

# LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION



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# Session Content



- **What is communication, what does it involve and what happens when it breaks down.**
- **Why is language and communication important?**
- **What is needed for successful communication?**
- **Typical language and communication development from 0-5 years of age**
- **Language development pyramid**
- **When to be concerned**
- **Top tips for talking**



# What does communication involve?



# Straws Game



**A practical activity to encourage you to think about what is involved in communication and how communication can break down.**

- Split into groups of three
  - One person to be the observer
  - One person to be the giver of information (speaker)
  - One person to be the receiver of information (listener)
- The speaker and listener sit back to back. The observer should position themselves so that they can see the speaker and the listener.
- The speaker will be given a card with a layout of straws on it. The listener will have the corresponding straws.
- The speaker will tell the listener how to position the straws so that they look like the layout on the card.
- The listener cannot say anything apart from “ah ha” and “can you say that again please”



# Straws Game

## Feedback

### **Participants –**

How did you communicate?

What was missing/needed?

How did it feel, was it frustrating, if so, Why?

### **Observer –**

Was the task successful, if not why not

Did you observe any particular difficulties



# Why is communication so important?



Communication is key and fundamental to learning and social interaction. Communication underpins everything that we do.

## The importance for children

Communication helps children to develop friendships, learn and enjoy life. Language and communication are essential for learning, as learning depends on understanding what someone says, thinking and responding. All these skills need language.



# Why is communication so important?

## Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

The EYFS has 3 prime areas of learning and development. Communication and language is one of them!

Prime areas are seen as being the most essential for a child's healthy development and future learning.

There are 3 elements to communication and language

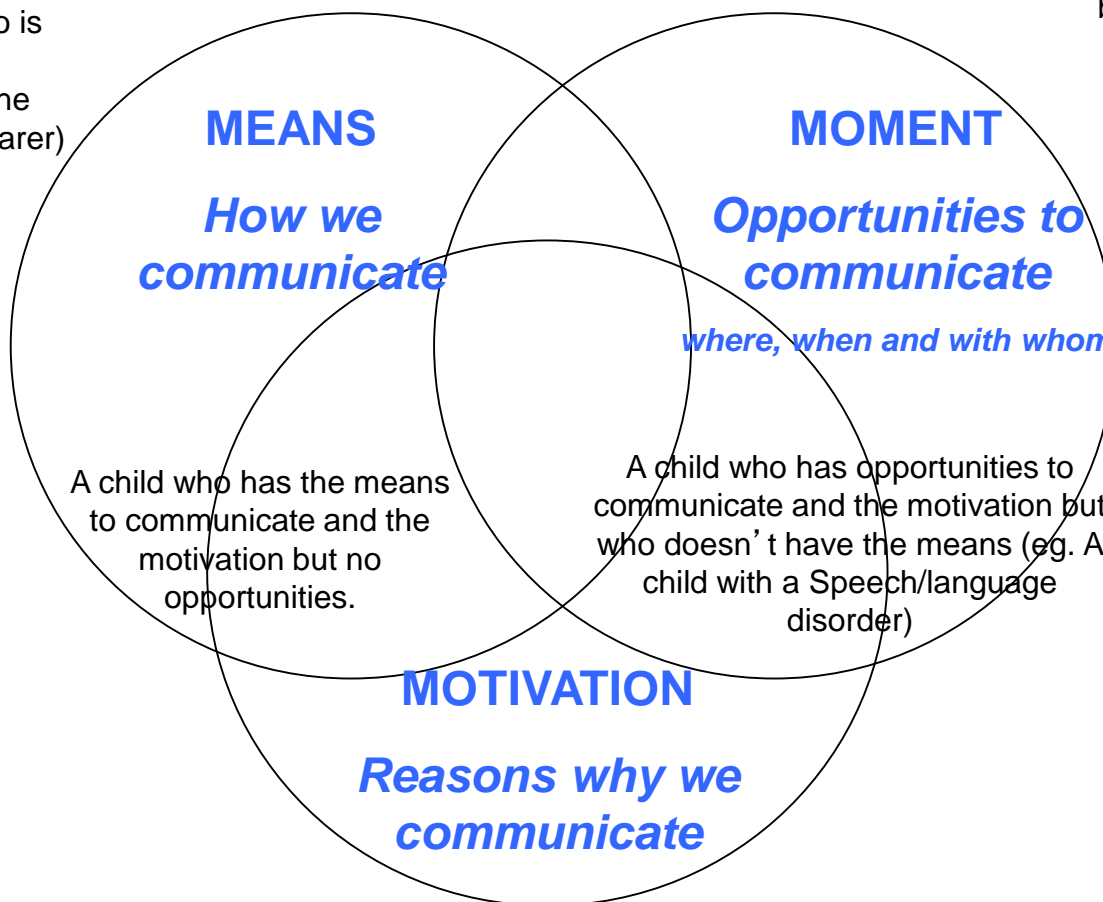
- **Listening and attention:** developing a child's ability to listen to others, focus attention and develop concentration.
- **Understanding:** A child needs to understand what is said to them, understand words/use of objects, follow instructions and respond to questions.
- **Speaking:** this is a child's ability to express themselves effectively, hold a conversation, ask questions, re-tell events and stories.



# What is needed for successful communication

A child who has the language skills but who is not given opportunities to communicate and who is not motivated to communicate (e.g. The child with a distracted carer)

A child who has lots of opportunities to communicate but who does not have the language skills or motivation to communicate



A child who wants to communicate but cannot and who doesn't have opportunities to communicate.





# How do children learn to communicate?



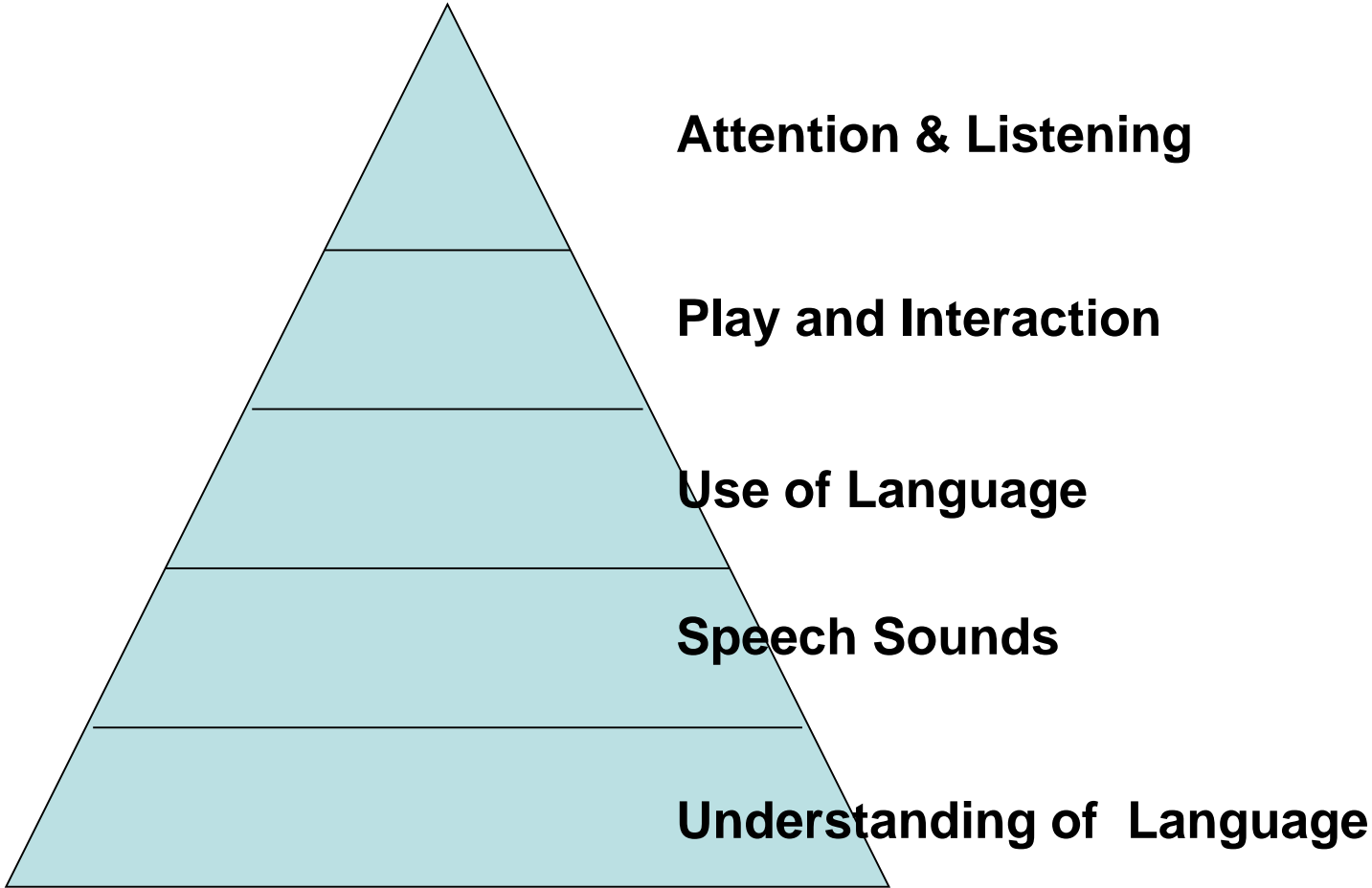
**Lets look at typical language/communication development (0-5 years)**

***Chatter Matters DVD- How children learn to talk***

***Any thoughts.....?***



# The Language Development Pyramid





# Attention and listening



Attention and listening forms the foundation for language; children cannot understand what they hear until they are able to attend and listen. Attention and listening develops in stages-Don't expect too much too soon! Starts with a child's attention being very single channelled at 12 months old to being two channelled at age 4 years old.

## Implications

A child who has difficulties listening and concentrating may have difficulty;

- Sitting still and focusing on a task. Easily distracted.
- Attending to the person talking, can appear to ignore the person talking.
- Remembering what they have been told; may rely on peers and copy actions.
  - Switch off during language activities.
  - Following instructions.
- May appear naughty; appear not to comply because they have not listened or understood. but may not listen or understand.



# Play and Interaction



Play forms the base for all of a child's learning, children learn through play. Play builds a child's confidence as they learn to explore, think about problems and relate to others. Through play children learn to look, listen, touch, smell, taste, copy, imagine and pretend. Children learn by leading their own play and taking part in play guided by adults. Language plays an important part in forming and maintaining relationships and relating to the world.

## Implications

A child who has difficulty playing and interacting may have difficulty;

- understanding the rules of conversation e.g.. turn taking, eye contact, topic maintenance.
- initiating play or interactions
- engaging in imaginative play or play with others.



# Understanding of Language (Receptive language)

Understanding underpins language development therefore children are likely to have difficulty in other language areas e.g. Use of language. Children have to learn words before they can use them to talk. By six years old a child should understand approximately 14,000 words!

## Implications

A child who has difficulty understanding language may have difficulty;

- Understanding words, sentences, questions or instructions (especially when there are no clues available e.g. pictures or gestures).
- Understanding changes to the routine even if explained.
- Starting and finishing tasks
- Processing verbal information and require extra time to respond.
- Giving appropriate responses; responses may be 'off topic' or they may look blank or confused.
- Listening and attending.



# Understanding Questions



Children have to learn to understand 4 different levels of questions and directions

<b>Level 1</b>	<b>Naming things</b>	
<b>Level 2</b>	<b>Describing/ listening to information &amp; answering who, what and where questions</b>	What is the cat doing? What colour is the cat Where is the cat? Where was kitty sleeping
<b>Level 3</b>	<b>Talking about stories and events</b>	What happened in the story? What did the boy say? What will happen next? How is the boy feeling?
<b>Level 4</b>	<b>Solving Problems- all Why questions</b>	Why did the cat chase the mouse? How will daddy get the boy dry? What else could daddy do?



# Understanding Questions



- **60% of 3 year olds understand level 1 and 2 questions**
- **60% of 5 year old understand level 3 and 4 questions**

So bear this in mind the next time you ask your child a question. It will help your child to understand and feel confident if 80% of questions are at their level.



# Use of Language (Expressive language)

Use of language is how a child is able to express themselves. It refers to the type of words and sentences a child produces.

## Implications

A child who has difficulty using language may have difficulty;

- Expressing their wants, needs, feelings, ideas and thoughts.
- Learning words or accessing them so presents with a limited vocabulary or knows lots of words but has difficulty finding the word they want to say.
- Building sentences and using grammar; sentences may be muddled or they miss out the 'little' words
  - Use strings of non words referred to as 'jargon'
  - Talking fluently; may sound slow and hesitant.
- They may appear to 'give up' with talking or resort to physical means.





# Speech Sounds



Speaking clearly is the icing on the cake. If a child finds the other areas of language difficult they may not be ready to work on their speech. Unclear speech can be very frustrating for children and adults. Some speech sound substitutions are part of typical speech development. By 4 a child should be understood most of the time.

## Implications

A child who has difficulty with speech may;

- Use a limited range of sounds or substitute some sounds for others e.g.. “Tat” for cat.
- Be or may not be unintelligible. May be more intelligible to familiar people than unfamiliar people.
- Resort to using non verbal means to communicate.
  - Withdraw from talking.



# Speech Sounds

Age	Sounds probably used	Sounds probably not used
1 ½ - 2 years	m, n p, b, t, d sounds	Your child may not use sounds at the ends of words
2 ½ – 3 years	m, n P, b, t, d f, s w, y, h	Long sounds f, s, v, sh, ch may not have developed so 'bis' or 'bid' for fish or 'dun' for sun. May not use k or g so will say 'dar' for car.
3-4 years	m, n P, b, t, d, k, g f, v, s prehaps sh w, y, h prehaps l	Blends may not have developed so 'poon' for spoon, 'bue' for blue.
4-5 years	m, n P, b, t, d, k, g f, s, v, sh, ch, j w, y, h, l Blends emerging sp, st, bl, cr	Children do not learn to use 'th' or 'r' until 6 years old and typically may adults do not say these correctly so rarely worked on.



# Remember:



Children with SLCN are likely  
to experience difficulties in  
**ALL** areas of the  
Curriculum



# How you can help



**Lets look at some top tips for helping your child's speech, language and communication development**

***Chatter Matters DVD- Top Tips***

***Any thoughts.....***



## Other ways of helping



- Pre-teaching vocabulary- What vocabulary do children need to understand and use in order to participate?
  - Auditory bombardment
  - Vary context
  - Scrap books
  - Home-school activities/projects
  - GAMES....
  - Word webs
- Narrative- asking who, where, when, what happened questions using visuals.
- Making questions visual using mind maps



**Thank you for listening  
and participating today**

***Please stay and have a  
chat if you have any  
further questions***