



# Promoting robust language development for all children

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# What is this educator doing to provide a rich language environment?



- The educator is responding to each of the children's communication attempts by repeating their phrase back/confirming phrase or extending. This is providing a good model for the children as well as confirming to the child that they are being understood – this may reduce frustration and encourage further communication.
- She is being repetitive with her language – children are hearing a similar sentence structure over and over, however, the sentence may differ with the animal the educator is talking about. Repeating the child's communication attempt so the children are hearing a sentence more than once.
- She is asking a range of different open 'wh' questions: e.g. 'what's on this picture?' 'Who could walk?' 'Where do the sheep live?' 'Why do the cows not live in the water?'
- Follows the child's lead in conversation and involves the children when asking them to point to the picture – she does not ask questions over and over, allows the child to lead and asks questions when appropriate to do so – does not dominate.
- She uses a range of different types of words in the activity:
  - Different nouns (farm animals)
  - Verbs (walking, hiding)
  - Prepositions (over the hill, in the water)
  - Feelings (happy place, scared etc)
- Slow pace – waiting for the children to respond to the questions
- Modelled/scripted an answer to a 'what?' question when children had not answered after pause: 'what will you do when you find the sheep? Educator: 'will you say hello?' Helps children understand what answer may be expected.
- Using toys (farm animals/farmer) as well as the picture to support language learning through play
- When one child seems to be quieter – perhaps language difficulties – she asks the question directly to child rather than to group. Also narrows a question down to a 'yes/no' question to involve child.
- And much more.....

# The 5 elements of a language rich environment



## 5. Adult responsiveness

The adult's responses to the child's attempts to communicate are

- Reliable and frequent
- Contingent – responds to the child's intent
- Sensitive to the child's language abilities



# Responsive Language Stimulation

Types of Responses		
Child-oriented	Interaction- promoting	Language-modelling
“create and maintain a shared conversational focus”	“encourage the child into active dialogue”	“provide examples of language structures, vocabulary and purposes”
Waiting	Pausing	Labelling
Extending	Open questions	Scripting
Follow the child’s lead	Imitating	
	Confirming	

# Responsive Language Stimulation

## Child-oriented - “create and maintain a shared conversational focus”

- **Waiting** - Adult uses a slow pace during conversation; adult actively listens to children when talking; adult does not dominate the conversation
- **Extending** – Adult repeats what child said and adds a small amount of information – adding complexity to the sentence and/or more information about meaning – Child: I done puzzle. Adult: Yes – you did the hard puzzle well.
- **Follow the child’s lead** – Adult waits to see what is the child’s focus of attention and the actions they initiate and joins in the child’s game rather than trying to shift the child’s focus

# Responsive Language Stimulation

## Interaction- promoting - “encourage the child into active dialogue”

- **Pausing** – Adult pauses expectantly and frequently during interactions to encourage child turn-taking and active participation
- **Open questions** – Adult asks questions to which he or she does not know the answer; what , where, when how and why questions.
- **Imitating** – Adult imitates and repeats what the child says exactly
- **Confirming** – Adult responds to all child utterances by confirming understanding of the child’s intentions. Adult does not ignore communicative bids e.g. child points and says “that” - Adult says – oh you would like to play with the tractor

# Responsive Language Stimulation

**Language-modelling-** “provide examples of language structures, vocabulary & purposes”

- **Labelling** – Adult provides labels for unfamiliar actions, objects, or abstract concepts (e.g. feelings).
- **Scripting** – Adult provides a routine to the child for representing and activity (e.g. first you go up to the counter. Then you say “I want a burger please”.....) and engages the child in known routines (e.g. Now it’s time for circle time. What do we do first?)



# Making it work for every child: when is the optimal time for language stimulation?

Reflect on your last day in your early years setting.....

Which activities/times of day created the most “chatter”?

Share these ideas if you are working through this CPD in a group

Make some notes if you are working alone

Check out Handout 2 for a place to post up your ideas on a virtual noticeboard and ‘post it’ note and to see ideas from other schools

The handout has a weblink and instructions (Padlet) – please join in so we can share and learn from each other even if we are not able to meet!

