

# Birth to three

# Examples to support learning

Babies and toddlers thrive when you show a genuine interest in them, join in, and respond warmly.

Regularly using the babies and toddlers' names helps them to pay attention to what the practitioner is saying for example: "Chloe, have some milk." It is important to minimise background noise, so do not have music playing all the time.

You can help babies with their understanding by using gestures and context. Suggestion: point to the cup and say "cup".



Wait for the baby or toddler to speak or communicate with a sound or a look first – so that they are leading the conversation. When responding, expand on what has been said (for example, add a word). If a baby says "bottle", you could say "milk bottle". In a natural way, use the same word repeatedly in different contexts: "Look, a bottle of milk– oh, you've finished your bottle." Adding a word while a toddler is playing gives them the model of an expanded phrase. It also keeps the conversation on their topic of interest. Suggestion: if they say "bag", you could say: "Yes, daddy's bag".

Take time and 'tune in' to the messages babies are giving you through their vocalisations, body language and gestures.

Where you can, give meaning to the baby's gestures and pointing for example:

"Oh, I see, you want the teddy."



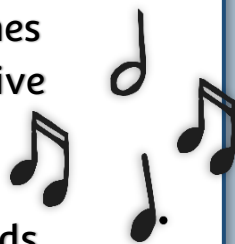
Chat with babies and toddlers all the time but be careful not to overwhelm them with talk. Allow babies and toddlers to take the lead and then respond to their communications.

## Communication & Language 1

When babies and toddlers are holding and playing with objects, say what they are doing for example: "You've got the ball," and "Shake the rattle."

Talking about what you are doing helps babies learn language in context. Suggestion: "I'm pouring out your milk into the cup".

Singing, action rhymes and sharing books give children rich opportunities to understand new words.



Babies love singing and music. Sing a range of songs and play a wide range of different types of music. Move with babies to music.

Babies and toddlers love action rhymes and games like 'Peepo'. As they begin to join in with the words and the actions, they are developing their attention and listening. Allow babies time to anticipate words and actions in favourite songs.

Using exaggerated intonation and a sing-song voice (infant-directed speech) helps babies tune in to language.

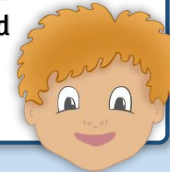
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Play with groups of objects (different small world animals, or soft toys, or tea and picnic sets). Make sure you name things whilst playing and talk about what you are doing.

Make time to connect with babies, toddlers and young children. Tune in and listen to them and join in with their play, indoors and outside.

You can help toddlers and young children listen and pay attention by using gestures like pointing and facial expressions.



Allow plenty of time to have conversations together, rather than busily rushing from one activity to the next. When you know a young child well, it is easier to understand them and talk about their family life. For example: "OK, I see. You went to the shops with Aunty Maya."

When talking with young children, give them plenty of processing time (at least 10 seconds). This gives them time to understand what you have said and think of their reply.

When appropriate, you can check children's understanding by asking them to point to pictures. Or ask them to point to particular objects in a picture. For example: "Can you show me the big boat?"



Share picture books every day with children. Encourage them to talk about the pictures and the story. Comment on the pictures – for example: "It looks like the boy is a bit worried..." and wait for their response. You might also ask them about the pictures: "I wonder what the caterpillar is doing now?"

## Communication & Language 2

Toddlers and young children will pronounce some words incorrectly. Instead of correcting them, reply to what they say and use the words they have mispronounced. Children will then learn from your positive model, without losing the confidence to speak.

Toddlers and young children sometimes hesitate and repeat sounds and words when thinking what to say.

You can help toddlers who are having tantrums by being calm and reassuring.

Help toddlers to express what's angering them by suggesting words to describe their emotions, like 'sad' or 'angry'. You can help further by explaining in simple terms why you think they may be feeling that emotion. Describe their emotions, like 'sad' or 'angry.'

Help toddlers and young children to focus their attention by using their name: "Fatima, put your coat on."



Listen patiently. Do not say the words for them. If the child or parents are distressed or worried by this, contact a speech and language therapist for advice.

Books with just pictures and no words can especially encourage conversations. Tell children the names of things they do not know and choose books that introduce interesting new vocabulary to them.

Encourage children to talk. Do not use too many questions: four comments to every question is a useful guide.

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