

Every Child a Talker: 'Types' of communicator

Stage and age	Listening and attention	Understanding of language
The early communicator By 12 months	Turns towards a familiar sound then locates range of sounds with accuracy.	Recognises parent's voice and begins to understand frequently used words such as 'all gone', 'no' and 'bye-bye'. Stops and looks when hears own name.
The attentive communicator By 18 months	Interested in music and singing. Easily distracted by noises or other people talking	Understanding of single words in context is developing, e.g. 'cup', 'milk', 'daddy'. The child can understand more words than they can say.
The innovative communicator By 24 months	Starting to focus on an activity of their choice, although finds it difficult to be directed by an adult. Using the child's name helps them to attend to what the adult says, e.g. 'Ben, drink juice,', 'Aysha, coat on.'	By 24 months, understands simple instructions, e.g. 'get mummy's shoes', 'put your bricks away', 'Tell dad tea's ready.'
The developing communicator By 3 years	Beginning to listen to talk with interest, however, easily distracted. Listens to 'talk' addressed to self, but finds it difficult if prompts are not provided, e.g. use of name, 'stop and listen'.	Developing understanding of simple concepts including in/on/under, big/little. Understands simple 'who' and 'what' and 'where' questions but not 'why'. Understands a simple story when supported with pictures.
The questioning communicator By 4 years	Enjoys listening to stories. Still finds it difficult to attend to more than one thing at a time, so can't easily listen to a speaker while still carrying on an activity.	Understands more complex questions or instructions with two parts ' <u>get your jumper</u> and <u>stand by the door</u> '. Now understands 'why' questions and is aware of more abstract ideas including time in relation to past, present and future
The skilled communicator By 5 years	Attention is now more flexible – able to understand spoken instructions related to a task without stopping the activity to look at the speaker.	Able to follow a simple story without pictures. Understands instructions containing sequencing words; 'first... after....last'. Aware of more complex humour, laughs at jokes that are told. Understands and enjoys rhyme.

Stage and age	Speech sounds and talk	Social skills
The early communicator By 12 months	Initially uses cries to communicate. Gradually develops speech sounds (babbling) to communicate with adults; says sounds like 'baba, nono, gogo'.	Gazes at faces and copies facial movements, e.g. sticking out tongue. Increasingly aware of other people and taking turns in interactions using babble
The attentive communicator By 18 months	Progresses from using babble and around 10 single words, although these will often not be very clear.	Likes being with familiar adult and watching them. Developing the ability to follow an adult's body language, including pointing and gesture.
The innovative communicator By 24 months	Using up to 50 words and is beginning to put 2–3 words together. Frequently asks simple questions, e.g. 'Where's my drink?', 'What's that? (towards two years of age). Uses speech sounds p, b, m, w.	Gradually able to engage in 'pretend' play with toys. Frustrated when unable to make themselves understood.
The developing communicator By 3 years	Uses up to 300 different words including descriptive language, space, function. Can link 4–5 words together. May stutter or stammer when thinking what to say. Finds it difficult to say some speech sounds: l, r, w, y, f, th, s, sh, ch, dz, j.	Holds a conversation but jumps from topic to topic. Interested in others' play and will join in. Expresses emotions towards adults and peers, using words and actions.
The questioning communicator By 4 years	Uses sentences of four to six words, e.g. 'I want to play with cars,', 'what's that thingy called?' Able to remember and enjoys telling long stories or singing songs. Has problems saying r, j, th, ch, sh	Understands turn-taking as well as sharing with adults and peers and can initiate conversations. Enjoys playing with peers and will argue if they disagree.
The skilled communicator By 5 years	Uses well formed sentences and is easily understood by adults and peers. Frequently asks the meaning of unfamiliar words and may use them randomly. Only a few immaturities in speech sounds, 'th', 'r' and three consonant combinations 'scribble'	Chooses own friends and is generally co-operative with playmates. Can plan play activities. Takes turns in longer conversations and uses language to gain information, negotiate, discuss feelings/ideas and give opinions.

