

EVERY CHILD, EVERY SETTING

EARLY YEARS CHECKLIST

COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

- ☐ **Repeat back** speech which is unclear to model to a child
- ☐ Encourage **face to face communication** so you can model production of good speech
- ☐ Offer spaces for individual play and smaller group play. Create **quieter spaces with fewer distractions** for targeted work
- ☐ Get to a **child's level** when communicating. Start sentences using a child's name, **use shorter sentences** and **simple language**
- ☐ Use songs and materials which are **highly motivating** to capture and extend attention
- ☐ **Visually label** all resources and guide children to these
- ☐ Use **choice boards** and **model choosing** multiple times during a session
- ☐ Encourage children to **"show me"** if they can't tell you
- ☐ Give children **time to respond** and **praise and reinforce** all attempts they make. Give instructions **one step at a time**
- ☐ Create a **language rich environment** to expose children to lots of quality language
- ☐ Use a **total communication approach** which includes facial, expression, sign and speech
- ☐ **Repeat language** and **teach new words**. **Narrate** what children are doing, what they're playing with, how they might be feeling

AUTISM AND SOCIAL COMMUNICATION

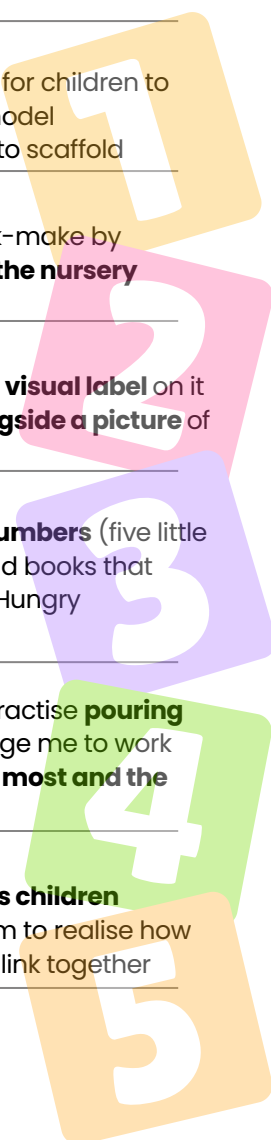
- ☐ **Model turn-taking** and incorporate into all group times. Provide **positive reinforcement** whenever a child demonstrates good skills
- ☐ Structure **small group activities** which are **of interest** to a child to provide more motivation for sharing and turn-taking
- ☐ Build in **partner talk** or **paired activities** during sessions.
- ☐ Use **visuals and objects to help with transitions** and routines. This could be traffic lights, now/next boards, visual timetables
- ☐ Make sure that **routines are the same** every day and prepare children when things change
- ☐ **Positively reinforce** when a child is able to follow an adult led instruction or task
- ☐ **Limit access** to certain toys so they only come out on specified days if they are distracting for a child
- ☐ Use a **timer** to show how much longer is left using a toy and then help them to choose their next activity
- ☐ Provide **warning before transition points** and **use visuals and objects** to support routines and also changes
- ☐ Use a **visual timetable** for all children and refer back to this at every transition point
- ☐ Use **songs and rhyme** to support with transitions points e.g., 'this is the way we wash our hands'
- ☐ Use language such as **"now, next, then"** and encourage children to also use these terms

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COGNITION AND LEARNING

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|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|--|
| ☐ | Set up a smaller group story time where you can tailor the experience | ☐ | Play alongside a child and scaffold their play at intervals |
| ☐ | Have a range of books available throughout the session and easily accessible | ☐ | Make sure there isn't too much to choose from in one go, limit choices and support with visuals and objects |
| ☐ | Have books related to topics of interest for children who are more reluctant readers | ☐ | Make sure you have a variety of toys including toys for younger children for those who are at an earlier stage of play |
| ☐ | Teach early phonics skills through stories, songs and rhymes | ☐ | Use language like " what will happen if .. " to prompt thinking and problem-solving |
| ☐ | Accompany stories with props, figures, fancy dress and other things which bring the story to life | ☐ | Make sure all learning is broken down into smaller steps |
| ☐ | Use music to embed learning throughout the day | ☐ | Have toys and activities out for children to explore cause and effect , model problem-solving language to scaffold |
| ☐ | Create interest bags to be used in small groups for exploring concepts, language and stories | ☐ | Encourage children to mark-make by including activities across the nursery environment |
| ☐ | Keep focused tasks short and visually scaffolded i.e., with a timer | ☐ | Make sure everything has a visual label on it which shows the word alongside a picture of what it means |
| ☐ | Point out shapes, colours and patterns during all activities and have toys where children can practise sorting and matching | ☐ | Sing songs which involve numbers (five little ducks, ten green bottles, read books that have numbers in (The Very Hungry Caterpillar, Ten Black Dots) |
| ☐ | Have resources around that are related to number and quantity e.g., number beads, blocks, stickers, cutters, posters | ☐ | Set up games where I can practise pouring and measuring and challenge me to work out which container has the most and the least in |
| ☐ | During a turn-taking game keep a tally of the number of goes each child has had. Find a way to include dice and counting during games children are motivated by | ☐ | Tailor new learning to things children already know and help them to realise how different topics or concepts link together |



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PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL

- ☐ Make sure the environment is **calm and organised**, and **routines are consistent**
- ☐ Take the time to **build relationships**. Identify things the child likes and spend time doing them together. Focus on **key person time**
- ☐ Give children **reassuring non-verbal messages** as well as telling them how much you like and care about them
- ☐ Remember how unsettling transitions can feel and give lots of **warning and explanations**
- ☐ Make sure that all staff have an understanding of **behaviour as communication**. Look for triggers that cause me to become upset and try to reduce these
- ☐ Create **safe, calm spaces** and support children in knowing when to use these. Talk to children about staying safe
- ☐ Talk to **parents and carers about co-regulation** and support them to use strategies at home
- ☐ Talk to children about how they feel '**name it to tame it**' and teach all children regulation skills.
- ☐ Build a **culture of reflection** amongst adults to help them respond effectively to challenging behaviours
- ☐ **Reinforce good choices** and talk to about safety and how much you care about a child's safety
- ☐ Give **choices** and remind children of what they should be doing in a positive way
- ☐ Model **language for turn-taking** and social play "can I join in?"

PHYSICAL AND/OR SENSORY

- ☐ Ensure that **physical access to all learning spaces, indoors and outdoors, is safe**. This could be through using ramps and making sure that changes in surface are easy to see and having some adapted play equipment
- ☐ Make sure you have an **Intimate Care policy** in place
- ☐ Have **quiet spaces or quieter times** during each session and regularly audit the environment
- ☐ Make sure there is **daily messy or dry sensory play**
- ☐ Have a range of objects and activities available for **sensory processing** and make sure there are ways I can get the sensory feedback that I need safely
- ☐ Talk to children about **why things happen** e.g., why hand driers are loud, why fire alarms go off
- ☐ Plan circle times, outdoor play, use of parachutes etc. to **practise gross motor skills**
- ☐ Make sure there are **clear spaces** for me to walk, run and crawl on a range of different surfaces
- ☐ Have **opportunities outdoors** for balancing, climbing, swinging, jumping, pulling, pushing, hanging, spinning
- ☐ Practise **pouring, picking up and cutting** at snack and lunchtimes. Make sure you model each time
- ☐ Have available a range of tasks to promote **fine motor skills** e.g., dough to mould, threading activities, tweezers to grab, pegs, ribbons etc.
- ☐ See **full OAP guidance** for strategies to support pupils with deafness or visual impairment.