



Principles and Values of Children's Care, Play, Learning and Development (0-19 years of age)

The importance of effective communication in children's care, play, learning and development

Effective communication

1/16

An important part of an early years childcare worker's job is the ability to communicate with a wide variety of people. The childcare worker must develop communication skills in order to work effectively with children, parents/carers, colleagues and other professionals. Good communication skills help with effective interaction.



Effective communication involves listening, understanding and responding to people. In order to develop listening skills, you need to pay attention to what's being said. You must think about what's being said and respond in a way that will encourage the person to keep talking. To show that they're paying attention, the childcare worker should ensure that they look at the person who's speaking and make eye contact without staring excessively. Asking questions will show an interest and it's important not to interrupt the speaker. You also need to make encouraging sounds and use short words or sentences.

Communication includes facial expressions and body language, e.g. gestures (non-verbal communication). You should respond to what's being said with facial expressions, e.g. a smile, a frown or a nod. A childcare worker can appear open, friendly or unfriendly depending on body language and tone of voice.

For others to be encouraged to listen, they need to feel comfortable so the childcare worker needs to make them feel at home. Standing too close to someone can make them feel uncomfortable, but standing too far away can give the impression that the childcare worker isn't interested in them. The body language of the listener can sometimes show whether or not they feel at home, and so you should try to respond appropriately to this.

Children often want to be close to an adult when speaking to them so the childcare worker should ensure that they go down to the children's level by sitting or crouching next to them. Standing above them can make them feel uncomfortable.

Key features of effective communication

- listening carefully
- seeing the effect of your words and gestures on others
- demonstrating empathy
- being non-judgmental
- being considerate of other people's feelings and moods
- adjusting your communication method to the person or scenario
- being genuine
- showing an interest in other people
- being conscious of confidentiality
- being friendly
- being professional
- showing respect
- avoiding stereotyping e.g. age; gender; ethnicity
- speaking in turn with other speakers
- showing respect towards the views, traditions and beliefs of the person you're communicating with
- being honest
- considering cultural differences e.g. when Welsh or English is not their first language.