

Supporting Your 0 - 1 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 them.

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 through fun and engaging activities, whether they are babbling or saying single words.

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.



From birth onwards, your child will be learning how to communicate with the world around them. How do they let you know they're hungry? They cry. How do they let you know they're listening? They look towards whatever is making sounds.



Communication and language doesn't just refer to whether or not your child can speak, but how they connect with you and the wider world.



Your child's development in listening and paying attention is also key in their communication, as the way they listen leads to them working on their understanding and responses.



This guide contains practical ideas and advice on how you can further support your child at home within the different aspects of listening, understanding and speaking.

Children develop rapidly in their first five years, more so than any other period of their young life. Although these guides have been divided by age band, we recognise that all children develop at different rates; this guide should not be used as a tick list of exactly what your child should be able to do at this age, but rather as an indicator of what they may be working towards.

Listening and Attention

Between birth and one year old, a child's listening and understanding develops rapidly and looks very different throughout. Their development will most likely manifest in how they react to new and familiar sounds. At this age, your child's attention will most likely be fleeting; they will pay attention to the dominant or new sounds they hear and will tire quickly.

At 0 - 1 years old, your child may be working towards...

To support this, you could...

turning towards and/or quieting to new or familiar sounds and speech.

provide your child with discovery baskets, tummy time or corners of the room set up with sound items to explore.

listening to and responding to the tones and sounds of voices.

use a variety of voices and expressions to convey a range of emotions and moods.

reacting during interactions with others by smiling, looking and moving.

praise and reciprocate any reactions your baby gives to you.

looking intently at a person talking.

engage your little one in song and story times; finger plays are a great way to hold their attention and involve them.

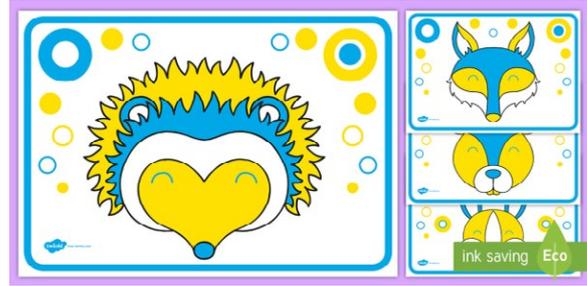
moving their whole body to sounds they enjoy, such as music or a regular beat.

have regular music times that showcase a wide variety of music, guiding your child to dance by moving their arms and legs.

Listening and Attention



How is your little one progressing with their listening and attention?



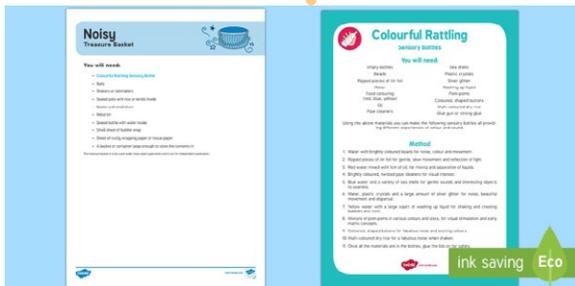
Visual Stimulation for Babies

Gather a wide range of sound-making objects, such as bells, rattles or drums. Items around the home (like pots and pans) can make interesting sounds, too!

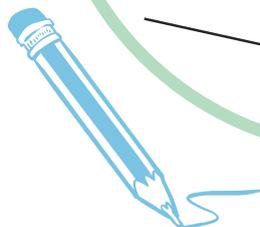


What songs can you remember from your childhood? Why not use some in your singing time with your baby?

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



Sound-Themed Treasure Basket



Understanding

A key part of communicating is to understand what is happening or being said so that you can react. For babies and young children up to the age of one, they will understand much more than they're able to respond to - finding ways to recognise how much they're understanding is helpful for parents hoping to help their child's communication development.

At 0 - 1 years old, your child may be working towards...

To support this, you could...

stopping and looking when they hear their own name.

use the same name for your child when getting their attention, not a variety of different nicknames (or use the same nickname regularly).

starting to understand contextual clues, e.g. familiar gestures, words and sounds.

give meaning to the things your child shows interest in, e.g. when they point to an object, tell them what it is.

developing the ability to follow others' body language, including pointing and gesture.

use gestures with your words where you can, e.g. waving for 'hello' and 'goodbye' or using actions during rhymes and songs.

responding to a variety of things said with a familiar context and person, e.g. "Where's Mummy?" or "Where's your nose?".

as you ask questions (even silly ones), give your child a little thinking time before answering so they begin to understand it's meant for them.

developing their understanding of single words in context, e.g. 'cup', 'milk', 'daddy'.

use pictures of items or routines that you can refer to on a visual timetable or book.

Understanding

How is your little one progressing with their understanding?



Visual Timetables

Talk regularly to your child and narrate the things that you or they are doing; this develops their understanding of the world around them and, when they begin to speak themselves, gives them the opportunity to widen their vocabulary.

Picture cards and visual timetables could be useful for your little one before they begin to speak. Can they point to something they want?



Fine Motor Skills Challenge Cards

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

Speaking

This area generally develops after the previous two and often happens slowly, then all at once! For young babies, you can notice the way they 'speak' through how they communicate their needs through gurgling, crying or other sounds. From around eight months onwards, you might find your child is starting to use more specific, simple sounds. Non-verbal communication might involve waving, pointing or other signals.

At 0 - 1 years old, your child may be working towards...

To support this, you could...

communicating their needs and feelings in a variety of ways, including crying, gurgling, babbling and squealing.

when you identify your child's need, narrate what it was, e.g. "Poor baby, you were crying because you needed your nappy changing."

making their own sounds (babbling) in response when talked to by familiar adults, e.g. sounds like 'baba', 'nono' or gogo'.

encourage sounds and babbling by copying your child's noises and turn-taking as if in conversation.

lifting their arms in anticipation of being picked up.

narrate to your child as you respond to their non-verbal communications, e.g. "Do you want to be picked up? Wait there, I'm coming!"

using sounds in play, e.g. 'brmm' for a toy car or 'ssssss' for cooking sounds.

demonstrate sounds when playing with your child and interacting with their toys, e.g. "It's a snake! Snakes say ssssss."

imitating simple words and sounds and using single words independently, e.g. teddy, more, no, bye-bye.

praise and reciprocate when your child says single words and ask them if they can say others.

using pointing with eye gaze to make requests and to share an interest.

respond to your child's pointing by asking them what they want, e.g. "Would you like the dummy or the bottle?"

Speaking

How is your little one progressing with their speaking?



Plastic Cup Telephones

Mimic the sounds your child makes and respond to their gurgles and babbles. For those using single words or short phrases, repeat the word and expand the sentence, for example, "Yes, it is a car. It's a yellow car."



Rhymes and Songs



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



Resources to Support Traditional Tales

Communication and Language

Journal nice moments
or record key
dates here:

Stick a photo of your child here:

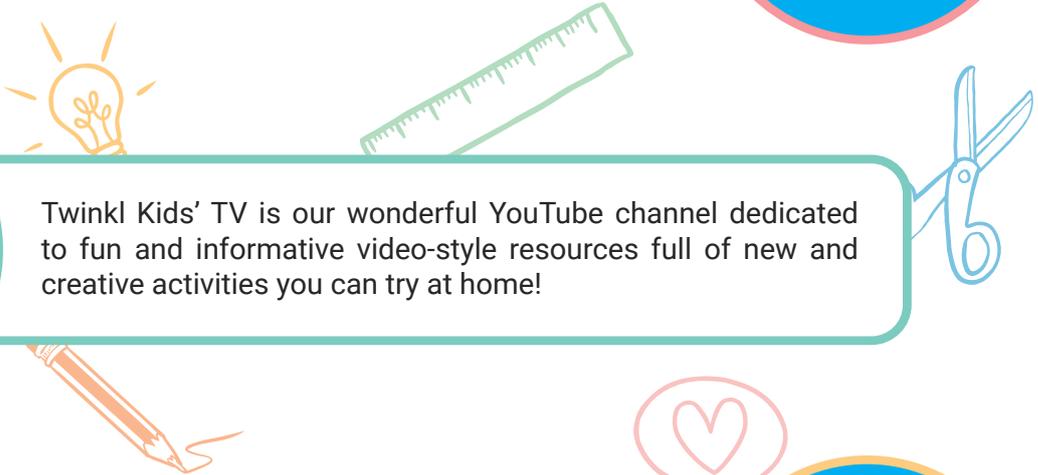
Explore and Discover More



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.

