

# Communication and Language at Rockwood Nursery School.

## What is it?

Communication and Language is essential not only for success in education but also for everyday life. It allows children to put their thoughts and feelings into signs/gestures and words that can be understood by others. As children develop in this area they will be able to question and therefore further their knowledge. More than this, communication and language is fun and rewarding and is open to creativity and imagination!

In the Revised EYFS CAL is broken down into three aspects:

## Listening and Attention

This aspect is about how young children learn to first respond to sounds around them, then listen for specific noises and gradually move to being able to sit, listen and respond appropriately to conversations; instructions; poems and stories. For the young child this skill takes a lot of practice and forms the foundation for future learning. Life is very busy and noisy so developing concentration and patience to listen is essential; at nursery we promote listening skills by setting up activities and areas specifically for listening and by allowing time and support for children to develop these skills. Our Forest School also promotes listening and attention; children play many games that rely on their ability to listen, for example, the children play 1,2,3, where are you? where they have to hide but then come back when the forest school leader calls out for them. When new tools are introduced listening and attention skills are essential for children to be able to use these tools safely.



## Understanding

This aspect is about how children come to understand the spoken word and respond appropriately. Children begin by copying others and often rely heavily on gesture to understand what is happening around them. When children learn to speak they also begin to understand the spoken word. We support speech with gesture and body language but eventually children are expected to understand words without pictures and prompts. In order to understand instructions children also need to be able to remember what has been asked of them and respond appropriately. Understanding is therefore a very complex skill. Adults need to be aware of children's capabilities and build on their skills, this is often done by following the children's interests and planning for experiences that we know they will enjoy both inside and out.



## Speaking

This aspect is about how children learn to communicate. Children begin by making noises and copying single words and eventually are able to string words together into complex sentences that take account of different audiences. Speaking can be for a variety of



purposes and at nursery we give children lots of different experiences in order to practice their speaking skills: from role play to exploring and describing. Adults support children's speech, offering new vocabulary and ideas. Sometimes they sensitively offer correct pronunciation and word endings. Adults celebrate their speech and often add it to children's personal books and displays. Most of all we give children time to speak and we listen!

### What we do at Rockwood to support children's CAL.

Every child is in a key person group to enable us to get to know individual children and families really well. The teacher and key person meet the child first in their own home and then at nursery with their special adult. Our home visits are relaxed and parents/carers can share with us their view of the child. This relationship between nursery and home continues through our open door policy. Parents are regularly invited to be involved in their child's education, through fun days, library and story sacks, regular progress meetings etc.

When children start nursery their group will be a family group - children are aged between 2-4 years which allows for the younger children to have older children as role models for speech and also to provide continuity for the children so that they can stay in the same group throughout their time at Rockwood.

The teachers work closely with both the key person and the children in each group to monitor the children's CAL development and to plan for their needs. The nursery now uses a Wellcomm program that is produced by speech and language therapists; this is an assessment

and planning tool which provides a detailed picture of every child's individual development in both the understanding and production of language. The Wellcomm is used to plan for children's nurture groups which form part of their session where children are involved in fun activities aimed at using and extending their language skills.

Speaking and listening are the first part of any session at nursery where the group sit together and discuss what is happening in nursery

that day. Children are encouraged to talk about what they have done and would like to do and things they have sometimes brought with them are shown to the whole group.

The children then move from their key group into the continuous provision either inside or outside. Speaking and listening occurs in all areas and is cross curricular but nursery works hard to provide a stimulating, rich environment for the children to enjoy with adults who enjoy spending time listening and talking to children. Children can work in small groups or individually and we aim to promote understanding and extend knowledge, concepts and vocabulary. Staff observe the children in play and any interests that the children talk about then can be used to enhance the learning environment in the days to come, providing further learning opportunities for the children.

Where needed nursery staff will work closely with outside agencies such as speech and language therapists and will offer support for children's speech and language development through small group and individual activities specifically targeting their needs. We also use visual cues and Makaton to help children with language difficulties.

Rockwood staff are committed and enthusiastic about children's speaking and listening development and strive for children to achieve their full potential.

