

# 3 & 4 year olds

# Examples to support learning

Help children to elaborate on how they are feeling: "You look sad. Are you upset because Jasmin doesn't want to do the same thing as you?"

Open-ended questions like "I wonder what would happen if....?" encourage more thinking & longer responses. Sustained shared thinking is especially powerful. This is when two or more individuals (adult & child, or children) 'work together' in an intellectual way to solve a problem, clarify a concept, evaluate activities, extend a narrative, etc.

Offer children at least a daily story time as well as sharing books throughout the session.



Children may use ungrammatical forms like 'I swimmied'. Instead of correcting them, recast what the child said. For example: "How lovely that you swam in the sea on holiday".

Expand on children's phrases. For example, if a child says, "going out shop", you could reply: "Yes, Henna is going to the shop". As well as adding language, add new ideas. For example: "I wonder if they'll get the 26 bus?"

Activities planned around those core books will help the children to practise the vocabulary and language from those books. It will also support their creativity and play.

Provide children with a rich language environment by sharing books and activities with them. Encourage children to talk about what is happening and give their own ideas. High-quality picture books are a rich source for learning new vocabulary and more complex forms of language: "Excuse me, I'm very hungry. Do you think I could have tea with you?"

## Communication & Language

If they are busy in their play, children may not be able to switch their attention and listen to what you say. When you need to, help young children to switch their attention from what they are doing to what you are saying. Give them a clear prompt. Suggestion: say the child's name and then: "Please stop and listen".

Outdoor play themed around 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt' might lead to the children creating their own 'hunts' and inventing their own rhymes.

Model language that promotes thinking and challenges children: "I can see that's empty - I wonder what happened to the snail that used to be in that shell?"

The BookTrust's 'Bookfinder' website can help you to pick high-quality books.

Consider which core books, songs and rhymes you want children to become familiar with and grow to love.



Extend children's vocabulary, explaining unfamiliar words and concepts and making sure children have understood what they mean through stories and other activities. These should include words and concepts which occur frequently in books and other contexts but are not used every day by many young children. Suggestion: use scientific vocabulary when talking about the parts of a flower or an insect, or different types of rocks. Examples from 'The Gruffalo' include: 'stroll', 'roasted', 'knobbly', 'wart' and 'feast'.

Shared book-reading is a powerful way of having extended conversations with children. It helps children to build their vocabulary.

When children have difficulties with correct pronunciation, reply naturally to what they say. Pronounce the word correctly so they hear the correct model.

Offer children lots of interesting things to investigate, like different living things. This will encourage them to ask questions.



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