / Small world play with cars, trains, action figures / Dress up with costumes, homemade masks, items from your wardrobe.

These activities will allow your child to use their interests whilst engaging in imaginative play. They may use new language, make up scenarios, or use object names in play. Model this language to them as they play, follow their lead and be careful not to ask too many questions. In pretend play it is often more beneficial for children to hear an adult's running commentary rather than be asked questions on what they are doing, for example, "you're cooking with the pan", "that's a fast car".

➡ **Phonics activities for letter recognition and pronunciation:**

-Going on a listening walk (At the park, up the street, to the shops etc) These listening walks will help children to distinguish between sounds and develop better listening skills.

-Drumming on different items, inside and outside, and comparing the sounds. Drumming against the floor, the wall, an outdoor fence, a slide etc will all make different sounds for children to learn and describe; some sounds might be loud, quiet, high pitched, long sounds, short sounds. You can drum with your hands, a wooden spoon, a stick etc!

-Making instruments. Instruments can be made at home using empty drinks bottles and filling them with rice, pasta, lentils, pebbles, cotton wool etc! There are so many different sounds that can be made from using different materials inside the instrument bottles.

-Sing action songs. This is a great way for children to relate a sound to an action.

-Read rhyming books. Rhyming books will support children in learning how to rhyme. Rhyming is important as it helps them to understand word and sentence structures before learning how to read.

-I-spy! I-spy is a great phonics game. You can use it for rhyming, alliteration, learning letter sounds, colours, shapes etc.

➡ **'What's in the box?' games:**

Place items inside an empty box and encourage children to use words to describe the texture of what they can feel. Model this language to them if they are unsure or don't know the words e.g., sticky, slimy, wet, soft. You can use any items you like, for example, rice, spaghetti, jelly, toy cars etc.



PEOPLE



PROMOTE



PROTECT



PROVIDE



PARTNERSHIP

Delivering good health
and prevention services
Public Health in Leicestershire



➡ Reading stories:

Ensure these are age appropriate and not too long, as young children struggle to sit through long stories and may lose interest. Reading stories and looking at books with children will develop their communication and language skills, specifically their speaking skills, listening skills, and attention skills. When reading with children change the tone of your voice, use character voices and even props to maintain their attention and make it more fun. Children may often want you to read the same book each time or repeat the words on the same page – this is all part of learning and may seem very repetitive but often this is how they learn best.

➡ Make a song bag:

Song bags can help children to develop their speech and ability to follow a beat and copy actions. You can use song bags with children at any time of the day e.g. before bed or after dinner. Using actions alongside singing will help to promote children's verbal and non-verbal communication skills.

➡ Other resources that may help to develop children's communication and language skills include:

- Musical instruments
- Puzzles
- Colouring/painting/chalking
- Balls and ball games
- Pretend play
- Messy play
- Toy phones or old unused phones
- Cars and transport toys
- Action figures/dolls
- Teddies or soft toys
- Mirrors or mirror toys
- TV/tablet time (Be mindful of internet safety and to limit screen time) there are many beneficial apps and programmes to develop early language skills such as cocomelon, Mr Tumble something special, alphablocks etc.

➡ Treasure baskets:

Creating simple treasure baskets for children can be a great way of developing early language. These baskets should contain a mixture of texture and visually different objects such as sponges, rough fabric, shiny objects, tin foil, hairbrushes etc. Model language to children as they explore each object and comment on the objects that they show interest in. This way children can relate the language to the objects e.g., a spiky hairbrush, a shiny ball etc.

➡ Natural play ideas: Leaf printing / conker counting / pinecone decorating.

These activities can promote language skills through modelling colour names, talking about textures, naming new objects, having conversations about where the resources were found.