

'Through the Eyes of a Child' films - Guidance for Early Years Workforce

About the films

The *Through the Eyes of a Child* films are a series of four short films, covering the 0-6 months, 6-12 months, 1-2 years and 2-3 age ranges. They are designed to support parents and the early years children's workforce to encourage and nurture children's speech, language and communication.

The films were developed by The Communication Trust, a coalition of nearly 50 voluntary organisations with expertise in speech, language and communication. They were commissioned by Jean Gross, formerly the Government's Communication Champion for children, as part of the *Hello* campaign (national year of communication).

The films show the view of the child, voiced by actress and comedienne Kathy Burke explaining what the child is thinking when they interact with their parent or carer. Each of the films was tested through a focus group of parents.

The films are available to download or view here
www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk



The importance of parents and carers

We really want to support parents to feel confident in communicating with their children and playing that vital role in supporting their child's speech, language and communication skills

We also want parents to feel confident about what to expect at key ages and stages of their child's development, so that if they have concerns, they can seek support and express their concerns.

Research tells us that the role of the adult is vital in nurturing good language and building social and interaction skills in our children for example,

- **The amount of language children hear is important** - the more they hear, the more time their parents spend talking with them and the more types of words they are exposed to, the more they use
- **What adults say is also important** - children seem to develop strong language skills where their parents ask open-ended questions, ask children to elaborate, and focus on topics of interest to the child.
- **How adults respond to children is key** - it is also important to respond to what the child has begun talking about and to have familiar routines to promote shared understanding.

- **Conversations about how people feel** and how that affects what they do, are important in learning social communication skills

Using the films with parents and carers

The *Through the Eyes of a Child* series of four films show from the child's perspective the importance of parent child interaction.

You could share this with parents you work with in a variety of ways, the clips are very short, so could be shared at ante natal classes, baby massage, mums and toddlers groups, stay and play sessions, etc.

Below are some suggestions of the ways in which information could be shared. Key messages for parents are that:

- Communication is vital
- Parents role is key
- Babies are born with a will to connect and communicate
- Talking helps us get to know our baby and can make life easier and routines more fun
- We're often doing lots of the right things – here are some extra ideas

Exercise



Show the clips to parents – ask them to watch the clips with certain things in mind. You could get a couple of parents to each look out for one or two things...

What is the parent doing that really works for helping communication? Try to come up with all the ideas you can. Think of one or more of the following...

1. The words they are using
2. The tone of voice
3. Facial expression
4. Looking at their baby / child
5. Listening to their baby / child
6. Repetition
7. Pace of talk – how quickly or slowly they are talking
8. Taking turns in the conversation - are there any gaps for baby to reply and join in the conversation
9. Following their child's lead
10. What the baby or child might be getting out of it

Following discussion about the film clips, it might be useful to share their own experiences.

It worth pointing out that babies do not always do what we want them to when we want them to, so some of the ideas around communication will work better at some times than others.

Ask parents and carers to share

- When do they like talking to their baby / child most?
- When do they find their baby / child most responsive?
- What works for them?
- What really doesn't work?
- How does their baby / child respond?

You could be much more specific

- What books does their baby / child like and how does it help with communication?
- What games do they like to play?
- How can certain routines help – e.g. talk at nappy time, dinner time, bath time?
- For older children...what are the funny things they say?



Exercise - Sometimes we can feel silly

Some things parents have said to us...

- *We don't know what to talk about....*
You can talk about everything and anything, the wonderful thing about babies is they just don't care – they just want to hear your voice and connect with you
- *What's the point of talking to them when they don't talk back ...*
New born babies recognise your voice. In the early days, talking is about soothing and connecting. As babies develop, they learn that noises mean something and can make things happen. Repetition really helps them understand that certain words mean certain things
- *I don't see the point of using baby talk, it sounds a bit stupid*
Babies respond to the singsong voice you hear some people using and really like repetition, but it doesn't mean we need to make everything in baby talk. You can call things by their real names, not by baby names, such as woof woof for dog, as this is what helps them learn

Ordering copies of the films

If you would like to hand out copies of the films on CD to parents, contact The Communication Trust in the following ways:

Write to -

Joanna Bolton
Programme Administrator
The Communication Trust
8 Wakely Street
London
EC1V 7QE

Email - jbolton@thecommunicationtrust.org.uk

The Trust are happy for you to use the films in presentations, training, conferences, classes as you see fit. Please credit us in the following way - *The Communication Trust, 2012*

About The Communication Trust

The Communication Trust is a coalition of nearly 50 leading voluntary sector and community-based organisations with expertise in speech, language and communication.

We work with an extensive advisory and partner network including the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT), Achievement for All, Council for Disabled Children and the Early Support Programme.

We support the children's workforce and commissioners to meet the speech, language and communication needs of all children and young people. We do this by raising awareness, influencing policy, promoting best practice among the children's workforce and commissioning work from our members.

For more information, visit www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk

Early Year's offer

The Trust provides the following support to early year's practitioners:

- **Portfolio of early year's resources** - A number of resources have been developed aimed at supporting Early Years practitioners and parents to understand speech, language and communication development in children under five. These include *Small Talk* booklet for parents and *Universally Speaking* birth to 5 'ages and stages' booklet for the workforce www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/resources
- **Speech, Language and Communication Framework (SLCF)** - an online self-audit tool which, once completed, signposts early years practitioners to training to help you develop the areas you are less confident in www.talkingpoint.org.uk/slcf

- **Continued Professional Development Award** in Speech, Language and Communication - new Level 3 Award in Supporting Children and Young People's Speech Language and Communication (Number: 4337) available via CACHE and City & Guilds awarding centres

The Trust has developed materials to support the delivery of the award for both trainers and learners

www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/early-years/training-and-qualifications.aspx
- **Children and Young People's Workforce Diploma** : Mandatory Speech, Language and Communication Unit in the Early Years Pathway (EYMP5) - Trust has produced free, expertly written materials for training and learners to support the delivery of the Early Years Mandatory Pathway Unit 5

www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/early-years/training-and-qualifications.aspx
- **Communication Ambassadors** initiative - run by the Trust and I CAN, the children's communication charity, creating a national network of volunteers to take on the role of Ambassadors for children's speech, language and communication

www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/early-years/projects/communication-ambassadors.aspx
- **Early Support** programme - improving the delivery of services for disabled children, young people and their families . The Trust sits on the Early Support consortium and has been commissioned to develop materials, training and developmental journals to accompany the approach

www.ncb.org.uk/earllysupport
- **Support from the Trust's consortium** - a group of nearly 50 voluntary and community organisations with expertise and knowledge of children's speech, language and communication. A catalogue outlining the consortium's resources and programmes is available to download

www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/consortiumcatalogue