

Speaks clearly in home language and is easily understood by adults

The early years are a crucial time for speech, language, and communication development. These skills help children express their needs, build relationships, develop confidence, and access learning. For children who speak more than one language, it is important to consider their communication skills in their home language as well as in English. Practitioners should work closely with parents and carers to understand the child's communication skills in their home language and ensure support builds on their strengths.

Practitioners can support children by:

- Gathering information from parents about the child's communication skills in their home language.
- Building on the child's existing language skills and valuing their home language within the setting.
- Using real objects, visual supports and gestures to help make connections between languages.
- Providing rich opportunities for communication throughout the day during play and everyday routines.
- Offering small-group activities to encourage interaction with peers.
- Creating a language-rich Total Communication environment.
- Introducing new vocabulary through meaningful play and real-life experiences.
- Repeating and modelling key words and phrases.
- Using clear, simple language alongside gestures and demonstrations.
- Allowing sufficient processing time for the child to understand and respond.
- Working in partnership with parents to share strategies that support communication at home and in the setting.
- Considering a referral to Speech and Language Therapy where appropriate.

Activities, Ideas, Resources and Strategies:

- Invite family members to share songs, stories, and cultural experiences with the setting
- Share stories, rhymes, and songs regularly, including those in children's home languages and from a range of cultures
- Provide role-play opportunities that reflect children's cultural backgrounds and experiences
- Create 'All About Me' books that include photographs, key words, and phrases in the child's home language
- Use collaborative games and activities that encourage communication, turn-taking, and interaction with peers
- Label areas, resources, and displays using both English and children's home languages where possible
- Use dual-language books and visual resources to support understanding and language development

Remember: Children learning more than one language benefit from continuing to develop their home language alongside English. Strengthening a child's home language supports their overall language and communication development.