

3-5 year-olds

Developing communication skills and general knowledge

Communication involves both talking and listening. It's the ability to clearly express needs and understand others. **General knowledge** is when children know about the world. Children who are confident communicating and curious to learn do well – both at school and throughout life.

3-5 years-olds with good communication skills and general knowledge:

- Tell stories
- Use imaginative play, such as playing with a cardboard box as if it is a car, or can pretend to be an animal.
- Understand when they are asked to do something
- Express their needs to adults in a way that is easy for adults to understand
- Know about the world, e.g. that an apple is a fruit

Ways to help your child:

- **Listen to your child without interrupting**
- **Let your child ask lots of questions** – this shows they are keen to learn. They are asking you because they trust that you will tell them what they want to know
- **Ask about their day** – You can use open-ended questions, starting with “What?” “Who?” or “How?” so that your child can say more than “yes” or “no”.
- **Talk about feelings** – When children can understand and express their feelings they can understand others feelings and help to control and express their own feelings.
- **Sing songs together**, children this age also love rhymes and silly jokes
- **Read with your child and talk about the books you read.** Try to make connections between experiences, ideas and books, e.g. they're eating vegemite sandwiches, I wonder if they'll become invisible like in the book, *Possum Magic*.
- **Notice what interests your child and build on that** – look for books, movies and experiences relating to their interests

- **Connection with playgroups, arts groups, cultural, religious, or sporting groups helps children to belong and make friends**
- **Encourage your child** – praising your child’s efforts encourages your child to continue to learn.
- **Play games of pretend and imagination** – adult clothes, empty boxes, rolls, cardboard and paper can allow children to play make-believe. Let them play with lots of different materials like play dough, beads, leaves, pegs and blocks, as appropriate.
- **Speak to your child in the language you are most comfortable with.** This will help them learn one language well. Enrolling your child in preschool or childcare can help your child learn English before they start school if it is not the language you speak at home.
- **Have family dinners together** – this is an important time for the family to talk about their day. Include your child in adult conversation.
- **Children learn different things from different people** – visit friends and family, meet up with others. Playgroups and preschool experiences are great for children’s development and forming friendships.
- **You don’t have to be rich for your child to have a rich learning experience** – Toys and books can be borrowed from libraries.
- **Talking, singing, playing and doing fun things** with your child now will help them develop and be ready to do well at school, more than educational TV shows, computer games, phone apps, or ipad games.
- **Find out about family events and parenting programs near you at:**
www.resourcingparents.nsw.gov.au
- **For more ideas download the *Love, Talk, Sing, Read, Play* app** to your phone from Google Play or the App store.