# Supporting Speech and Language Development

## Everyday Conversations That Help Little Voices Grow

Communication begins long before children speak in sentences. Facial expressions, gestures, sounds and shared attention are all important parts of early language development. Warm, responsive interactions throughout the day help children build understanding, express their needs and enjoy connecting with others.

## How Language Grows

Children develop communication skills through everyday relationships and meaningful experiences.

### Listening and Understanding

Hearing words in familiar situations helps children connect language with people, objects and actions. Repeating words during real experiences helps make their meaning clear.

### New Vocabulary

Play, stories and daily routines introduce useful words in a natural, memorable way.

### Back-and-Forth Interaction

Pausing, responding and taking turns show children that their communication matters. These little exchanges are the foundations of a real conversation.

### Confidence to Express Needs

Gestures, sounds and words all help children share feelings, choices and ideas.

## Five Ways to Support Language

### 1. Talk Through Daily Routines

Name what you are doing while dressing, preparing meals or tidying up. Keep sentences natural and connected to what your child is noticing.

### 2. Pause and Listen

Give your child time to respond with a gesture, sound or word. A smile, look or point may be their answer for now.

### 3. Share Books Together

Point to pictures, follow their interest and talk about what you see. You do not need to ask questions on every page.

### 4. Enjoy Songs and Rhymes

Repetition, rhythm and actions make language playful and memorable. Leave little gaps so children can join in when ready.

### 5. Use Your Home Languages

Speaking the languages your family knows best builds connection and communication. Children can learn more than one language through supportive relationships.

## Communication at Dovecote

At Dovecote Nursery, language is woven into play, stories, songs and everyday interactions. Our educators listen carefully, model useful words and respond to each child's attempts to communicate.

We recognise that every child develops at an individual pace and value close partnerships with families. If you have concerns about communication, speaking with your child's educator and an appropriate health professional can help you seek support early.

**The most valuable language experiences often begin with a simple conversation and a listening adult.**