



Social Communication: What to expect and when

Age Range	What your child is doing	How you can help
0-1 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Watches your face when you talk to them * Smiles and laughs when other people smile and laugh * Notices other children * Babbles back and forth with an adult 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Try to establish 'joint attention' - try to draw the child's attention to something interesting so that you are looking at it together. ⇒ Copy sounds your baby makes. This will encourage more noises and is the start of turn-taking and conversations. ⇒ Play people games like peek-a-boo. ⇒ Have some special time with your child each day.
1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Copies adults, like saying 'Hello' or waving goodbye * Plays alongside other children * Expresses a range of communicative functions: greeting, requesting, attention-seeking, rejecting or protesting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Play copying games e.g. when child claps their hands, adults to copy and clap their hands back, be enthusiastic and model language whilst copying: 'yes! Clap, clap, clap!' ⇒ Talk about the things your child is looking at or doing and everyday activities like putting away the shopping. ⇒ Follow their lead when playing with them and talk about their interests ⇒ Model using language for a range of communicative functions.
2-3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Plays more with other children and starts to share things * Asks lots of questions. They will want to find out the name of things and learn new words * Initiates interaction e.g. "Mummy" * Starts to use language more imaginatively in play 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Model joining in play and carrying out sequences together <i>e.g. undress doll, prepare bath, wash and dress doll.</i> ⇒ Often children enjoy helping. Sharing daily jobs gives a chance to talk about objects and actions. ⇒ Model using language for a range of communicative functions e.g. commenting on what you are doing etc.

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3-4 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Likes to play with other children * Play becomes more sociable – role play with others and play games * Uses language to talk about past and future events, give information, and retell simple stories * Initiates conversation with others e.g. using someone's name, commenting or 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Children may still need help in resolving conflicts with peers. ⇒ Join in with a child in pretend play. Let them take the lead. This will help their language and creativity. Talk about what they are saying and doing rather than asking lots of questions. Your commentary helps their language skills and shows you are listening and interested. ⇒ Reversing roles can be great fun for a child. Let them be the 'mummy' or the 'teacher'. This helps them to talk about new situations.
4-5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Chooses their own friends to play with * Takes turns in much longer conversation * Uses language to gain and hold an adult's attention, give and seek information, and give instructions to children their own age * Begins to tell jokes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Playing board games that involve taking turns helps them to listen and concentrate for longer. ⇒ Use open questions like 'what are you going to play with today?' to encourage children to say more than 'yes' and 'no' and learn how to contribute in conversation.
5-6 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Understands the feelings of others * Uses language to persuade, hypothesise and state their belief and opinions * Starts to use non-literal language e.g. idioms, metaphors and use sarcasm and irony 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Make time to talk about your day and give the child time to talk back to you ⇒ Ask open questions like 'tell me something you liked about today'.