

## **37. Speech, Language and Communication Policy**

At La Petite Academy, we are committed to meeting the speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) of all children to give them the best possible foundation for their life, schooling and later years. If talk is valued and a desire to communicate is encouraged, children will become confident communicators. Research shows that language skills are linked to children's skills in school literacy, behaviour and future employment (NHS, 2021). We recognise that language and communication are an intrinsic element of life and learning as such is considered across every aspect of the nursery experience.

We acknowledge that on entry into the setting children will be bringing a variety of skills, knowledge and understanding in one or more languages, alongside gestures, to make their needs known. Some children may require help to listen, sustain attention and communicate appropriately and purposefully. We role model the conventions of communication and interaction, turn-taking, listening, initiating and sustaining appropriate conversation.

We value ongoing training to support the whole staff team to improve their skills, in order to become a 'total communication approach' setting. In 2022, the setting achieved 'Communication Friendly Status' (DfE) and the Manager holds the Level 7 NASENCO award, Early Years Professional Development Program (EYPDP), and Level 1 Makaton training. The SENDCO has completed Level 3 SENDCO training.

Please also refer to the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, Inclusion and Equality policies where applicable.

### **Guidelines**

The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development (Development Matters, 2023). There are two strands to communication and language outlined in the EYFS Early Learning Goals:

- Listening, Attention and Understanding
- Speaking

Both have the same prominent focus within the curriculum.

Indoors and outside, all practitioners should:

- Have a positive attitude to communication and language development in all children and high expectations of what all children can achieve.
- Have a good understanding of the learning outcomes within Development Matters and the stages of language acquisition, and how to support children to meet these.
- Attend training and read documentation as provided to ensure that they have a sound knowledge of current trends relating to communication and language in the early years.
- Ensure that planned adult led activities, planning in the moment activities and continuous provision/enhancements encourage communication and language development and are differentiated to meet children's needs.
- Ensure that they understand how appropriate IT can promote children's communication and language development (eg telephones, talking stars).
- Ensure that they interact effectively with children across the day to provide regular opportunities for children to comment, suggest, question, instruct and negotiate in a thoughtful and sensitive manner.
- Provide a wide range of well thought out resources, equipment and visual aids to support children at different stages of language acquisition and that these challenge and extend children's learning.
- Give children opportunities to communicate within meaningful activities with a purpose, including role play scenarios. For example,
- Allow children opportunities to speak with each other as well as with adults, in pairs, small groups and whole room settings.
- Use a range of stories, songs, rhymes and poems to support the development of children's listening and attention skills, including the core rhymes and books.
- Consider the language that they use themselves and understand how children will replicate this in their play.
- Use the strategies learnt in training in their daily practice. These include the 5-finger rule; the 10 second rule; stop, listen, respond; modelling; and vocabulary development strategies.
- Identify children who may need help in developing their language skills and speak with the SENDCO about this as soon as concerns arise.
- Value parent partnership in supporting children's language development and involve parents in discussions about their children's learning.
- Foster good relationships with outside agencies and follow any plans and targets that they set.

## **Early Identification of Speech, Language and Communication Needs**

We recognize that early identification and intervention are key to ensuring children make the progress and attainment of which they are capable.

Where staff have concerns about children's progress, these will be shared with the Special Educational Needs Co-Ordinator (SENDCO) Jojo Ebanks who will support with activity ideas, visual resources and additional assessments.

Assessments are made using a variety of the following, depending on need:

- EYFS Development Matters and Checkpoints (all children)
- Birth to Five Matters ranges
- Teaching Talking (GL assessments)
- Communication Profile (EYPDP)
- Attention checklist (EYPDP)
- Sound Development checklist
- Speech Sound Screen
- Every Child a Talker (ECAT)
- Universally Speaking
- Progress Check at Age 2 (Toddlers only)
- Early Talk Boost (Pre-School only)
- Early Years Profile (if child spends final term of EYFS in setting)

Should staff require the support of a specialist (e.g. speech therapist, Early Intervention Team practitioner) then parents' views will always be sought, and permission gained. The Progress Check is shared with the Health Visiting Team.

## **Resources**

There are many resources available within the nursery as well as externally to support and promote effective speech, language and communication. These include:

- The knowledge and experience of the SENDCO, manager and staff
- Internal and external training and courses
- Communication puppets
- Communication friendly spaces
- Information books and leaflets for parents (some of which are available in a variety of languages for those who speak English as an additional language)
- Support from the Early Intervention Team and Speech Therapists

- Providing activities and resources under the Communication and Language prime area of the EYFS
- SENDCo resources bag which contains a variety of activities aimed at children with specific needs however can be used at a universal level
- Targeted interventions such as Every Child a Talker (ECAT) and Early Talk Boost
- We also signpost staff and parents towards services which may help them in support children to develop their speech, language and communication skills e.g. through the Family Hubs.

This policy was adopted on	Signed on behalf of the nursery	Date for review
31/03/26	<i>Carol Daly</i>	30/04/2030