

# Childcare

**Level 1: Communication skills with children  
(A/502/3375)**



## Introduction

Our Skilled for Life resources are designed to provide you with ideas for delivering the unit content and engaging tasks and activities that will help learners work towards assessment.

The materials consist of stand-alone sheets that can be used in a range of ways to suit most situations. Whether you are working in a classroom or a less formal learning environment, with individual learners or with groups, it is hoped that you will find these sheets and the accompanying tutor guidance notes useful.

The sheets are in pdf format; they are downloadable and may be photocopied for use only within your institution. Alternatively, learners can access them on-screen – the write-in sections are interactive so that answers to activities can be recorded electronically.

Each sheet addresses one or more of the assessment criteria in the unit (A.C.s are clearly marked at the top of each page). Page 1 of each sheet provides a starter stimulus or introductory idea based around the suggested unit content in the specification; it can be used to explain key concepts, or as the basis for a discussion. You could use the stimulus to draw together key learning points and encourage learners to engage with the topic or concept from the outset. There is plenty of scope for you to introduce your own content or ideas as well.

Page 2 of each sheet includes tasks that will consolidate learners' knowledge and understanding and, in some cases, may provide evidence for assessment.

This tutor guidance document provides detailed suggestions for how to use each of the resource sheets in the unit, and includes tips and advice together with suggested extension activities, alternative ideas, useful reference sources and answers to activities where applicable.

## Unit overview

In this unit, learners will be introduced to the skills they need in order to communicate with children and look at some of the key features of effective communication. They will explore both verbal and non-verbal forms of communication and think about how they can interact effectively with children aged 0–5 years, through practising their own communication skills.

## Learning and teaching activities in this unit

### Resource sheet 1: Can you communicate well?

The purpose of this sheet is to demonstrate to learners the importance of good speaking and listening skills, and to encourage them to think about how they can ensure the clarity of their communications.

The sheet shows an example of the problems that can arise during the whisper game if either party is not speaking or listening carefully. Learners can play the whisper game themselves to see if they can pass a message accurately.

Alternatively, other games that explore communication can be used, such as the blindfold game or charades. In the blindfold game, pairs of learners sit face to face and have a conversation, with one of them blindfolded. The game helps to highlight how body language, eye contact and facial expressions are an important part of communication.

It is important in this context to discuss cultural differences affecting the ways in which we communicate; for example, in some cultures direct eye contact is seen as disrespectful.

To help learners fully appreciate the ways in which adults communicate with children, you could invite a group of parents and children to the session or ask learners to carry out an observation in an early-years setting. They can see for themselves the ways that the adults communicate, and reflect afterwards on the examples they saw, be they positive or negative. This observation could also be used to support assessment criterion 2.1, in which learners need to think about how children communicate with one another.

### **Activity 1: How do adults communicate with children?**

In the activity, learners must record their own examples of how adults communicate with children. They must provide five examples of non-verbal communication and five examples of verbal communication, and describe the effect their choice will have on their communication with children.

Learners can record their thoughts in the table on the activity sheet. They can use the image on the sheet as inspiration – it shows a positive example of communications where they can see the adult talking to the child, making eye contact and smiling. You may wish to begin the activity by reiterating the difference between verbal and non-verbal communication.

### **Resource sheet 2: How does play change?**

The purpose of this sheet is to demonstrate how children learn to communicate with their peers and how this skill develops over time.

The photographs show children engaged in different forms of play – solitary, parallel, co-operative and role-play. In each form of play, the children will also use different types of communication. Show learners the photographs and invite their comments about the different forms of play, and then discuss the types of communication as a group. You will need to emphasise that these different forms of play and the level of interaction shown by the children is related to their stage of development. Highlight the significance of play in the development of children's communication skills.

Learners should also be given the opportunity to observe children communicating with one another (see Resource sheet 1 above) by going into settings or watching videos of children at different stages of development.

### **Activity 2: How are these children communicating?**

In the activity, learners must work in groups to discuss the ways in which the children are communicating with one another. They need to record their ideas on the activity sheet.



To extend the activity, learners could be asked to suggest which stage of development each child might have reached.

### Resource sheet 3: How does this nursery help children communicate?

The purpose of this sheet is to encourage learners to think about their working environment and how, as adults, they can help children to communicate by making them feel happy, settled and included. Examples of good practice shown in the image provided include the reading corner, child-sized furniture and boxes of toys labelled with pictures as well as words. Ask learners how this environment is conducive to communication for children of this age and stage of development.

A guest speaker such as a speech therapist, early-years practitioner, bilingual teaching assistant or sign-language communicator could come in and speak to learners about the importance of communicating with children in a way that is appropriate to their age and stage of development and how this can be achieved. Ask learners to prepare questions in advance.

Following this session, initiate a tutor-led discussion to review ideas. Alternatively, you may wish to use case studies showing the ways in which children may face different barriers to communication (for example, cultural, physical or language). You could then talk about how these might be overcome.

### Activity 3: How does communication change?

In Activity 3, Part 1, learners are asked to list five different ways that adults can interact with children to help them communicate. They are also asked to explain how each idea helps. Space has been provided on the activity sheet; however, this information could also be captured in a discussion.

In Part 2, learners are asked to complete a leaflet covering appropriate ways to communicate with children in two different age ranges; 0–3 years and 3–5 years. They must identify two different ways of communicating and then adapt each idea so that it is suitable for children in the two age ranges shown (0–3 years and 3–5 years). This activity is designed to allow learners to appreciate that their communication style may change as the children develop.



As an extension activity, more confident learners could produce a poster or leaflet of their own without using the template provided, but they must include both age ranges and explain at least two methods of communication for each.

## Useful resources

- **Communication games:** There are a large number of these and many can be found on the Internet by entering the phrase 'communication games for students' into an Internet search engine. These will usually be team based and may be competitive; for example, distribute playing cards to each student and ask them to arrange themselves in number order without showing one another their cards or talking to one another, using other forms of communication.

## Websites

See Unit specification.

## Answers to activities

### Activity 1: How do adults communicate with children?

Learner's own answer. Examples could include:

Verbal	Non-verbal
Speech	Touch
Pitch of voice	Facial expressions
Tone of voice	Body movement
Volume of voice	Posture
Questioning	Gestures
	Proximity
	Eye contact
	Pauses and silence
	Reflective listening

### Activity 2: How are these children communicating?

Scenario	Answer
Mark is five. Katie is two. Mark says to Katie 'Do you want a drink?' Katie says 'Dink!'	Copying
Aarya is three. She is singing a nursery rhyme. Her friend George joins in.	Singing
Alicia is three. She is playing with her mum's make-up. Her five-year-old brother Fabio says 'No! Mummy says don't touch!'	Talking
Five-year-old Janek is riding a tricycle with his friend, Claire. They are taking turns.	Playing
Samira is five. Her friend Malik asks her for the red pen. She passes it to him.	Listening

### Activity 3: How does communication change?

Part 1 – suggestions could include:

Ways to help	How it helps
Talking	Gives attention, encourages language development, gives children time to express themselves, acknowledges their thoughts and opinions, promotes self-esteem by showing respect and value.
Facial expressions	Gives attention, shows active listening, shows understanding, can be used with all age groups/levels of development.
Eye contact	Gives attention, shows active listening, shows understanding, shows respect, allows for clear communication, can be used with all age groups/levels of development.
Playing	Encourages communication, language development, cognitive development, physical development and social development, allows children to express themselves, develops self-esteem.
Singing	Encourages communication, language development, cognitive development and physical development, can be used with all ages/levels of development.

Story-telling	Supports communication, language development, and speaking and listening skills, acknowledges feelings, enables expression of thoughts and ideas, overcomes barriers in communication by including all cultures and beliefs.
Gestures / Body language	Gives attention, shows active listening, encourages eye contact, enhances and can be used to support language development, overcomes language barriers, adds value.

Part 2 – an exemplar is given below.

Two examples of communication:

Learners must select two examples of communication from the completed table in Part 1. They must then demonstrate how these forms of communication must change for different age groups; for example, facial expressions and eye contact may be used with babies in the first stages of communication development but they can also be used with 3–5 year olds when carrying out learning activities. An exemplar answer has been provided below for talking and facial expressions.

<b>Communicating with babies (aged 0–3 years)</b>
How will my communication change?
Talking: Babies become used to the sound of a particular adult’s voice and will be reassured by hearing it. An adult in this situation might provide a commentary – ‘we are going to change your nappy now’ – or simply tell them that they are being good, or that it won’t take long. At this stage, the baby will be starting to learn about language and will respond through facial expressions or baby talk before starting to learn to speak.
Facial expression: Adults will usually smile at babies to communicate with them and develop an early attachment, and babies will respond in the same way. Babies may also copy adult’s expressions.

**Communicating with small children (aged 3–5 years)**

How will my communication change?

Talking: Small children will be more able to have conversations with adults and will be starting to understand the importance of taking turns in conversations. They will be able to express themselves and talk about their needs. Adults, in turn, should respond to children appropriately and acknowledge what they say.

Facial expression: Adults may use facial expressions to show a range of emotions which children will be able to interpret; for example, frowns, surprise, displeasure or excitement.