

# Communication Week

## Day 1: Let your child take the lead

Children tend to play for longer periods and allow you to stay close when you show interest in their activities. To enhance this connection, sit on the floor with them. Being at the same physical level helps your child notice you, listen better and makes it easier to share activities

- 1** Wait and observe.  
Notice what captures  
your child's interest.



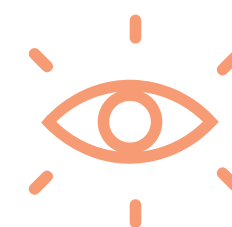
- 2** Narrate and comment on  
your child's play without  
trying to direct.



- 3** Echo your child's  
gestures, sounds and  
phrases by copying them.



- 4** Observe how your child  
communicates. Focus on  
useful words like 'more,'  
'stop,' 'finished' and 'like.'



- 5** Repeat useful words  
frequently so your child  
hears them and becomes  
familiar with them.



- 7** Be patient. Allow your  
child time to absorb  
what you have said and  
for them to respond.



- 6** Engage your child by  
imitating them. For  
example, if they push a  
truck, grab another truck  
and push it alongside  
them, mirroring their play.



For more information:

[www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/education-and-learning/educational-psychology-service-eps](http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/education-and-learning/educational-psychology-service-eps)

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## Day 2: Be your child's mirror

Imitation is a fundamental aspect of language development, helping your child develop their communication skills, navigate social interactions and build relationships. Mirroring your child encourages them to accept others playing alongside them or joining in their activities.

Position yourself at your child's level but allow them their personal space.

Mirror your child's sounds, facial expressions, body language and gestures.

Enjoy spending time together!

Have some of the same toys as your child so you can copy what they do.



Avoid imitating unwanted or negative behaviours such as hitting or throwing toys.

When your child looks at you, smile to show that you enjoy spending time together.

If your child is enjoying their current activity, avoid encouraging them to do something new or different. Allow your child space and time to develop their play without feeling you need to direct this.

Avoid using your child's name or saying 'look' to get their attention: this can be overstimulating or overwhelming.

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## Day 3: Developing joint attention

Joint attention involves focusing on the same object or activity as someone else. This is a crucial skill for children to learn so that they can connect the words they hear with what they see, building their vocabulary and enhancing language comprehension.

Try this activity to help develop your child's joint attention skills:

- 1** Collect interesting 'cause and effect' toys or items (e.g. toys that light up or make a noise when a button is pressed) and put them in a box.
- 2** Get down to your child's level for some 1:1 time. Get one thing out of the box and play with it.
- 3** Use facial expressions and talk about the toy, keeping your child engaged.
- 4** Hold onto the toy so your child learns to focus on both you and the toy.
- 5** Replace the toy and take a different one out of the box.
- 6** Repeat this activity each day for 2 minutes to start with and gradually increase the duration over time.



For more information:

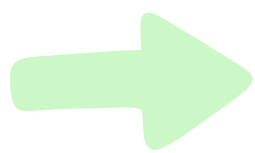
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# Communication Week

## Day 4: Object cues

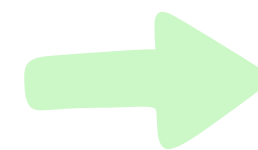
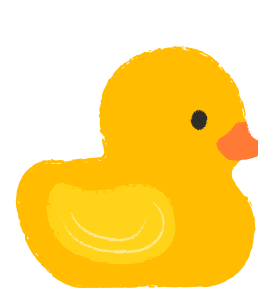
Object cues are items used to represent something else, helping your child understand transitions between activities. For example, showing a nappy to indicate it's time for a nappy change, or a rubber duck to signal bath time. These cues help your child associate words with objects and activities.

- 1** Identify activities you do with your child and find objects that represent these activities.

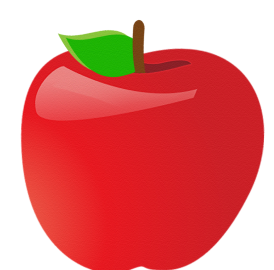
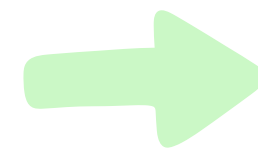
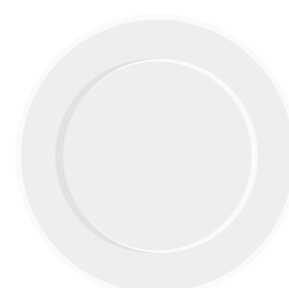


**2**

- Keep the objects handy and use the same object for the same associated activity each time.

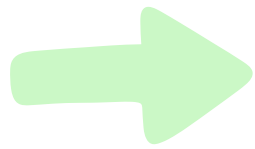


- 3** Say the name of the activity (not the object), for example when showing a plate, say 'snack time.'

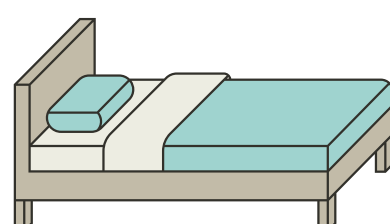
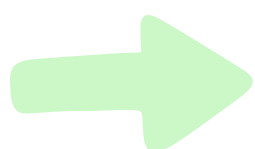
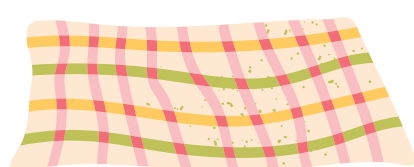


**4**

- Hold up the object before the activity.



- 5** Use these object cues when needed throughout the day.



**6**

- Don't get discouraged if it seems that your child isn't noticing or responding. Keep using the object cues consistently.



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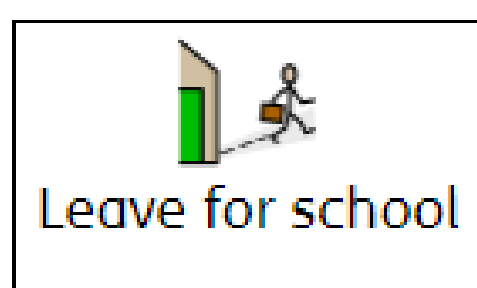
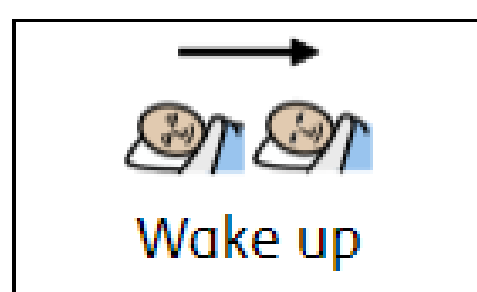
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## Day 5: Linear Visual Schedules

Sequential visual schedules are often used in schools to help children understand what to expect during the day. They are also helpful at home as they provide a visual order of tasks and activities for children who are developing their ability to follow verbal instructions.

Create a visual schedule for your child using picture cards.

### Example of morning routine schedule:



Identify daily activities, such as waking up, TV time, mealtimes, playtimes and going to bed.

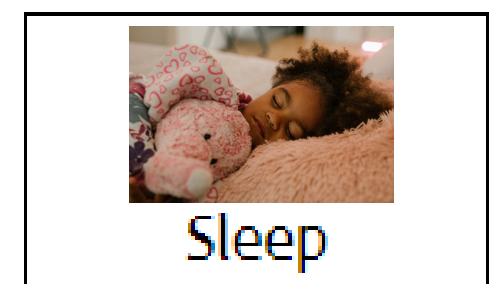
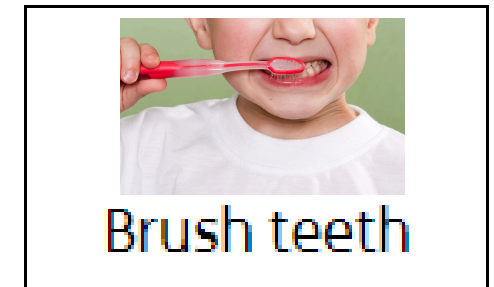
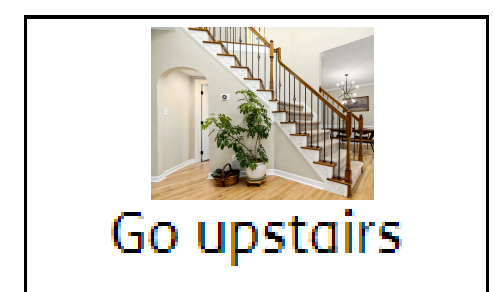
Find or create images that represent these activities. They can be drawings, photos or pictures.

Arrange the images in the order of your child's daily routine, adding simple word labels to help your child connect words with the images.

Make the schedule interactive and engaging. Encourage your child to look at what is next on the schedule and move the completed items to a 'finished box'.

Display the schedule somewhere your child can see and reach, such as on the fridge.

### Example of bedtime routine schedule:



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