



# EARLY YEARS

## Communication Week - activities for parents Fascinating Friday

### Fascinating Friday

Use pre-phonics focus of body percussion (stamping, clapping, finger clicking) to develop awareness of sounds and rhythms.

### Sing a bedtime song

Singing quietly before bedtime is proven to help children to sleep, it helps your child learn language and provides a great opportunity to bond with your child.

Some popular songs are [Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star](#) and [Rock-a-Bye Baby](#)

Rock-a-Bye Baby on the treetop,  
when the wind blows, the cradle will rock,  
if the bough breaks, the cradle will fall,  
but mama will catch you, cradle and all.

Baby is drowsing, cosy and fair,  
mother sits near, in her rocking chair,  
forward and back, the cradle she swings,  
and though baby sleeps, he hears what she sings.

### Teddy Bears Picnic

Put a tea towel or tablecloth on the carpet. With your child collect some of their favourite teddy bears. Pretend to have a picnic (or a real snack) Serve the bears pretend food and have a chat with them. Pretend to answer with different bear voices.



### Sound Game

Place mystery noisy objects out of sight. Shake, squeeze, tap, or rattle them in turn to make a noise. See if your child can guess what they are. Try...grains of rice in a small container, bubble wrap, a bell, tissue paper, bottle of water, sandpaper, coins, bunch of key and comb or hairbrush.



### Sounds at night

Go outside or open the window and listen to what sounds you can hear at night. Talk about what the sound might be and where it may have come from. Can you copy the sound and repeat with your child? Add an action like a clap or a stamp or a click of your fingers.

I wonder what you can hear together ...owls, dogs barking, leaves rustling...

### Peace At Last - Jill Murphy

#### Peace at Last

*"The hour is late, and Mr Bear is tired. But he just can't sleep - however hard he tries; all he can hear are the noises in the house. SNORE, SNORE goes Mrs Bear. TICK-TOCK, TICK-TOCK goes the clock. Will he ever be able to find peace at last?"*

If you don't have a copy you could take a trip to [your local library](#) and find a copy to borrow.

Catch the bus or walk to the library. On the way, remember to chat to your child about what you can see or hear.

#### Peace at Last by Jill Murphy

Look together at the pictures on the front cover and the first double page spread. What clues do these give about the story? What do you think the story will be about?

Snuggle up together and read the story aloud, taking time to talk together about the pictures on the page.

Pause when Mr Bear goes to find somewhere else to sleep. Encourage your child to think what might keep him awake there. Turn the page to see if they were right.

Talk about the story - what could Mr Bear do to have a good night's sleep? Talking about the book will deepen your child's understanding of the story as they make connections with their own lives.

Read the story again, this time, pause and allow your child to join in with the repeated phrases and sounds. Reading the story again and again helps children to read more of the story themselves and builds their confidence in books and reading.

After hearing the story a few times, your child will get to know it well. Encourage them to turn the pages and use the pictures to tell the story in their own words. They might use some phrases from the book or invent new parts of the story to add to the fun.

## Communication and Language

### Listening and Attention

You might notice that your child:

Enjoys listening to stories you tell them and talks about them later.

Joins in with their favourite bits in the story, for example, "Who's been sleeping in my bed?" when you're reading Goldilocks and the Three Bears.

Joins in with their favourite rhymes and stories and guesses what will happen next.

Stops what they are doing and listens when they hear you talk to them, or they hear the doorbell ring.

### Understanding

You might notice that your child:

Understands questions like "What do we need for a bedtime story?" They may be able to say "book"

or be able to point to one or even go and get one. Can follow simple instructions like "Put teddy under the blanket" or "Put the train on the track"

Understands what you are saying and can help when you ask them to bring you something.

### Speech

Use longer sentences with words like "because" and "and". For example, "I cried, I did, because I banged my foot and it hurt".

Ask them to tell you about something that's happened. For example, "Remember when we went to the park yesterday and came home?". Ask lots of questions and answer your questions too.

Talk about what you are doing now, and what might happen later or tomorrow.

Sometimes talk like a grown up and repeat words to make yourself clear. For example, "I'm really, really hungry now". Use lots of different words.



## Top Tips

Learning to talk is a complicated skill for a child. These tips will help you, to help them:

- Say their name when you start talking to get their attention
- Help your child to learn new words by using all their senses to teach new words
- Build in lots of repetition "Dog, yes a dog, woof woof dog"
- Build on what your child already knows and says
- Taking turns with babies, add words for toddlers and phrases for older children. "Car, yes it's a car, a blue car, a big blue car"
- Talk about things that your child is interested in
- If your child makes a mistake, repeat the words and sentences clearly in the correct way
- Use comments and prompts instead of asking them too many questions. "We're going to walk to see Granny, we have to go up the road and through the park"
- Play around with words and make up silly ones
- Give your child time to think about what you have said
- Chatting is important, the more you chat to your child the more time they get to practice

## Find out more about your Child's development

### [What to expect when - Developmental Guide for Parents](#)

If you have any concerns about your child's development the first thing to do is talk to your child's key person at their childminder / nursery / pre-school.

## Find out More

- [The Communication Trust Top Tips](#)
- [Literacy Trust Multilingual](#)
- [BBC Tiny Happy People](#)
- [Words for Life - ideas for Parents](#)
- [Hungry Little Minds Campaign](#)

