

EYFS · RECEPTION-Y1

# Communication & Language

EYFS Knowledge Organiser

## Three strands of Communication & Language

1

### Listening, Attention & Understanding

The ability to focus on what someone is saying, sustain attention, and demonstrate understanding. By ELG: children can listen to and understand instructions without visual cues; they can carry out a sequence of directions.

2

### Speaking

The ability to communicate ideas, feelings, and events using increasingly complex vocabulary and grammar. By ELG: children participate in small group and class discussions; use past, present, and future tenses correctly; connect ideas using a range of conjunctions.

3

### Pre-reading/phonological awareness

Sensitivity to the sounds in spoken language — rhyme, rhythm, alliteration, syllables. Develops before and alongside reading. Strong predictor of literacy outcomes.

## Communication & Language in EYFS

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**SERVE AND RETURN:** children's communications deserve a response. Every interaction where an adult genuinely responds builds neural connections for language.

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**RICH VOCABULARY:** introduce and use new words in context. Don't replace with simpler synonyms — explain and use them. Children can handle complex vocabulary if it's embedded in meaning.



- READ ALOUD DAILY: books expose children to syntax, vocabulary, and narrative structures they wouldn't encounter in conversation. Read slowly. Discuss. Re-read.
- WAIT TIME: give children time to formulate a response. 5 seconds of silence is not failure — it's thinking.
- SUSTAINED SHARED THINKING: long exchanges where adult and child genuinely explore an idea together. Not question-and-answer, but co-construction of meaning.
- TALK BETWEEN PEERS: structured and unstructured talk with other children develops pragmatic language skills that adult-child talk alone cannot.
- EARLY LANGUAGE GAP: by age 5, some children know three times as many words as others. Vocabulary at age 5 is a strong predictor of attainment at age 16.

