

## **Early Years Inclusion and Childcare Service**

### **Best practice guidance for listening and responding to the child's voice**



## **Best practice guidance for listening and responding**

Examples of best practice in listening and responding to the child's voice

*'The most basic of human needs is the need to understand and be understood. The best way to understand people is to listen to them'*

*Ralph Nichols International Listening Association*

### **Introduction**

Leicestershire Early Years Inclusion and Childcare Service remain committed to ensuring that the voice of the child and young person is embedded in all areas of working with children and families.

This guidance can support practitioners to identify how their everyday routines and interactions promote effective listening and responding.

This guidance supports the document 'Top Tips for Listening and Responding'

In this context 'voice' refers to all forms of communication, both verbal and non-verbal. Remember that all actions and behaviours are forms of communication.



I am unique ...


What methods do you use to find out children's interests and needs; is this the most effective for each child?

**I am Unique – How do you find out children's interests and needs; is this the most effective for each child?**

'Jakub, I knew today that you were happy when we sang nursery rhymes together on the carpet; you showed me this by your big smile and gurgles of joy. You really enjoyed 'Twinkle, twinkle' because you waved your arms, I listened to you, and we sang it a few more times. All the singing tired you out; you always twiddle your ears when you feel like this. We had a cuddle and you soon fell asleep. When you woke, we continued with the songs and you helped to teach me some of the signs Daddy uses when he sings with you, I am looking forward to learning more signs together with you.'

'Lily, I believe that yesterday you spent some time with Mummy and Daddy (at supervised contact). Dee told me that you had played with playdough together. Today I was watching you and you couldn't seem to find anything you'd like to play with. I know how much you enjoy playing with playdough and so we sat down together and squished, moulded, and rolled. It was nice to play with you and we had a chance to talk about your visit with Mummy and Daddy.'

'Anja, I was so happy to hear that you're going to get a rabbit. I could tell that you were excited because you smiled, jumped up and down, ran around the room shouting 'rabbit, rabbit' and squealed loudly in delight. When we were outside, I really enjoyed watching you show your friends how a bunny hops. Later we sat down together and shared your story about rabbits, we sang 'hop little bunnies' and we shared your news with your friends. Before you went home you enjoyed making a picture for your rabbit's hutch, we talked about what you might call your rabbit and what it might like to eat.'




Build a positive  
relationship  
with me

How do your interactions with  
children help them to feel safe, secure  
and valued?

‘Thomas, you didn’t want to stay with us today as you knew that Amy was on holiday and wouldn’t be there to play with you. You cried for a short while when you first arrived. We had a cuddle and shared a story together. We talked about how you were feeling and decided that you were a bit scared without Amy. We decided that we would play together for a while, and you wanted to play in the water tray. Theo and Imran joined us, and you were happy to play with them.’

‘Prisha, whilst Mummy was at college today it was nice to see you for an extra morning. You were a bit confused when you first came in as you didn’t see your usual friends and Arjun, your key person, also wasn’t here. We started reading your home book and you were happy to see that I was familiar with the words written in your home language, you told me all about your celebration meal you shared with your family. I introduced you to some children you haven’t met before and told you, their names. It took you a while to settle but I was pleased to see that you were soon joining in games with the other children and having fun. You kept coming back to me for reassurance, so I made sure you knew where I was at all times.’

‘It was ok today Lucas that you wanted to leave your coat on when Marcus dropped you off, I know you sometimes like to keep snuggled up in your coat first thing in the morning. You were yawning a lot and then had a few tears when Marcus left; (I wondered if you were tired, I know sometimes you wake up when Mummy comes back from her night shift). I explained that sometimes I feel tired and upset too...that’s ok; being with a special friend can help when you feel like that. Next you got the bubbles from the shelf, and we blew some together with your friend Harper; you started to smile and giggled as Harper chased the bubbles up the path.’



Environments  
to share my  
voice

Do you give time to genuinely listen  
respond to children? Does the  
environment support children's  
interests, needs and subsequently  
develop their play through choice and  
access of appropriate resources?

'Oliver, you've had a very exciting weekend watching your Mummy run in the fun run, she did so well. I enjoyed you telling me about the race and sharing your photos, your friends joined us to hear your story. You were proud to wear Mummy's medal. When you were outside you chose cones and hoops from the shed, with your friends, and set up your own running track. Wow you can run fast like Mummy.'

'Akbar, I wondered if you were unhappy today. I noticed you were looking sad, quiet and wanted to be in the cosy corner by yourself, playing with the toy buses & lorries. Your Aunty (who dropped you off) said she was late for work, and she would text later to see if you were ok.

After a short time, when I showed you the photographs (the choice board we have used previously) you pointed to the sand pit outside and smiled. We gathered some of the buses in a basket; I noticed you chose your favourite red bus (like the one you ride on to nursery).

You played in the sand for quite a while, 'brumming' the buses up and down the ramps. Then you helped me take a photo of the buses which I sent to your Aunty later in the morning.'

'After speaking to mummy yesterday about your visit to the nurse (child Riya needs support with large motor skills) we were able to use your new chair in nursery. Riya, I know you really like the water wheels and funnels, so using your visual aids, we decided together to put your new chair at the water tray to start the morning; you seemed very happy as you laughed with your friends watching the water wheels spin round.'



'Sophie, recently you've not always wanted to have an afternoon nap, Daddy said this is the same at home too. I noticed you were quiet after lunch; we sat together and shared some stories. We had great fun reading 'Dear Zoo' quite a few times. I'll let Daddy know that we shared a story instead of having a nap and how much you enjoyed this story.'

'Today, Noah, you were enjoying playing outside with the building blocks. When your friends came to play with you, they changed the game, and you became frustrated. I came to join you and your friends, and we looked together at what you were making, some of your friends helped you. You were much happier and together we enjoyed making a really big tower, the best bit was knocking it down. I think we will keep the blocks out for a while and have more fun with them.'

'Lena, I know you have moved into a new home last week (partnerships with family outreach workers has kept the setting informed of the move to a nearby bedsit with mum) and it's lovely to see you at nursery today. I can see you are looking a little cross and angry; It is alright to feel cross. I'll pick up your teddy from the floor and we will have a cuddle if you like.

Shall we have snack early today, I know you always enjoy your milk; we have a choice of bananas or apple? I could sit with you and teddy and eat snack together'