

ALVER VALLEY SCHOOLS EARLY YEARS NETWORK



Welcome

**NOVEMBER 2024
NETWORK**



**EARLY YEARS
NETWORK**



The Vision for the Network

A space for Early Years practitioners to meet, share good practice and work collaboratively to develop our practice to improve outcomes for children in our local area.

**NETWORKING &
SHARING
PRACTICE WITH
OTHER
PRACTITIONERS**

**A SHORT INPUT
ON AN AREA OF
INTEREST TO THE
GROUP**

**SHARING &
SIGNPOSTING
OF USEFUL
RESOURCES**

Communication and Language



Why is it
important?

How can we
respond?

What does the research tell us?

What does our framework say?

What evidence based strategies can we use?

Research

- Early language is **THE** most important factor influencing literacy levels at age eleven.
- Children with poor language at age five are six times less likely to reach expected standard in literacy at age 11 than those with good language.

Link with both comprehension and decoding.



What about maths?

Research

Children with poor language are 11 times less likely to reach the expected standard in maths.

Language matters for English, maths but also wellbeing...

Children who are able to articulate what they are thinking and how they are feeling, and who have those thoughts and feelings valued, are likely to report a greater sense of well being.

Speak for Change, 2021

The Oracy Network



By age five, how far are UK children brought up in the most disadvantaged families behind those brought up in the most well-off families in their vocabulary?

Speech, Language and Communication in England

This is the latest data

'Year group, by type of SEN provision and type of need - 2016 to 2024' for Speech, Language and Communications needs in England between 2020/21 and 2023/24

Move and reorder table headers

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Early years	13,627	16,429	19,148	20,097
Reception	34,135	36,236	39,600	44,078
Year group 1	39,682	43,778	45,516	48,140

Footnotes

1. Includes state-funded nursery, primary, secondary and special schools, non-maintained special schools and state-funded alternative provision schools. Does not include independent schools.

Communication & Language Educational Programme

The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development.

Children's back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The **number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial.**

By commenting on what children are interested in or doing, and echoing back what they say with new vocabulary added, practitioners will build children's language effectively. ...



... Reading frequently to children, and engaging them actively in stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems, and then providing them with **extensive opportunities to use and embed new words in a range of contexts**, will give children the opportunity to thrive.

Through **conversation, storytelling and role play**, where children share their ideas with support and **modelling** from their teacher, and sensitive questioning that invites them to elaborate, children become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures.

Framework shaped by Research = Emphasise on Language

Evidence suggests that language growth is optimised by adult input which features talking **with** rather than **to** children, providing rich and diverse language models, and a gradual transition from contextualised to decontextualised conversations about things outside the immediate context.

(Rowe, 2022; Rowe and Snow, 2020).

The number of **back-and-forth conversations** adults have with children are particularly important. In a recent study, the number of '**conversational turns**' which children experienced in their preschool settings were found to be **the strongest predictor of their vocabulary skills**. (Duncan et al., 2020).

Enhancing back-and-forth conversations

[Based on: EEF
Improving early
education through
high-quality
interactions](#)

Quality not just quantity of conversations matters

Shared or interactive reading, where the book is a focus for conversation between educators and children.

Discussions beyond here and now:
What has happened (past)
What might happen (future)

Imagination-rich discussions during pretend play.

Conversations where we teach and model new words to children in a natural way.

Adult conversation behaviours that have been shown to lead to greater language growth:

Social contingency' – joining in the child's activities, following their lead, and making comments that are relevant to whatever it is they are attending to or interested in

Expansions and recasts of children's language: echoing back what a child has said in grammatically correct and expanded form, adding new vocabulary and modelling language structures.

Keeping conversations going - looking expectantly at the child & asking open-ended questions

Use of sophisticated vocabulary, and using a lot of new vocabulary repeatedly, in meaningful contexts.

The most **powerful context** of all for language development is **interactive book reading**, which has been shown to **improve receptive and expressive vocabulary and narrative skills**.

(Cabell et *al.*, 2019; Grolig et *al.*, 2020; Rowland et *al.*, 2016); Mol et *al.*, 2009).

Sharing books offers opportunities for extended conversations, increases opportunities for joint attention, and enables adults to use higher-quality language with the sort of vocabulary and language structures not used in everyday conversation. It also helps children hear and use decontextualised language – language beyond the here and now.

Guided play following shared book reading, and approaches which combine *implicit* (meeting a new word repeatedly in different contexts) and *explicit vocabulary instruction* (direct teaching, with the adult giving definitions of a new word and examples of its use) have also been shown to enhance receptive and expressive vocabulary.

(Marulis and Neuman, 2010; Toub et al., 2018).

Decontextualised language

Language about a situation they're not currently experiencing - they're having to put things into context for you so that you understand.

- Link for parents from [Tiny Happy People](#)
- Link for staff or parents from [Tiny Happy People](#)

Tiny Happy People – resources to share with parents



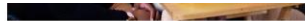
Tools for Talking 12-18 months: Following baby's lead

When your baby starts to point and say their first words, it's a good idea to let their interests lead your chats together and ask a few simple questions.



Tools for Talking 18-24 months: Expanding on toddlers' words

Easy tips for helping your 18-24 month old with their language learning. As toddlers start to string a few words together, help them go that step further by expanding on the things they say.



Tools for Talking 2-3 years: Responding to toddlers with longer sentences

Build toddlers' understanding of sentence structure by repeating their sentences back to them with corrections, allowing them to hear how sentences are formed correctly.



Tools for Talking 3-4 years: Talking about past and future

Help grow your child's language skills and understanding of the world by introducing them to talk about the past and future.



Tools for Talking 4-5 years: Exploring word sounds

Help grow your child's understanding of phonics by playing with rhyming and sounding out different words so they can hear things that sound the same or different.



Key talking tips for any age

Find ways to bond with your child and help develop their language skills, no matter their age.

Practising talking in different tenses



Planning adventures with teddy

Use toys to help create a future adventure with your child.



Talking about the past

Encouraging your child to talk about past events will help them think beyond the present moment.



Play the tomorrow game

The Tomorrow Game is a simple way to encourage talking about the future.



Play memory games

Why memory games based on your everyday activities are a brilliant way to learn.

Fun activities to boost language development



Retelling stories together



Building towers against the



Playing Teddy says together



Games with a ball

From Strong Foundations in the First Years of School

Well-planned play gives children opportunities to practise using their knowledge and skills to:

- explore and make sense of the world around them
- learn to focus their attention
- learn to communicate and cooperate with others

Discussing play in Yr R classes the report goes on to say:

If play does not challenge children's thinking, problem-solving, persistence and collaboration, it is ineffective in developing their executive functioning. Such poorly planned play keeps children busy but does not support their development: **their hands and bodies are active, but their minds are not.**

Strong Foundations in the First Years of School

Teachers need to think carefully about play-based learning and the **role of the adult**. For example, they should plan and prepare resources for play that reflect children's differing knowledge and broaden their interests. When adults, through their **interactions**, help children name new objects and thoughtfully explore resources with them, they develop children's language, extend their vocabulary and introduce them to knowledge of the world.



LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Practitioners should be **ambitious for all** children. To do this they **must** consider the individual **needs, interests,** and **development** of each child in their care. They **must use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience** for each child in **all areas of learning and development.**

Acting on concerns

Throughout the early years, if a provider is worried about a child's progress in any prime area, practitioners **must** discuss this with the child's parents and/or carers and agree how to support the child. Practitioners **must** consider whether a child needs any additional support, including whether they may have a special educational need or disability which requires specialist support.



Key concepts:

Conversational
turns

Back and
forth
conversations

Shared
attention

Scaffolding

Decontextualised
language

Building
vocabulary

SIGNPOSTING & RESOURCES

EEF Article: [Improving early education through high-quality interactions](#)

Video: [The ShREC Approach](#)

EEF Blog: [The ShREC Approach](#)

Ofsted report: [Strong foundations in the first years of school](#)

Tiny Happy People [website](#) with clips and tips to share with parents and staff

