

Top Tips for Supporting Families

Communication & Language Development

Activities To Try at Home

- Make one to one special time with your child and follow their lead with a toy or activity of their choice.
- Loan storybooks and a cuddly toy to encourage parents to read stories to their children.
- Loan story sacks, story boxes and song bags to encourage storytelling and singing at home.
- Loan chatter boxes or activity bags.
- Make books part of your routine – daily bedtime story sharing.
- Chatter throughout the day.
 - Encourage parents to talk about things they see around them for example on the way to pre-school or in the supermarket.
 - Involve children and chatter as they help with simple chores such as hanging the washing up, washing the car or toys, setting the table, or putting the shopping away.
- Create dens, tents, or cosy spaces for chatting.
- Look at photographs together and use them to recall and talk about previous experiences, things they have done at pre-school and experiences with their family.

Events Within Your Setting

- Invite parents in early to share stories over breakfast with their children, or tea as appropriate – set up the room with lots of book/story sharing opportunities.
- Walk and talk – in key person groups with parents point out things to talk about on route.
- Nursery Rhyme Challenge – learn 8 nursery rhymes. Give families copies of the nursery rhymes you are learning so they can practise them at home too. Have a celebration where you sing the songs together and give families certificates for taking part. (*Research has shown that children who know 8 nursery rhymes by the age of 4 years old are some of the best readers by the age of 8 years old*).
- Post box for dummies, or dummy tree – dummy fairy comes and takes them away.

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Signposting To Opportunities in The Community

- Events such as rhyme time at the local library.
- Children's Centre/Family Hub groups and events.

Sharing Key Messages

- Ensure all staff have a good understanding of how best to support children's development so they can share their knowledge with parents during everyday discussions.
- Share videos, posters and leaflets that help families understand ways they can support children's communication and language development and why the early years are so important.
- Signpost families to courses that may be of interest.
- Run some workshops for your families where they can learn more about your settings approach to supporting children's communication and language development and experiences they can replicate at home.

Useful Links

- [Start for Life Website | NHS \(www.nhs.uk/start-for-life\)](http://www.nhs.uk/start-for-life)
- [Tiny Happy People | BBC \(www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people\)](http://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people)
- [Enhancing Family Involvement Toolkit | The Education People \(theeducationpeople.org\)](http://theeducationpeople.org)
- [Working with Parents to Support Children's Learning | EEF \(educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk\)](http://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)
- [Songsheets with Makaton | Singing Hands \(www.singinghands.co.uk\)](http://www.singinghands.co.uk)