

Using Nursery Routines and Activities to Support Communication



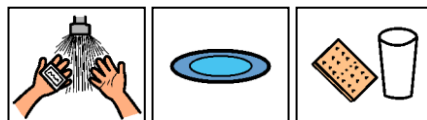
Nursery Routines

The routines within the nursery are an ideal opportunity to make use of **gesture/sign** to support children's understanding and use of language.

The following suggestions relate to different aspects of the routine in nursery.

Snack time

- Offer choices at snack time using pictures or symbols.
- Use symbols/pictures to show the sequence of snack routine e.g. wash hands, get plate etc.



- Remember to use comments to support vocabulary development. e.g. "That's a crunchy apple."

Circle time

- You can use cue cards for feedback e.g. "good sitting," or "good looking".
- Consider the size of your group in relation to children maintaining attention and waiting for their turn. Also remember that smaller groups can encourage participation from less confident children.
- Use visual cues if you are giving instructions. e.g. Show a photo or symbol of the outdoor area when lining up to go outside.

Story time

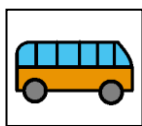
- Maximise opportunities for interaction during the story by using props or story bags.
- You can build up a visual picture of the story sequence by using story boards with pictures that represent characters from the book.
- Encourage active listening during the story by asking the children to hold up a puppet/picture character when the character is mentioned in the story.



- Consider the language levels of the children and where appropriate use touch and feel books and books which incorporate flaps and repetitive lines.
- Adapt stories to meet the differing language needs of children within your group. Use gesture/sign, props and emphasis of key words. Simplify the story as required.

Song time

- Offer choices at song time using symbols/pictures or objects. Ask the children to choose.
e.g. “Do you want “Wheels on the Bus” or “Twinkle Twinkle”? “



You can do this with objects too. e.g. a toy duck for “5 Little Ducks”, a spider for “Incey Wincey”.

- Use objects or pictures within the song. e.g. You could let the children choose the next verse in ‘Old McDonald’ by using toy animals.
- Remember to sing slowly then it’s easier for children to join in.
- In familiar songs leave pauses for the children to fill the gap e.g. completing a line, or in “Row the boat” (crocodile verse) “Don’t forget to scream!”
- Have a song board (Velcro pictures) so that the children can build up the song visually as you sing. e.g. “5 Speckled Frogs”.



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Games and activities

Most games you play in nursery can be used as language learning opportunities. You could use or adapt the ideas below:

Listening and attention games

- Try using 'stop and go' with musical instruments. If you are in a group, say "Stop" and "Go" and support this with pictures and gesture.



- Hide a noisy toy somewhere in the room. See if the children can hear where it is hiding. You can also talk about where the toy is e.g. "It's in the box", "It's under the blanket".
- Gather some everyday objects that can make a noise, e.g. keys, shaker, squeaky toy. Show them to the children and let them hear the sound they make. Hide them behind a screen, and make a noise with one of the items. Can they identify the object that makes the sound?
- Shopping game: let the children have turns to be the shopkeeper and you tell them what you would like to buy from the pretend shop (1 or 2 items).
- When tidying up give specific instructions, e.g. "Put the doll in the bed."; "Put the brick under the table."

Vocabulary games

- Use pictures of everyday vocabulary and play a game where the children take turns to post a picture.
- Picture matching games such as pairs, lotto and dominoes are good opportunities to reinforce vocabulary. Put the pictures in a bag and let the children take one out. This encourages anticipation and provides an opportunity to name their picture.
- You can do the same with inset puzzles -put the pieces into a box/bag, as above, before placing them in the board.
- Have fun hiding and finding things! Try playing hiding games with pictures or objects and encourage the children to tell you what they have found and/or where they have found it.



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