



EYFS Parent Workshop: Communication and Language

ShREC High Quality
Interactions Toolkit

Supporting language through meaningful interactions



Why Early Communication matters

Brain Development: The first three years of life involve rapid brain growth where back-and-forth interactions build strong neural pathways for learning.

Foundations for Learning: Spoken language underpins all other areas of development, preparing children for future literacy, reading comprehension, and writing skills.

Emotional Regulation: When young children learn the words to express their feelings and needs, they are better equipped to manage and regulate their emotions.

Social Relationships: Talking and listening help children connect with others, build empathy, share emotions, and form friendships.



Why Interactions Matter

Children learn language through interaction.

Children develop language best when adults:

- listen carefully
- respond meaningfully
- build on what children say
- engage in back-and-forth conversations

Key message: Talking with children is more powerful than talking to children.



Reflect: Your Current Practice

Think about your day with your child.

Questions:

- When do the best conversations happen?
- What encourages your child to speak?
- At what time of the day does your child talk the most?
- At what time of the day does your child talk the least?
- If your child is non-verbal, how do you communicate with them?



What Is a High-Quality Interaction?

A high-quality interaction is when an adult:

notices what a
child is doing

joins the child's
focus

responds
thoughtfully

extends the
conversation

These interactions support:

- vocabulary development
- thinking skills
- confidence in communication



The ShREC Framework

One approach to supporting strong interactions is ShREC.

ShREC stands for:
Sh – Share Attention
R – Respond
E – Expand
C – Conversation

This helps adults move from simple comments to rich conversations.



Sh - Share Attention

Shared attention means:

- getting down to the child's level
- focusing on what the child is interested in
 - showing genuine curiosity

Instead of directing, adults join the moment.



Sh - Share Attention

Example in school:

Child: building a tower.

Adult joins and says: "I can see you're stacking the blocks really carefully."

The adult is not leading the play, they are sharing the focus.



Sh - Share Attention

Example at home:

Child: looking at a bird in the garden

Adult joins and says: "Look! I can see a little bird in the garden. It's hopping along the grass."

The adult is not leading the play; they are sharing the focus.



R- Respond

Responding means:

- acknowledging what the child says or does
 - following their lead
 - showing interest

Adults can respond by:

- commenting
- modelling vocabulary
- narrating play



R- Respond

Example in school:

Child says: "Look, a bug!"

Adult responds: "Yes, I can see it. It's a tiny black beetle crawling along the path."

The adult adds language while staying with the child's interest.



R- Respond

Example at home:

Child says: "Look at my picture!"

Adult responds: *"Wow, I can see it! You've drawn a big yellow sun. Tell me about your picture."*

The adult responds to what the child has said, acknowledges their interest and encourages them to continue the interaction.



E-Expand

Expanding means:

- building on what the child says
- adding new vocabulary
- modelling full sentences

Adults should aim to extend children's ideas gently.



E- Expand

Example in school:

Child says: "Dog."

Adult expands: "Yes, that's a big brown dog. I think it's wagging its tail because it's excited."

The adult adds language without forcing repetition.



E-Expand

Example at home:

Child says: "Look at my teddy!"

Adult expands: "Yes, that's your soft teddy. He's sitting on the sofa waiting for his bedtime cuddle."

The adult adds language without forcing repetition.



C – conversation

Conversation is when adults and children engage in back-and-forth talk.

Key features:

- time for children to respond
- open comments rather than constant questions
 - sustained interaction

These exchanges help children develop thinking and communication skills.



C – conversation

Example in school:

Child: “I made a tower.”

Adult: “That tower is really tall! How did you make it stay up?”

Child: “I used big blocks.”

Adult: “I can see the big blocks at the bottom. That helps keep it strong.”



C – conversation

Example at home:

Child: “I’ve got toast.”

Adult: “You do! Your toast looks nice and crispy. What are you going to put on it?”

Child: “Butter.”

Adult: “Butter on your toast — yummy! Is the butter melting because the toast is warm?”



Supporting Quieter Children and reluctant talkers

Some children may need extra support to communicate.

Strategies include:

These might be children who:

- are new to the setting
- are learning English
- lack confidence speaking
- prefer observing before joining in

- building strong relationships
- avoiding pressure to speak
- using small group interactions
- allowing time to respond

Even small attempts to communicate should be acknowledged positively.



Reflection

Reflect on Your Interactions

- When do you use ShREC naturally?
- Which part do you find easiest?
- Which part could you develop further?

Please complete the questionnaire



Lancashire Walk and Talk Scheme

Please take a 'top tips' booklet alongside a pack of communication and language support cards. These will help you at home.