



Getting ready for school

Advice for parents on developing your four year olds
language and communication skills

Help your child prepare for school by building their language and communication skills

At school children need to be able to use language in a variety of ways to communicate with others. They also need to learn to understand language differently. School language and communication is different to the home. Children have to learn new rules, to communicate in groups, to wait for their turn, to learn when it's ok to talk and when not to, as well as learning the new words and concepts that go with the subjects they are learning.

Children also have to learn how language works in order to be able to read and write, as well as learn new subjects, such as numbers and following rules.

By helping your child develop language skills you will help them to learn more easily at school. This matters because:

- it will help them to make friends;
- it will help them to understand what the teacher expects;

- it will help them to learn new rules;
- it will help them to communicate in a group and work together with others;
- it will help them learn to read and write;
- it will help them to remember what they have learned and to organise themselves.

A large number of children start school without the language and communication skills they need to learn and get on with others.

At 4 years old most children can:

- use complete sentences when they talk including words like because;
- can ask questions such as why and when;
- be understood by all though some speech sounds are immature:
- understand past and future (yesterday and tomorrow);
- play pretend games;
- use language for a variety of reasons such as to describe something, and can talk about how they feel.

How you can help your child get ready for school

Talk to your child during everyday activities. Get them to help you with everyday tasks such as making sandwiches. Get them to think about what order we use to complete the task.

Use mistakes and accidents such as spillages or forgetting something to talk about how you can solve problems. Real life experiences are really valuable for developing problem solving skills.

Help your child to remember and plan. Talk to them about the things you need when you do a task or go out.

Don't ask your child too many questions. Instead talk about what they are interested in. Give them time to answer you. Children take longer to process information than adults and need thinking time.

Encourage turn taking. Listen to your child when they talk to you and take turns in conversation rather than taking over. You can show your

listening by giving eye contact and looking interested.

Talk about what would happen if...

This helps children to use language to think. Use examples in daily life such as what would happen if you lost your keys when shopping, or use well known stories to talk together about what could have happened if the situation was different. Allow your child to use their imagination and come up with all sorts of different endings and situations.

Read stories and talk about the characters. Children often need extra explanation to help them read 'between the lines' and fully understand the story. Allow them to ask questions about the story and talk about what different words mean.

Encourage pretend play. Pretend play and imaginative games are essential in developing language and communication skills.

Teach social language such as asking politely, saying when they don't like something or saying hello and goodbye.

You may want to talk to someone if:

- your child uses short or muddled sentences;
- is not always understood by others;
- has had hearing difficulties;
- has little interest in talking to others;
- does not understand what you say or can't carry out simple instructions.

For more ideas, information or informal advice on helping your child, please contact the Early Communication Team through your local children's centre.

Childrens centre details

County Hall, Newport, Isle of Wight PO30 1UD

Tel: (01983) 823142

email: s.collins@iwcouncilpublications.co.uk

Web: www.iwight.com



SureStart

Published by the Early Communication Team.

Ryde Children's Centre, George Street,

Ryde, Isle of Wight

Tel: 617617



**ISLE of
WIGHT**
COUNCIL