Siarad Gyda Fi
Talk With Me

Supporting the Development of Speech, Language and Communication in the Early Years

Section 5:
Guidance for
3 years – 3 years 11 months

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Supporting the Development of Speech, Language and Communication in the Early Years

Section 5: Guidance for 3 years – 3 years 11 months

Overview Pages:

Attention & Listening 88
Play & Interaction 89
Understanding Spoken Language 90
Using Spoken Language 91
Speech 92

Developmental Sequences:

Attention & Listening 93
Play & Interaction 94
Understanding Spoken Language 95
Using Spoken Language 96
Speech 97

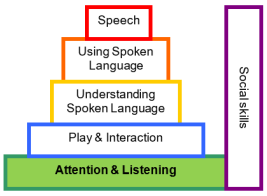
Strategy Posters and Suggested Activities:

Attention & Listening 100
Play & Interaction 102
Understanding Spoken Language 104
Using Spoken Language 106
Speech 108

Throughout this guidance, references have been made to typical development of SLC. It is important to support the child at their *developmental stage* rather than their age.

Attention and Listening

3 years – 3 years 11 months



Attention and listening skills are the foundation of speech, language and communication. Children need to develop these essential skills to be able to understand the world around them, develop social skills, understand routines, learn new words and develop speech sounds.

It is important to make sure children are *attending* before expecting them to listen.

Many children of this age will enjoy listening to stories. They may find it hard to attend to more than one thing at a time e.g. listening to instructions when they are focussed on their own play.

Between 3 years and 3 years 11 months you may notice the child….

- begins to attend and listen in small groups or 1:1 e.g. to short stories (usually around 10-15 minutes)
- shows interest and will join in with an activity chosen by an adult or another child (usually around 10-15 minutes)
- begins to move their focus of attention from one activity to another on their own e.g. can move their attention from their play to the speaker.
- joins in with familiar rhymes or songs and answer simple questions about it
- concentrates on a self-chosen activity for 15 minutes.

Creating an enabling environment:

- ☑ Reduce distractions e.g. movement, noise, visual distractions.
- ☑ Label areas with visual signs.
- ☑ Have clear and consistent routines using visual timetables.
- ☑ Limit the amount of resources out at a time.

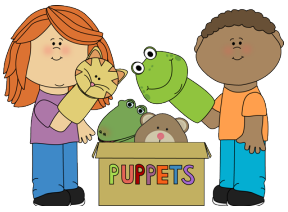
Strategies to develop attention and listening:

- Use the child's name to gain their attention.
- Wait until the child is looking at you before speaking.
- Follow the child's lead in play.
- Comment on what the child is doing; repeat what they say.
- Speak calmly and slowly and give the child thinking time.
- Tell the child when it is time to listen.
- Get down to the child's level.
- Break down instructions to help the child to focus on one part at a time.

Make sure all adults MODEL and PRAISE good attention and listening behaviours.

PLAY WITH ME… look at some suggested activities on page 101

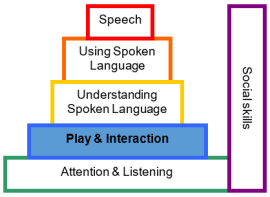
What's in the box?



What's the sound?

Play and Interaction

3 years – 3 years 11 months



Play is how children make sense of the world and it is crucial to support brain development in the early years. Through play, children develop and learn to use their speech, language and communication skills. Play is the essential context for learning about social skills for children under the age of five.

Interaction includes the ability to play cooperatively with peers and take turns. Through play and interaction, children learn to understand and regulate their emotions and develop their social skills.

Between 3 years and 3 years 11 months you may notice the child….

- initiates conversation with others
- understands turn-taking and sharing with adults and peers
- enjoys imaginative and pretend play e.g. dressing up, role-play
- plays with miniature or small world play
- likes to play with other children.

Creating an enabling environment:

- ☑ Provide role-play areas, indoors and out.
- ☑ Use open-ended resources e.g. loose parts, natural materials.
- ☑ Provide opportunities for collaborative play e.g. den building.
- ☑ Have a range of small world resources available for a range of scenarios.
- ☑ Observe how children interact with the physical learning environment.

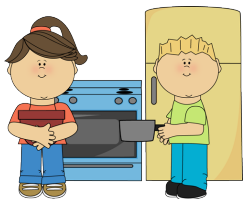
STRATEGIES to develop play and interaction:

- Focus on what the child is doing by demonstrating good looking and listening.
- Comment on what the child is doing during play.
- Encourage turn-taking with others e.g. *"Billy's turn…now Ben's turn."*
- Demonstrate the next stage of play.
- Use a 'Now and Next' board or visual timetable to support with the routine of the day and transitioning between play opportunities.

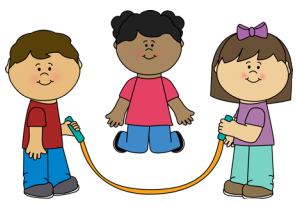
Let the child lead the play.

PLAY WITH ME…look at some suggested activities on page 103

Role-play

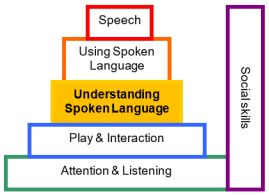


Time to talk



Understanding Spoken Language

3 years – 3 years 11 months



Understanding spoken language (receptive language) is essential for children to make sense of the world around them. It includes the ability to understand the words, sentences and the non-verbal communication of others. Children learn to develop an understanding of words and sentences in stages, first one word, then a number of individual words, then short sentences and longer more complex sentences.

Between 3 years and 3 years 11 months you may notice the child….

- understands instructions with two parts e.g. *'Get your jumper and stand by the door.'*
- understands simple *'why'* questions about something he is doing/looking at e.g. *'Why is Peppa Pig happy?'*
- understands the negative *'not'* e.g. *'Who is not eating?'*
- understands sentences with three important words e.g. *'Get the big spoon out of the drawer.'*
- understands some concepts and positional words e.g. *long, short, hard, soft, fast, slow, in front, behind.*

Creating an enabling environment:

- ☑ Label resources clearly with photos/pictures.
- ☑ Use visual instructions with clear pictures to support understanding e.g. hand washing.
- ☑ Use visual timetables to support routines.
- ☑ Use visual timelines to sequence activities.
- ☑ Use real situations and objects to introduce new vocabulary.

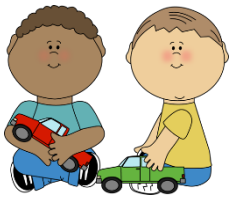
STRATEGIES to develop understanding of spoken language:

- Get the child's attention before talking with them e.g. use their name.
- Check the child knows the names of objects before you give an instruction.
- Simplify your language.
- Give clear short instructions, one at a time.
- Emphasise the key words using your voice, gestures or a sign.
- Use visual supports e.g. 'Now and Next' pictures.
- Use FIRST and THEN to sequence instructions, retelling and routines.
- Show the child what to do if they don't understand an instruction.

10 Second Rule! Give the child time to process an instruction or question.

PLAY WITH ME… look at some suggested activities on page 105

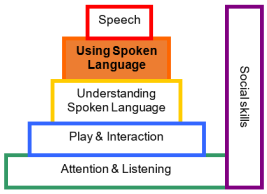
Find the object



Busy Bees

Using Spoken Language

3 years – 3 years 11 months



Using spoken language (expressive language) is the ability to recall words and information and use language, body language and gestures appropriately in given situations e.g. to label/name objects, describe actions and events, ask and answer questions and retell a story. A good vocabulary is essential for children so that they can express their thoughts, needs and wants.

Between 3 years and 3 years 11 months you may notice the child….

- links 4 – 6 words in a sentence e.g. *'I want to play with cars.'*
- uses language for a variety of reasons e.g. can retell favourite stories or tell others what has happened.
- uses future and past tense e.g. *'I am going shopping.' 'I walked home.'* May still have difficulty with irregular verbs e.g. *runned/ran.*
- starts to link ideas together using *'and'* or *'because'* e.g. *'I put wellies on 'cos it's raining.'*
- asks lots of questions such as *'Who?', 'What's that for?', 'Why?'* and *'When?'*

Creating an enabling environment:

- ☑ Notice the child's interests – add resources to develop their play and encourage language.
- ☑ Use natural materials e.g. stones, leaves, fir cones to stimulate sensory exploration.
- ☑ Add new resources to everyday routines to encourage learning new vocabulary e.g. big, small, colourful bowls and plates on the snack table.

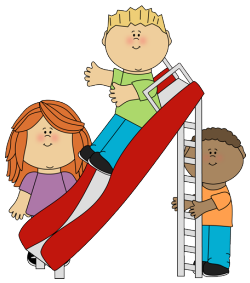
STRATEGIES to develop using spoken language:

- WAIT! Give the child time to process and organise their thoughts.
- Name objects during shared play, rather than asking '*What is this*?'
- Let the child lead the play.
- Expand on the child's words by adding extra words e.g. if they say '*car*' you can say '*yes, it is a big car.*'
- Model the correct grammar rather than telling the child they are wrong e.g. if they say *'I falled'* you can say '*Oh dear, you fell over.*'

Talk about what the child is looking at or doing.

PLAY WITH ME… look at some suggested activities on page 107

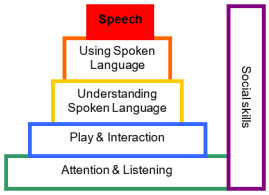
Talk about play



Storytime

Speech

3 years – 3 years 11 months



Speech (phonology) refers to being able to say speech sounds to make yourself understood. When we are listening to a child talk, we can think about how clear their words are. *Speech* is not the same as *talking*.

By the age of 3 years, a child's speech can typically be understood by familiar adults outside the home, but it will not be perfect. By the age of 4 years, a child's speech can typically be understood most of the time.

Use the **English Speech Sound Development Poster** on page 98 and Speech acquisition - Multilingual Children's Speech (csu.edu.au) to support your observations.

Creating an enabling environment:

- ☑ Reduce distractions e.g. movement, noise, visual distractions.
- ☑ Have quiet, distraction-free areas/activities for children to focus on listening to sounds.
- ☑ Include songs and rhymes as part of the daily routine.
- ☑ Share lots of stories - encourage children to join in as they listen.

STRATEGIES to use to develop clear speech:

- If a child says a word unclearly, respond to what they are saying, not how clear they are.
- Repeat back using the correct sounds for the child to ***hear*** e.g. if a child says '***t***at' the adult says '*yes, it's a c*at'.
- Encourage the child to use actions to help get their message across and reduce frustration.
- Ask the child to show you what they want.
- Get down to the child's level so they can see how you make sounds – don't expect them to copy you.

Do not tell the child they said a word incorrectly or ask them to repeat it.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES to support the development of speech:

- Go on a listening walk (listen and talk about environmental sounds).
- Listen to and talk about all sorts of sounds – high and low sounds, loud and quiet sounds…
- Tune into rhymes – say and sing rhymes every day.
- Clap out syllables in familiar words.
- Set up a sound table/feely bags – play 'What's in the box?'
- Rhyming stories: Read, and re-read, stories with rhyming patterns. Encourage the children to predict the rhyming word when you pause on it and think of others that rhyme.

Go on a listening walk

Clap syllables

Attention follows a developmental sequence:

0 – 11 months	8 – 20 months	22 – 36 months
Fleeting Attention Easily distracted and attention flits from one thing to another.	**Rigid Attention** Can concentrate on one task of own choice, cannot tolerate interruption from an adult.	**Single channelled attention** Will attend to an adult direction. Cannot cope doing one thing and listening to an instruction about something else.
30 – 50 months	**40 – 60 months**	**60+ months**
Focusing attention Beginning to control own focus. Can only concentrate on one thing at a time (the task or the unrelated instruction). Can shift focus of attention independently.	**Two channelled attention** Can do a task and understand an instruction at the same time. Concentration span may be short but can now be taught in a group.	**Integrated attention** Attention is controlled, sustained and well established across different situations, with different people.

- **Some children may be functioning at a level below their chronological age**
- **Children cannot develop their speech, language and communication skills if they are unable to attend or listen**

Play skills follow a developmental sequence:

Exploratory play (birth to around 5 months): Shakes, mouths, bangs and turns over toys and other objects to try to work out what they are. At around 9 months will look for an object that has been hidden away (understands object permanence).

Recognising objects (around 12 months): Shows an understanding of the appropriate use of an object without pretending e.g. uses a brush on their hair.

Object play (between 8-20 months): Pretends to use an object on themselves e.g. using a toy cup to pretend to drink.

Character play (between 16-26 months): Involves character toys in their play e.g. gives toy dinosaur a drink.

Acts out routines (around 22 - 36 months): Acts out simple routines through play e.g. baths and dresses dolly ready for bed. Small world play becomes more complex as the child acts out scenarios and stories. Uses objects imaginatively e.g. a box could be a car or a bed.

Role-play (around 3 to 4 years): Simple dressing up to begin with, gradually taking on more imaginative role of the whole character.

Complex and co-operative imaginative play (4 years+): Acts out sequences observed in their environment, books and TV e.g. household routines.

Interaction skills build from play and include the ability to play cooperatively with peers and take turns:

0 – 9 months	9 – 18 months	18 months – 3 years
Interactions begin and end with baby's eye contact, e.g. games such as peekaboo.	Interactions initiated by child both verbally and non-verbally e.g. pointing, giving and showing. Interaction may end by child moving away. Interactions limited to 1 or 2 turns per partner.	Interactions may be initiated using a name e.g. *'Mummy'*. Child begins to respond to questions verbally. Repeats or changes their utterance if not understood. Interaction may be restricted to comfortable, familiar situations.
3 – 4 years	**4 – 7 years**	**7 years+**
Has a variety of strategies to initiate conversation e.g. *'Guess what?'* Number of turns in conversation increases. More able to communicate with strangers. Can participate in pretend conversations. Uses language for a wide variety of functions e.g. asking questions, making suggestions, directing others.	More able to initiate and end conversations and take turns. Learns to choose most appropriate timing to join in other people's conversation. Child still assumes the listener shares his/her background knowledge. Learns to adapt styles of conversation for a variety of listeners e.g. family, friends, and teachers.	Becomes more aware of the listener and his/her background knowledge. Conveys subtleties with intonation and stress. Uses language to persuade, convey disapproval and for politeness. Develops social appropriateness.

Understanding Spoken Language (receptive language) follows a recognised progression:

Birth	6 months	12 months
Responds to sound (spoken or non-spoken). Responds to intonation and emotion in voices.	Understands whole phrases when used in familiar routines.	Understands key words in familiar situations (often called situational understanding).
18 months	**2 years**	**2 ½ years**
Understands names of absent objects whenever used in familiar sentences at any time.	Can relate two named objects. Can identify objects from a description of their use.	Understands simple actions and properties not related to themselves. Understands simple prepositions, e.g. *in, on, under* and basic size concepts, e.g. *big, little*, when used in simple sentences. Begins to understand 'time' as a reference to the immediate past and future.
3 years	**4 years**	**5 years +**
Relates up to three key words in a sentence when there are no other clues to help. Begins to understand tense, e.g. *We <u>went</u> to the shop; We <u>will go</u> to the shop*. Understands simple concepts of shape and colour when used in simple sentences.	Follows a simple story sequence. Understands most straightforward sentences. Continues to benefit from situational clues.	Gradually understands more complex sentences out of context. Receptive vocabulary continues to develop.

Using Spoken Language (expressive language) follows a recognised progression:

9 months	18 months	2 years
Babble, early attempts at words e.g. '*Dada*'.	Uses approximately 50 - 100 words with more recognisable words. Sometimes uses 2-word learnt phrases e.g. '*all gone*'	Uses approx. 200 – 300 words. Puts 2 and 3 words together in short sentences e.g. '*Me go home*'.
2 ½ years	**3 years**	**3 ½ years**
Puts 3- and 4-word sentences together using different sorts of words. Starts to use 'question words' e.g. '*Me go there*?'	Links more than 4 words together. Starts to use *'and'* to link ideas. Starts to use pronouns *'I', 'he', 'she'* and plurals e.g. '*I want juice and sweets*.'	Links ideas together using *'cos'* (because) e.g. '*I put wellies on 'cos it's raining*.' Asks more complicated questions using *'why'* and *'how'.*
4 years		**4 ½ years**
Uses language for a variety of reasons e.g. to retell favourite stories, play make-believe games and retell events. Uses talk to problem-solve and form friendships. Asks many questions to find out information.		Children have a vocabulary of about 5000+ words.

Typical Development of Speech

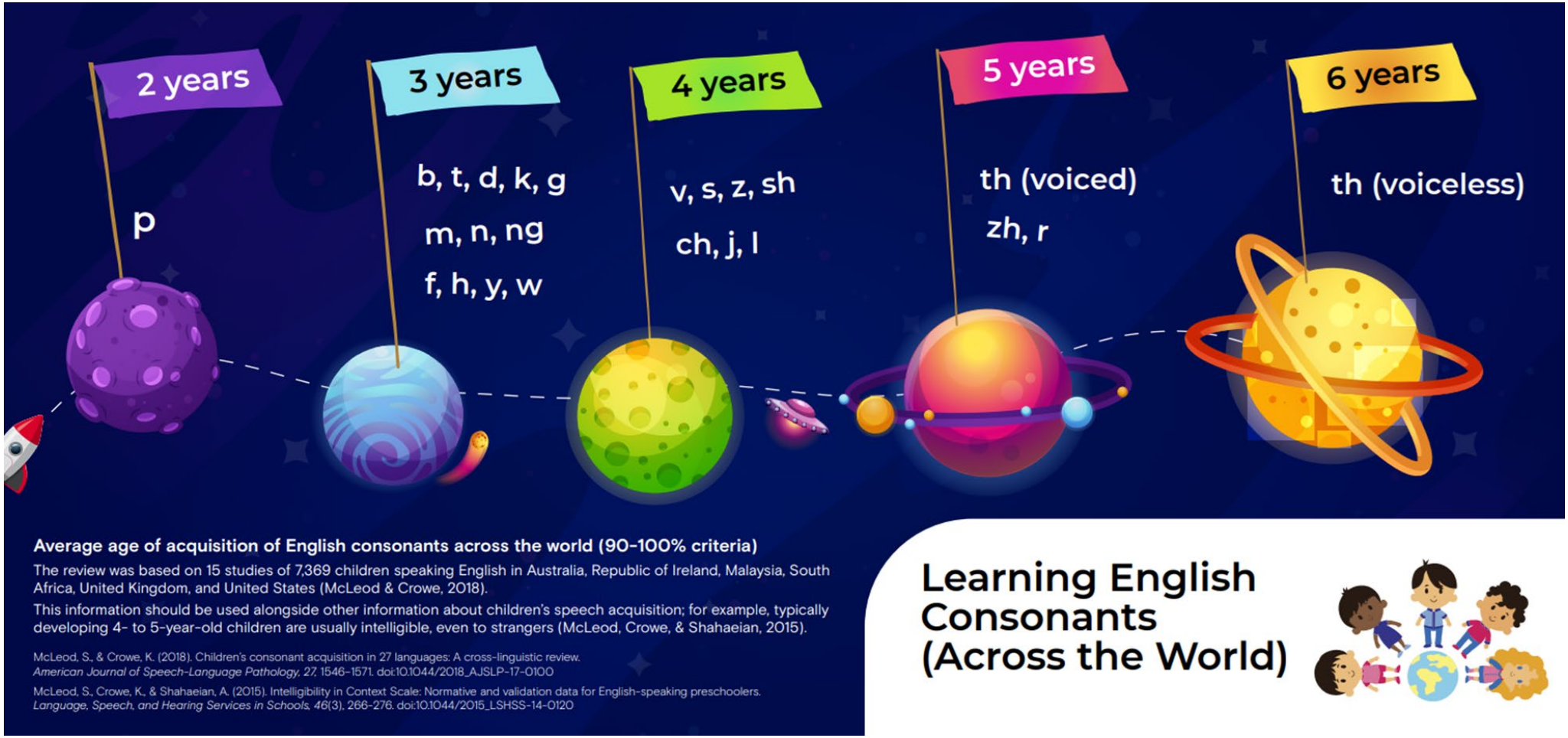
2 years 10 months – 3 years 10 months	3 years 10 months – 5 years 1 month	5 years 2 months – 7 years 3 months
50% of a child's speech is understood by unfamiliar adults	75% of a child's speech is understood by unfamiliar adults	90% of a child's speech is understood by unfamiliar adults

Hustad, Mahr, Natke and Rathouz (2021)

- **Speech sounds follow a developmental progression**
- **Speech sounds vary across languages.**
- **Children learning more than one language may develop speech sounds in a different order.**
- **For further information, please refer to** Speech acquisition - Multilingual Children's Speech (csu.edu.au)

English Speech Sound Development

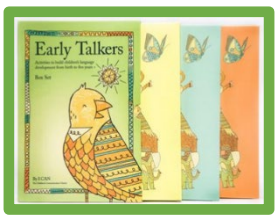
(There is no information on the norms for speech sound development in Welsh)



Strategy Posters and Suggested Activities

In this section, you will find some strategy posters and suggested activities to guide you when planning to develop certain aspects of the child's speech, language and communication.

The activities are suggested as examples - please use your own experiences and ideas to enhance them. The grids are not intended to be a prescriptive programme; however, the ideas can be used to support personalised targets, as appropriate. You can refer to the *'Early Talkers'* boxset for more ideas (available from **speechandlanguage.org.uk).**



Strategies to develop attention and listening:

- Use the child's name to gain their attention.
- Wait until the child is looking at you before speaking.
- Follow the child's lead in play.
- Comment on what the child is doing; repeat what they say.
- Speak calmly and slowly and give the child thinking time.
- Tell the child when it is time to listen.
- Get down to the child's level.
- Break down instructions to help the child to focus on one part at a time.

Make sure all adults MODEL good attention and listening. PRAISE good attention and listening behaviours.

Each strategy is shown on a poster.

You may want to share these posters with parents.

IMPORTANT:

Use the suggested strategies with the planned activities, and in your interactions throughout the day.

You may want to use the suggested activities to support skills in this area.

Target	Attention and Listening - Suggested Activities (3 years -3 years 11 months)	Too difficult?	Too easy?
To begin to attend and listen in small groups or 1:1 e.g. to short stories (usually around 10-15 minutes).	**Hidden Sounds:** ***Finding a sound-making object hidden in the room.*** This activity helps children to practise their listening skills, and to think about the different sounds they hear around them. **How to play:** You will need an alarm clock, radio, ticking clock etc. Ask the child to leave the room, close their eyes, or put on a blindfold. Hide the sound-maker somewhere in the room/area. The child has to find the object hidden in the room by listening for the particular noise. You can adapt this game by hiding a silent object and giving clues to how close the child is e.g. *'Nearly there'* or *'Far away'*. This encourages them to listen to the speaker.	Choose more obvious hiding places or nosier objects to make it easier to find.	Use quieter objects or hide more than one sound-maker.
To show an interest and join in with an activity chosen by an adult or another child (usually around 10-15 minutes).	**Name the Animal:** ***listen to the animal noises and name the animal.*** This encourages children to listen to information given and link it to what they already know. It also helps children to use information that they have heard to solve a simple puzzle. **How to play:** Find pictures or toy animals. Make the noise of the animal and ask the child to tell you which animal they think makes this noise. If you can find some, use recordings of more unusual animal noises. Ask the child if they have heard the noise before, and if it is loud or quiet, or scary or friendly.	Reduce the number of animals the child has to choose from. If 3 is too difficult, use 2 and ask the child which animal makes the noise made.	Make more than one animal noise and see if the child can remember which noise you made 1st, 2nd etc. Young children may be able to remember up to 4 noises in order.
To begin to move their focus of attention from one activity to another on their own e.g. can move their attention from their play to the speaker.	**Stop and Go:** ***encourage children to listen to instructions during an activity/when there is other noise around.*** Paying attention and listening to instructions are the most important skills in learning to talk – they take time to develop. This game involves distractions that make it harder for the child to listen, taking them on to the next step in learning to listen. **How to play:** Choose noisy instruments or items to bang. Tell the child that when you say, "Go", they can play their instrument (you can play yours too). Tell them that when you say, "Stop", they must stop the noise. Play the game a few times, with you calling "Go" and "Stop". Then swap over and let the child say when to "Go" and "Stop".	Use a gesture as well as a word to help the child see when it's time to "Go" and "Stop"	Turn your back so the child cannot see you, or speak very quietly. Does the child stop if you say "Stop", but carry on playing your instrument?
To join in with familiar rhymes or stories and answer simple questions about it.	**Listen for the Word:** ***listen for and respond to key words, mixed up with others in sentences in a story***. Key words make a big difference to the meaning of a sentence. This activity helps children to focus on key words in the whole sentence by listening to the storyteller. **How to play:** Choose a story the child knows well. Tell them that every time you say a particular word, you want them to complete an action/hold up a picture. Share the story, pausing each time you say the key word, so the child can complete the action. Praise the child - tell them you enjoyed the sound/visual!	Prompt the child by completing an action yourself or hold up a visual. Try using a well-known Nursery Rhyme instead of a story.	Leave less of a pause so the child really has to concentrate on the words spoken.
To concentrate on a self-chosen activity for 15 minutes.	**Observation:** ***Play dough, blocks, sand, role-play etc.*** Develop meaningful concentration on an activity chosen freely by the child, within a variety of different areas of provision. **What to do:** Observe a child in the specific area to see whether they can sustain concentration on a chosen task.	Attempt a lesser time scale and introduce a 'now and next' board or timer.	Encourage the child to move and choose another area within the setting and sustain attention for a similar amount of time.

Attention and Listening – KEY STRATEGIES 3 years - 3 years 11 months

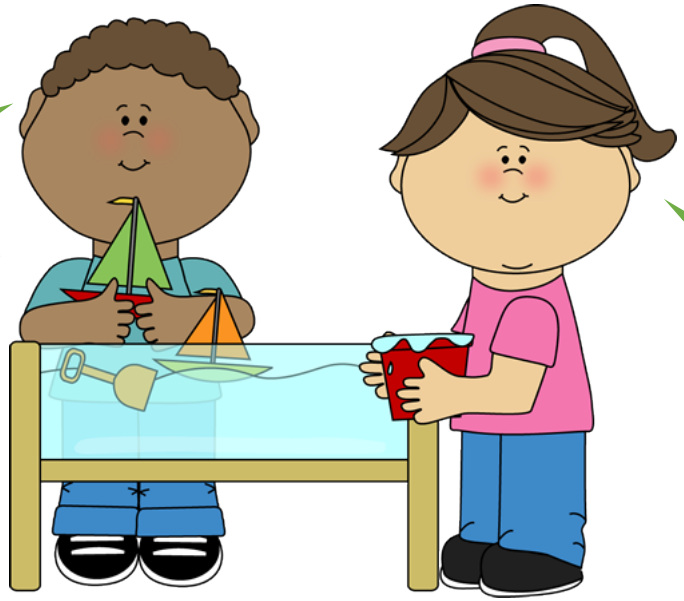
Make sure all adults MODEL good attention and listening. PRAISE good attention and listening behaviours.

Comment on what I am doing. Repeat what I say.

Speak calmly and slowly and give me thinking time.

Follow my lead in play.

Tell me when it is time to listen.



Wait until I am looking at you before speaking.

Get down to my level.

Use my name to gain my attention.

Break down instructions to help me focus on one part at a time.

Activity	Attention and Listening - Suggested Activities (3 years -3 years 11 months)	Too difficult?	Too easy?
Hidden Sounds	***Finding a sound-making object hidden in the room.*** This activity helps children to practise their listening skills, and to think about the different sounds they hear around them. **How to play:** You will need an alarm clock, radio, ticking clock etc. Ask the child to leave the room, close their eyes, or put on a blindfold. Hide the sound-maker somewhere in the room/area. The child has to find the object hidden by listening for the particular noise. You can adapt this game by giving clues to how close the child is e.g. '*Nearly there'* or '*Far away'*. This encourages them to listen to the speaker.	Choose more obvious hiding places or nosier objects to make it easier to find.	Use quieter objects or hide more than one sound-maker.
Who am I?	***Listening to the animal noises and name the animal.*** This encourages children to listen to information they have heard and link it to what they already know. **How to play:** Find pictures or toy animals. Make the noise of the animal and ask the child to tell you which animal they think it is. If you can find some, use recordings of more unusual animal noises.	Reduce the number of animals the child has to choose from.	Make more than one animal noise - see if the child can remember which noise you made first. Young children may be able to recall up to 4 noises in order.
Stop and Go	E***ncouraging children to listen to instructions during an activity.*** This game involves distractions that make listening more challenging which supports the child to develop their listening skills. **How to play:** Choose noisy instruments or items to bang. Tell the child that when you say, "Go", they can play their instrument (you can play yours too). Tell them that when you say, "Stop", they must stop the noise. Play the game a few times, with you calling "Go" and "Stop". Then swap over and let the child say when to "Go" and "Stop".	Use a gesture as well as a word to help the child see when it's time to "Go" and "Stop"	Turn your back so the child cannot see you or speak very quietly. Does the child stop when you say "Stop" even if you carry on playing your instrument?
Listen for the word	***Listening for and responding to key words in a story***. This activity helps children to focus on key words in the whole sentence by listening to the storyteller. **How to play:** Choose a story the child knows well. Tell them that every time you say a particular word, you want them to complete an action/hold up a picture. Share the story, pausing each time you say the key word, so the child can complete the action. Praise the child - tell them you enjoyed the sound/visual!	Prompt the child by completing an action yourself or hold up a visual. Try using a short, familiar rhyme instead of a story.	Leave less of a pause so the child really has to concentrate on the words spoken.

Play and Interaction – KEY STRATEGIES 3 years - 3 years 11 months

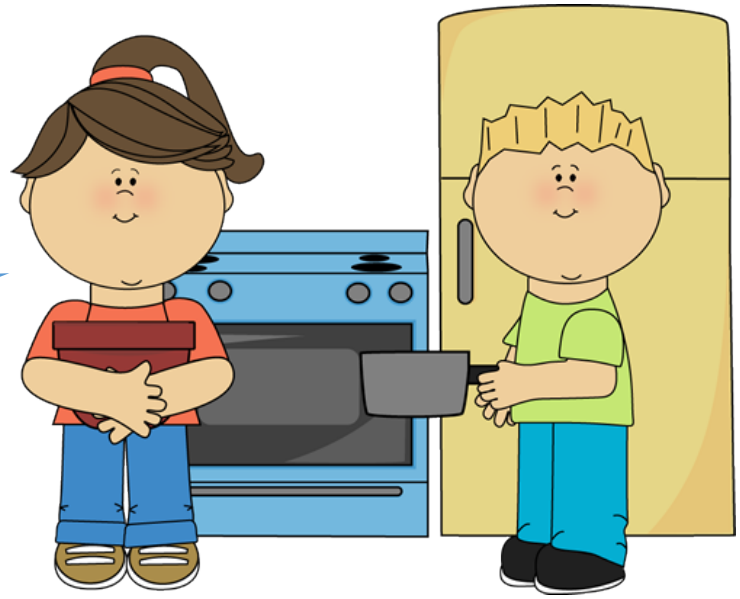
Adults may need to model the play opportunities and encourage interaction to begin with.

Comment on what I am doing.

Encourage me to take turns.

Let me lead the play.

Model the next stage of play to me.



Focus on what I am doing.

A 'now and next' board and visual timetable can help me.

Activity	Play and Interaction - Suggested Activities (3 years - 3 years 11 months)	Too difficult?	Too easy?
Time to talk	***Encouraging spontaneous conversations led by the child.*** Learning how to take turns in conversation, swap topics and share experiences. **What to do:** Encourage the child to lead a conversation about a topic of their choice. Try not to ask lots of questions – give the child time to think what they want to say.	As you are playing, talk about what you are doing to encourage the child to join in with your chat.	Encourage the child to have conversations with other adults.
Circle Time	***Encouraging early turn-taking skills.*** This activity encourages children to wait for the teddy and take their turn. **How to play:** Sit in a small group and pass teddy around. When they are holding the teddy, the child shares something with the group e.g. a favourite animal, favourite colour, something they did on the weekend etc. Always praise good waiting.	Make the group smaller.	Encourage the child to choose who they would like to have teddy next.
Role-play	***Role-play areas and dressing up opportunities.*** Supporting the children to develop their imaginative play experiences – learning to share and take turns in the role-play area. **How to play:** You may need to model the play in any new role-play area if the child has limited experience.	Link in with parents to see what familiar routines and resources are used at home.	Give the child empty boxes and allow them to create their own role-play.
Parachute games	***Encouraging children to play with others.*** Developing turn-taking, good listening (waiting for their name) and sharing a resource together. **What to do:** Sit the children in a circle with a large parachute and play short, simple games. Call the child's name to take turns in joining in and following instructions.	Limit the numbers in the group so the child does not have to wait too long for their turn.	Use some children as models for those who find waiting a challenge.

Understanding Spoken Language – KEY STRATEGIES 3 years - 3 years 11 months

Use the 10 – Second Rule! Give the child time to process an instruction or question.

Use FIRST and THEN to help me understand instructions, routines and retelling events.

Check I know the names of objects before you give me an instruction.

Give me clear, short instruction, one at a time.

Use your voice, gestures or a sign to emphasize key words.

Use simple language when you play with me.

'Now and next' pictures can help me to understand.

Get my attention before you talk with me.

SHOW me what to do if I don't understand.

Activity	Understanding Spoken Language - Suggested Activities (3 years – 3 years 11 months)	Too difficult?	Too easy?
Assault course	***Following instructions with two parts.*** Children follow instructions all the time, at home and in school. **How to play:** Set up a safe assault course using various objects to crawl under, jump over etc. Give the child a two-part instruction e.g. '*Jump over the box and then put the beanbag in the bucket*'. You could also support children in following two-part instructions during circle time e.g. '*Clap your hands and touch your ears*'; '*Stand up and stamp your feet*'.	Give a one-part instruction. Call the child's name, wait until they are looking at you, then give the instruction. Check they know the vocabulary used e.g. body parts.	Give three-part instructions e.g. 'Clap your hands, touch your ears and stamp your feet'.
Story Time	***Listening to a story.*** Developing their understanding of simple ***why*** questions. **What to do:** Whilst looking through a picture book together, ask simple ***why*** questions. Begin by narrating what you can see to model and scaffold the language of *'why/because'* e.g. *'Oh look, the girl is sad because she has fallen off the swing.'* Then ask questions e.g. '*Why is the girl crying?'*	Model the correct response.	Continue to ask ***why*** questions in other contexts (to support generalisation).
Find the object	***Finding the correct object.*** Developing understanding of the negative ***not*** in a sentence. **How to play:** You will need a selection of objects in play situations. Choose three which are identical or have identical features and one that is different e.g. three big cars and one little car. As the child is playing, ask 'Find the car that is ***not*** big'. You can also use this during everyday routines e.g. at snack time '*Who is **not** eating a banana?'*	Model the correct response and model the use of ***not*** in everyday situations.	Encourage the child to find more things in the setting e.g. objects that are ***not*** green.
Busy Bees	***Understanding describing words (concepts).*** **What to do:** Concepts are best explained as they happen. Demonstrate and comment using describing words during the child's play. e.g. during water play talk about ***full*** or ***empty***. You could also encourage children to find objects that are ***soft*** *or* ***hard*** or make cars go ***fast*** or ***slow***. It is best to focus on one concept at a time.	Concentrate on one concept at a time and try not to teach opposites at the same time e.g. use ***full*** and ***not full*** rather than ***full*** and ***empty***.	Introduce other concepts.

Using Spoken Language – KEY STRATEGIES 3 years - 3 years 11 months

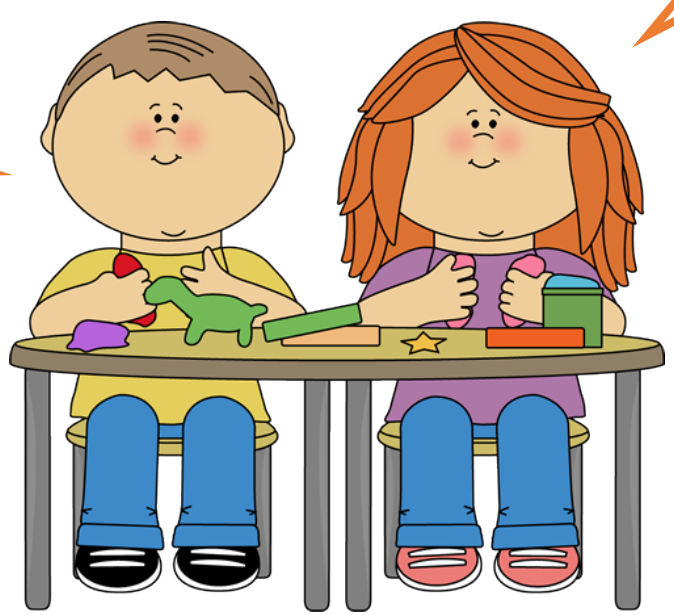
Engage in authentic conversations that are meaningful to the child.

WAIT! Give me time to organise my thoughts.

Add an extra word to what I say.

Let me ***hear*** the correct way to say something but don't tell me I am wrong.

Let me lead the play. Talk about what I am doing or saying.



Use the names of the things I am playing with rather than asking me '*What is this*?'

Activity	Using Spoken Language Suggested Activities (3 years – 3 years 11 months)	Too difficult?	Too easy?
Talking Time	***Building up sentences.*** Putting words together to form short sentences. **What to do:** Make a photo-book or take videos of children playing in the setting. Share these with the children and talk about what is happening. Encourage the children to use short sentences e.g. *'Jack is digging the sand.'*	Repeat the children's sentence back, adding an extra word if necessary.	Encourage the child to give more detail.
Story time	***Retelling a familiar story or a recent event.*** Beginning to use early storytelling (narrative) skills. **What to do:** Encourage the child to retell something that has happened or a familiar story. You could use puppets and props or simple picture books to encourage them tell a story.	Use picture cards of a familiar story or event. Start with two pictures and build up.	Expand the number of pictures. Encourage the child to put pictures in order and tell you the story.
Playing Shops	***Linking vocabulary and ideas together.*** Using scenarios to extend the child's language. **How to play:** When playing shops alongside the children, take it in turns to be the shopkeeper and the customer. Use sentences like "What do you need?" Model some responses which include ***and*** or ***because*** e.g. "I need flour **and** eggs.", "I need balloons ***because*** I'm having a party!" Use your voice to emphasise key words ***and***, ***because*** etc.	Focus on using ***and*** to link two vocabulary items.	Shop for more items and ask ***why*** questions to encourage the child to use ***because***.
Toys' Tea Party	***Using everyday words and sentences during imaginative play.*** Encouraging children to ask a range of questions. **How to play:** Arrange a tea party with a doll, teddy bear and other toys. Have a cup, plate, fork and spoon for each toy and pretend food/drink (or real if possible). Model asking a variety of question types e.g. 'Who would like a cup of tea?' 'What does teddy want to eat?' Encourage the child to ask questions – give them time for the child to use the modelled language.	Focus on one type of question (start with ***who***).	Extend the use of questions in other areas of the setting.

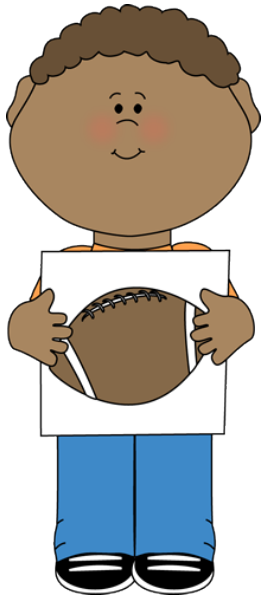
Speech - KEY STRATEGIES 3 years - 3 years 11 months

Listen and respond to what the child says rather than how clear their speech is.

Repeat my words using the correct sounds so I can ***hear*** it.

Ask me to use actions or show you what I want.

Do not tell me I said something wrong or ask me to repeat it.



Respond to the words I am saying, not how clear I am.

Get down to my level so I can see how you make sounds. Don't expect me to copy you.

Speech Suggested Activities (3 years – 3 years 11 months)
Activities suggested in all other areas of communication will support the development of speech. Here are some everyday activities which can also help to develop children's speech:
Go on a listening walk (listen and talk about environmental sounds).
Listen to and talk about all sorts of sounds – high and low sounds, loud and quiet sounds…
Tune into rhymes – say and sing rhymes every day.
Clap out syllables in familiar words. Have fun with longer words e.g. cat-er-pi-llar.
Set up a sound table/feely bags – play 'What's in the box?'
Rhyming stories: Read, and re-read, stories with easy-to-hear rhyming patterns. Encourage the children to predict the rhyming word when you pause on it and think of others that rhyme.