

COURSE CONTENT OVERVIEW

Supporting Speech and Language Development in Early Years



In some areas, more than 50% of children entering Reception have language levels below what is expected for their age. This statistic needs to change, because speech and language development is vital for many areas of a child's life, including their ability to learn, express their needs, thoughts, and wishes, make friends, read and write, and behave well. Adult interaction is crucial to ensuring optimal speech and language development, and as a result, it is important that you are aware of the most effective strategies to use to support children in this area.

This course will go through these strategies in detail. It will also explain what typical development in this area looks like, giving you insight into the complex processes involved in learning to talk - and why it can go wrong. Additionally, it will discuss speech, language, and communication needs - including what causes them, warning signs, and how to help children who you know or suspect might have them - and explain when to refer children to speech and language therapy. The course content was developed with early years professionals and speech and language therapists.

Module One: Understanding Speech, Language, and Communication

This module discusses why speech, language, and communication skills are so critical, and talks about your responsibilities as someone working in the early years sector, as well as the specific responsibilities set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage framework. It looks at what the terms speech, language, and communication mean, and what typical development in these areas looks like (including typical development for children with English as an Additional Language). It provides you with a typical development chart and poster that you can use in your setting.

- The impact of speech, language, and communication
- What are speech, language, and communication?
- The communication chain
- Typical development
- EAL development
- EYFS framework

Module Two: Supporting Speech, Language, and Communication Development

In this module, different strategies for supporting speech, language, and communication development are discussed, including how to adapt your language to the child (such as using child-directed speech), and how to model language (including scaffolding and extending children's sentences). It also details what a communication-friendly environment looks like, and discusses how to ensure that parents and carers are also supportive of speech, language, and communication development, giving you an information leaflet that you can hand out to them.

- Talking together
- Attention, listening, and auditory memory
- Adapting your language to the child
- Modelling language
- Communication-friendly environments
- Working with parents and carers

Module Three: Speech, Language, and Communication Needs (SLCN)

This module defines the term 'speech, language, and communication needs', explaining the different types of needs that you might encounter and the warning signs that a child might have them. It also discusses the importance of carrying out observational assessment in order to identify potential problems early on, giving you a guide on how to do so and a template to use.

- What are SLCN
- Risk factors of SLCN
- Warning signs of SLCN
- Responding to concerns

Module Four: Targeted SLCN Support Strategies

In this module, the graduated approach to speech, language, and communication needs - which is currently being favoured by the Department for Education - is explained. A guide to going through the different stages of the approach is given, and then targeted support strategies for each type of need are discussed. The module explains when and how you should refer speech, language, and communication needs to specialists (such as speech and language therapists), and discusses how to talk to parents and carers about any concerns. Finally, it gives you several detailed examples that illustrate the different actions to take in different situations of potential SLCN.

- The graduated approach
- Support strategies
- Referring SLCN
- Working with parents and carers
- Example scenarios

Aims of the training

By the end of this course, you will:

- Understand the importance of speech, language, and communication for children's overall development and later lives.
- Understand what the terms speech, language, and communication mean.
- Know the basic developmental milestones within speech, language, and communication development.
- Know the EYFS expectations in this area and be able to meet them.
- Understand how to support speech, language, and communication development using a variety of techniques, including having a communication-friendly environment.
- Understand how children with EAL's development may differ, and how to support and monitor their progress.
- Know and recognise warning signs of the different types of speech, language, and communication needs (SLCN) that children might face.
- Know how to implement targeted support for different types of SLCN, and create a support plan to monitor progress.
- Understand how and when to make referrals to speech and language therapy.
- Know how to work effectively with parents and carers to maximise the support children are given and flag concerns.