

Supporting Your 4 - 5 Year Old Child in

Communication and Language

Parent Advice Booklet

What Is This Guide?

What do we mean by communication and language? In the Early Years Foundation Stage framework (known as EYFS), there are some expectations laid out for how children generally develop in the ways they communicate. This guide can help you understand what that development might look like for your child and how you can help support their learning at home.

This guide breaks down the EYFS framework into simple sections and statements, providing you with explanations of what communication and language might look like for your child at this stage of their learning. Each area has ideas for supporting your child with fun and engaging activities, whether your child is beginning to communicate with a wider range of vocabulary or they are new to the English language.

Rather than a list of must-do activities, you can dip in and out of these prompts and ideas based on your child's current interests and appropriate stage of development.

You can visit the **parent section** of the Twinkl site for even more resources to support your child in communication and language, as well as all other areas of learning. Either search for keywords used in this guide or explore more in the early years section.



In the early years framework, communication and language is split into three aspects: listening and attention, understanding and speaking.



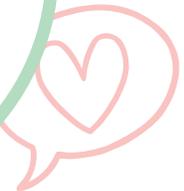
Within school, children will be observed during play and everyday activities; they are then assessed against statements within the communication and language framework. Depending on where they currently are within their development, they will then be given support or challenged to help them strengthen their communication skills further.



The key to understanding how your child is progressing within communication and language is to observe them during day to day homelife. Every child is different and the ways that they communicate can be varied. By understanding your child's current level of communication skills and what their current interests are, you should then be able to provide them with experiences to develop these skills further.



Read this guide for practical ideas and advice on how you can further support your child at home within the different aspects of communication and language.



Listening and Attention

As your child develops, so will their listening and attention skills. At school, they will be required to spend longer lengths of time listening and attending to what others say. They may also have regular contact with a wider range of different children in their class and therefore need to adapt their listening skills for different situations and people. As their attention span increases, you may notice that they are able to be engaged in an activity for a longer period of time and can listen and respond to others whilst doing so.

At 4 - 5 years old, your child may be working towards...

To support this, you could...

maintaining their attention, concentrating and sitting quietly during an appropriate activity.

provide your child with opportunities to play alone in a quiet space at length; painting, puzzles and role play are great examples of engaging activities during which your child may show increased attention.

having two-channelled attention, in which they can listen while doing something else for a short span.

ask your child a question like 'What would you like for dinner?' or 'Who did you play with today?' whilst they are engaged in an activity to see if they can listen and do simultaneously.

listening attentively in a range of situations.

observe your child in different settings and with different people. Are they able to listen and maintain attention during these periods?

listening to stories and accurately anticipating key events.

provide your child with plenty of opportunities to comment or question during reading or story time. You could also prompt them by asking 'What do you think might happen next?'

Listening and Attention

How is your child progressing with their listening and attention?

Listen and Colour Three Key Words

Instructions

1. Colour Teddy's nose red.

ink saving Eco

Listen and Colour Worksheet

Instruction sheet

1. Colour the star blue.
2. Colour the triangle green.
3. Colour the square red.
4. Colour the circle yellow.
5. Colour the diamond purple.
6. Colour the hexagon orange.
7. Colour the heptagon brown.
8. Colour the octagon pink.
9. Colour the nonagon grey.
10. Colour the decagon black.
11. Colour the hendecagon light blue.
12. Colour the dodecagon dark blue.

Instruction sheet

1. Show a star under the circle.
2. Show a star next to the triangle.
3. Show a star above the square.
4. Show a star inside the circle.
5. Show a star under the triangle.
6. Show a star next to the square.
7. Show a star above the circle.
8. Show a star inside the triangle.
9. Show a star under the square.
10. Show a star next to the circle.
11. Show a star above the triangle.
12. Show a star inside the square.

Instruction sheet

1. Show an apple next to the blue apple.
2. Show an apple above the blue apple.
3. Show an apple inside the blue apple.
4. Show an apple next to the red apple.
5. Show an apple above the red apple.
6. Show an apple inside the red apple.
7. Show an apple next to the green apple.
8. Show an apple above the green apple.
9. Show an apple inside the green apple.
10. Show an apple next to the yellow apple.
11. Show an apple above the yellow apple.
12. Show an apple inside the yellow apple.

Instruction sheet

1. Show the first square in the fourth row. Draw a yellow triangle.
2. Show the second square in the third row. Draw a green circle.
3. Show the third square in the second row. Draw a blue square.
4. Show the fourth square in the first row. Draw a red triangle.
5. Show the fifth square in the fourth row. Draw a green circle.
6. Show the sixth square in the third row. Draw a blue square.
7. Show the seventh square in the second row. Draw a red triangle.
8. Show the eighth square in the first row. Draw a green circle.

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7. Show the seventh square in the second row. Draw a red triangle.
8. Show the eighth square in the first row. Draw a green circle.

Listen and Do Activity Pack

During story time, why not create a basket of books chosen by both you and your child? Encourage them to tell you which books they enjoy the most and see if they can explain why. Model reading using different voices to portray a character or add humour.

Try to introduce your child to a variety of books, including information books, poetry and rhyming books, joke books, decodable books (phonics), picture books and chapter books.

Have any moments stood out to you as a special memory?

Biscuit Recipe Cards

1. Add the flour into the mixture.
2. Add the egg yolk and vanilla.
3. Mix all of the ingredients together.
4. Roll out the dough on a floured surface.
5. Mix everything together. You may have to use your hands to make sure they are mixed.
6. Add the egg yolk and vanilla.
7. Cut out your biscuits and put onto preheated paper on a baking tray.

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Biscuit Recipe Cards

Understanding

At school, your child may be showing their understanding skills in a variety of ways. For example, they may be required to follow simple instructions or answer questions about a story. Ensuring that you are speaking clearly during conversations, waiting for responses, reading lots of stories together and sharing ideas and opinions are all great ways to develop your child's understanding skills further.

At 4 - 5 years old, your child may be working towards...

To support this, you could...

responding to instructions involving a two-part sequence.

give a two-step instruction instead of one, e.g. 'Could you fetch your coat **and** put on your shoes please?'

understanding humour, e.g. nonsense rhymes or jokes.

read a silly story or some nonsense jokes and see if your child can understand the humour.

following a story without pictures or props.

listen to an audiobook together, maybe a short chapter each night before bed. Ask questions like 'What did you think when...?' or 'What did you enjoy the most?' to see if they listened and understood the story.

listening and responding to ideas expressed by others in conversation or discussion.

observe your child during interactions with others; are they actively listening and responding appropriately?

following instructions involving several ideas or actions.

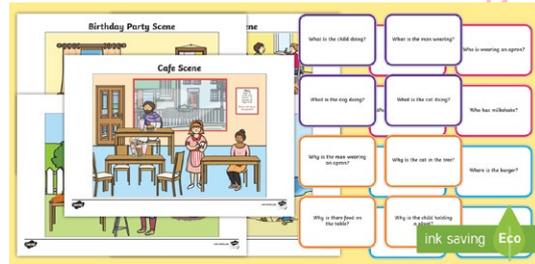
extend instructions from a two-part sequence to multiple instructions, for example: 'Could you please go upstairs, tell your sister it's dinner time and bring down your book and pyjamas and give them to Grandma?'

answering 'how' and 'why' questions about their experiences and in response to stories or events.

model asking questions all the time: who, what, where, when, why? Think of a question of the week; put it in a prominent place and see if you and your child could find out concepts such as 'Why does it rain?'

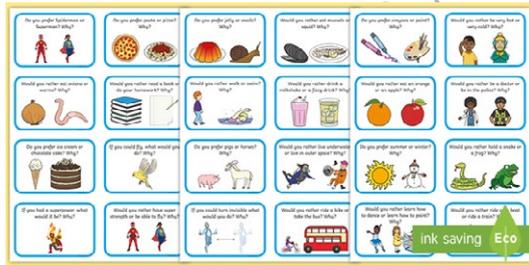
Understanding

How is your child progressing with their understanding?



Picture Scene 'Wh-' Questions

Why not have a question book, in which you record all of your child's most curious and interesting questions? Next time your child asks a question in relation to their current interests, explain that it's a really great question and that you're going to write it down. Give them thinking time to clarify the wording of their question further.

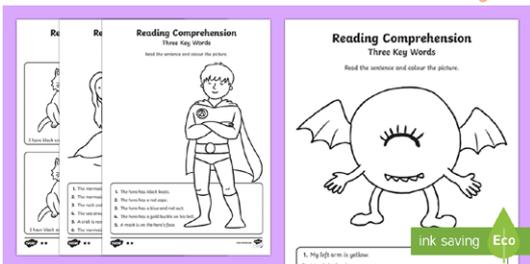


Question Cards for Conversation

Model how you can find out new information or answer tough questions by using books or reliable websites to research together.



Have any moments stood out to you as a special memory?



Reading Comprehension Pack

Speaking

Many children learn lots about speech through listening to how others speak and structure conversations. You may have noticed your child repeating a phrase that you often say or copying the way you pronounce something; therefore, modelling good speech is paramount to your child developing good communication skills too. Speaking to your child clearly and calmly, using age appropriate language and introducing new concepts and vocabulary are all ways you can extend your child's communication skills.

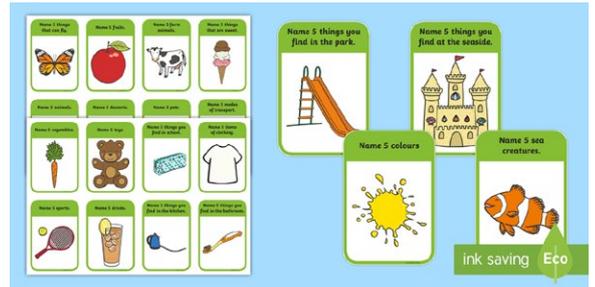
At 4 - 5 years old, your child may be working towards...

To support this, you could...

extending their vocabulary, especially by grouping, naming and exploring the meaning and sounds of new words.	ensure you are using a wide range of vocabulary with your child as they progress in age. Instead of simple language like small, happy and cold, why not introduce miniscule, overjoyed and icy?
using language to imagine and recreate roles and experiences in play situations.	encourage your child to role play through dressing up or with toys and puppets. Are they using their imagination? Can they re-enact previous experiences and imagine new possibilities?
linking statements and sticking to a main theme or intention when speaking.	listen to when your child is speaking about a particular topic or event. Can they stick to one theme and make links rather than jump between many things at once?
using talk to organise, sequence and clarify their thinking, ideas, feelings and events.	encourage your child to do lots of speaking at home. What have they been up to? What would they like to do tomorrow? How did they feel when...? What would they think if...?
introducing a storyline or narrative into their play.	read lots of stories with your child so that they become familiar with popular story characters, settings and storylines, which they can later adapt and re-enact with friends.
expressing themselves effectively, showing awareness of listeners' needs.	give your child lots of opportunities to speak at length about their interests and to different audiences. Can they change the way that they speak based on their audience, e.g. their baby sister or grandpa?
using past, present and future forms accurately when talking about events that have happened or are to happen in the future.	listen carefully to your child as they speak; can they use tenses correctly? Support this by gently correcting them if they get their tenses mixed up - it's easy to do at this stage!
developing their own narratives and explanations by connecting ideas or events.	observe and give praise when your child practices a safety measure independently, e.g. not getting too close to an open flame or touching something potentially harmful.

Speaking

How is your child progressing with their speaking?

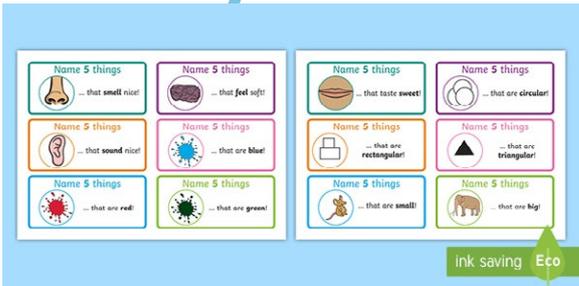


Name Five Things Card Game

Playing pretend and taking on a role are both great ways to develop vocabulary, tone of voice and other speaking skills. Why not create a dressing up box or set up a performance space for your child and their toys?

Scrapbooks and photo albums of the things and activities that your child enjoys can provide opportunities for your child to talk about their experiences. Can they tell you about the fun they had on holiday using the past tense, e.g. 'we went to Cornwall'?

Have any moments stood out to you as a special memory?



Name Five Things Challenge Cards

Support and Challenge

After reading this guide and trying out some of the activities with your child, you may find that they require more support with some activities than others. This is perfectly OK; some concepts are more difficult than others and with more practice, your child should begin to make more progress. On the other hand, if your child is able to do most of these activities easily, then perhaps they need a challenge?

A Parent Guide to Communication and Language for Ages 3 - 4 may be more suitable for your child if they aren't quite ready for some of the activities in this guide. Why not take a step back and try some of the ideas listed in there first and develop their self-confidence?

If your child seems to be beyond the activities and skills in this guide, you may be wondering how you could help them further. Providing your child with plenty of opportunities to speak to different people and for different purposes (e.g. to recount events or explain their personal ideas and opinions) is key to further developing their early speaking skills. You can encourage good listening and understanding skills through reading books and asking open-ended questions or getting your child to carry out tasks involving several instructions. Alternatively, you can always find more resources on the **Twinkl Parents hub**.



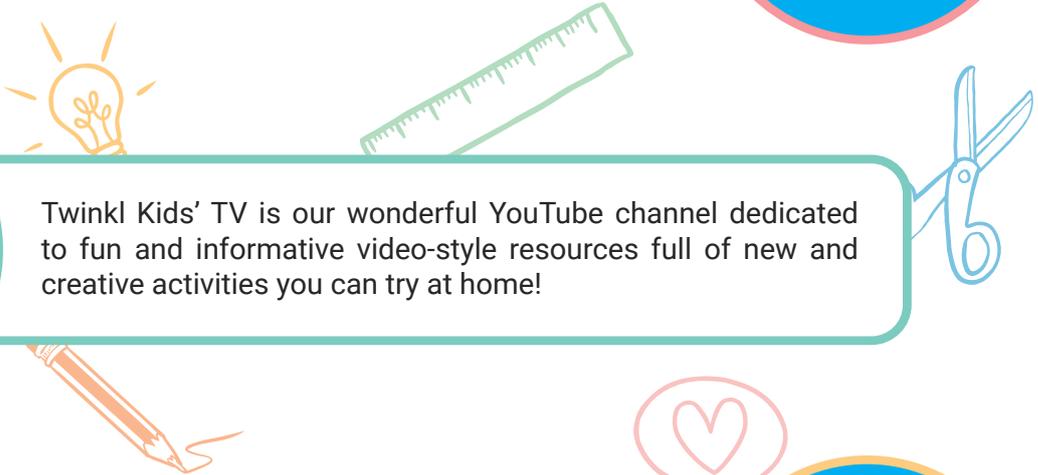
Explore and Discover More



Twinkl Go! is a digital platform, hosting interactive content such as videos, games, audiobooks and more. Twinkl Go! enables digital content to be streamed to your computer or mobile device.



Twinkl Kids' TV is our wonderful YouTube channel dedicated to fun and informative video-style resources full of new and creative activities you can try at home!



Twinkl Originals are engaging stories written to inspire children from EYFS to KS2. Designed to encourage a love of reading and help curriculum-wide learning through accompanying resources.

