

Communication – Keeping in Touch

Over the past few weeks and months our opportunities for social interactions and our ways of communicating have changed. We miss our grandparents, our cousins, our friends, our teachers, our sports coaches and so many other people. Even though we don't get to go on play dates, see our friends at school, visit our grandparents, go to parties, there are still lots of ways for us to keep in touch. It is very important that communication skills are developed and practised during your child's time at home. Families interact and communicate 24/7 and there are great opportunities to develop communication skills and boost confidence.

- **Verbal:** Allow for opportunities for your child to develop their vocabulary and also to use and practise this. Base conversations around your child's interests and things they enjoy.
- **Non Verbal:** Your child may be using an alternative communication system like ISL, PECS, LÁMH, eye pointing or voice output communication aid. As mentioned above allow for lots of opportunities to allow communication and base communication around your child's interests and things they enjoy.
- **Attention and listening:** To be a good communicator we have to pay attention and listen to what the other person or people are saying. Allow for plenty of opportunities to model and act out good listening and speaking skills by modelling eye contact, body language, turn taking etc...
- **Written:** We can communicate through drawing symbols, codes or through written text. Words or sentences can also help us to relay information to others when we are telling them about our news or something fun that has happened.
- **Visual:** We can also communicate using pictures, videos, signs, graphs, charts, maps, logos and other visualizations. We see signs and logos everyday on walks and in our house, you can point these out and guess what they might mean.
- **Technology:** Children, Parents and Grandparents are using technology more than ever to communicate and stay in touch. It has been a learning curve for us all.



Activities to enhance everyday Communication

Verbal/Non Verbal	Allow for opportunities for your child to practise communication, asking for things around the house, play with your child, talking around the dinner table, play a board game as a family.
Attention and Listening	Games to develop listening skills https://discoverexplorelern.com/5-preschool-listening-games/ Listener- Speaker Relationship https://pdst.ie/sites/default/files/Oral%20Language%20Booklet%20PDF.pdf
Written	Drawing pictures, writing postcards, letters or cards to our friends. We can plan out our walk to the post box to post these and draw the map with arrows, pictures or written directions. Using our map we can give instructions to our family members about where to turn or things to look out for.
Visual Communication	Looking at and discussing the importance and meaning of visuals in books and newspapers/online articles; road signs on walks, discussing logos on food and clothes labels and what they mean, drawing maps and following them, as well as playing games like Pictionary and Rapidough can be fun ways to use visuals in everyday communication.
Technology	Under the guidance of a parent/guardian, children might compose emails, e cards, e postcards and send them to relatives and friends. Virtual calls like zoom, Skype, Face Time allow us to keep in touch and this is an ideal opportunity to show off what we have learnt about the listener speaker relationship. We might write down or draw pictures of what we have been doing so that we can remember these things and talk about them with the other people on the call. Make a quiz for your friends, this is a great fun way to stay in touch www.kahoot.com