

A PARENTS GUIDE TO...

Developing Communication Skills— How can parents help at home?



Why is it so important for young people to be effective communicators?

“Good communication is the gateway to learning, friendships, academic achievement and success at work.” Communication Trust

This broad field is typically broken down into the separate facets of Speech, Language and Communication (SLC). Although some young people have difficulty in these areas and require targeted support from an SLCN specialist, when considering all young people it is important to model good communication skills to nurture and enhance their confidence and ability in this area. Within our setting it is important to consider how parents, alongside the school, can enhance the academic and informal language of their child and can support their ability to articulate with maturity and confidence their opinions and viewpoint.

Confident speech typically refers to:

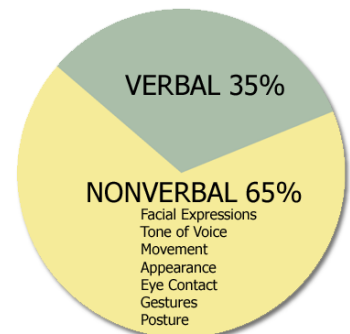
- Speaking with a clear voice, in a way that makes speech interesting and meaningful
- Speaking without hesitating too much or without repeating words or sounds
- Being able to make sounds like ‘k’ and ‘t’ clearly so people can understand what you say

Language refers to talking and understanding:

- Joining words together into sentences, stories and conversations
- Knowing and choosing the right words to explain what you mean
- Making sense of what people say

Communication refers to how we interact with others:

- Using language or gestures in different ways, for example to have a conversation or to give someone directions
- Being able to consider other people’s point of view
- Using and understanding body language and facial expressions, such as:
 - knowing when someone is bored
 - being able to listen to and look at people when having a conversation
 - knowing how to take turns and to listen as well as talk



How might my child display a difficulty in this area?

In older children and young people it can be harder to recognise difficulties with speech, language and communication. **Most young people starting secondary school are able to listen for half an hour or more. They can:**

- remember new words after hearing them just a couple of times
- understand word play in jokes and give a clear explanation when something has gone wrong
- cope with the change to a more independent way of learning and if they don’t understand something they ask questions

How can I help at home?

- Encourage opportunities to talk without making young people feel under pressure.
- Use opportunities for chatting, like mealtimes.
- Give everyone a chance to talk about their day, including you.
- Help by explaining any words or phrases that they don't understand.
- Show that you are interested by making time to listen.
- Model 'positive communication' skills during your interactions– such as good eye contact, positive body language/posture, welcoming greetings etc.
- Turn off technology to allow time to talk
- Alter your language between the office and home, to model the differences in informal and formal talk
- Get in to a debate, pick a topic you know will ruffle their feathers and pick the opposing viewpoint to theirs (whether you believe it or not). See how well they can persuade you on a topic they feel passionate about.

Where can I find useful information?



Who can I contact at the school for advice?

Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo)– Mrs G Reed, greed@thelangton.kent.sch.uk