National Deaf Children's Society

Supporting the pragmatic and social communication skills of deaf children

Contents

Acknowledgements

A note about terms

We use the term 'deaf' to refer to all types of hearing loss, from mild to profound. This includes deafness in one ear or temporary hearing loss such as glue ear.

We use the term 'parent' to refer to all parents and carers of children.

Who is this resource for?

This resource is aimed at parents of deaf children but may also be helpful for Teachers of the Deaf (ToDs) and other professionals working with deaf children.

1 Introduction

Pragmatics refers to how we use language with other people. Having pragmatic skills helps us communicate appropriately with others and know what to say, when to say it and how much to tell people. Sometimes we might call pragmatics 'social skills'.

Having good pragmatic skills is extremely important for many reasons. Connecting with and engaging with others is vital for friendships and relationships, from a child being able to express their needs and wants to adults communicating with a wide range of people at work and in personal relationships. It's also important academically, as many learning-based activities rely on working in groups and communicating with peers.

However, deaf children may have delayed pragmatic skills, so it's important that everyone supporting them understands:

- that pragmatic skills are as important as other aspects of language
- how deafness can impact a child's development of pragmatic skills
- how to assess pragmatic skills
- how best to support and develop pragmatic skills.

How to use this resource

The aim of this resource is to support parents, working alongside their Teachers of the Deaf (ToDs) or other professionals involved with their child, to create a rich pragmatic learning environment by:

- learning how pragmatic skills develop, including how the development of language, social interaction and social understanding interact with pragmatic development
- understanding how pragmatic development can be interrupted in deaf children
- identifying the key skills needed to be successful in everyday interactions and social opportunities
- supporting pragmatic development and related communication and social interaction needs using clear practical advice and fun activities.

Before using any of the activities or advice in this resource, it's important to first understand your child's skills and needs. Your child's Teacher of the Deaf can help you set goals and advise on a plan. See Chapter 4: Assessing pragmatics (page 13) for more information.

2 What are social communication and pragmatic language skills?

Social communication is a broad term which describes the ability to express meaning and intent to other people. The desire to interact and to express our thoughts is the basis of social communication, but we use lots of ways to do this.

Pragmatics is one part of social communication skills and refers to how we use language socially. It includes the language we use (words and sentences), along with non-verbal communication (such as eye gaze, movement and posture) and paralinguistic features (intonation and volume).

Pragmatic language skills are also context-dependent.[1] What we say in one situation to one person may or may not be appropriate if repeated to a different person in a different situation.

Pragmatics is therefore a complex idea: it's concerned with both choosing and using words and meanings which match social contexts, but also with understanding and interpreting social language and intended meanings. The range of communication behaviours that are described under the heading of pragmatics is therefore very large.
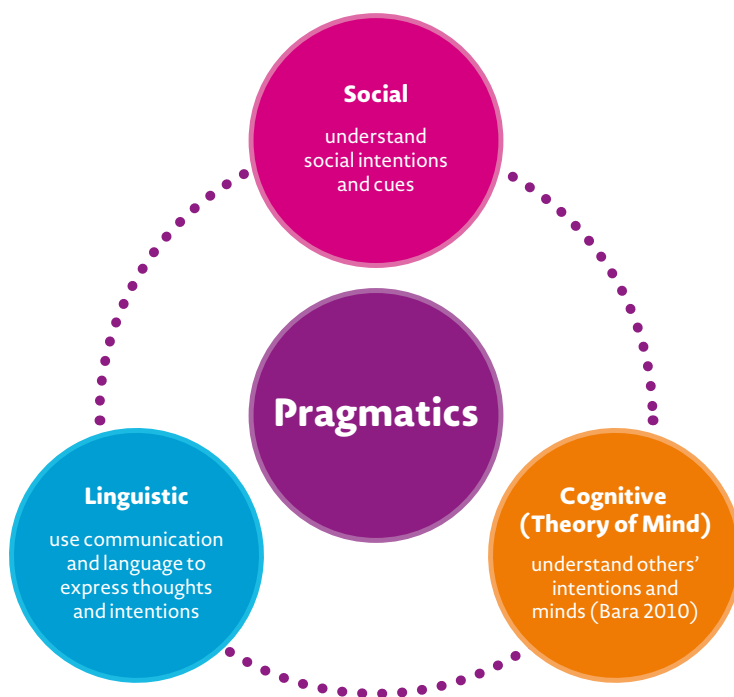
Social
understand social intentions and cues

Pragmatics

Linguistic
use communication and language to express thoughts and intentions

Cognitive (Theory of Mind)
understand others' intentions and minds (Bara 2010)

1. Adams, C. (2002). Practitioner Review: The assessment of language pragmatics. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry.* 438:73–987.DOI: 10.1111/1469-7610.00226

Breaking down pragmatics

It can be useful to break down pragmatics into its separate parts to understand the challenges for deaf children in developing social communication skills. Some of the important parts of pragmatics are included in the table below.

Reference	Making language relevant and meaningful Providing enough (but not too much) information regarding specific objects, events, people or places
Speech acts/ intention	Using appropriate speech (for example, requests, commands, politeness) to match intention and context
Inference	Taking meaning from things that have not been said by using things we already know about the person, the situation or world knowledge
Conversational skills	Such as taking turns and being reciprocal
Relevance	Being relevant and staying on topic
What's implied but not said directly	Including interpreting and using non-literal language forms

Every time we communicate with other people, we use many or all of these pragmatic skills. Often several are used at once, and we don't realise we're doing this. Advanced language use such as sarcasm, jokes and persuasion are likely to involve many complex aspects of pragmatics that develop later in childhood.

The key pragmatic language and social interaction skills of most concern to parents, teachers and researchers include:

- good conversation skills
- understanding others' thoughts, feelings and intentions (known as Theory of Mind)
- friendship skills.

Theory of Mind

Theory of Mind refers to how we understand the thoughts and feelings (mental states) of ourselves and others.

Everyone uses Theory of Mind, and it's a key skill in forming successful relationships. Recognising what someone is thinking or feeling (especially if they don't tell you), or explaining thoughts and feelings, requires Theory of Mind skills.

Pragmatics often overlaps with Theory of Mind, as it's often necessary to understand mental states to communicate in a socially appropriate way.

We use Theory of Mind every day. Think about the last time you:

- told a lie to avoid upsetting someone (for example, "Your new haircut looks great!")

- shared a joke (you need to understand what others know or what they find funny)

- downplayed how good you are at something (because you were embarrassed about a compliment or to avoid someone else feeling bad).

All these (and more examples) show advanced Theory of Mind skills, that is, the ability to understand how you and others think and feel, and to act accordingly in social situations.

Theory of Mind may only be thought about when it appears to be a problem, for example, deaf young people finding it difficult to understand the perspectives of others. It's possible to intervene when children and young people face Theory of Mind challenges, but it's better to foster early learning in a more preventative way.

Theory of Mind development begins in early childhood, and interactions with very young deaf children lay the foundations for later Theory of Mind development.

3 Laying the foundations for pragmatic development

Communication is the starting point for developing pragmatic skills.

Language and communication

Children need access to communication and language to develop pragmatic language skills. It doesn't matter whether they use sign language or spoken language or a combination, the foundations for understanding and supporting pragmatic and social communication skills are the same.

Here are some examples of how to build the foundation for a rich pragmatic environment for your child:

- Use facial expressions to show your child how you're feeling or to cue them into a joke or sad situation. Make sure they can see your face.

- Bring conversations to your child. Deaf children may struggle to overhear

everyday interactions, so think about how you can bring your child into a conversation or explain what's being talked about.

- Add in extra visual information such as gestures or simple signs, or by pointing to or showing what's being discussed.

- Use play to make interactions and conversations engaging and fun. Follow your child's lead to find out about their interests.

- Be deaf aware in group situations, for example, by communicating one at a time, signalling before talking or signing, and repeating or rephrasing if your child has missed out on what was being said.

If your child's home language is British Sign Language (BSL), some aspects of language which are commonly used in spoken English (for example, idioms) may need a different explanation as to how they occur in BSL.

Technology

Children learning spoken language need good access to spoken communication and language. For many deaf children, this will be through their hearing devices (for example, hearing aids and cochlear implants) and hearing technologies (such as radio aids and streamers).

Hearing and seeing lots of conversations and interactions will support their pragmatic skill development. Here are some examples of ways you can make sure technology helps your child:

- Check that equipment is working (for example, checking batteries).

- Write down a plan for how equipment should be used during social times at school (Teachers of the Deaf can help with this).

- Ask about taking radio aids home to support social experiences outside of school.

- Consider when and where conversations take place. Could background noise be reduced? Is your child ready to listen and attend?

- Use the right technology for the situation. For example, radio aids are best in busy, noisy social situations or during group conversations, whereas streamers work well for phone calls.

Technology is not perfect, and deaf children may still miss out on things, for example, by not overhearing interactions which can be useful for learning. While technology is a good starting point, there's much more that those around the child can do to make sure they develop to the best of their abilities.

Working together

Joint working is important for success. Parents best understand their child's interests, experiences and opportunities for social interaction. Teachers of the Deaf and other professionals can provide ideas for activities and resources and support families to understand what's required when planning for pragmatic learning opportunities.

The guidance below on creating and using naturally arising opportunities for pragmatic language learning can be used by professionals within the school context and by parents at home, ideally in a coordinated and planned approach.

Natural learning opportunities

Children learn best by getting to observe and practise communication skills during day-to-day routines. They acquire pragmatic skills incidentally by experiencing rich social interactions and by seeing and hearing the social interactions of others.

Although deaf children have many opportunities to acquire language, pragmatic skills may not automatically follow. This may be because it's more challenging for deaf children to experience, see and hear the same range of social interactions, or because they're learning conversation skills from teaching sessions with adults rather than from naturally occurring interactions.[2]

Understanding how to create opportunities for children to be part of conversations and interaction and learn through these opportunities is key.

Hearing children can use overhearing for learning even when busy doing other tasks. This is a powerful opportunity for learning.

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2. Paatsch, L.E. and Toe, D.M. (2014). A Comparison of Pragmatic Abilities of Children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing and their Hearing Peers. *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education.* 19(1):1–19. DOI: 10.1093/deafed/ent030.

Deaf children learn more if adults know more

Children develop better pragmatic skills if those around them understand the underlying skills required for pragmatic language development and make changes to what and how they communicate. By emphasising aspects of pragmatic language use, children will notice and learn from them. This is called a rich pragmatic language environment. By creating a rich pragmatic learning environment, children can learn skills in one context, and through discussion and explanation, can generalise them to other contexts.

Adults can create a rich pragmatic language environment by:

- observing their child's pragmatic language skills

- using everyday interactions as learning opportunities

- giving feedback to their child in ways that support them to learn

- recognising and building upon progress.

For more information on assessing pragmatic skills, go to Chapter 4.

(4) Assessing pragmatics

Although pragmatics may appear to be complex, it's possible even without training or specialist knowledge to recognise when people aren't using language or communicating in a way you'd expect. By carefully observing your child's interactions, you can identify areas where they may need additional support.

Recording and observing your child's interactions

Watching video recordings of your child's interactions can help you become more attuned to their communication strengths and needs, and can help you adopt new skills to support their social communication.[3]

You can use the following suggestions to record and observe your child's interactions. You may want to do this with your child's Teacher of the Deaf (ToD), who can help guide discussion.

Make a video	Make a short video of an interaction between you and your child, for example, a mealtime, play session or shared book reading.
	You may want to record this on your own phone (rather than your ToD's) so you can decide whether you want to keep it or delete it afterwards.
General observation questions	Watch the video and carefully pay attention to the entire interaction. Write down what you observed or discuss with your ToD. Here are some questions to get you started:
	• What did you notice about your child's communication?
	• What did they ask for?
	• What did they comment on?
	• What did they show an interest in?
	Now observe and discuss how you communicated during the interaction using the same questions as above.

3. Green, J., Charman, T., McConachie, H., Aldred, C., Slonims, V., Howlin, P., and Barrett, B. (2010). Parent-Mediated Communication-Focused Treatment in Children with Autism (PACT): A randomised controlled trial. *The Lancet*. 375(9732):2152–2160.DOI: 10.1016/S0140-6736(10)60587-9.

Questions to identify skills	Watch the video several times with just one question, for example:
	• Did your child ask any questions?
	• Did they look at you when you spoke?
	• Did they answer your question?
	• Did you pause before asking the next question?
	When you have identified a missing skill, consider how you could practise this skill with your child in other interactions. Discuss with your ToD for more ideas.
	Keeping the video is great for celebrating progress.
Alternative ideas	• You can do this activity to address a specific concern or to make general observations to start the discussion around pragmatic language development.
	• You may want to ask people who know you or your child well for ideas on how they can support this. For example, "I noticed that Amy doesn't ask many questions, and I'm wondering what we can do differently to make it easier for her to ask questions. Do you have any ideas?"

Methods of assessing pragmatic skills

Pragmatic and social communication skills in children can be assessed in different ways. Assessing these skills is more challenging than measuring other aspects of language, such as grammar or vocabulary, because the assessor needs to decide how well a child uses language and communication that's appropriate to the context or social situation.

The assessment methods described in this section have not all been used with deaf children. Many have originated from assessments of children on the autism spectrum who may experience similar difficulties with social communication. This doesn't exclude these methods from being useful for deaf children, but some general principles of assessment should be considered first.

When assessing pragmatics and social communication in children:

• make sure you're clear about the purpose of the assessment

• choose the scale or task as well as the material to match the age and developmental stage of the child

- make sure that any required measures can be recorded accurately.

If you're unsure how best to assess your child, discuss with your Teacher of the Deaf (ToD) or other professional working with your child.

Observing natural interactions

The most used approach for observing pragmatic skills is looking at natural, everyday interactions, such as conversations in the classroom with peers and teachers or at home with family members. Pragmatic language skills are sensitive to context, and therefore it's helpful to observe your child's interactions in a range of different settings and with different people.[4]

A natural setting is also likely to be more comfortable for children than a formal testing situation. For pre-school children, this is the only recommended approach.

Observations can be opportunistic: you can note pragmatic behaviours when they happen, rather than conducting a one-off assessment session. When observing your child's interactions, try to choose a range of naturally arising, routine and familiar situations. This will give the best information about how your child typically communicates in those situations.

You could create an observation sheet which you and other adults living or working with your child could fill in throughout their day. Here's an example:

Name: Lucy **Date:**	**Activity:** Art and craft	**Focus of this observation:** Asking questions
Communication partner	**Example of skill use**	**Communication partner behaviours that helped this skill to be used**
Mum	Lucy asked for glue and paint.	Mum poured only small amounts to prompt Lucy to ask for more glue.
Teacher	Lucy asked to use the internet to search for images from an artist.	Teacher commented: "Your picture reminds me of Miro. He's a famous artist."
Friend in school	Lucy asked about her friend's work.	Lucy's friend told her about some artwork she was really pleased with.

4.   Adams, C. (2002). Practitioner Review: The assessment of language pragmatics. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*. 438:73–987. DOI: 10.1111/1469-7610.00226.

Observational checklists

You can use a structured observation approach, such as checklists, to get more accurate and comprehensive information on your child's pragmatic behaviours.

Checklists have the advantage of being easy to carry out, and parents can complete some of them. Checklists can help you build a profile of your child's pragmatics ability based on your observations, helping you understand their strengths and weaknesses.

There are many published observational checklists which provide a set of behaviours to be rated or checked off (for example, children's ability to take turns, introduce topics, or ask for clarification). See Appendix 1 (page 120) for examples. Some checklists extend beyond pragmatics into broader social and emotion-related behaviours; others are more closely related to the linguistic aspects of pragmatics.

Parent or teacher reports

This type of assessment is an observational checklist in which the parent (or other adult who spends time with the child) reports and rates a set of pragmatic and social communication features. For some measures, a long period of observation is recommended. Other report measures may ask parents to rate a social communication behaviour based on their knowledge of their child. Reported measures have the advantage of being structured, easy to administer and can provide a useful profile of ability. It's not clear how reliable they are.

Structured elicitation methods

Elicitation methods refer to tasks or activities set up by an adult to engage children in verbal interaction. During the task, the adult will prompt the child to use specific aspects of pragmatics. The aim is to try to encourage (elicit) social communication behaviours that have not been observed in a naturalistic setting but which children may be able to produce. Elicitation tasks help children demonstrate pragmatic and social communication behaviours that they don't frequently use.

You can use elicitation methods to understand children's pragmatic strengths and weaknesses, and to measure changes in pragmatic ability from a baseline. Compared to checklists, there are not many published elicitation tasks.

Formal testing

Pragmatics is linked to social context, and formal testing is not an everyday social context. However, there are some aspects of pragmatics and social communication that can be elicited in standard contexts. These are typically quite complex behaviours and are aimed at older children and young people. Standardised tests that contain pragmatic assessment material and normative data are shown in Appendix 1 (page 120).

5 Pragmatic development in the early years

Pragmatic and social communication development begins even before children begin to use language to communicate. At first, children pay attention to either a caregiver or an interesting object or event (known as dyadic interactions).

Even these early interactions with parents rely on babies' natural motivation to interact with other humans, paying attention to their parents' faces, listening to the sounds and words they hear, and mimicking facial expressions and sounds.

There are several ways to promote social communication and pragmatic skills in deaf babies and toddlers:

- **Establish joint attention** with your child. Joint attention involves sharing a common focus on something (such as other people, objects, a concept, or an event) with someone else. It requires the ability to gain, maintain and shift attention. For example, a parent and child may both look at and react to or talk about a toy they're playing with.

- **Use child-directed language,** that is, language and communication which is adapted to be accessible to babies ('baby talk'). Child-directed language is more expressive and may include both visual and spoken elements, and elements of children's own communication repertoire. It's highly repetitious, creating a social feedback loop.

- **Create a rich language environment.** Deaf babies benefit not only from having access to lots of conversation and language experiences but also good quality language experiences. The quality of language refers to a range of language structures, including a range of vocabulary, use of techniques that can engage children in conversational interactions, and a range of verbal interaction styles (for example, responsive or directive).

- **Create a good communication environment.** Deaf children may be more sensitive to their communication environment. Background noise can drown out information such as pitch and intonation. It may also make it more difficult for babies to engage with language and communication at times when they're at their most receptive.

- **Use visual cues.** Deaf children benefit from opportunities to see and copy visual cues such as natural gesture, facial expressions, pointing, the 'give' gesture and simple signs.

- **Include language about thoughts, feelings, emotions and desires to help children develop Theory of Mind.** This includes using abstract language and terms which are about thinking such as 'believe', 'wonder', 'guess'. For more about Theory of Mind in the early years, go to page 27.

- **Promote playful interactions and make opportunities for social play.** Social play begins early with smiling and cooing, imitation and peekaboo. Children then learn to share toys when playing with others, take turns and follow the rules.

Creating child-centred approaches

The most frequently used approaches to support early communication development in deaf children focus on parent involvement in supporting language.[5] These approaches aim to support language development rather than teach language. Within child-centred approaches:

- Parents observe and identify opportunities to respond to and encourage verbal and non-verbal communication, including those that begin before language is used to express intent. Professionals who understand child development may support parents in this.

- Adults model age-appropriate interactions.

You can find more information on parent-child interactions and approaches on the Hanen Centre website: **hanen.org**.

5. Rees, R., Mahon, M., Herman, R., Newton, C., Craig, G., and Marriage, J. (2015). Communication Interventions for Families of Pre-School Deaf Children in the UK. *Deafness & Education International.* 17(2):88–100.DOI: 10.1179/1557069X14Y.0000000043.

Examples and practical tips for communication and language with babies

Babies at the starting point of their communication journey are already developing the skills needed for pragmatic development.

This table gives ideas on how to develop babies' and toddlers' pragmatic skills through everyday activities and play.

Starting points for communication and language Adapted from 'Success from the Start' – **ndcs.org.uk/successfromthestart**.	Things you can do to promote social communication
At 0 to 3 months old:	

• Babies show the beginnings of social behaviour. They look at and listen to your communication and copy you. This shows that they will soon try to join in.
 	
• They smile when they're touched or when they see an interesting object.
 	
• They show they're aware of other people as well as family members.
 	
• They cry to get the attention of others.
	• Use speech, signs, touch, gesture and facial expression.
	
	• Use 'baby talk' or 'child-directed speech'. You should think about using:
	
	  - short simple sentences
	
	  - a lively tone of voice
	
	  - lots of facial expressions and gestures
	
	  - your baby's name or nickname.
	
	• Repeat things and allow time and space for your baby to join in.
	
	• Sing songs and rhymes, varying your rhythm and pitch.
	
	• Copy your baby's facial expressions and mouth movements and encourage your baby to copy yours.
	
	• Touch, cuddle, stroke and massage your baby. These are all important ways of comforting, soothing, communicating and showing love.

| | • Play games such as 'pat-a-cake' and tickling. |
| | • Find out what interests your child – such as faces, bright lights and colours, stripes, dots and patterns – and watch their reaction. |

At 3 to 6 months old:

• Babies tell their family more clearly what they need, using different cries and facial expressions and making a range of sounds and gestures.	• Copy your baby's noises and facial expressions. Remember to leave a space to let your baby reply.
• They're interested in communication and now begin to take turns, communicating back.	• Spend time in face-to-face contact, and talk or sign about what your baby is doing or how they're feeling, for example: "Was that a yawn? Are you tired?"
• They recognise a wide range of people and everyday routines.	• Use speech, touch and your face to communicate with your child. Play games such as peekaboo.
• Sometimes they get excited before feeding or when they recognise a familiar person.	• Use familiar words, routines and games for regular routines such as nappy time or feeding time.
• They may begin to self-soothe. They can calm down on their own, allowing them to, for example, fall asleep without help or play by themselves.	• Look at books together and talk or sign about what you see.
	• Respond to your baby's signals for interest, enjoyment, anger, pain and disgust. These include crying, vocalising and body movements combined with facial expression.

At 6 to 9 months old:

• Babies can show their family what interests them, and the family can talk or sign about this.	• Comment on the things that your child looks at and is paying attention to, such as family members, pets or favourite toys.
• Their behaviours show that they recognise their home environment, familiar objects and favourite toys.	• Make links by pointing to what you're talking or signing about.

- They respond to certain voice or hand patterns, facial expressions and familiar gestures such as pointing.

- They're responsive to the emotions of people in their family.

- They've started to understand what their world is normally like and what they can expect.

- They've started to be cautious of new things, unfamiliar people or events.

- They now expect a thing to look, feel or taste the same each time they explore it.

- They link objects and events, for example, they get excited when they see their food.

- Use child-directed speech ('baby talk') or signs to keep your child's interest.

- Play visual tracking games – moving toys in your child's line of vision.

- Continue to play touch and anticipation games, for example, 'peekaboo'.

- Respond to your baby's attempt to communicate with an encouraging voice or game they enjoy.

- Continue to develop your baby's turn-taking skills though physical play – repeat the same actions again and again so your child sees how they can affect adult behaviour. Remember to follow your baby's lead.

- Use rhyme and songs linked to rhythmic movements, such as rocking, bouncing and swinging – this creates a link between rhythms in language and in movement.

At 9 to 12 months old:

- Children can communicate with and sometimes combine some gestures and vocalisations. This makes it easier for you to understand what they want or mean.

- They're tuning into the home language, producing babble that resembles speech or sign.

- They choose what to pay attention to. At this age, they are still only able to pay attention to one thing at a time.

- Watch and respond to your child's attempts to communicate with you, using your voice, gesture, sign and facial expression.

- Put into words or signs what you think your child is trying to tell you.

- Copy the sounds, movements and gestures your child makes.

- Sing and sign action games, rhymes, and songs – children will copy and respond.

- They use what they've seen others doing and may copy sounds, actions and behaviours such as pointing or pushing away a spoon at mealtimes.

- They begin to show through their behaviours that they have goals, and they know the importance of social interaction to achieve these goals.

- They may show emotion when they're unable to achieve their goals.

- Play give-and-take games where toys and objects are exchanged.

- Share books with your child – this is an ideal way for you to share a focus of attention and for them to direct your attention.

- Share books and talk or sign about what the characters are thinking and feeling.

- Follow your child's lead. Remain flexible and try not to teach or correct – this helps your child to feel secure and reduces stress.

- Provide opportunities for your child to watch and be with others.

- Use playful exclamations and gesture and exaggerated intonation to show surprise when your child pushes buttons or causes something to happen.

- Continue to repeat the language and actions you use in everyday routines and play. This will help your child develop their understanding of sequences of actions and sounds.

12 months and older:

- Children have learnt that things have names and are beginning to try them out.

- They know how language can be used to contact people, to direct their attention to things and to order them about.

- They have lots of ways for communicating what they mean, and close family understand what some of these are.

- Communicate about what your child does when they play, naturally providing them with opportunities to hear or see a range of vocabulary and language.

- Share books and name objects, people and pictures.

- Continue to use a range of speech, gesture and sign in everyday routines and social situations.

- They pay attention to things, events or people for an extended period.

- They can increasingly control their focus of interest.

- They know how to follow others' focus of attention and how to direct the attention of others.

- They're now able to use a small number of recognisable words and/or signs.

- They may use a combination of words or signs, tone of voice and facial expression to convey different meanings.

- They can understand more language than they're able to express.

- Expand 'child words' and/or signs so they see or hear the adult version. For example, if your child says "mo", you could say, "More, you want more?"

- Play games which encourage your child to wait, for example, pausing before rolling the ball or pushing the swing.

- Look at, share, and talk or sign about photos of you and your child, or make photobooks of special events and everyday routines.

- Follow your child's point or gaze and communicate about what they're interested in.

- Respond to your child's attempts to get your attention and take part in games.

- Allow your child to explore and then come back to you.

- Encourage your child to do things independently. Don't be too quick to solve problems but offer several possible solutions.

- Express the feelings that your child may be experiencing and help them understand their own feelings.

- Use language and gesture to comment upon and direct your child's behaviour, for example, extend your arms as you ask your child to come.

Combining language and social interaction development in the early years

Once children begin to combine words together into short utterances at around two years of age, there's a close relationship between their developing language abilities and their social and pragmatic development.

Language skills	
	• By two, children have some of the basic skills they'll need later for more complex pragmatics such as holding a conversation, constructing a narrative and telling jokes.
	• Toddlers can use language for different reasons, such as making statements and asking questions.[6]
	• They begin to adapt their language to the needs of the listener, for instance, by drawing attention to new pieces of information and using words to label objects.[7]
	• Toddlers have the basics of conversational abilities; they begin to try to repair miscommunications[8] and respond appropriately to requests for clarification.[9]

6. Snow, C.E., Pan, B.A., Imbens-Bailey, B., and Herman, J. (1996). Learning How to Say What One Means: A longitudinal study of children's speech act use. *Social Development*. 5:56–84.DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-9507.1996.tb00072.x.

7. Allen, S.E.M., Skarabela, B., and Hughes, M. (2008). Using Corpora to Examine Discourse Effects in Syntax. Corpora in Language Acquisition Research: *Finding Structure in Data*. 6:99–147.DOI: 10.1075/TILAR.6.

8. Grosse, G., Behne, T., Carpenter, M., and Tomasello, M. (2010). Infants Communicate in Order to be Understood. *Developmental Psychology*. 46(6):1710–1722.DOI: 10.1037/a0020727.

9. Corrin, J. (2010). Maternal Repair Initiation at MLU Stage I: The developmental power of 'hm?' *First Language*. 30(3-4):312–328.DOI: 10.1177/0142723710370526.

Building a conversation	- By three years, children use questions both to gain information and to make requests.[6] - They begin to understand how to use information to work out the intended meaning of ambiguous language (for example, pronouns such as 'he' can refer to multiple people). Whereas two-year-olds tend to solve these ambiguities by relying on who or what has previously been mentioned, how recently and in what order,[10] three-year-olds can also use other information such as gender. [11] - Three-year-olds begin to detect the miscommunications of their peers[12] and show some understanding of the need to respond in a conversation by keeping the same topic.[13] - By four years old, children begin to provide more detailed descriptions when the person they're talking to is unfamiliar with the topic[14] and produce basic narrative sequences to relate their experiences.[15] - In conversation, four-year-olds respond within a similar timeframe to adults (whereas earlier there tends to be longer gaps[16]) and begin to use fillers (uh, um) to show they expect to pause the conversation while they plan what to say.[17]

10. Song, H. and Fisher, C. (2005). Who's "she"? Discourse prominence influences preschoolers' comprehension of pronouns. *Journal of Memory and Language*. 52(1):29–57. DOI: 10.1016/j.jml.2004.06.012.

11. Arnold, J.E., Brown-Schmidt, S., and Trueswell, J.C. (2007). Children's Use of Gender and Order-of-Mention During Pronoun Comprehension. *Language and Cognitive Processes*. 22(4):527–565. DOI: 10.1080/01690960600845950.

12. Clark, E.V. (2014). Two Pragmatic Principles in Language Use and Acquisition, in D. Matthews (Ed.) *Pragmatic Development in First Language Acquisition*. John Benjamins. p. 105–120. DOI: 10.1075/tilar.10.07cla.

13. Clark, E.V. and Bernicot, J. (2008). Repetition as Ratification: How parents and children place information in common ground. *Journal of Child Language*. 35(2):349–371. DOI: 10.1017/S0305000907008537.

14. Saylor, M.M., Baird, J.A., and Gallerani, C. (2006). Telling Others What's New: Preschoolers' adherence to the given-new contract. *Journal of Cognition and Development*. 7(3):341–379. DOI: 10.1207/s15327647jcd0703_7.

15. Peterson, C. and McCabe, A. (1992). Parental Styles of Narrative Elicitation: Effect on children's narrative structure and content. *First Language*. 12(36, Pt 3):299–321. DOI: 10.1177/014272379201203606.

16. Casillas, M., Bobb, S., and Clark, E.V. (2016). Turn-Taking, Timing, and Planning in Early Language Acquisition. *Journal of Child Language*. 43(6):1310–1337. DOI: 10.1017/S0305000915000689.

17. Hudson Kam, C.L. and Edwards, N.A. (2008). The Use of Uh and Um by 3- and 4-year-old Native English-Speaking Children: Not quite right but not completely wrong. *First Language*. 28(3):313–327. DOI: 10.1177/0142723708091149.

Awareness of others	• At three to four years old, children are aware of differences between conversational partners and are more likely to learn new words from speakers who are good communicators.[18,19] • Children develop expectations about language use that vary according to who they're talking to and what experiences they share with that person.[20] • Children develop their awareness of other people's perspectives (known as Theory of Mind) and begin to use complex mental state language (for example, 'I think' or 'He knows').[21] These skills are thought to underpin the later successful mastery of non-literal language.[22]

18. Koenig, M.A. and Harris, P.L. (2005). Preschoolers Mistrust Ignorant and Inaccurate Speakers. *Child Development*. 76(6):1261–1277.

19. Sabbagh, M.A. and Baldwin, D.A. (2001). Learning Words from Knowledgeable Versus Ignorant Speakers: Links between preschoolers' Theory of Mind and semantic development. *Child Development*. 72(4):1054–1070.DOI: 10.1111/1467-8624.00334.

20. Matthews, D., Lieven, E., and Tomasello, M. (2010). What's in a Manner of Speaking? Children's sensitivity to partner-specific referential precedents. *Developmental Psychology*. 46(4):749–760.DOI: 10.1037/a0019657.

21. Boeg Thomsen, D., Theakston, A., Kandemirci, B., and Brandt, S. (2021). Do Complement Clauses Really Support False-Belief Reasoning? A longitudinal study with English-speaking 2- to 3-year-olds. *Developmental Psychology*.

22. Bosco, F.M. and Gabbatore, I. (2017). Sincere, Deceitful, and Ironic Communicative Acts and the Role of the Theory of Mind in Childhood. *Frontiers in Psychology*. 8(21).DOI: 10.3389/fpsyg.2017.00021.

Theory of Mind in the early years

Theory of Mind is the ability to recognise and understand our own thoughts, feelings, desires, intentions and motivations, and to predict these in other people. When we recognise these in ourselves, we're thinking about our mental state. What someone thinks, feels and believes influences their actions. Theory of Mind helps us understand why someone acts in the way that they do and why people interact with each other in the way that they do.

Before Theory of Mind develops

Ever wondered why children play hide and seek by covering their own eyes?

When children are very young, they can't separate what they know from what other people have knowledge of. When young children play hide and seek, they believe you can't see them, because they can't see you! They haven't yet developed their Theory of Mind, but with lots of interactions with other people, they soon will.

False beliefs

Imagine being handed a box of your favourite chocolates. When you open the box, you see it's filled with pencils instead of sweets. If your friend suddenly came into the room and saw the closed box with pictures of chocolate on it, what would they think was inside? If you answered 'chocolates', then you understand 'false beliefs', which means you know that someone can believe something that's not true because they don't have the same knowledge that you do. When three-year-olds are asked this question, they answer 'pencils', because they haven't reached this stage of understanding in their Theory of Mind development.

Developing Theory of Mind

The starting points of developing Theory of Mind in children include:

- paying attention to people and becoming aware of their feelings

- recognising others' emotions and using words to express them ('happy', 'sad', 'mad')

- knowing that their thoughts and feelings are different from other people and that others may have different likes or dislikes from each other

- knowing that people act according to the things they want

- understanding the causes and consequences of emotions

- pretending to be someone else when they play.

Helping young children develop Theory of Mind

The way in which we interact with and play with children can help their understanding of others' thoughts and feelings. In fact, studies have shown that when families use words that refer to thinking and feeling when they talk to their child, sometimes known as mental state language, it helps children's Theory of Mind development.[23,24]

Here are some simple things you can do at home with your child to promote their Theory of Mind.

- **Follow your child's lead.** To tune in to other people's thoughts and emotions, children need to pay attention to other people. You can support your child to do this by talking about or playing with things that your child is interested in. Observe their interests and then get down to their level so that you're face-to-face. This will help them pay attention to you and tune in to your facial expressions. Copy their actions and add to their play ideas. Once you're paying attention to the same thing, you'll have an opportunity to use 'tuning-in' language.

- **Use 'tuning-in' language.** This is when someone's perspective is put into words. Imagine what a child might be wanting, thinking or feeling, and say something about it using mental state terms, such as:

  - "Oh, you **want** to get that toy out."

  - "Don't **worry**. You **thought** I was gone, but I'm here!"

  - "I'm **upset** because you took that toy away from me."

  - "Sam looks **happy**. She must really **like** her present."

- **Role-play and play pretend together.** Role play encourages your child to think about and act out other people's perspectives. When children first learn to role-play, they pretend to be individuals they have experienced in everyday life, like pretending to be mum or dad, a doctor, bus driver or teacher.

- **Use books to talk about the characters' thoughts and feelings.** Talking about the characters' thoughts and feelings, their different ideas and reactions, and what characters might do next in the story helps promote early Theory of Mind. But research shows that it's also important to connect these ideas to your child's own experiences.[25] For example, when talking about a character that looks sad because she lost her favourite toy, connect that to a time when your child was sad because they lost something special.

23. Carr, A., Slade, L., Yuill, N., Sullivan, S., and Ruffman, T. (2018). Minding the Children: A longitudinal study of mental state talk, Theory of Mind, and behavioural adjustment from the age of 3 to 10. *Social Development*. 27:826–840.DOI: 10.1111/sode.12315.

24. Taumoepeau, M. and Ruffman, T. (2008). Stepping Stones to Others' Minds: Maternal talk relates to child mental state language and emotion understanding at 15, 24 and 33 months. *Child Development*. 79(2):284–302.DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-8624.2007.01126.x.

25. Paatsch, L.E. and Toe, D.M. (2014). A Comparison of Pragmatic Abilities of Children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing and their Hearing Peers. *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*. 19(1):1–19.DOI: 10.1093/deafed/ent030.

Important conversations for Theory of Mind

Young children don't understand that people don't hold the same knowledge as them. This is to be expected, but it's through conversation they will start to understand that different people have different knowledge sets. Every time you interact with your child, you have an opportunity to put into words what you're both thinking and feeling. These types of conversations will deepen their understanding of their own thoughts and feelings, and how others may have different thoughts and feelings from their own, and how we all act based on what we're thinking and feeling.

Look at the table below to see how you can use conversation to develop Theory of Mind skills.

Example 1	Example 2
I'm going to check the weather to see what it's going to be like tomorrow. If it's nice weather, we can have a picnic. The weather report says it's going to be sunny.	I've been **wondering** about the weather tomorrow. I **think** it's going to be sunny, but I'm going to check. Do you **think** it's going to be sunny? Yes, I've checked. I **thought** it was going to be sunny. I **hoped** it would be sunny. Now I **expect** I'm right. I **think** Dad will be **pleased** because I **think** he **wants** to have a picnic. Do you remember how you felt last time we had a picnic? I'm really **happy** and **excited**.

See the differences between the two types of conversations? Example 2 provides the following:

- use of mental and emotional state terms – wondering, think, hoped

- modelling of language – expanding on and adding extra information

- running commentary

- talking about other people and what you see (remember to talk about what they think, how they feel and how this affects the things they do).

⬈ Expand

- Try to include a range of mental state terms in your conversations with your child. These might include, think, know, wonder, guess, believe, realise, remember.

- Think about how you can provide a running commentary like example 2 on the previous page.

- Don't worry if you think your child doesn't understand. Over time and through exposure, this will become more natural to them.

- If your child uses sign language or signs to support spoken English or Welsh, you might want to make sure you know the signs for different mental state terms.

Pragmatic skills games

Game	How to do it	Why
I Spy	- I spy with my little eye… something that you can eat. - I spy with my little eye… something that you can play with.	Remember to 'tune in'. Expand and add commentary when you reply, for example: - That's good, but it isn't what I'm thinking of. - That's a good guess, but it isn't right. - That's not right – remember you already guessed that? - I'm getting better at I Spy! I thought you might be thinking about the computer because I could see you looking at it. - You're getting better at I Spy! I saw you looking at my eyes, trying to see what I was looking and thinking about.

What am I thinking of?	Similar to I Spy. • I'm thinking of something that's cold and white and you can eat it. (Ice cream) • Adapt and change to your own ideas.	Help your child understand that you're having a different thought to the one they have. • That's right, yoghurt is cold and white and you can eat it. But I'm not thinking of yoghurt. I'm thinking in my mind about something else.
Pretend play	You can use a range of play ideas such as setting up cups and water for a pretend café or washing cars outside in a pretend carwash.	Talk about how people's thoughts affect what they do and say. • I'm going to be the customer. I'm very cross because my food is cold!
Small world play	Small toys such as Playmobil can be helpful for setting up role play with small characters.	Play with your child by taking on the role of a character each. Talk about what you think your character is thinking or feeling.

Resources to support early pragmatics

There are lots of resources available to help you understand more about developing language and communication in deaf babies aged 0 to 2.

Video resources

Our 'Supporting Communication with Deaf Babies and Toddlers' videos (**ndcs.org.uk/developing-language-communication**) go step-by-step through language and communication development and give lots of ideas for concepts such as tuning in and responding to your baby.

Our Family Sign Language videos (**ndcs.org.uk/sign-language-family**) support parents who are using sign language with their child.

Booklets and charts

Our 'Success from the Start' resource (**ndcs.org.uk/successfromthestart**) helps families of deaf children aged 0 to 3 observe, monitor and record their child's developmental progress.

Our developmental play chart (**ndcs.org.uk/developmental-play-chart**) offers lots of play ideas for children at all stages of their development.

Reflections

For any of the activities in this chapter, you can use the following template to reflect on what you did and what you observed.

What did I do?	
What did I learn?	
What did I observe?	
How did I change the activity?	
Thoughts for things to do in the future	

6 Pragmatic development in older children

As children's language develops, they gain the pragmatic language skills necessary to be successful communicators. They learn to:

- be appropriately informative

- explain sequences of information accurately

- understand and use non-literal language to say what they mean. For example, instead of saying, "I'm very hungry," they might say, "I could eat a horse." This is an advanced pragmatic skill.

Children also start to understand other people's behaviours and they can use this in conversation, for example:

- the speaker's intentions

- the other person's needs in the conversation

- the physical context.

Research shows deaf children may develop pragmatic skills slower than hearing children. They may have difficulties using these skills in a socially appropriate manner even when they have age-appropriate vocabulary and grammar to support them.[26] Deaf children may need those around them (such as their families and teachers) to be more aware of opportunities to support development.

A child's communication skills are developed and continually influenced by their relationships. As children's skills improve and they take part in more conversations, they will develop a better understanding of others' views and feelings, thereby fostering the development of social skills and relationships.

Developing conversation skills

Conversation is the exchange of news, ideas, opinions, feelings, experiences and future plans between two or more people talking or signing together. Having an enjoyable conversation with friends, acquaintances and sometimes strangers is a pleasurable and rewarding experience that can build, maintain and deepen connections to others. Conversation helps children develop peer relationships and friendships.

26. Goberis, D., Beams, D., Dalpes, M., Abrisch, A., Baca, R., and Yoshinaga-Itano, C. (2012). The Missing Link in Language Development of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children: Pragmatic language development. *Seminars in Speech and Language*. 33:297-309.DOI: 10.1055/s-0032-1326916.

What skills do children need to engage in conversation?

- Language skills to understand what is said and prepare a response.

- Social understanding to interpret the conversation partner's level of interest in and knowledge of the topic.

- Pragmatic skills to adapt the quality and quantity of information and degree of formality needed to ensure a smooth exchange of ideas.

At what age do conversation skills develop?

- At age four or five, children can provide some information or descriptions. It's possible to get further information from children as young as four with supportive feedback.[27]

- By age seven, children are able to be more informative, which helps the other person in the conversation.

- By age nine, children will have developed the ability to detect that the other person has not found information clear enough.[28]

Conversation skills and deaf children

Between the ages of 8 and 12 deaf children may show differences in their approaches to conversation compared to their hearing peers. Research[29] has shown that deaf children may:

- ask more questions

- make more personal comments

- initiate more topics

- take longer turns.

Deaf children may need extra support with the following areas of development:

- **Reciprocity** – taking both speaker and listener roles appropriate to the context, asking enough, but not too many questions, and responding to the speaker in ways that extend and maintain the conversation.

- **Topic maintenance** – staying on the same topic and knowing how to end conversations before their turn becomes too long.

27. Matthews, D., Butcher, J., Lieven, E. and Tomasello, M. (2012). Two and Four-Year-Olds Learn to Adapt Referring Expressions to Context: Effects of distractors and feedback on referential communication. *Topics in Cognitive Science.* 4(2):184-210.DOI: 10.1111/j.1756-8765.2012.01181.x

28. Lloyd, P., Camaioni, L., and Ercolani, P. (1995). Assessing Referential Communication Skills in the Primary School Years: A comparative study. *British Journal of Developmental Psychology.* 13(1):13-29.DOI: 10.1111/j.2044-835X.1995. tb00661.x.

29. Paatsch, L.E. and Toe, D.M. (2014). A Comparison of Pragmatic Abilities of Children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing and their Hearing Peers. *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education.* 19(1):1-19.DOI: 10.1093/deafed/ent030.

- **Changing topic** – marking a change of topic in clear and appropriate ways, not changing topic too often, not dominating with one preferred topic and avoiding making personal comments.

- **Information requirements** – managing the listener's need for information by giving enough but not too much information, adapting how much information to give depending on the audience and responding to requests for more information.

- **Specific and coherent** – expressing ideas using the right words and being able to use language to give a logical account so that it's possible to follow the conversation, using accurate and complete sentences.

> Try out our activities for practising conversation skills with your child on page 53.

Developing narrative skills

Understanding and constructing narratives supports children's interactions with family and friends. It's also important for understanding teachers' instructions and expectations in the classroom and is therefore key to academic achievement.[30]

What skills do children need to tell a narrative?

Understanding and telling narratives is a complex skill which involves a range of language, pragmatic and social understanding skills.[31] To tell a narrative, and be understood, children need:

- structural language skills of vocabulary, grammar and syntax

- an understanding of what information the listener already knows and what needs to be explained

- the ability to use parts of language which make the flow of information clear to the listener, for example, pronouns (he/she/they) link events to a character

- Theory of Mind skills to explain feelings and intentions, understand their conversation partner's perspective, and predict their level of interest and how they will react to what they're being told

- the ability to remember events and report them in order using words that mark the sequence of events (for example, 'next', 'then', 'before').

30. Johnston, J.R. (2008). Narratives: Twenty-five years later. *Topics in Language Disorders*. 28(2):93–98 DOI: 10.1097/01. TLD.0000318931.08807.01.

31. Norbury, C.F., Gemmell, T., and Paul, R. (2014). Pragmatics Abilities in Narrative Production: A cross-disorder comparison. *Journal of Child Language*. 41(3):485–510. DOI: 10.1017/S030500091300007X.

At what age do narrative skills develop?

Narrative skills begin to develop in the early years.

- By four years, children can provide more detailed descriptions for a listener unfamiliar with the topic[32] and can produce basic narrative sequences to relate their experiences.[33]

- At five or six, children can produce more mature narratives. At this age, children not only understand the structure and story grammar elements but can use these to formulate their own narratives.[34]

- As children develop further, they understand and can include more information such as the thoughts, motives and intentions of characters in a story.

Narrative skills and deaf children

Deaf children with otherwise good language skills might leave out key elements in their narratives. They often find it difficult to understand inference questions, which are questions that don't have a direct answer, but which can be worked out from clues or other evidence (for example, how or why a character feels a particular way). This may indicate poor understanding of underlying messages in stories.[35,36]

Deaf children may need additional support with:

- reporting events clearly and in order

- understanding and using non-literal language.

> Try out our activities for practising storytelling and narrative skills with your child on page 80.

32. Saylor, M.M., Baird, J.A., and Gallerani, C. (2006). Telling Others What's New: Preschoolers' adherence to the given-new contract. *Journal of Cognition and Development*. 7(3):341–379.DOI: 10.1207/s15327647jcd0703_7.

33. Peterson, C. and McCabe, A. (1992). Parental Styles of Narrative Elicitation: Effect on children's narrative structure and content. *First Language*. 12(36, Pt 3):299–321.DOI: 10.1177/014272379201203606.

34. Davies, P., Shanks, B., and Davies, K. (2004). Improving Narrative Skills in Young Children with Delayed Language Development. *Educational Review*. 56(3):271–286.DOI: 10.1080/0013191042000201181.

35. Boons, T., De Raeve, L., Langereis, M., Peeraer, L., Wouters, J., and van Wieringen, A. (2013). Expressive Vocabulary, Morphology, Syntax and Narrative Skills in Profoundly Deaf Children after Early Cochlear Implantation. *Research in Developmental Disabilities*. 34:2008–2022.DOI: 10.1016/j.ridd.2013.03.003

36. Jones, A.C., Toscanob, E., Botting, N., Marshall, C.R., Atkinson, J.R., Denmark, T., Herman, R., and Morgan, G. (2016). Narrative Skills in Deaf Children who use Spoken English: Dissociations between macro and microstructural devices. *Research in Developmental Disabilities*. 59:268–282.DOI: 10.1016/j.ridd.2016.09.010

Developing non-literal language

Non-literal language is when words and phrases have an intended meaning which is different to the literal meaning of the words used. The meaning taken from the words depends on the context. In general, non-literal language is used to make spoken and written language more varied and interesting. You can also use indirect language to be more polite, or use irony and word-play to be amusing.

What skills do children need to understand non-literal language?

- Theory of Mind skills to interpret the speaker's thoughts and beliefs about the situation.

- Pragmatic skills to decode the intended meaning of the utterance in context.

- Language processing skills to understand the literal meaning of the words and reject the literal in favour of the intended meaning.

Non-literal language and deaf children

Deaf children may need support to develop greater understanding and use of non-literal language.

Understanding and using non-literal language for a range of purposes increases in the school years[37] but can continue to be an area of challenge for deaf children, even those with good vocabulary and grammar knowledge.

Deaf children may need additional support with the following non-literal language forms.

37. Eson, M. and Shapiro, A. (1982). When "Don't" means "Do". Pragmatics and cognitive development in understanding an indirect imperative. *First Language*. 3:83–91.DOI: 10.1177/014272378200300801.

Idioms

An idiom is a word or phrase that doesn't mean exactly what's said: it has a hidden meaning that's not often easy to work out from the words alone. For example, 'A penny for your thoughts' is an idiom meaning 'Tell me what you're thinking about'. It doesn't literally mean you'll spend a penny for someone's thoughts!

Knowledge of idioms starts in the primary school years and continues to develop beyond secondary school and into adulthood.[38] Some idioms are easier to 'translate' than others. For example, you can analyse 'to speak your mind' to work out that it means: 'to speak your feelings or opinions honestly'. For most idioms, you can't work out the meaning from the words alone, and social cues are more relevant. Analysing the words for possible clues and reading the social context will help you to understand the intended meaning.

Try out our activities for practising idioms with your child on page 87.

Indirect requests

An indirect request is a polite way of expressing a desire or intention without stating it explicitly.

Indirect requests require us to interpret the speaker's intended meaning in context. For example, if the window is open and the speaker would prefer it closed, they could use an indirect request to hint at what they want. For example, they could say, "It's cold in here" or "The traffic is quite noisy with the window open." Both statements give information about the impact of the open window on the speaker, but it's up to the listener to work out what the speaker wants.

Children as young as three can understand simple indirect requests which are predictable and made within their routine day-to-day experiences.[39] Examples might include, "Can you wash your hands?" or "Can you tidy up?", both of which are requests for action, not information.

Try out our activities for practising indirect requests with your child on page 92.

38. Cain, K., Towse, A.S., and Knight, R.S. (2009). The Development of Idiom Comprehension: An investigation of semantic and contextual processing skills. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*. 102:280–298.DOI: 10.1016/j.jecp.2008.08.001.

39. Cameron-Faulkner, T. (2014). The Development of Speech Acts, in D. Matthews (Ed.) *Pragmatic Development in First Language Acquisition*. John Benjamins Publishing Company: Amsterdam/Philadelphia.

Irony

Irony is when a speaker says the opposite of what they mean. They'll use tone of voice, gestures and/or facial expressions to signal their intended meaning. For example, on setting off for a picnic just as it starts to rain, an ironic statement could be, "What a perfect day for a picnic." To understand what the speaker means, listeners must understand the literal meaning of the words and then use context cues and the speaker's intonation, gestures and/or facial expressions to understand the speaker's attitude to the situation, that is, that it's **not** a lovely day for a picnic.

Irony is used to indicate a mismatch between what was expected and what's occurred in a critical way. We use irony with the aim of being entertaining or amusing. Sarcasm is a form of irony but is made with a hurtful intention.

Understanding irony begins to develop in children around five or six years of age and continues into early teenage years, although telling the difference between irony and deception can still be problematic for young people. Using language to be ironic starts later, at around seven years of age, and is thought to be related to how much irony is used within the family.[40]

Try out our activities for practising irony with your child on page 96.

Puns

Puns are jokes that make use of the different possible meanings of a word, or the fact that there are words which sound alike but have different meanings (homophones). For example, "I was struggling to figure out how lightning works, then it struck me!" or "Reading while sunbathing makes you well red/read".

To understand a pun, you have to know both meanings of the homophone and be able to use context clues to work out the correct one for the joke.

Usually, homophones occur in a context where only one meaning is intended. Children four years and older have the ability to understand that one word may have two different meanings.[41] As they get older, they're better able to use context cues to work out the meaning of homophones in stories. By the age of 10, children can accurately understand most puns.[42]

Try out our activities for practising puns with your child on page 99.

40. Filippova, E. (2014). Irony Production and Comprehension, in D. Matthews (Ed.) *Pragmatic Development in First Language Acquisition*. John Benjamins Publishing Company: Amsterdam/Philadelphia. p. 261–278.

41. Doherty, M.J. (2000). Children's Understanding of Homonymy: Metalinguistic awareness and false belief. *Journal of Child Language*. 27:367–392. DOI: 10.1017/s0305000900004153

42. Doherty, M.J. (2004). Children's Difficulty in Learning Homonyms. *Journal of Child Language*. 31(1):203–214. DOI: 10.1017/S030500090300583X.

Developing advanced pragmatic skills

Development of pragmatics continues into adolescence and beyond[43] with the use of negotiation strategies, non-literal language and slang becoming more sophisticated.

Here are two other types of advanced pragmatic skills they will develop:

Complex speech

Complex speech such as promising, persuading, using words to be polite and multiple embeddings of thoughts and feelings (for example, "I think my friend thinks his mother is upset") continue to develop in the early school years but may not be mastered completely until nine years old or later.[44]

Deception

Young children may show the basic beginnings of using language for deceptive purposes (for example, by lying or understanding that someone else is trying to deceive[45]). As they get older, children show more highly developed skills. For example, they develop understanding of the contexts in which lying is considered acceptable.[46]

Developing Theory of Mind

Theory of Mind is the ability to recognise and understand our own thoughts, feelings, desires, intentions and motivations and to predict these in other people. When we recognise these in ourselves, we're thinking about our mental state. What someone thinks, feels and believes influences their actions. Theory of Mind helps us understand why someone acts in the way that they do and why people interact with each other in the way that they do.

To predict mental states in others, we use what we already know of the other person, their verbal and non-verbal responses, and the context of the situation to interpret what they're thinking and feeling in that situation. Theory of Mind helps us act and interact in ways that accurately communicate our own thoughts, feelings, desires and intentions, and in ways that are right for the situation.[47]

43. Nippold, M.A. and Rudzinski, M. (1993). Familiarity and Transparency in Idiom Explanation: A developmental study of children and adolescents. *Journal of Speech and Hearing Research*. 36:728–737. DOI: 10.1044/jshr.3604.728

44. Axia, G. and Baroni, M.R. (1985). Linguistic Politeness at Different Age Levels. *Child Development*. 56(4):918–927. DOI: 10.2307/1130104.

45. Bussey, K. (1999). Children's Categorization and Evaluation of Different Types of Lies and Truths. *Child Development*. 70:1338–1347. DOI: 10.1111/1467-8624.00098.

46. Talwar, V. and Crossman, A. (2011). From Little White Lies to Filthy Liars: The evolution of honesty and deception in young children. *Advances in Child Development and Behaviour*. 40:139–179. DOI: 10.1016/b978-0-12-386491-8.00004-9

47. Westby, C. and Robinson, L. (2014). A Developmental Perspective or Promoting Theory of Mind. *Topics in Language Disorders*. 34:362–382. DOI: 10.1097/TLD.0000000000000035.

Mental states are discussed using mental state verbs such as:

Know
Think
Forget

Pretend
Believe
Remember

Realise
Guess
Wonder

By understanding mental state verbs, children can analyse other people's actions to determine their goals and motives and consider how these relate to their own goals and motives. Mental state verbs are abstract, can't be touched or seen, and are determined by the context in which the interaction is happening, all of which make them challenging for children to learn.[48] Talking about mental states and encouraging your child to use mental state verbs will help them understand thoughts and feelings and support their emerging Theory of Mind.[49,50]

Theory of Mind in deaf children

Past research has shown that deaf children with hearing parents have performed more poorly than deaf children from deaf families on tests of Theory of Mind, suggesting that shared language plays an important role in Theory of Mind development.[51]

Children with cochlear implants aged 3 to 12 years old have been found to have Theory of Mind abilities similar to their hearing peers with some slight differences in the order of how things develop.[52] This shows that increasing language can increase Theory of Mind understanding.

48. Papafragou, A., Cassidy, K., and Gleitman, L. (2007). When We Think About Thinking: The acquisition of belief verbs. *Cognition*. 105:125–165.

49. Carr, A., Slade, L., Yuill, N., Sullivan, S., and Ruffman, T. (2018). Minding the Children: A longitudinal study of mental state talk, Theory of Mind, and behavioural adjustment from the age of 3 to 10. *Social Development*. 27:826–840.DOI: 10.1111/sode.12315.

50. Taumoepeau, M. and Ruffman, T. (2008). Stepping Stones to Others' Minds: Maternal talk relates to child mental state language and emotion understanding at 15, 24, and 33 months. *Child Development*. 79(2):284-302.DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-8624.2007.01126.x.

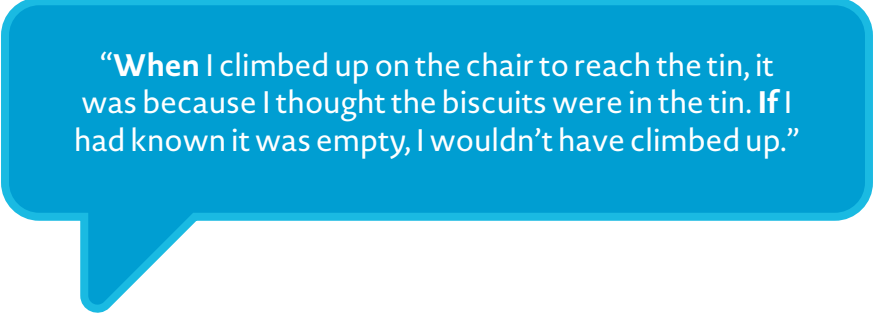51. Schick, B., de Villiers, P., de Villiers, J., and Hoffmeister, R. (2007). Language and Theory of Mind: A study of deaf children. *Child Development*. 78(2):376 – 396.DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-8624.2007.01004.x.

52. Remmel, E. and Peters, K. (2009). Theory of Mind and Language in Children with Cochlear Implants. *The Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*. 14(2):218–236.DOI: 10.1093/deafed/enn036.

The importance of language for Theory of Mind

Language supports the development of Theory of Mind,[53] and narrative language skills are closely linked to socialising with other people.[54] Talking about and explaining different aspects of Theory of Mind often requires the use of long and complex sentences. Keeping sentences short and clear makes them easier to understand but doesn't support Theory of Mind development.

For example, more complex sentences that use 'when' or 'if' explain the conditions under which we hold a belief or a thought.

> "**When** I climbed up on the chair to reach the tin, it was because I thought the biscuits were in the tin. **If** I had known it was empty, I wouldn't have climbed up."

How Theory of Mind develops in children

Children's Theory of Mind starts developing from around age three and continues as they get older.[55] Before this age, children understand the world from their own perspective only. Refer back to page 27 for more information about Theory of Mind in the early years.

Theory of Mind requires understanding of our own thoughts and feelings as well as other people's thoughts and feelings.

Theory of Mind skills include:

- understanding and using deception, that is, lies and white lies

- cheating or playing tricks

- being persuasive, that is, using what you know about another person's preferences to persuade them to your way of thinking

- perspective taking, that is, understanding that others may have different knowledge, thoughts, feelings, beliefs and hopes.

53. Milligan, K., Astington, J.W., and Dack, L.A. (2007). Language and Theory of Mind: Meta-analysis of the relation between language ability and false-belief understanding. *Child Development*. 78(2):622 – 646.DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-8624.2007.01018.x.

54. Norbury, C.F., Gemmell, T., and Paul, R. (2014). Pragmatics Abilities in Narrative Production: A cross-disorder comparison. *Journal of Child Language*. 41(3):485–510.DOI: 10.1017/S030500091300007X.

55. Wellman, H.M., Cross, D., and Watson, J. (2001). Meta-Analysis of Theory of Mind Development: The truth about false belief. *Child Development*. 72:655 – 684.DOI: 10.1111/1467-8624.00304.

You can see a developmental trajectory for Theory of Mind from pre-school to eight years and older (adapted from Westby and Robinson, 2014[56] with permission) below:

Pre Theory of Mind – the skills that begin between birth and four years:

- Early communication and interactions.
- Using language to describe thoughts.
- Using language to describe feelings.

Four to five years – skills at this time focus on understanding thoughts and feelings

Children at this age are able to:

- explain that other people have thoughts and feelings, why and how they know this
- understand that we know information because we have seen it or heard it
- understand that people make decisions on what they believe to be true, even if it isn't true (false belief)
- understand not only what people see but how it appears to them
- understand that thoughts and emotions are caused by what people think is the case, even if this isn't true.

Six to eight years – skills at this time focus on expanding understanding of a range of thoughts and emotions

Children at this age are able to:

- explain what a person is thinking or feeling about another person's thoughts or feelings (for example, "John believes that Alex believes" or "Hani knows that Sammi feels")
- understand that someone can have more than one feeling about the same situation and that these may be 'mixed feelings', for example, being both excited and nervous about starting school
- judge situations and understand that people remember, forget, guess
- describe situations where social emotions such as jealousy, pride, embarrassment or guilt occur. These feelings require an understanding of the mental states of others.

56. Westby, C. and Robinson, L. (2014). A Developmental Perspective or Promoting Theory of Mind. *Topics in Language Disorders*. 34:362–382. DOI: 10.1097/TLD.0000000000000035.

Eight years and older – focus is on more complex skills

From this age, children are able to:

- understand complicated lines of thoughts and feelings including multiple people, for example, "She thinks that her mother knows that her brother hopes his girlfriend will want the gift"

- understand that people do things to hide lies and to find out when others are lying

- understand that words can have hidden meanings (for example, tricks, persuasion, sarcasm, or idioms).

Try out our activities for practising Theory of Mind skills with your child on page 106.

Supporting deaf children to develop friendships through enhanced pragmatic and social communication skills

Children with poor pragmatic skills in childhood can struggle to make good peer relationships and establish friendships, even into their teenage years.[57] Addressing any weaknesses in their language skills, social understanding or pragmatics can impact positively on the quality of their relationships. The integration of these skills is shown in the diagram below.

If deaf children are struggling to make friendships, it's important to examine their pragmatic skills and take steps to raise their metapragmatic and metacognitive awareness of these skills. Doing this will help them to improve all their interactions.

57. Mok, P.L., Pickles, A., Durkin, K., and Conti-Ramsden, G. (2014). Longitudinal Trajectories of Peer Relations in Children with Specific Language Impairment. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*. 55(5):516–527.DOI: 10.1111/jcpp.12190.

7 Activity pack: Pragmatic and social communication skills

This activity pack provides simple and fun activities you can use to support your child to develop key pragmatic skills.

Techniques to use in the activities

You can use the following communication practices and approaches in each activity to support your child to develop their pragmatic skills.

Clarification

Asking for clarification when you haven't heard or understood something is a key communication skill. Deaf children need to be able to ask for clarification often and with confidence. For example, when teaching your child about idioms, check they understand or encourage them to work out the meaning from the words and context. This will help your child become more aware that they may misunderstand information if they don't ask or check what's meant.

Metacognition: thinking and reflecting about communication

A key part of supporting your child's pragmatic skill development is engaging them in discussion about their communication skills and pragmatic language skills, as well as giving feedback and encouraging them to think about their own language and thinking. This is sometimes known as **metacognition**.

What, When, Why and How rule

Adopting a metacognitive approach with children helps them remember what they've learned and to generalise new skills to new settings.[58]

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58. Dignath, C. and Büttner, G. (2008). Components of Fostering Self-Regulated Learning Among Students. A meta-analysis on intervention studies at primary and secondary school level. *Metacognition Learning*. 3(3):231264.DOI: 10.1007/s11409-008-9029-x.

One metacognitive approach for learning pragmatic language skills is the **What, When, Why and How (WWW&H) rule**:

- **What** strategy to use

- **When** to use it

- **Why** it is important

- **How** to perform the strategy.

For example, when working on developing narrative skills for conversation, explain to your child:

What to do	Tell me what happened in order.
How to do it	Tell me who was there, what happened first, next, last, where you were, and so on.
When they would do this	In conversation, when someone asks you what you did at the weekend, or to talk about a problem.
Why they would do it	Talking about what we have done helps us to make friends. Giving a full and clear account in order helps me to understand.

Feeding back

Feeding back is an important tool to support the development of pragmatic language skills. Explicit knowledge of pragmatics emerges from around 6 to 7 years and continues to develop to at least 10 to 11 years, so this is the best time to be giving children opportunities to practise skills and become more aware of the importance of a given skill through feedback. They then become more able to self-monitor and correct any errors independently.

You can help your child develop metapragmatic awareness by:

- identifying specific strengths or errors in their communication attempt

- explaining the impact of any errors on the communication experience for both people

- explaining what to change to avoid any errors and improve communication

- providing opportunities to practise the target skills and give feedback on your child's efforts.

Identifying chances to practise and giving explicit metapragmatic feedback are essential skills for all adults wishing to develop the pragmatic language skills of deaf or hearing children.

What Went Well (WWW) and Even Better If (EBI)

WWW and EBI is a metapragmatic feedback tool that makes it very clear to children what target skills they have used and what additional work is needed to improve and why.

Enabling children to join in discussions about their pragmatic language skills can help you see what support they need to make changes in their communication and social interaction.

Example of WWW and EBI feedback approach in the classroom:

In a group situation, the teacher notices that one child has her head down when other pupils are talking. The teacher might say:

"In the group, you were quiet when Sameena was talking. You didn't interrupt, well done (WWW). I could see that you didn't laugh at the joke. It looks like you didn't find it funny. If you don't understand something, don't be worried about asking someone to explain it (EBI)."

Preparing and reflecting through discussion

Sometimes, it's best for children to discuss upcoming or past social events in a more relaxed and private environment. Discussions can be more detailed than feedback, giving you the chance to elaborate on the event, explain new words, teach signs and explore reasons why certain skills and actions are important.

Prepare your child for an upcoming situation

Start a discussion before an event and explain what's going to happen and what opportunity for conversation and/or friendship it brings. Explain what skills are needed, why they are important and what might happen if the skills aren't used. Assess which skills your child is confident in and ready to try.

Reflect on a recent experience

Reflecting on a recent experience helps your child understand and consolidate learning. During the discussion, be specific and highlight what your child achieved. Explain the importance of this skill for other situations, not just the most recent one.

Noticed – Appears – Why?

'Noticed – Appears – Why?' is a reflection tool which supports your child to reflect on what they were doing and explain why.

> For example, you might say:
>
> Earlier today in the group, I **noticed** that you didn't laugh when Sameena told a joke.
>
> **It looked like** you didn't find it funny. Is that right? I know you normally like a pun!
>
> **Why** didn't you laugh?

This active engagement in metapragmatic discussion helps your child build self-reflection and encourages self-monitoring. When done sensitively, it'll help your child develop and maintain self-esteem.

🚫 Sabotage

Sabotage is a technique in which you create a problem which encourages your child to step in and use their emerging pragmatic skills. It's important to do this in a way that reassures them that they are supported and capable of achieving what they want.

> #### Examples of sabotage
>
> **Giving something but not quite enough:** pouring only a small amount of a drink and saying, "You can have more drink when you're ready, just let me know," will provide multiple opportunities for your child to ask for what they want.
>
> **In sight but out of reach:** placing toys in sight but out of reach should prompt your child to request what they're looking for.
>
> **Showing what not to do:** for example, to teach your child to not interrupt, you can deliberately and playfully interrupt your child and then discuss what happened and how it made them feel.
>
> **Create a situation where they want to know more:** provide opportunities for your child to start a conversation by asking a question. For example, a comment such as, "I've had the best day ever", may encourage them to ask what happened.
>
> **Deliberately leave out details** when reporting an event. For example, "He told me I can book two tickets, so I must get on with it," should provoke your child to ask questions such as, "Who told you?", "Tickets for what?", "Am I coming?"

When using sabotage as a technique, be playful and use a facial expression that shows you're still 'in' the conversation and want to be asked questions. It's possible to use a direct prompt such as, "Don't you want to ask me anything?". Over time, reduce the direct prompts until the sabotage alone is effective, and notice whether they are using the skills more spontaneously.

Role play and role reversal

Pragmatic language skills and understanding social situations are best explained in context. Role play and role reversal are great ways to teach skills directly. For example:

- Model pragmatic skills for your child to observe and copy by taking on the role of a friend, story character or familiar adult. Repeat skills if necessary and slow the pace to help your child concentrate on a specific part of the learning.

- Reversing roles provides the chance for your child to use the skill they have just watched you use. Every time they have a turn, give feedback and then repeat by either modelling in another role-play or continuing with a new context. Switch quickly from modelling the skill to responding to your child's use of the skill and commenting on it.

- Use sabotage in role-play. This will provoke your child to notice that something wasn't right, and maybe they'll give you 'advice' on what to do differently and/or comment on the impact that the rule break had on them, for example, "I didn't like it when you ignored me."

What you'll need

For each suggested activity, you'll need:

- paper and pens
- puppets, toys or characters (you can use the cut-out dolls on page 117)
- sticky notes
- reward stickers (if necessary)
- ideas of current topics of interest to your child and their peer group
- ideas of current events in school.

Contents

Conversation skills

The activities in this section will support your child to develop their conversational skills. In particular:

- starting conversations

- taking turns and asking questions

- joining an ongoing conversation

- changing topic and not dominating with one topic

- being aware of formal and informal interaction styles and avoiding making personal comments.

The language, pragmatic and social understanding skills required to develop conversation are:

Social cognition Theory of Mind	Your child must be able to understand: • other people's perspectives • the social context • the speaker's intention • the speaker's attitude towards a topic or a situation • the relationship between the speaker and listener.
Pragmatics and metapragmatics	Your child must be able to: • understand different styles of formal and informal interaction • understand the information requirements of the listener • maintain and manage topics to avoid dominance and reticence • monitor whether they've been understood and make necessary requests for clarification • take turns to avoid interrupting and avoid slow responses.
Language and vocabulary	Your child must be able to understand and use: • enough vocabulary to take part • sentence level language • meaning in context, including non-literal language forms and inference.

Starting a conversation

Small talk or social chit-chat is a way to pass time with another person in a pleasant verbal exchange which can sometimes lead to a conversation. It's used to show the other person that you're friendly and want to speak with them. It avoids important or controversial topics and is most useful when time is short or when you're meeting people for the first time.

A great way to strike up a conversation with someone new is to ask them a question that's easy to answer and won't cause the other person to become upset or reveal personal details. Your child can rehearse and use these starter questions to make small talk in an open and safe way.

The evening or weekend question

In this activity, your child will learn how to start a conversation by asking a question about an upcoming event. By learning how to ask starter questions, your child will be able to express interest in having a conversation with another person in an acceptable way that avoids topics that are too personal for a first meeting.

How does it appear in the world?	A non-threatening easy-to-answer question to show an interest in starting a conversation.
Pragmatic and metapragmatic skills	Asking questions and using the answer to elaborate into a topic of conversation.
Language and vocabulary	Your child will need to know or learn the following words for this activity: ask, listen, answer, small talk, starter question. They will need to be able to understand and use language at a sentence-level.
Social cognition Theory of Mind skills	Understanding the social context and the other person's perspective to gauge their interest in the topic and in talking at this moment in time.
Throughout the activity add metapragmatic commentary using the What, When, Why and How (WWW&H) rule (see page 45).	

Activity

Look at the drawing below with your child and explain the following situation:

Becky wants to talk to Julie. She's asking Julie what she's doing this evening. This is a good question to ask because everyone has some downtime in the evening, and it'll show what she likes to do.

Julie feels good that Becky asked about her evening because it shows Becky is interested in getting to know her.

> **What are you doing this evening?**

> **Tonight I'm playing video games with my brother.**

> **That's so nice of you to ask me.**
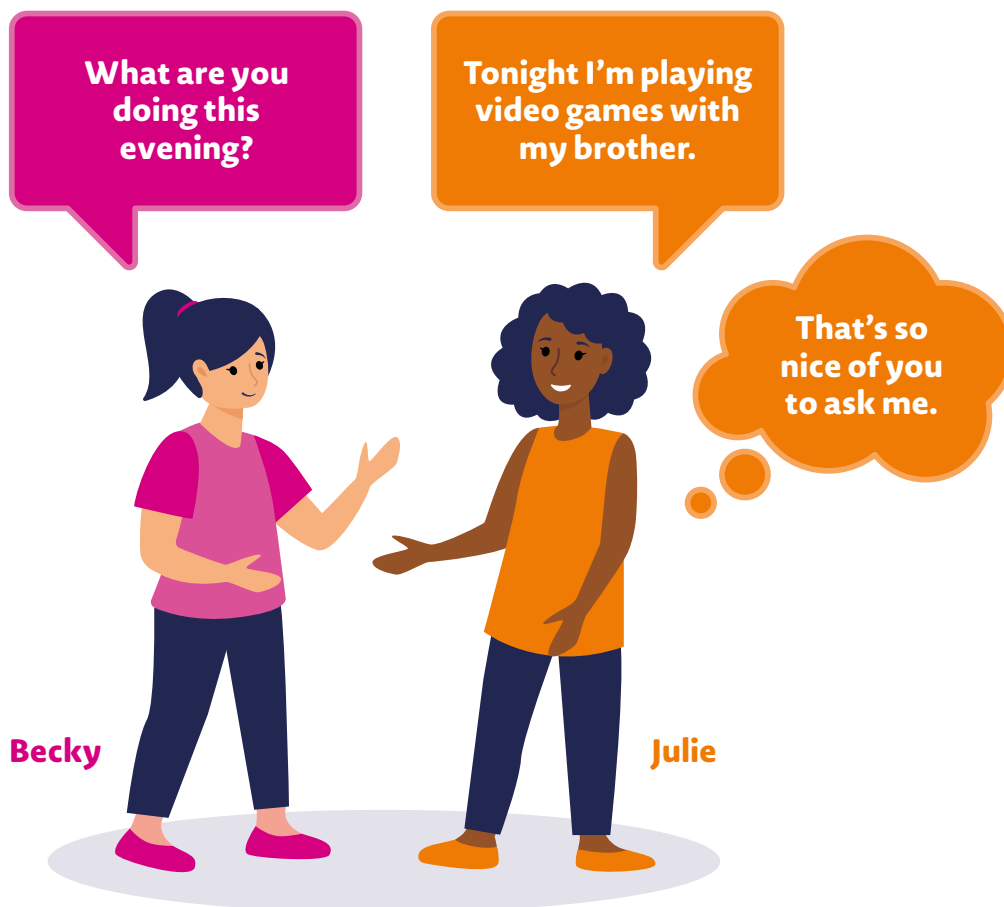
Becky

Julie

? What would be a good follow-up question Becky could ask Julie? Discuss with your child.

Using the template below, engage your child in thinking of the questions and answers for two new characters.

Role play

Act out the same conversation with your child. Get your child to start by asking about your evening or weekend. When you respond, show that you're happy to be asked by saying, for example, "That's nice of you to ask me!"

Help your child think of a good follow-up question.

Then, reverse roles and repeat the conversation – this gives your child the chance to see how you ask questions.

Extend – Two questions and a wish

You can extend the evening or weekend question activity by using a strategy called 'Two questions and a wish'. In this activity, your child will learn how to ask a follow-up question about the event when the children meet again. They can then make a statement that expresses interest in this event or a similar one.

Don't forget to use the What, When, Why and How (WWW&H) rule (see page 45) to encourage your child to think and reflect upon their communication.

Using the cut-out characters on page 117 or a couple of your child's toys, act out the following conversation for your child to watch:

Step 1 – Question

"What are you doing this weekend?"

"We're going to the park with our nets to look for tadpoles."

"That sounds great. Will you bring them to school on Monday?"

Step 2 – Follow-up question

"Did you find any tadpoles at the weekend?"

"We saw lots in the pond. My daddy said we couldn't bring them home."

Step 3 – Wish statement

"I would love to have a pond in my garden and have frogs in it." Or "I think frogs are great, but I'd love to have a goldfish."

Role-play a similar conversation with your child. If needed, use the cards below and point to each step as you carry it out to make it easy for your child to follow. Reverse roles so your child can observe how you ask the questions too.

1. Child Question: "What are you doing this weekend?	**2. Friend** Answer: "I'm visiting Grandma."
3. Child Ask a follow-up question to find out more: "Where does she live?"	**4. Child** Ask question after the event: "How was Grandma?"
5. Friend Answer: "OK, she's got a new cat."	**6. Child** Make a wish statement: "I wish my grandma had a pet."

Feedback and discussion

As with all conversation skills, deaf children will benefit from talking about conversations as they happen or afterwards.

- Explain why it's important to ask people about something they have done or are planning to do, and how it makes them feel when you show you're interested.

- Help by setting up a conversation with your child about something they're planning to do or have just done.

- Practise and give feedback using the What Went Well (WWW) and Even Better If (EBI) technique (see page 47).

Sabotage

You can use 'sabotage' to help your child practise starting conversations. Make a comment to lure your child into asking a question. You can say, "I've had a brilliant/awful day" or "I'm so happy today."

Wait for your child to ask why or what happened. Repeat and look with an expectant expression to encourage them to ask.

Prepare

Prepare your child before an upcoming conversation by reminding them that they can use the strategy 'Two questions and a wish' (see page 56).

Discuss who will be there, what they're interested in and possible questions your child can use to start a conversation.

Reflect

Use your child's recent experiences and attempts at starting a conversation or asking questions to reflect and give balanced feedback. Try using the What Went Well (WWW) and Even Better If (EBI) feedback tool (see page 47).

If appropriate, set a goal with your child for next time.

Games to practise asking questions

Games based on asking and answering questions can help your child practise using questions when starting a conversation.

Here are some good games to try:

- **What am I? (Animal, vegetable, mineral)**. In this two-person game, one player chooses an object to be. The other player can ask 20 questions to try and work out what the object is. However, the questions can only be answered with 'yes' or 'no'. For example, if the guessing player asks, "Are you an animal?" and the answer is 'yes', they could follow this up by asking "Are you larger than a microwave?"

- **Guess Who** is a board game where players use yes and no questions to figure out the other player's mystery character. For example, a player might ask "Do you wear glasses?", and if the answer is 'yes' they can eliminate all characters who don't wear glasses.

- **Who knows me better?** In this game, one player will ask a set of questions about themselves, such as, "What always makes me laugh?" or "What is my all-time favourite food?" The other players guess and keep points for every correct answer. The player with the most points wins.

- **That's a question!** In this party game, one player is asked a preference question such as, "What would you miss more if it no longer existed: pizza or hamburgers?" The other players guess what they think the first player will answer. Those who guess correctly get a point and the round moves on to a new person answering a question.

Taking turns

ⓘ In this activity, your child will learn how to take turns by telling a story with you.

Knowing how to take turns is important in a conversation: taking too long on a turn can make a listener grow bored, while not taking a turn at all may make you seem uninterested.

Signs of poor turn-taking skills include:

- talking at the same time as someone else or not allowing others to take a turn
- taking too many or too few turns
- not seeing a chance to take a turn or not wanting to take a turn
- pausing for too long after someone else has taken their turn
- giving minimal responses.

By becoming more self-aware, your child will understand the impact of not taking turns appropriately.

Taking turns to tell a story

In this activity, your chid will practise taking turns to tell a story with another person.

How does it appear in the world?	Waiting for the other person to finish telling a story without interrupting.
Pragmatic and metapragmatic skills	Pausing at the end of a turn to allow the other person to take a turn.
Language and vocabulary	Your child will need to know or learn the following words for this activity: ask, listen, pay attention, watch, answer, pause, wait, share. They will need to be able to understand and use language at a sentence-level.
Social cognition Theory of Mind skills	Understanding the social context and the other person's perspective to gauge their interest in the topic.
Throughout the activity, add metapragmatic commentary using the What, When, Why and How (WWW&H) rule (see page 45).	

🧩 Activity

1. Choose a picture book or story cards that your child is already familiar with. You can also use the cut-out story cards below or our children's storybooks featuring deaf characters – **ndcs.org.uk/childrens-books**.

2. Explain to your child that the goal of this activity is to take turns telling each other what's happening in each picture. You can first demonstrate this using the cut-out characters on page 117, showing how each character listens to the other and then takes their turn to continue the story. For example:

   (Picture 1) Character 1: The three little pigs went off to build their homes.

   (Picture 2) Character 2: The first little pig built his house from straw.

   (Picture 3) Character 1: The second little pig built his house from sticks.

3. Repeat the activity using a different story. Change who starts the story each time.

4. Give feedback on what went well. For example, you could say, "You listened well and took your turn at the right time. I had just finished, and you joined in with the next part of the story so that it linked perfectly."

The three little pigs went off to build their homes.

The first little pig built his house from straw.

The second little pig built his house from sticks.

The third little pig built his house from bricks.
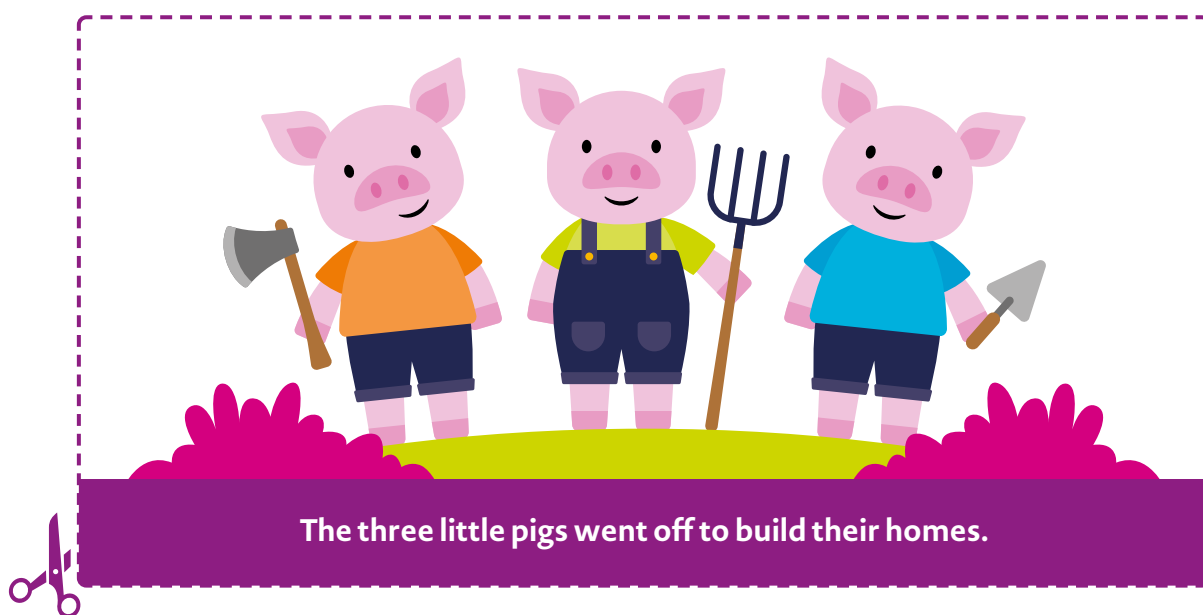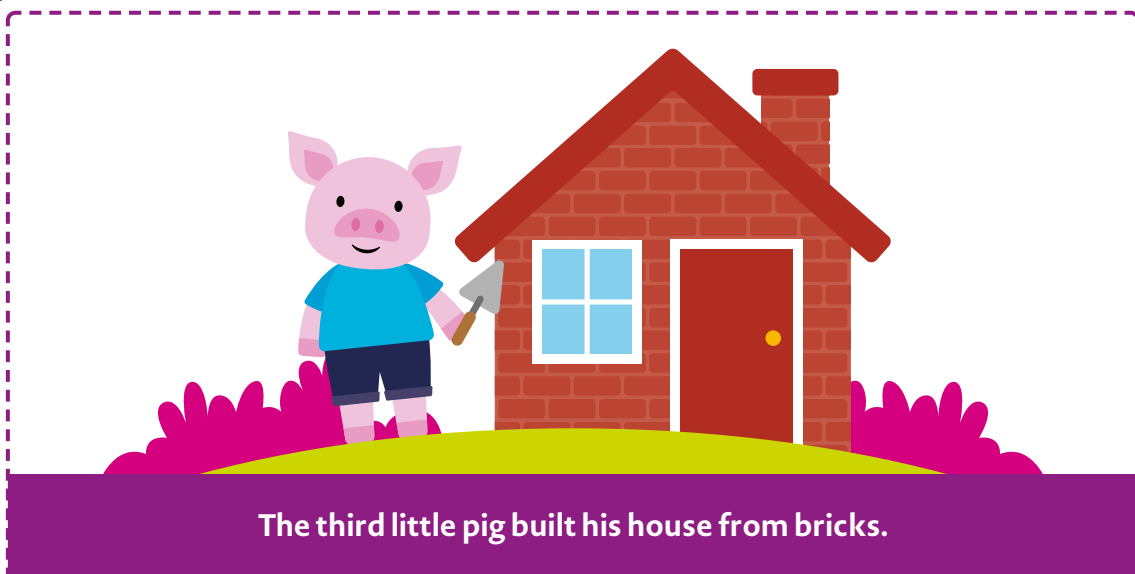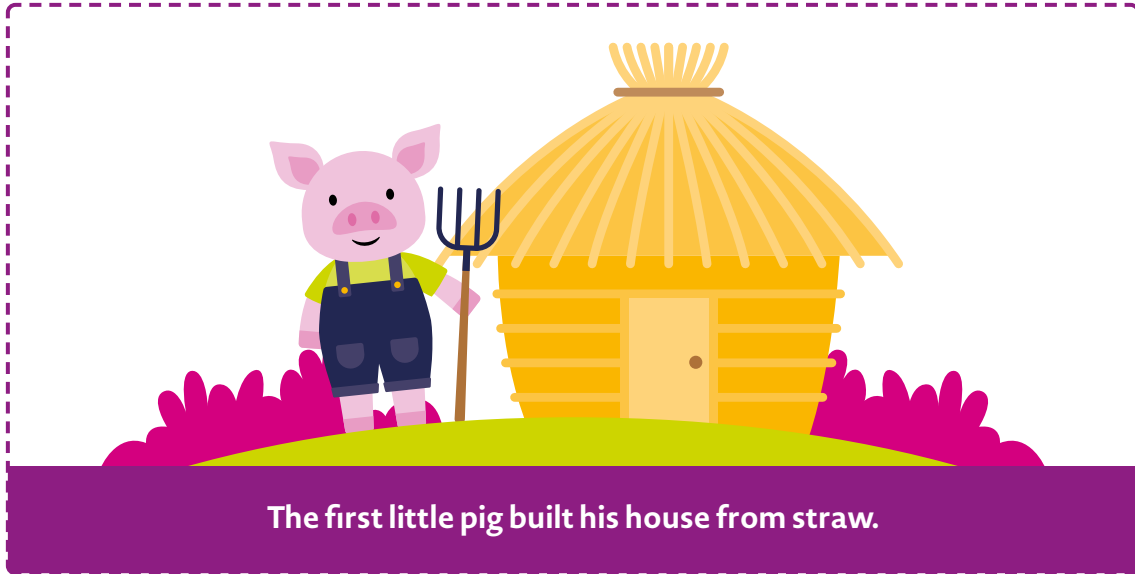
Practising turn-taking skills in conversation

Help your child practise taking turns in a conversation by following these steps:

1. Set up a conversation with your child about something you have experienced together.

2. Prepare them for the conversation and explain why it's important to practise. For example, you could say, "We're going to practise taking turns to listen and speak. Let's talk about the TV programme we watched together. It's important to take turns so we both feel part of the conversation."

3. Get the conversation going and comment on what's going well. Be sure to include vocabulary such as ask, listen, pay attention, watch, answer, pause, wait, share.

4. Practise and give metapragmatic feedback using the What Went Well (WWW) and Even Better If (EBI) strategy (page 47).

If your child struggled to take turns, use the Noticed-Appears-Why strategy (page 48) to ask them why they performed as they did. This will help you gain insight for how to enrich the practice going forward.

Sabotage

You can show your child **what not to do** by breaking the rules of turn taking. For example, you could interrupt and take your turn too soon. Stop after each time you break the rules to discuss what went wrong, why it went wrong, and how it made your child feel.

Prepare

Prepare your child for an upcoming conversation by reminding them that they should take turns to listen and speak. Discuss who will be there and what they might say.

Reflect

Use your child's recent experiences and attempts at taking turns to reflect and give balanced feedback. Try using the What Went Well (WWW) and Even Better If (EBI) feedback tool (see page 47).

If appropriate, set a goal with your child for next time.

Use games to practise taking turns

1. Set up a game matched to your child's age and interests that requires turn-taking. Play the game and emphasise turn-taking vocabulary: my turn, your turn, first, next, follow on.

2. Once the game is established, use **sabotage** to show the impact of poor turn-taking. Take two turns, be too slow to take your turn, or take a turn at the same time as your child.

3. Explain that you were breaking the rules and discuss how it feels when someone breaks the rules and why it's not a good idea.

4. Explain that this is the same in conversation. It's important to take turns and listen and not interrupt if possible.

Topic skills for conversation

The topic of a conversation is the subject that's being discussed. Children may know the word 'topic' from school lessons, but it's useful to use the word 'topic' when talking to children about conversations. In this section, we consider four skills:

- introducing a topic
- joining others in an ongoing conversation topic
- changing topic
- favourite topics and the impact of talking too much about one topic.

Introducing a topic

After you have made the initial greetings one of the conversation partners will introduce a topic. You can start a topic by asking questions or making statements about something general or of mutual interest.

Showing an interest in my friend

In this activity, your child will learn how to use other people's interests as a topic for conversation.

How does it appear in the world?	Talking about topics you know the other person is interested in to make conversation easier to start and maintain.
Pragmatic and metapragmatic skills	Asking and answering questions on a specific topic.
Language and vocabulary	Your child will need to know or learn the following words for this activity: ask, listen, answer, plus any words associated with the topic. They will need to be able to understand and use language at a sentence-level.
Social cognition Theory of Mind skills	Understanding the social context and the other person's perspective to gauge their interest in the topic.
Throughout the activity, add metapragmatic commentary using the What, When, Why and How rule (WWW&H rule) (see page 45).	

Activity

Using the cut-out characters on page 117 or your child's toys, create a conversation between two characters. You can use the topic cards on page 118 for ideas, or you can make up your own.

1. Start with a greeting and then ask a question about the topic.

2. Get your child to respond and then ask another question about that topic.

3. Keep the conversation going by asking questions until you have had two or three turns each. Discuss the questions asked and answers given.

4. Once you've finished one topic, ask your child to choose another, but this time get your child to start the conversation with a greeting followed by a question.

Here's an example conversation you could use to demonstrate:

Character 1: "Hi Alice! What art have you made this week?

Character 2: "I drew a picture of my grandfather."

Character 1: "Do you like drawing or painting more?"

Character 2: "I like painting because I like using lots of colours."

Character 1: "What's your favourite art piece you've made?"

Character 2: "A painting of my pet turtle. It's hanging on our fridge!"

Practising introducing topics in conversation

Help your child practise introducing topics in a conversation by following these steps:

- Set up a conversation with your child about something they are planning to do or have just done.

- Prepare them for the conversation and explain why it's important to practise. For example, you could say, "Let's have a conversation about playing football. Let's practise asking and answering questions on this topic."

- Get the conversation going and comment on what's going well. Give metapragmatic feedback using the What Went Well (WWW) and Even Better If (EBI) strategy (page 47).

- Repeat with other topics of interest to your child's peers.

🎭 Role play and role reversal

Reverse roles so that your child starts the conversation with a greeting followed by a question on a different topic.

Repeat the conversation and give metapragmatic feedback on what went well and what could be better. Explain how to improve one thing in the next role reversal.

Repeat twice more using different topics.

🚫 Sabotage

During these conversations, you can also show **what not to do** by going off topic. Stop to discuss and reflect on what went wrong, why it went wrong, and how it made your child feel.

↗ Expand

Get your child to start thinking about their friends' and classmates' interests. Use the table below to write these interests down together and think of questions to get them started.

Who do I want to talk to?	What are they interested in doing or talking about?	Questions to get started
Melissa	Outdoor activities, tadpoles, growing plants and food, camping in a tent in the garden	What are you growing in your garden?
Benjie	Goes to a drama club, writes plays and puts them on in the playground, loves dressing up	Have you written a new play?

Prepare

Prepare your child for an upcoming conversation by reminding them that they can use the strategies 'Two questions and a wish' (see page 56) or 'Showing an interest in my friend' (see page 65).

Reflect

Use your child's recent experiences and attempts at introducing a topic to reflect and give balanced feedback. Try using the What Went Well (WWW) and Even Better If (EBI) feedback tool (see page 47).

If appropriate, set a goal with your child for next time.

Joining a conversation

To join a conversation that's already happening, your child will need to:

- **Work out what the topic of the conversation is.** Your child will need to move close enough to listen but not be too close so that the other person feels crowded and uncomfortable. They can then work out the topic of the conversation by listening to the words.

- **Use body language to show they are paying attention** and would like to join the conversation. They can do this by looking at the speaker, nodding their head and matching their facial expression to the topic. They can look at the facial expression of the speaker to help them work out if the topic is neutral, enjoyable or upsetting. If the topic is neutral, an interested facial expression is needed. If the topic is enjoyable and pleasant, a smiling facial expression is needed. If the topic is upsetting in any way, a sympathetic facial expression is needed.

- **Decide what to communicate.** What does your child already know about the topic? This can help them plan what to say. They can then join the conversation by saying something very short that matches the topic and feelings.

    - To join a neutral topic, they might say: "Mhmmm", "Oh", "Ah", "Really?", "OK".

    - To show support for an upsetting topic, they might say: "Oh no", "Uh oh", "I'm sorry", "That's so sad".

    - To join an enjoyable topic, they might say: "Wow", "That's amazing", "That's so funny", or laugh along at the right time.

    - To show support for an idea, they might say: "Definitely!", "That's true", "Absolutely", "Awesome!".

Move, Match, Remark

In this activity, your child will learn to work out the topic of an ongoing conversation so they can join in.

How does it appear in the world?	Being close enough to the people in conversation to listen to and work out the topic under discussion.
	Looking at the speaker and making a general comment to show an interest in joining before contributing after the speaker has finished.

Pragmatic and metapragmatic skills	Making inferences about what the topic is from the words used.
	Remarking on the topic before asking and answering questions on a specific topic.
Language and vocabulary	Your child will need to know or learn the following words for this activity: ask, listen, answer, plus any words associated with the topic.
	They will need to be able to understand and use language at a sentence-level.
Social cognition Theory of Mind skills	Understanding the social context and whether it's appropriate to join this conversation.
	Understanding the speakers' signals of welcome to join in.

Throughout the activity, add metapragmatic commentary using the What, When, Why and How (WWW&H) rule (see page 45).

Activity

Using the cut-out characters on page 117 or your child's toys, act out a conversation between two characters. You can use the topic cards on page 118 for ideas, or you can make up your own.

1. Explain to your child that you're showing how to join a conversation.

2. Get a conversation going between two characters and then stop it. Talk to your child about the topic and whether it's neutral, enjoyable or upsetting.

3. Explain that you'll now join the conversation by paying attention, saying something short, and then joining in with a comment or a question. This should be at the end of what the speaker has said and should be about the topic. This is called 'Move, Match, Remark'.

4. Step by step, demonstrate the movements, facial expressions and short comments to join in. Stop after each sequence to talk about what happened and why: matching the words and facial expression to the topic helps the people talking to know that you want to join.

Here's an example conversation you could use to demonstrate:

Toy 1: "I went to the cinema on Saturday with my dad."

Toy 2: "What did you see?"

Toy 1: "I went to see 'Mary Poppins'."

Toy 3: "Wow! I love 'Mary Poppins'."

Role play and role reversal

Act out the same conversation with your child playing the character trying to join in. Get them to first practise body language and facial expressions to show they're listening. Then, they can try adding a short comment followed by a question. You can use the topic cards on page 118 if your child needs help thinking of questions to ask.

Sabotage

Reverse roles, but this time demonstrate **what not to do** when trying to join a conversation (for example, by moving too close to the speaker or saying "Oh no" to comment on an enjoyable conversation). Make this fun and show that you're deliberately breaking the rules so your child isn't confused. Encourage them to comment on the errors.

Prepare

Prepare your child for an upcoming conversation by reminding them that they can use the strategy 'Move, Match, Remark' (see page 69).

Discuss who will be there, what they're interested in, and what they might say.

Reflect

Use your child's recent experiences and attempts at joining a conversation to reflect and give balanced feedback. Try using the What Went Well (WWW) and Even Better If (EBI) feedback tool (see page 47).

If appropriate, set a goal with your child for next time.

Changing topics

Changing topics helps keep conversations going and gives opportunities to include new people. It's useful for your child to know how to change topics when:

- they've run out of things to say about the current topic

- they're not interested in the current topic

- they notice the other person doesn't want to talk about it anymore

- the current topic is uncomfortable or embarrassing for them or the other person.

In a conversation, your child can change the topic by:

- Making a link to something similar to the current topic. This helps both people stay interested and have things to say on the new topic. For example, "You sound like you love football. I don't play football, but I do play netball."

- Making a break to introduce a brand new topic. It's important to signal when you're making a break so that the other person doesn't feel ignored. You can signal a break by using phrases such as, "I wanted to tell you…", "Let's talk about…", "I've just remembered…", or "That reminds me…" (even if it doesn't remind you).

Making a link and making a break

In this activity, your child will learn how to change topics in an ongoing conversation.

How does it appear in the world?	Making links from one topic to another or making a comment to indicate that you wish to change topic.
Pragmatic and metapragmatic skills	Noticing when a topic is coming to an end. Using phrases that indicate a topic change.
Language and vocabulary	Your child will need to know or learn the following words for this activity: ask, listen, answer, plus any words associated with the topic. They will need to be able to understand and use language at a sentence-level.

Social cognition Theory of Mind skills	Understanding the social context as well as the other person's level of interest in the topic and signals to decide whether it's appropriate to change the topic or not.

Throughout the activity, add metapragmatic commentary using the What, When, Why and How (WWW&H) rule (see page 45).

Activity

Using the cut-out characters on page 117 or your child's toys, create a conversation between two characters. You can use the topic cards on page 118 for ideas, or you can make up your own.

Once the conversation is underway, explain that one of the characters wants to change topic and then demonstrate the steps to make a link or make a break.

Here are two examples of conversations you could use to demonstrate:

Make a link	**Make a break**
Character 1: "I'm going ice-skating this weekend with my family."	**Character 1:** "I'm going ice-skating this weekend with my family."
Character 2: "Oh really? Are you good at ice-skating?"	**Character 2:** "Oh really? Are you good at ice-skating?"
Character 1: "Yes, I've been practising since I was little."	**Character 1:** "Yes, I've been practising since I was little."
Explain that Character 2 isn't that interested in ice-skating and wants to change topics. They are going to make a link by choosing a similar topic to ice-skating. To make a link, they need to acknowledge what the other person last said and then say something about the new topic.	Explain that Character 2 isn't that interested in ice-skating and wants to change topics. They are going to make a break to a topic they want to talk about: going on holiday. To make a break, they need to acknowledge what the other person last said and then signal they're making a break with an appropriate phrase.
Character 2: "You must be really good then. I'm not very good at ice-skating, but I love going skiing with my family.	**Character 2:** "You must be really good then. Oh, I wanted to tell you about my holiday. I went to the beach."

Role play and role reversal

After demonstrating how to make a link or a break, act out one of these conversations with your child, getting them to be the character wanting to change topics.

Sabotage

You can show your child **what not to do** by changing topics without giving any signals or links. Stop to discuss what went wrong, why it went wrong, and how it made your child feel.

Practising changing topics in conversation

Set up a conversation with your child. Prepare your child for this and explain why it's important to practise. Say, "I'm going to start talking about X. Once we have talked about that for a while, I want you to make a link to a new topic."

Prepare

Prepare your child for an upcoming conversation by reminding them that they can change topic by making a link or making a break.

Discuss who will be there and what their interests are. Emphasise the steps in making a link or making a break. Suggest comments and questions they can use to join a conversation.

Reflect

Use your child's recent experiences and attempts at changing topic to reflect and give balanced feedback. Try using the What Went Well (WWW) and Even Better If (EBI) feedback tools (see page 47).

If appropriate, set a goal with your child for next time.

Sharing information

It's common to have interests or experiences that we want to talk about, and it's important to know whether the listener is as interested in this topic as you are. Being able to detect signals of boredom in your conversation partner is an important step in not talking too much on one topic.

Noticing interest

In this activity, your child will learn to understand the impact of talking too much on one topic and how to look out for signs of boredom in their conversation partner.

How does it appear in the world?	Talking at length on one topic, usually a favourite topic, and reluctance to talk about or listen to another person's choice of topic.
Pragmatic and metapragmatic skills	Understanding how much information the other person needs or wants on a topic to avoid giving redundant information. Giving concise, pertinent and sufficient information.
Language and vocabulary	Your child will need to know or learn the following words for this activity: ask, listen, answer, plus any words associated with the topic. They will need to be able to understand and use language at a sentence-level.
Social cognition Theory of Mind skills	Understanding the social context and the other person's level of interest in the topic and signals as to whether it's appropriate to keep talking.

Throughout the activity, add metapragmatic commentary using the What, When, Why and How rule (WWW&H rule) (see page 45).

Activity

Using the cut-out characters on page 117 or your child's toys, act out a conversation between two characters. You can use the topic cards on page 118 for ideas, or you can make up your own.

1. Make the speaking character talk too long about one topic.

2. Show the listening character losing interest by asking fewer questions, looking away, trying to change topic, and eventually walking off to talk to another character.

3. Explain to your child why the listener lost interest, for example: "I've heard this before. She always talks about video games, and I just don't like them. She never asks me what I'm interested in."

Role play and role reversal

Role-play a similar conversation with your child and get them to start by talking at length about a topic that interests them. Give feedback on how you felt as the listener and explain how to look out for signs of boredom. For example, "I started looking away after a few minutes. That was a good time to stop talking and ask me a question so I can join in." Discuss the impact of talking too much and how it made your child feel.

Formal and informal interaction styles

Teaching formal and friendly interaction styles and politeness can be easily achieved through role play with toys and puppets. Showing both styles at the same time in a pretend play situation allows you to discuss the impact on the listener when the speaker is rude, too friendly to a stranger, or too formal with a friend. We recommend that you take the role of the person making the mistake for the following activities.[59]

Rude vs polite

Activity: Set up a pretend play situation where one person asks another for something, for example, in a shop or at a tea party.

What to do:

1. Use one character to model politeness in asking, using the preferred politeness markers, for example, 'please, thank you, may I?'.

2. Use another character to model rude replies to these requests such as, "no, get it yourself" or ignoring the request.

3. Discuss how this made the person feel (upset) and what they think about the friendliness of the other person.

4. Reverse roles so that the rude character now has a chance to ask. Continue with rudeness in asking, for example, "give me the…", or grabbing something from the other person.

5. Ask your child to offer suggestions on how the rude character could ask more politely. Support answers and discuss, giving reasons, explaining the impact on the listener using mental state words and metapragmatic feedback.

59. Andersen-Wood, L. and Rae Smith, B. (1997). Working with Pragmatics: A practical guide to promoting communicative confidence. Winslow.

Formal vs informal

Activity: Set up a play situation with adult and child characters, for example, a classroom.

What to do:

1. Start a conversation between two child characters and show how they say hello to each other in a friendly way, for example, "Hi".

2. Introduce a teacher and say hello more formally, for example, "Hello, Mrs Smith," or "Good morning, Miss." Explain that when we greet our friends, we say "Hi" or "Hello", but when we meet a teacher, we should be more formal. Explain that this is important in showing a difference in the relationship we have with that person.

3. Repeat with other adult figures to represent adults your child encounters and needs to understand how to interact with.

4. Repeat using a child character who is new to your child. Show how we start by being more formal and build up to being friendlier over time as we get to know them.

Avoiding unkind comments

When they're young, children tend to make personal comments that can be embarrassing or hurtful. To help your child understand the impact of their words, it's important to discuss how others think and feel. As your child develops a better understanding of other people's feelings, they will stop making these types of comments.

Activity

In this activity, your child will learn how what they say or sign can affect other people's thoughts and feelings.

1. In the speech bubble in the image below, write down a personal comment your child has made. However, be sure to name the character differently so your child doesn't feel like they're being reprimanded.

2. Discuss the situation and explain that while what the character has said may be true, it's hurtful to the other person.

3. Add a sad or hurt expression on the face of the listener.

4. Ask your child whether they've ever said things like this or heard others make personal comments.

5. Discuss how your child could use a white lie or stay silent so they don't hurt the other person's feelings.

Add facial expression here
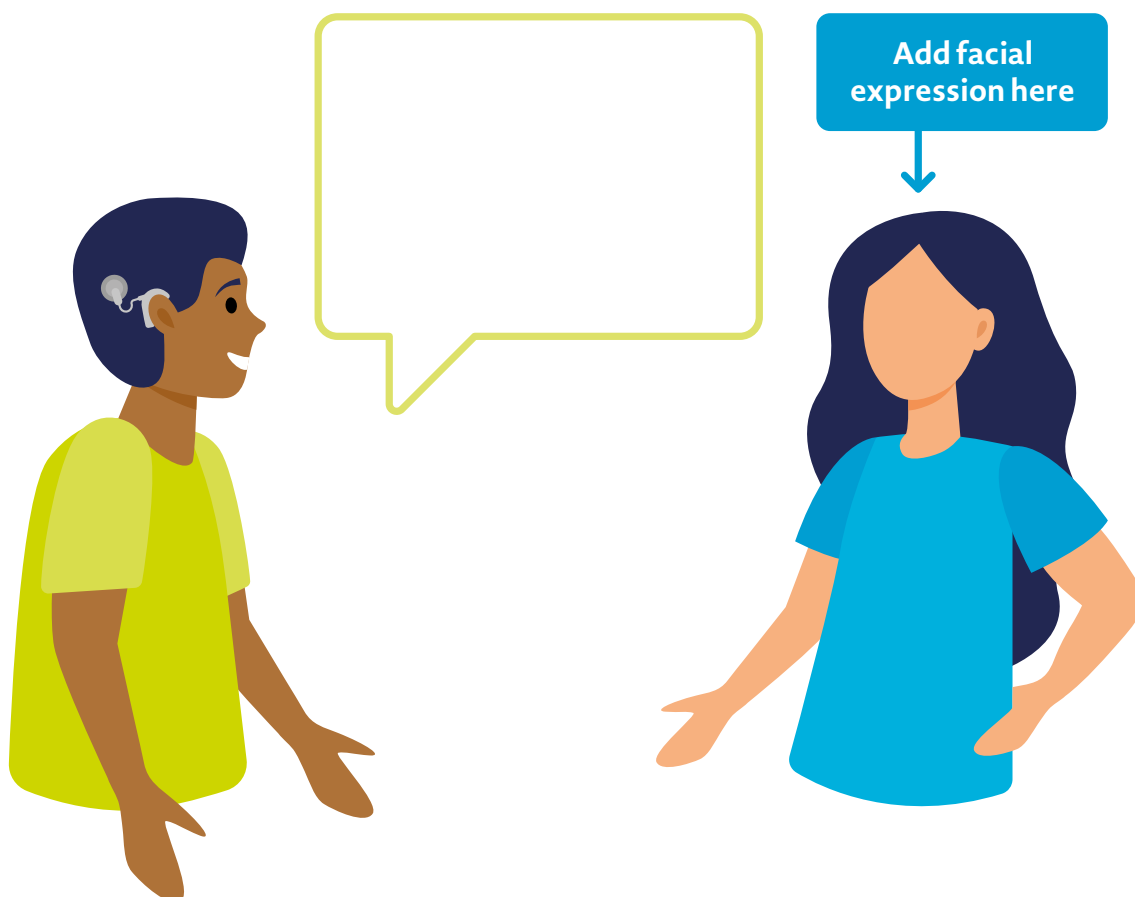
Storytelling and narrative skills for conversation

Stories are a type of narrative which include elements such as characters, locations, actions, events, emotions, problems and resolutions. These elements make up what's known as story grammar.[60] It's important to understand, remember and tell narratives when sharing information in conversations.[61]

A structured approach to discussing and encouraging narrative skills, such as using story grammar, may help deaf children make themselves more understood. Remember to discuss the thoughts, feelings and intentions of story characters to help your child understand other people's perspectives and what might be meant.

The language, pragmatic and social understanding skills required to develop narrative skills are:

Social cognition Theory of Mind	Awareness of: • other people's thoughts • what other people might already know • how other people might react to the story.
Pragmatics and metapragmatics	Understand: • how much knowledge is shared with the listener • how explicit and detailed the narrative needs to be for the listener to understand the story • how to repair misunderstandings and misinterpretations by, for example, adjusting the level of detail given or explaining what's meant.
Language and vocabulary	Understand: • the words/signs needed to report on events • how to construct simple and complex sentences • how to combine multiple sentences in order and use words to link them or refer to things not said, for example, the order of events (first, then, next), relationships between characters and referents (it, he, she) to make links between story grammar elements.

60. Davies, P., Shanks, B., and Davies, K. (2004). Improving Narrative Skills in Young Children with Delayed Language Development. *Educational Review*. 56(3):271–286. DOI: 10.1080/0013191042000201181.

61. Adams, C. (2002). Practitioner Review: The assessment of language pragmatics. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*. 438:73–987. DOI: 10.1111/1469-7610.00226

Retelling a story

In this activity, you'll use a storybook to help your child practise retelling a story.

Through this activity, your child will learn that narratives are made up of multiple elements, all of which are needed to make the story coherent. The story grammar elements are who, where, what's happening, when and why. You can also add thoughts, feelings and intentions.

How does it appear in the world?	Remembering a shared experience. Talking about an experience. Reading or retelling stories from books.
Pragmatic and metapragmatic skills	Understanding what the other person already knows (shared knowledge) and adapting what's said for clarity and coherence.
Language and vocabulary	Combining multiple sentences into narratives and using syntax and grammar to support order and relationships and to make links between story elements.
Social cognition Theory of Mind skills	Awareness of other people's thoughts and what they might already know or how they might react to the story.
Throughout the activity add metapragmatic commentary using the What, When, Why and How (WWW&H) rule (see page 45).	

Activity

1. Using a storybook, tell the story as it's written in the book to familiarise your child with an overview of the story.

2. Read it again and stop on each page to elaborate the story grammar elements present in the pictures or the words. For example, you might say, "On the cover we find out where the story is set. It's in a school. You can see the classroom on the cover."

3. To help your child remember the story and be able to retell it, you can ask a choice question. For example, "On the next page, we find out who's in the story. Do you think it's the teacher, the headteacher, or the boys and girls?" Confirm their response and add the story grammar element, for example, "Yes, you know who's in the story: the teacher and the boys and girls."

4. Using the same storybook, ask your child to retell it to you. Use metapragmatic comments to highlight when they've included story grammar elements, for example, "Well done, you told me who opened the cupboard and why the other person was scared. That helps me to understand."

5. Point out when your child includes important new information and why this is important. For example, if there's a change of location or a new character enters the story, you could say, "You told me that they're now in the playground. That helped me to understand why they're running around so noisily. I would have been confused if they'd been running around so noisily in the classroom."

Expanding the activity

Repeat with stories your child knows well and then expand to new stories and harder and longer stories. Encourage your child to tell the narrative by explaining what's been told, what's known and new, and why it's important to explain new information.

Note elements your child often omits when they tell stories.

Remembering events with your child to develop storytelling

You can support your child's narrative abilities (how they tell a story) by remembering an event together with them. While remembering, you should:

- elaborate on details

- explain events

- make comments on the experience

- ask your child open-ended questions

- confirm your child's answers.[62]

Here's an example of how you could remember and talk about a recent event with your child.

What to say	Why (the strategy)
It was fun to see Grandma today.	To introduce the remembering
Playing in her garden was really good fun.	A comment on the experience
She was pleased to see you.	A comment on the experience related to your child
What did you think of the visit?	An open-ended question
I agree, I enjoyed it too, especially the cake.	Confirm your child's answer
I had a small meal this evening because I had so much cake this afternoon.	Elaborate
No, I don't think she was sad when we left. She knows we'll see her soon.	Explain events
We could make a cake for the next visit. What's her favourite cake?	Perspective taking
I think she likes carrot cake. She always makes one for us, and she had some today.	Explain what you think and why you think it

62. Carmiol, A.M. and Sparks, A. (2014). Narrative Development Across Cultural Contexts: Finding the pragmatic in parent-child reminiscing, in D. Matthews (Ed.) *Pragmatic Development in First Language Acquisition*. John Benjamins Publishing Company. p. 279–294.

Remembering: opportunities at home

Here are some ideas for ways to practise remembering:

- Remember and discuss television shows and films to help your child understand and explain the storylines.

- Discuss things you have seen together and individually to emphasise the different levels of detail needed when talking to someone with or without shared knowledge.

- When reporting events that you and your child haven't shared, encourage and model asking questions to clarify misunderstandings or misinterpretations, and elaborate on areas of particular interest.

Remembering: opportunities at school

Here are some ways teachers can support remembering. You may want to share some of these ideas with your child's teacher.

- Small group or one-to-one book discussion time will help children who need additional support to develop narrative skills.

- It's common for narrative skills to be prompted by teaching story grammar techniques.[63] Consider using leading questions (who, where, when, what happened and why) to help children recognise these elements in their own and other narratives.

- Use puppets and role play to help children visualise their story and enrich their narratives.

- Use symbols for each of the story grammar elements to help children include them in retelling until they become more skilled.

Metapragmatic commentary

When you've finished remembering an event with your child, make comments to highlight elements important to your child's progress in narrative skills.

"It was good to remember all the things that happened at Grandma's. We remembered them in the right order, and that will help when we tell Dad later about the visit. He'll ask us what we did, and we can say, 'We played in the garden, had cake, looked at Grandma's photos of when she got married to Grandad, and then came home.' Telling what happened in the right order makes it easier for Dad to understand what we did."

63. Davies, P., Shanks, B., and Davies, K. (2004). Improving Narrative Skills in Young Children with Delayed Language Development. *Educational Review*. 56(3):271-286.DOI: 10.1080/0013191042000201181.

Developing underpinning vocabulary

- For information on how schools and families can work together to develop vocabulary see **Word Aware: Teaching vocabulary across the day, across the curriculum by Stephen Parsons and Anna Brannigan – thinkingtalking.co.uk/word-aware**.

- For a comprehensive resource for children aged 8 to 18 years: **Vocabulary Enrichment Programme: Enhancing the learning of vocabulary in children by Victoria Joffe – routledge.com/Vocabulary-Enrichment-Programme-Enhancing-the-Learning-of-Vocabulary-in/Joffe/p/book/9780863887987**.

These resources are available to teach narrative skills using a story grammar approach:

- **Black Sheep Press: Speaking and Listening through Narrative, ages 5-7 – blacksheeppress.co.uk/product/speaking-listening-narrative-ages-5-7**.

- **Narrative Intervention Programme by Victoria Joffe (ages 8-18) – routledge.com/Narrative-Intervention-Programme/Joffe/p/book/9780863887970**.

Understanding non-literal language

Non-literal language is language whose intended meaning is different to its literal meaning. The meanings taken from the words depend on the context. You can help children to understand and use non-literal language forms if they're presented in a story which explains the context and gives clues to the intended meaning.[64,65]

The language, pragmatic and social understanding skills required to develop non-literal language are:

Social cognition Theory of Mind	Understand: • perspective taking • the social context • the speaker's intention • the speaker's attitude towards a person or a situation.
Pragmatics and metapragmatics	Understand: • meaning in context • non-literal meaning • different styles of interaction. Be able to: • monitor understanding and make requests for clarification.
Language and vocabulary	Be able to show: • use of word knowledge and vocabulary • phrase-level understanding and use.

64. Norbury, C.F. (2004). Factors Supporting Idiom Comprehension in Children with Communication Disorders. *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research*. 47:1179–1193 DOI: 10.1044/1092-4388(2004/087).

65. Cain, K., Towse, A.S., and Knight, R.S. (2009). The Development of Idiom Comprehension: An investigation of semantic and contextual processing skills. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*. 102:280–298.DOI: 10.1016/j.jecp.2008.08.001.

Idioms

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An idiom is a phrase that expresses an idea that isn't directly and explicitly referred to. Sometimes called expressions or sayings, idioms are used to make spoken and written language more interesting.

Context is important

Often idioms also have a possible, but unlikely, literal meaning, so the situation in which the idiom is being used is key to understanding what the speaker means. For example, the idiom 'get your skates on' can be taken literally if waiting to go ice-skating, but the non-literal, figurative and more commonly intended meaning is to ask someone to hurry up.

How to understand and use idioms

Using idioms in context, and explaining the meaning if necessary, is the most natural way for children to pick up on this non-literal language form.

You can introduce idioms when remembering (see page 83). Select a few idioms that reflect your child's day-to-day experiences and tell a short story about one of these situations. For example, "In the morning, your brother is always slow to get ready. I could say, 'hurry up', or I could use an idiom. I could say, 'get your skates on'. This means the same as hurry up."

Repeat with another story about a familiar event. For example, at mealtimes you might say, "When I cook your favourite meal, you are 'over the moon.'" Then explain this idiom in the same way.

Encourage using idioms to explain emotions by adding these to your conversation as opportunities arise. For example, "You were as pleased as Punch," or "Don't set yourself up for a fall." You can find a list of idioms to express emotions in Appendix 5.

Sometimes children may benefit from a focused teaching session on idioms. You can use the following activity to introduce and develop a better understanding of idioms.

Book of idioms

In this activity, you and your child will create a book of idioms together. This activity teaches that idioms are phrases used to express ideas and that the intended meaning is different to the actual meaning of the words used.

How does it appear in the world?	Used in context to express an opinion, make a request or explain a state of mind in a non-literal way, for effect, exaggeration or variety.
Pragmatic and metapragmatic skills	Understanding non-literal meaning in context. Monitoring understanding and making requests for clarification.
Language and vocabulary	Your child will need to know or learn the following words for this activity: idiom, metaphor, saying. They will need to be able to understand and use language at a phrase-level.
Social cognition Theory of Mind skills	Perspective taking to understand the speaker's intention. Understanding the social context.
Throughout the activity add metapragmatic commentary using the What, When, Why and How (WWW&H) rule (see page 45).	

Activity

Using paper and pens or markers, you're going to create a book of idioms with your child. Here's an example of one page:

Idiom: A piece of cake

That's a piece of cake!

That's really easy!

Use the blank template below to add another idiom. Be sure to draw a line between the idiom and its non-literal meaning in the thinking bubble to show that they mean the same thing.

For more idioms, go to Appendix 5 or **theidioms.com**.

You can use a blank notebook to add more sheets as you and your child come across idioms in your everyday interactions. If it helps, sketch or write a situation when each idiom would be used.

Idiom: ....

Published resources

You can buy good visual resources to explain idioms, such as, 'What Did You Say? What Do You Mean?' by Jude Welton. This uses a visual representation to show the idiom inside a speech bubble and the intended meaning inside a thinking bubble.

Other resources, such as Victoria Joffe's Vocabulary Enrichment Programme, use pictures of the literal meaning of an idiom to show that a non-literal consideration is needed, for example, having hair in a 'bun'. Both types of visual representations will provide clues to make learning idioms easier.

Here are some other useful resources to support understanding of idioms:

- '120 Idioms at Your Fingertips' by Jane Nichols

- 'Idioms: People say the funniest things' from Black Sheep Press

- Picture books by Serge Bloch: 'Butterflies in My Stomach', 'Reach for the Stars' and 'You Are What You Eat'.

Indirect requests

An indirect request is a polite way of expressing a desire or intention without saying it outright. Understanding and using indirect requests helps us to be polite in interactions, show respect or avoid confrontation. If children don't understand or use indirect requests, then they could be seen as rude.

Telling a story with indirect requests

You can help your child learn the intended meaning and purpose of indirect requests by presenting them in a story which explains the context and gives clues as to the intended meaning.

For example, you could say to your child, "In the morning, your brother is always slow to get ready. I could say, 'hurry up', or I could say, 'We're going to be late'. This means the same as hurry up. It's an indirect request. It sounds more polite than 'hurry up'."

Repeat with another story about a familiar event. For example, at mealtimes you might say 'food's ready' rather than 'come to the table'. Explain that this is an indirect request.

Once you have explained what an indirect request is in a few stories, you can start using more easily understood indirect requests throughout the day, for example, "Can you clear the table?", "Do you know where the schoolbag is?"

Plan to replace direct requests with indirect requests in familiar routine events in your child's day. For example:

Indirect request	Direct request
I can't hear the television.	Can we turn the TV up?
The phone is ringing.	Will you answer the phone?
It's so hot in here.	Can we open a window?
It's too noisy.	Please be quiet.
It's too wet to walk to school today.	Can you drive us to school?
That cake looks nice.	Can I have some cake?
Oh no, I dropped my ice cream. I really wanted to eat it.	Can I have another ice cream?

Book of indirect requests

In this activity, you'll create a book of indirect requests with your child. This activity teaches that we use indirect requests when we want to be polite, formal or to avoid confrontation.

How does it appear in the world?	Used in context to make a request or express a preference in a polite way.
Pragmatic and metapragmatic skills	Understanding meaning in context by making inferences. Understanding non-literal meaning.
Language and vocabulary	Your child will need to know or learn the following words for this activity: direct, question, indirect request. They will need to be able to understand and use language at a phrase-level.
Social cognition Theory of Mind skills	Perspective taking to understand the speaker's intention. Understanding the social context.
Throughout the activity add metapragmatic commentary using the What, When, Why and How (WWW&H) rule (see page 45).	

Activity

Using paper and pens or markers, you're going to create a book of indirect request examples with your child. Here's an example of one page:

Hurry up!

Explain that the listener thinks the direct request is rude and now feels upset.

Could you go a little faster?

Explain that the indirect request is more polite, and now the listener understands that they need to hurry up, but they're not upset.

Use the blank template below to add another indirect request. Change the expression to show different reactions caused by using direct and indirect requests.
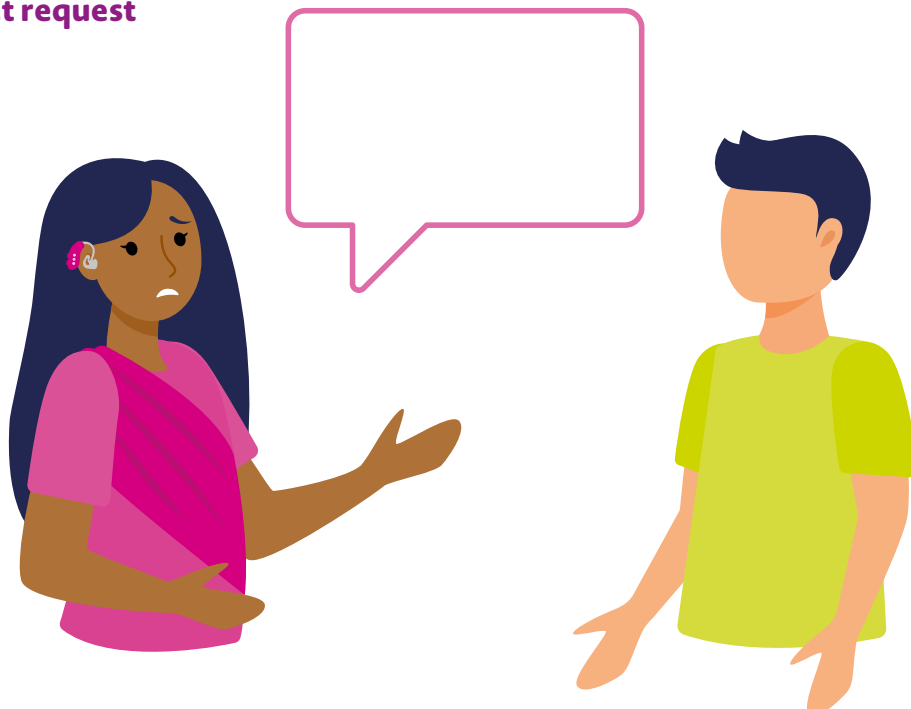
You can use a blank notebook to add more sheets as you and your child come across indirect requests in everyday interactions.

Direct request

Indirect request

Irony

Irony is when a speaker uses words to state the opposite of their intended meaning. They will use a combination of tone of voice, gestures and facial expressions to signal their true meaning.

Understanding and using irony can be part of how people build closeness, for example, through ironic teasing or ironic praise. The risk in not understanding irony is to be offended by comments intended to be amusing or friendly.

Parents and teachers may avoid using irony as they're aware that it can be confusing for children. However, irony is an essential part of using language creatively and fluently. It's best to explain ironic comments as they happen, using context to explain the reasons for the comments.

You can help your child learn what's meant when irony is used and why by presenting an ironic comment in a story which explains the context and gives clues as to the intended meaning. They may also benefit from a focused teaching session on irony. You can use the following activity to introduce and develop a better understanding of irony.

Book of ironic statements

In this activity, you'll create a book of ironic statements with your child. This activity teaches that you can use irony to express frustration about unmet expectations in a humorous way.

How does it appear in the world?	Used in context to express an attitude to an event or person, usually when expectations aren't met. The speaker will deliberately say the opposite of what they mean while using a distinct tone of voice and a facial expression to show that they're trying to be funny or critical.
Pragmatic and metapragmatic skills	Understanding meaning in context by making inferences. Understanding non-literal meaning.
Language and vocabulary	Your child will need to know or learn the following words for this activity: irony, ironic, joke, tease, annoy, insult. They will need to be able to understand and use language at a phrase-level.

Social cognition Theory of Mind skills	Perspective taking to understand the speaker's intention and attitude. Understanding the social context.
Throughout the activity add metapragmatic commentary using the What, When, Why and How (WWW&H) rule (see page 45).	

Activity

For this activity, you'll create a book of ironic comments with your child. Here's an example of one page:

Oh great, pasta again this week.

We've had pasta a lot this week, and I'm bored of it.
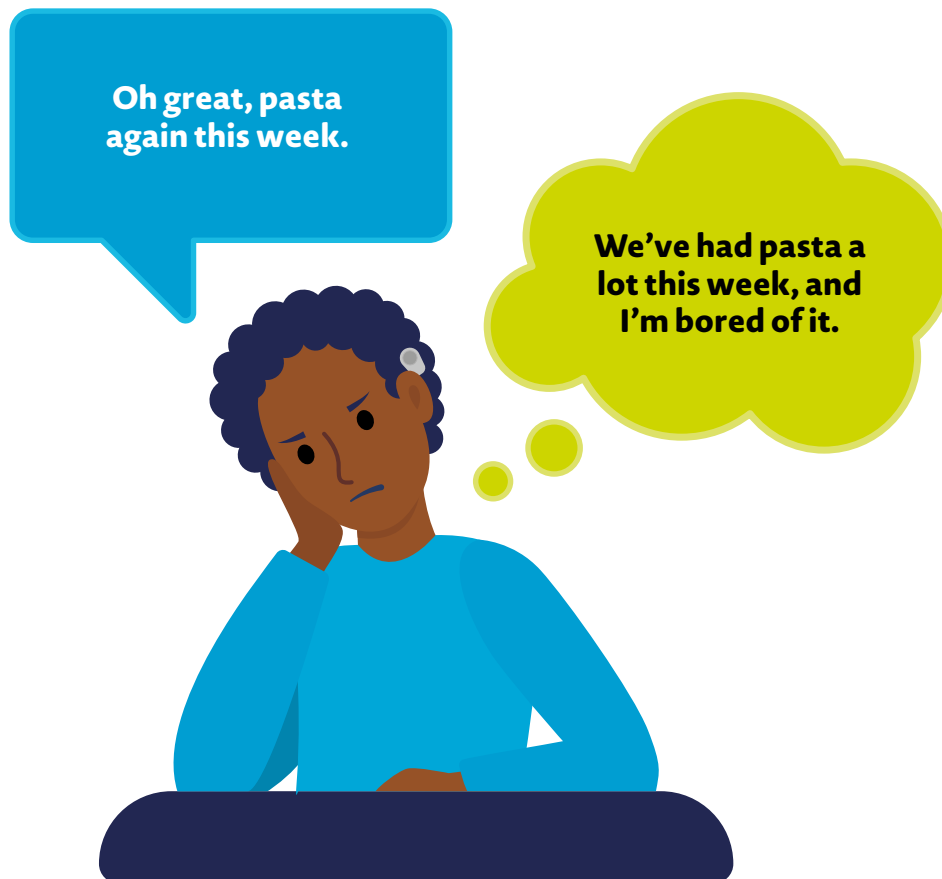
Use the blank template below to add another ironic statement. Be sure to draw the character's expression to reflect what they're really thinking. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Telling a quiet group, "Don't speak all at once."

- Coming home to a big mess and saying, "It's great to be back."

- During a thunderstorm, saying, "Beautiful weather we're having."

You can use a blank notebook to add more sheets as you and your child come across irony or sarcasm in everyday interactions.
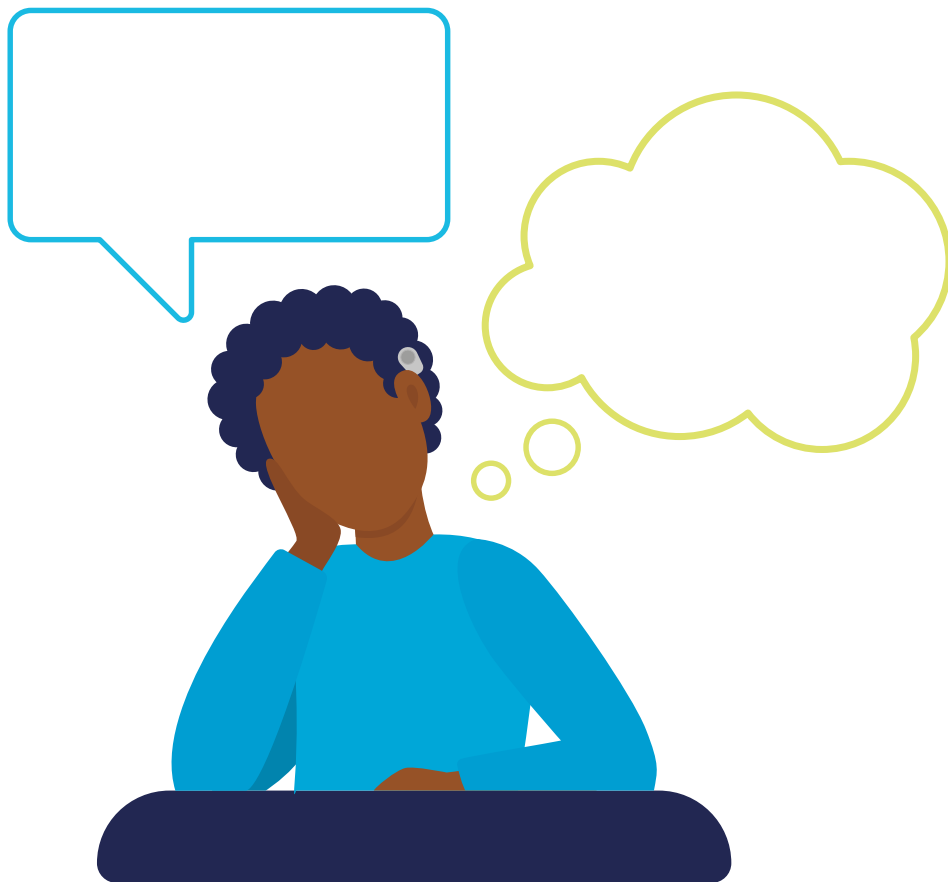
Humour, word play and homophone jokes

i

Homophones are words that sound the same when spoken but have different meanings and may be spelt differently. Homophones are often used in jokes, especially question-and-answer jokes which use homophones in either the question or the answer for humorous effect.

Here are two examples of how you can use homophones in jokes. By examining each joke, you can explain to your deaf child why the joke is funny.

Joke 1: "What building has the most stories? The library".
In this joke, the word 'stories' has two meanings: the floors in a building and the telling of real or imagined events. By using the word 'stories' in the same sentence as the word 'building' the joke works by making the listener think of only one of the meanings. This leads the listener to think of 'stories' as the number of floors.
Joke 2: "How did the farmer fix his jeans? With a cabbage patch!"
In this joke, the word 'patch' has two meanings. This time, the homophone is in the answer, and the listener may well say 'patch' as this is related to fixing jeans. But they will know that this isn't sufficient as a joke, as on its own patch isn't funny. Using the word 'farmer' in the question is intended to make the listener think of something other than a patch. In this joke, patch also has two meanings, a patch to mend clothes and a plot of land devoted to growing cabbages. Farmers may grow cabbages, and cabbages are grown on a cabbage patch.

Homophones require your child to know there's a second meaning to an already known word, and to use the context in which the word is used to work out the meaning.

Tips for increasing understanding of homophones:

- Explain the word's meaning in the new context to help your child learn multiple meanings for one word. For example, the words 'stares' and 'stairs' sound alike, and you can explain the meaning by adding information such as, "Staring is when you look at something for a long time without looking away. It sounds the same as stairs you climb, but it means a kind of looking."

- It can be helpful to spend time teaching your child explicitly about homophones and how you can work out their meanings from the context.

You can use the following activity to introduce and develop a better understanding of homophones in jokes.

Make a book of homophones

In this activity, you'll make a book of homophones with your child. This activity teaches that you can use homophones to make jokes.

How does it appear in the world?	Homophones are words which sound alike but have different meanings and are often spelt differently. Using homophones for word play and jokes is common.
Pragmatic and metapragmatic skills	Understanding meaning in context by making inferences. Understanding non-literal meaning.
Language and vocabulary	Your child will need to know or learn the following words for this activity: joke, homophone, word play, punchline. They will need to be able to understand and use language at a phrase-level.
Social cognition Theory of Mind skills	Perspective taking to understand the speaker's intention. Understanding the social context.
Throughout the activity add metapragmatic commentary using the What, When, Why and How (WWW&H) rule (see page 45).	

Activity

In this activity, you'll make a book of homophones with your child. Here's an example of one page:

What building has the most stories?

Stories = tales, like in a book

Stories = floors of a building

1. Use the blank template on the next page to add another homophone joke. Here are some ideas to get you started:

   a. Why was the baby ant confused? All his uncles were ants!

   b. What makes an octopus laugh? Ten tickles

   c. Why don't African animals play games? There are too many cheetahs.

   d. What has arms and legs but no head? A chair!

   e. How did the farmer fix his jeans? With a cabbage patch!

2. Write down the different meanings of the homophone. Explain that it's important to keep both meanings in mind.

3. Repeat the joke and ask your child for an answer.

4. Link their answer to one of the meanings and then ask them to think of an answer for the other.

5. Give the correct answer and explain how the joke works by making us think of only one meaning and then using the other meaning as the punchline.

You can use a blank notebook to add more sheets as you and your child come across homophones and word-play jokes in everyday interactions.

Published resources

Twinkl, an online source of teacher-created materials, has many homophone resources at **twinkl.co.uk/resources/ks2-english-spag-mirror/ks2-spelling-strategies-and-aids/ks2-spelling-homophones**.

General guidance on developing non-literal language forms

Remembering

Remembering (see page 83) is a useful way to introduce non-literal language forms. The following example shows how you can adapt any situation to include a non-literal teaching opportunity for idioms, indirect requests and irony.

Situation: Your child tells you about getting a gold star for a story they wrote in school.	
Technique	**Example**
Remembering strategy: Confirming children's experience	You got a gold star for a brilliant story?
Non-literal opportunities	
Add idioms to your child's retelling of events	You're the bee's knees.
Explain the idiom	The bee's knees means you're special. It's an idiom.
Add an indirect request	I'd love to hear your story.
Explain the indirect request	"'I'd love to hear your story'" means I want you to read it for me. It's an indirect way of asking, 'Will you read it for me?'"
Add a teasing ironic praise statement or question	"Not another star for another brilliant story!" or "You got a star for a story? Not you, never!"
Explain the irony	"'Not another star for another brilliant story'"/"'You got a star for a story? Not you, never!' means that I know you're an excellent writer and I expected you would get a star from the teacher for your work. It's called irony. It's the opposite of what I think.

Reading stories with your child

As you read together, draw your child's attention to idioms, metaphors, indirect requests, irony or sarcasm in the text.

If there are no examples, you can add these as you read along and explain what's meant. Sometimes it's helpful to read through your child's book or next chapter in advance to find opportunities to add non-literal language. You might want to mark these by adding a note in pencil or as a sticky note on the page.

'The Selfish Crocodile' by Faustin Charles and Michael Terry tells the story of a crocodile who loudly shouts every morning for the other animals to stay away from the river and threatens to eat them. In the story:

- The crocodile gets a toothache, and he not only can't eat (irony) but also needs help from one of the other animals to take the tooth out.

- He cries "real tears" which provides an opportunity to discuss the idiom 'crocodile tears', which means to pretend to be upset.

- Only the mouse is brave enough to help, and the lion is shown with a scared expression (irony).

- The mouse and crocodile become friends, and the crocodile uses an indirect request to ask the mouse for help in the future, "But, what shall I do if my toothache comes back?" Mouse understands this as a request for help, "Don't worry, I'll help you take care of your teeth."

- The crocodile feels grateful and sends out an invitation to all the animals to come to the river. By the end of the book, all the animals share the river, and the title of the book is now ironic as the selfish crocodile is no longer selfish.

This book can be found as a read-along book on YouTube. It may be fun to watch together without the need to buy the book.

For older children:

Irony is used often in the Harry Potter series of books. For example, Harry Potter says, "I like a quiet life," when Mrs Weasley tells him to stay out of trouble. Use these opportunities to discuss the meaning and why irony was used (that is, to share a joke).

Using non-literal language in real-life situations

Gradually use more idioms, metaphors, indirect requests, irony or sarcasm in your day-to-day conversations.

- First, point out when non-literal language is used. Then, ask your child if they know what it might mean before telling them the non-literal meaning.

- Encourage your child to ask for the meaning (comprehension monitoring) by pausing or repeating the non-literal form and waiting for your child to ask before providing an explanation.

- Explain non-literal language used by others in real life, on TV or in storybooks.

Opportunities for developing non-literal language forms at school

Teachers can support pupils to understand and use non-literal language at school by:

- encouraging children to read widely and drawing attention to non-literal language in texts

- asking children to add idioms, indirect requests and irony to texts to explain events or change how feelings are described

- using idioms across the curriculum, not just in English. Idioms then become a part of life and more broadly relevant. For example, a teacher could use "on the ball today" when a pupil is working well. Or they could use "a piece of cake" when a pupil completes a task with ease.

- explaining the meanings of non-literal language or pausing and waiting for children to ask.

Theory of Mind

Theory of Mind is the ability to recognise and understand our own thoughts, feelings, desires, intentions and motivations and to predict these in other people. When we recognise these in ourselves, we're thinking about our mental state.

To predict mental states in others, we use what we already know about the other person, their verbal and non-verbal responses, and clues in the situation to interpret what they're thinking and feeling.

Sharing books to improve Theory of Mind skills

Reading books and talking about the mental states and feelings of characters with your child will help them to better understand Theory of Mind concepts.

Picture books provide the chance for your child to see events unfold and have the thoughts, feelings, intentions and differing perspectives of characters explained to them.[66] Books with characters and plots are a great opportunity for learning.

An analysis of five children's books[67] revealed many opportunities to discuss Theory of Mind concepts, including:

- attributing thoughts and feelings to others

- understanding that we know information because we have seen it or heard it

- understanding not only what people see but how it appears to them

- understanding that beliefs cause people to act in certain ways

- predicting a person's actions based on their false beliefs

- identifying characters' feelings according to whether wishes are fulfilled

- thinking about what one person is thinking or feeling about what another person is thinking or feeling

- understanding that thoughts and emotions are caused by what people think is happening, even if it conflicts with reality

- understanding that people can have mixed emotions about a situation

- understanding of persuasion and lies

- understanding the use of figurative language

66. Chilton, H. and Beazley, S.M. (2018). Reading the Mind or Only the Story? Sharing fiction to develop ToM with deaf children. *Communication Disorders Quarterly*. 39(4):466–476. DOI: 10.1177/1525740117741170.

67. Chilton, H. (2017). Tricks, Lies and Mistakes: Identifying Theory of Mind concepts within storybooks shared with deaf children. *Deafness and Education International*. 19(2):75–83. DOI: 10.1080/14643154.2017.1357779

- judging situations and understanding that for example, people remember, forget and guess

- understanding strategies to hide and detect deceit

- understanding presentational lies (making oneself look good in the eyes of others)

- understanding and describing situations where emotions such as jealousy, worry, pride, shame and guilt may emerge.

We've included highlights from one of these books, 'The Gruffalo' (with permission from the author), below along with recommendations for opportunities to highlight and discuss the Theory of Mind concepts in the book with your child. Summaries of the other four books with guidance are in Appendix 4 (see page 129).

'The Gruffalo'

We have provided a summary of 'The Gruffalo' by Julia Donaldson below, along with guidance on how to make Theory of Mind concepts explicit as you read together with your child. This example shows the rich potential of one book for discussing and learning a range of Theory of Mind concepts.

Children enjoy reading and re-reading the same books, and you can use this to help them concentrate on the Theory of Mind aspects to the story once they understand the vocabulary.

Overview of book

A mouse avoids being eaten by a fox, an owl and a snake by pretending he's going to have tea with a Gruffalo. On encountering a real Gruffalo, the mouse avoids being eaten again by saying he's the "scariest creature in the wood," and encouraging the Gruffalo to walk behind him. When the other animals see the Gruffalo, they're convinced that he's the mouse's friend and run away. The Gruffalo believes that the animals are scared of the mouse, and he too runs away. The mouse escapes unharmed.

What can deaf children learn through this book?

When reading this story to your child, first read the story exactly as presented in the text. Then, re-read the story and explain the events in more detail using mental state verbs to make the thoughts, feelings and intentions of the characters explicit.

For example, each time the mouse meets an animal, the text says, "and the mouse looked good". Explain that this means 'good to eat' as the mouse is prey for these animals.

The following mental states are present in the Gruffalo:

- The animals invite the mouse to their homes for lunch because they want to eat him, not have tea with him.

- The owl, fox and snake are thinking about eating the mouse. The mouse knows this and tells a lie about going to see the Gruffalo for tea.

- We can see that the fox runs away because he believes the mouse. The same is true for the other animals and for the Gruffalo at the very end of the story.

- The animals run away feeling scared because each one believes the Gruffalo will eat them. For example, the mouse convinces each of them that he eats roasted fox, owl ice cream or scrambled snake.

- At the start, there's no evidence that the Gruffalo exists, but for the animals it appears to be something to be scared of.

- The mouse believes that the animals believe there's a Gruffalo: he knows he's doing a good job of tricking them.

- The reader knows that the mouse is lying as he says, "Silly old owl, doesn't he know? There's no such thing as a Gruffalo". However, the other animals don't hear this and have false beliefs as they don't know the mouse thinks there's no such thing as a Gruffalo.

- The Gruffalo thinks that the mouse is something to be scared of. In reality, he's a small, harmless mouse.

- The mouse believes that the animals feel scared of the Gruffalo.

- The mouse knows that the Gruffalo thinks the mouse is the scariest creature in the wood.

- The Gruffalo is suspicious and follows the mouse to 'find him out'.

- The mouse knows that if the animals and the Gruffalo believe him, he'll be successful in his trickery.

- The mouse claims, "I'm the scariest creature in this wood," to the Gruffalo.

- The mouse tells lies throughout the book. He knows he's lying, and to ensure that his initial lies ("I'm having tea with a Gruffalo") are believed, he has to continue to convince the Gruffalo that the animals are scared of him.

- The mouse knows that the Gruffalo thinks the animals feel scared of the mouse.

- At the end, the Gruffalo believes that the mouse believes that the other animals are scared of the mouse.

How will I know if my child understands the concepts?

Your child may be able to acknowledge and explain these events either independently or through questioning. For example, you can ask some of the following questions:

- An owl is a real animal. A mouse is a real animal. A snake is a real animal. Why isn't there a Gruffalo?

- Does the mouse really think the Gruffalo exists? Why does he say it?

- Do the other animals believe a Gruffalo exists?

- Does the Gruffalo believe the animals are scared of the mouse?

- Why do the animals run away from the mouse? Are they really scared of him?

They may also raise some of their own ideas, which you can discuss through further questions.

Sabotage

As your child becomes familiar with one aspect, introduce another and gradually ask them to tell more of the story and explain the characters' intentions using mental state words. You can do this by making mistakes deliberately and by starting a sentence and pausing for your child to complete it.

Understanding feelings

Your child may benefit from more targeted input to understand the vocabulary and context in which specific feelings arise and why. Below are resources you can use with your child to help them understand feelings:

- We have a resource for parents and teachers called 'What are you feeling? A guide to help deaf children understand and identify their emotions' – **ndcs.org.uk/feeling**.

- Some books that focus specifically on understanding feelings may provide the opportunity for rich discussion. For example, books by Lisa Regan such as 'I'm Feeling… Angry'. You can find a full list of books to help with feelings in Appendix 3 (see page 128).

- In each of these books, there are opportunities to use a variety of words for each feeling, (for example, furious, scared, worried) and to link the feelings to your child's actual experiences and feelings by remembering shared events together (see page 83).

Developing Theory of Mind through everyday experiences

Everyday experiences offer a rich variety of opportunities to talk about people's feelings and the reasons for those feelings, their thoughts, beliefs, actions and intentions.

Once the skill of using additional rich Theory of Mind commentary has been established in book sharing, it can be added into everyday exchanges with your child.

Tips for enriching everyday experiences with metapragmatic commentary

- Start small by focusing on either your own or your child's thoughts and feelings. Explain these to your child throughout the day or at key times that suit your child.

- Explain why you or they feel that way and, if appropriate, talk about what would make you or them feel better.

- Plan ahead and focus on one or two things to talk about, either related to concepts in books you've already discussed with your child, or as they arise in the course of the day.

- If you don't remember to talk about Theory of Mind while an event is happening, remind your child about it afterwards.

- Use the technique of remembering events together (see page 83) but add Theory of Mind concepts and mental state vocabulary to explain the inner worlds of other people and their thinking, decisions and feelings.

- As you become more familiar with this way of commenting on events, you'll be more responsive in the moment and will be able to make the most of events as they arise.

Extending your child's skills

Using the same technique of enriched commentary, you can also help your child become more confident in problem-solving situations to make themselves or someone else feel better.

- Start a conversation with your child about how to make someone who's upset feel better.

- Make suggestions that are realistic and within your child's experience of what would make them feel better.

- If your child suggests something that they like, but the other person may not, use this as an opportunity to explain that everyone likes different things, and we need to match the solution to what the other person likes.

- Gradually begin to ask your child to imagine how they might feel in the same situation as someone else. For example, if a child refuses to play with your child because they're not sharing, you might say, "How would you feel if your friend didn't share their train set with you?"

- Explain the feelings, thoughts and solutions as you help your child identify that the other child would feel the same way. This can help resolve conflict, and you may wish to use words like share, take turns, compromise and accept to explain the situation thoroughly.

Suggested activities for teaching Theory of Mind

Children are most likely to improve their Theory of Mind skills by discussing mental states and their own experiences, along with pictures and drawings of scenarios.

You can find more information about developing social communication skills in the Social Communication Intervention Programme (SCIP), an evidence-based intervention for children with autism and social pragmatic communication disorder.[68,69] See **sites.manchester.ac.uk/scip**.

Seeing leads to knowing

In this activity, your child will learn to use eye gaze as an indicator of thinking, and then expand this skill to use facial expression as an indicator of feelings.

How does it appear in the world?	Eye gaze to an object or person indicates what people are thinking about. Joint attention to a shared focus is a key first step in understanding others' thoughts.
Pragmatic and metapragmatic skills	Being able to understand or signal a thought or intention through eye gaze.
Language and vocabulary	Your child will need to know or learn the following words for this activity: know, think, believe, hide. They will need to be able to understand and construct simple and complex sentences to discuss thoughts and beliefs.
Social cognition Theory of Mind skills	Awareness of own and other people's thoughts.

68. Adams, C. and Gaile, J. (2015). The SCIP Manual: Managing children's pragmatic and social communication needs in the early school years. Manchester, UK: Napier Hill Press.

69. Adams, C., Lockton, E., Gaile, J., Earl, G., and Freed, J. (2012). Implementation of a Manualized Communication Intervention for School-Aged Children with Pragmatic and Social Communication Needs in a Randomized Controlled Trial: the Social Communication Intervention Project. *International Journal of Language and Communication Disorders*. 47(3):245–256.DOI: 10.1111/j.1460-6984.2012.00147.x.

✦ Activity

You will need:

- pen and paper
- a set of six common objects
- cards with the name or picture of each object
- thinking bubbles drawn on cards.

What to do:

1. Space the six objects out on a table or on the floor so your child can clearly see which one you're looking at.

2. Show your child the set of matching words or drawings on the cards. Select one card without telling your child which one.

3. Tell your child, "I'm thinking about one of these things." Look at one object on the table which matches your chosen card.

4. Ask, "Which one am I thinking about?" Exaggerate looking to help your child select the correct object. For example, lean towards it or trace your finger from your eye to the object while still looking at it.

5. Give feedback to explain what your child did and how it helped them work out what you were thinking about. You could say, "I was thinking about the apple. You worked out what I was thinking about by following my eyes." Give your child the card as a reward and repeat with all the objects.

🎭 Role reversal

Repeat the game, but this time switch roles so that your child is the one to select a card and look at it. Use the same words to reinforce the skill and the importance of following eye gaze to work out thoughts. Use the words 'thinking, looking and working out' often in the discussion.

↗ Extend: Hide and seek with toys

1. Play a game of hiding objects around the room and giving clues by looking at each hiding place in turn.

2. Explain that you're giving a clue by looking.

3. Tell your child, "I'm thinking about the book. I know where it is. Can you find the book?" If needed, tell your child to "Follow my eyes to find the book."

4. Exaggerate your gaze and trace your finger from your eyes to point to the hiding place. Repeat until all the toys are found.

5. Repeat with explicit metacognitive feedback, for example, "You worked out what I was thinking about and found the toys by following my eyes."

6. Ask your child to hide objects and give clues by looking at the hiding place.

↗ Extend: Understanding preferences

1. Set the activity up in the same way but divide the cards into 'things I like' and 'things I don't like'.

2. Draw a smiley face on the card for the ones you like and a sad face for the ones you don't.

3. Lay the objects out and explain that you're going to look at each in turn with either a happy or a sad face to show that you like or don't like it.

4. Ask your child to select the correct object by following your gaze and then say whether you like it or not based on your expression.

5. Repeat and change the feeling for each object. Go against your child's preferences to help them understand that different people have different feelings about the same things.

6. Reverse roles and after a few turns, introduce sabotage by making a mistake in detecting the object or the feeling towards it. Encourage your child to emphasise and correct you.

↗ Extend: Understand the role of looking in listening and conversation

1. Start a conversation with your child and explain that you're going to look at them when you're listening to them and look away when you're not.

2. Allow the conversation to start well before sabotaging it by looking away from your child.

3. Choose something to look at that can be explained, for example, out of the window, at a mobile phone, a TV, or another person.

4. Explain, "I looked away. I was looking at X. I was distracted. I was thinking about X. I didn't follow what you were saying. Can you tell me again please?"

5. Continue the conversation, alternating maintaining eye gaze with your child and obvious acts of sabotage to look away.

6. Explain each time what happened and why your child needs to wait until you're looking again before continuing the conversation.

7. Use the words 'looking, thinking, listening, distracted and waiting' in the explanations.

Prepare

Prepare your child for upcoming conversations by explaining the link between looking and thinking and how to follow eye gaze to work out what people are thinking about.

Using metapragmatic commentary

In a social situation, observe what's happening and point out to your child the eye gaze and probable thoughts of the people present. For example, a new person arrives and everyone looks up to say hello.

Use What Works Well (WWW) and Even Better If (EBI) (see page 47) to talk to your child about an interaction, and make the link between looking, thinking about the words, listening, asking and answering questions explicit. If you can observe your child in interactions, you can reflect with them on this aspect of the interaction in the same way.

Understanding preferences

In this activity, your child will learn that other people have different thoughts, feelings and preferences.

How does it appear in the world?	Perspective-taking means being able to consider a situation from a different point of view. Eye gaze to an object or person indicates what people are thinking about, with facial expression to indicate feelings.
Pragmatic and metapragmatic skills	Being able to understand or signal a thought or intention through eye gaze and facial expression.
Language and vocabulary	Your child will need to know or learn the following words for this activity: know, think, believe, feel. They will need to be able to understand and construct simple and complex sentences to discuss thoughts and beliefs.
Social cognition Theory of Mind skills	Awareness of own and other people's thoughts and feelings.

![Activity icon] **Activity**

1. Using the image below, explain that the children are going to the shop, and each one can get exactly what they like.

2. Draw a line from the treat in their thinking bubble to the treat on the counter.

3. Discuss the children's likes and dislikes in their speech bubbles.

4. Add a drawing of your child and ask, "Which would you choose?" If they choose the same as another character, make this explicit and say, "You and David both like candy."

5. You can repeat by drawing other examples within your child's experiences and understanding (for example, favourite animals, films, pizza toppings).

Paper characters

Use the following cut-out characters for any role-play activities in this packet.

Topics

Visiting the zoo

Going to the cinema

Going for an appointment

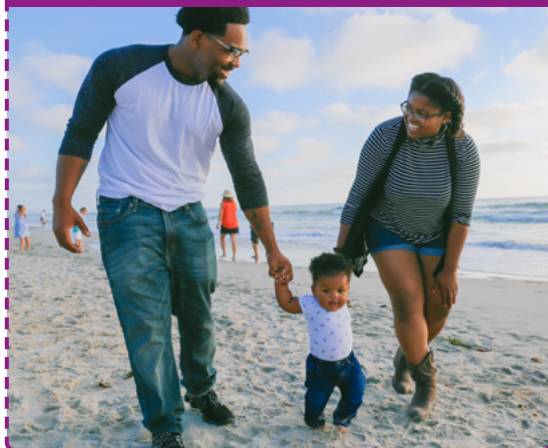

Our football team winning

Ice-skating

Arts and crafts

Topics

Flying in a plane	Going to the beach

Superhero movies	Dancing

Baking	Puzzles

Appendix 1

Assessment checklists

Checklist name	Description
The Pragmatics Profile of Everyday Communication Skills[70]	• Information is collected through an interview with parents, teachers or other carers. It aims to show how a child communicates in everyday interactions in familiar settings with people they know well. • The assessment gives teachers an idea of how a child communicates and their communication skills inside and outside school. It's relatively easy to carry out and takes 30 minutes to do. • There are two profiles for children: the early years version (from 9 months) and the one for school-age children up to 10 years. • There's also an adult profile which can be used for secondary aged children and post-16 students. • The assessment is appropriate for any communication approach (spoken and/or signed). • As the information collected is not numerical, it isn't possible to compare the scores with other children of the same age. • The profile can be used by anyone with a professional interest in the development of language and communication. • There's no cost to using the assessment. Manual, background information and profiles are available to download.

70. Dewart, H. and Summers, S. (1995). *The Pragmatics Profile of Everyday Communication Skills in Children, Revised*. Available from: complexneeds.org.uk/modules/Module-2.4-Assessment-monitoring-and-evaluation/All/downloads/ m08p080c/the_pragmatics_profile.pdf.

The Pragmatics Checklist[71]	• Forty-five-item observational checklist covering a range of pragmatic behaviours. • Suitable to use with children up to the age of seven years. • Covers a wide range of social communication abilities in addition to language pragmatics. • Examples of items are interacting with others in a polite manner, revises/repairs an incomplete message, maintains a conversation. More advanced observational items include tells a lie, expresses humour/sarcasm. • Items are rated on a scale to show whether the behaviour is not present, present but pre-verbal, present with one to three words, and present with complex language. • The Pragmatics Checklist was used in a study to identify pragmatic difficulties in deaf and hard of hearing children. Even by age seven, deaf children still didn't show complete mastery of all items on the checklist. This suggests that the checklist will be a useful and relevant observational instrument to describe the profile of pragmatic ability.
The Pragmatic Protocol[72]	• Thirty-item observational checklist. • Focuses specifically on language aspects such as speech acts/turn taking but also includes paralinguistic (for example, prosody and vocal quality) and non-verbal (eye gaze) aspects. • Research has used the Pragmatic Protocol to investigate the pragmatic abilities of deaf children with and without cochlear implants. They were able to show areas of pragmatic ability in both groups that were under-developed in comparison to typically developing children.[73]

71. Goberis, D., Beams, D., Dalpes, M., Abrisch, A., Baca, R., and Yoshinaga-Itano, C. (2012). The Missing Link in Language Development of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children: Pragmatic language development. *Seminars in Speech and Language*. 33:297–309. DOI: 10.1055/s-0032-1326916.

72. Prutting, C.A. and Kirchner, D.M. (1987). A Clinical Appraisal of the Pragmatic Aspects of Language. *Journal of Speech and Hearing Disorders*. 52(2):105–119. DOI: 10.1044/jshd.5202.105.

73. Most, T., Shina-August, E., and Meilijson, S. (2010). Pragmatic Abilities of Children with Hearing Loss Using Cochlear Implants or Hearing Aids Compared to Hearing Children. *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*. 15(4):422-437. DOI: 10.1093/deafed/enq032

The Pragmatic Rating Scale – School Age[74]	• Published assessment tool, initially used to record observations of social communication behaviours in people with autism. • Several pragmatic and social communication behaviours are observed during an appropriate interaction with the child (typically around 15 minutes' duration). • Examples of observations include 'over-talkativeness' (including overly detailed and dominating the interaction), items on expression of empathy and emotion towards others and rating of language structure. • This checklist requires some training and is usually employed by professionals. • It's been used to assess social communication from the age of four years up to adulthood.
The Language Use Inventory (LUI)[75]	• Parent report assessment of a wide range of social communication functions for children from 18 to 47 months. • Children's ability is rated on a scale by parents or other carers. • A structured observational framework is used across a wide range of natural settings. • Scales include ratings of ability in areas such as requesting help, sharing humour and adapting communication to perspectives of other people. • Ratings can be converted to percentile ranks and age equivalents. • The Language Use Inventory has a substantial amount of research to support its development and a website to support training and application. Like other instruments listed in this section, it's not been standardised on deaf children and is only appropriate for use with pre-school children. • See **languageuseinventory.com** for further information.

74. Landa, R., Piven, J., Wzorek, M., Gayle, J., Chase, G., and Folstein, S. (1992). Social Language Use in Parents of Autistic Individuals. *Psychological Medicine*. 22:245–254.DOI: 10.1017/s0033291700032918

75. O'Neill, D.K. (2007). The Language Use Inventory: A parent-report measure of pragmatic language development for 18-47-month-old children. *Journal of Speech, Language and Hearing Research*. 50:214-228.DOI: 10.1044/1092-4388(2007/017)

The Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals (CELF) Pragmatics Profile[76]	• Fifty-item questionnaire that can be filled out by a variety of respondents (for example, parents, teachers). • It includes items such as asking and responding and conversational skills (for example, showing humour in conversation, adjusting language to the situation) as well as non-verbal skills such as body language and gesture. • Items are rated on a four-point scale according to how frequently each behaviour occurs. • Speech and language therapists use the profile with school-aged children.
The Children's Communication Checklist (CCC-2)[77]	• Used to identify school-aged children with Developmental Language Disorder who have difficulties with communication and pragmatic problems. • Has been widely used in research with children with social communication disorders and autism. • This is a parent or teacher-completed rating scale. Some normative interpretation is possible; there are separate rating scales for pragmatics, social behaviours and speech/sentence-level assessment. • This has not been widely used with deaf children but has the potential to provide useful information.

76. Wiig, E.H., Semel, E., and Secord, W.A. (2013). *Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals–Fifth Edition* (CELF-5). 5th ed., Bloomington, MN: NCS Pearson.

77. Bishop, D.V.M. (2003). *The Children's Communication Checklist.* 2nd ed., Hove: Harcourt Assessment.

Structured elicitation methods

Structured elicitation methods	Description
The Peanut Butter Protocol[78]	• This is a short play-based elicitation task for verbal pre-school children that provides context and verbal prompts. For example, the adult asks the child to select a toy from a set of items, but then hands them the wrong item. • It aims to elicit the communicative intent 'denial' ("not that one"). • It was originally developed to identify pragmatic behaviours in children with language disorders. • A similar method for older children is described in Adams and Lloyd.[79]
Happé's Strange Stories[80]	• Happé described a task to elicit the understanding of others' minds using a story-based task. • A series of short stories or scenarios are presented to children orally, but in practice these could be supported with drawings or in a written form. • At the end of each story, children are asked to explain the underlying meaning.

78. Creaghead, N.A. (1984). Strategies for Evaluating and Targeting Pragmatic Behaviors in Young Children. *Seminars in Speech and Language*. 5:241–252.DOI: 10.1055/s-0028-1085181.

79. Adams, C. and Lloyd, J. (2005). Elicited and Spontaneous Communicative Functions and Stability of Conversational Measures with Children who have Pragmatic Language Impairments. *International Journal of Language & Communication Disorders*. 40(3):333–347.DOI: 10.1080/13682820400027768

80. Happé, F.G. (1994). An Advanced Test of Theory of Mind: Understanding of story characters' thought and feelings by able autistic, mentally handicapped, and normal children and adults. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*. 24(2):129–154.DOI: 10.1007/BF02172093

	• One of the scenarios requires them to recognise and interpret a joke as follows: "Daniel and Ian see Mrs Thompson coming out of the hairdressers one day. She looks a bit funny because the hairdresser has cut her hair much too short. Daniel says to Ian, 'She must have been in a fight with a lawnmower!'" Question 1: Is it true what Daniel says? Question 2: Why did he say that? • Other items are concerned with white lies and sarcasm and therefore may be useful with older children. • There is no normative data for responses, but it's possible to assess whether children show understanding of the hidden intent and to gain an insight into children's ability to interpret the thoughts of others.

Standardised tests

Standardised test	Description
The Test of Pragmatic Language-2[81]	• Aimed at 6 to 18 year olds. • It consists of a series of pictures of scenarios with a verbally presented explanation and prompt. • The set of prompts allows elicitation of a range of social communication interpretations and expression. For example, one scenario asks children to explain how a disagreement can be repaired and to express feelings about the argument.
The Social Language Development Test – Elementary (6-11 years)[82]	• This is a standardised test that uses a series of visual and verbal prompts and scenarios. • Subtests include making inferences, interpersonal negotiation, multiple interpretations and supporting peers. • A similar test for older children is available: The Social Language Development Test – Adolescent (12-17 years).[83] This contains subtests of making inferences, interpreting social language, problem solving, social interaction, and interpreting ironic statements.

81. Phelps-Teraski, T. and Phelps-Gunn, D. (2007). *The Test for Pragmatic Language- 2*. Austin, Tx: Pro-Ed.

82. Bowers, L., Huisingh, R., and LoGiudice, C. (2008). *Social Language Development Test: Elementary*. East Moline, IL: LinguiSystems.

83. Bowers, L., Huisingh, R., and LoGiudice, C. (2013). *Social Language Development Test: Adolescent*. LinguiSystems.

Appendix 2 - Homophone and word play jokes

- What building has the most stories? The library.

- Why was the baby ant confused? All his uncles were ants.

- What month has 28 days? All of them.

- What makes an octopus laugh? Ten tickles.

- What's in the middle of Paris? The letter R.

- What's a moth's favourite subject in school? Mothematics.

- Why don't bikes stand up by themselves? They are too tired (two tired).

- Why don't African animals play games? There are too many cheetahs.

- What's black and white and red all over? A newspaper.

- What do skeletons use to speak to their mum? A mobile bone.

- What do you call a man with a car on his head? Jack.

- What do you call a man with a seagull on his head? Cliff.

- What happens when a frog's car breaks down? He gets toad away.

- What happened to the cat that swallowed a ball of wool? She had mittens.

- Which bird does construction work? The crane.

- What house weighs the least? A lighthouse.

- What has a head and a tail but no body? A coin.

- What has arms and legs but no head? A chair.

- What is the laziest thing on a map? A river, because it's always in its bed.

- Why couldn't the skeleton go to the party? Because he had nobody to go with.

- What do you call a deer with no eyes? No idea.

- Why did the boy eat his homework? Because he thought it was a piece of cake.

- When is a door not a door? When it's ajar.

- Why is six afraid of seven? Because seven ate nine.

- How did the farmer fix his jeans? With a cabbage patch.

Appendix 3 – Books which focus specifically on feelings

- 'I'm Feeling…' by Lisa Regan. This is a series including 'I'm Feeling… Jealous', 'I'm Feeling… Angry', 'I'm Feeling… Scared', 'I'm Feeling… Shy'.

- 'Scaredy Squirrel' by Melanie Watts. This is a series including 'Scaredy Squirrel at Night', 'Scaredy Squirrel Makes a Friend', 'Scaredy Squirrel at the Beach', 'Scaredy Squirrel has a Birthday Party'.

- 'Little Mouse's Big Book of Fears' by Emily Gravett.

- 'The Wolves in the Walls' by Neil Gaiman and Dave McKean.

- 'Don't Panic Annika!' by Juliet Clare Bell and Jennifer E. Morris.

- 'Art to Make You Scared' by Elizabeth Newbery.

- 'The Lion Inside' by Rachel Bright and Jim Field.

- 'Ruby Finds a Worry' by Tom Percival.

- 'The Selfish Crocodile' by Charles Faustin and Michael Terry.

- 'When I Feel Angry' by Cornelia Maude Spelman.

- 'Cool Down and Work Through Anger' by Cheri J. Meiners.

Ideas for parents

All the above books are currently available as read-aloud books on YouTube. Watching the story together and talking to your child about the story might be a fun and cost-effective way to approach this activity.

Appendix 4 – Book sharing for Theory of Mind

Here are details of a variety of books which you can use to support Theory of Mind development and to understand deaf children's existing level of knowledge. See page 29 (younger children) and page 40 (older children) for an introduction to the concept of Theory of Mind and why it's important for deaf children.

This is based on already published work. For the full work please see Chilton, H. (2017) 'Tricks, lies and mistakes: identifying Theory of Mind concepts within storybooks shared with deaf children', Deafness & Education International, 19:2, 75-83, DOI: 10.1080/14643154.2017.1357779

Book 1: 'Handa's Surprise' by Eileen Browne[84]

Overview of book

Handa sets off to visit Akeyo with a varied basket of fruit. The fruit is stolen piece by piece by a range of animals without her knowledge. She's surprised to find the basket full of tangerines which fell when a goat hit a tree. Akeyo appears delighted with the tangerines, unaware of the previous variety of fruit.

What can deaf children learn through this book?

This is a great book to help you understand more about children's emerging Theory of Mind. The story is just like a 'false belief task' which has been used in lots of research with deaf children. This means a character in the story does and says things because they believe something that isn't true. The task for the deaf child is to see the 'false belief' of the character.

How will I know if my child understands the concepts?

Children may be able to acknowledge and explain these events either independently or through your questioning. They may also raise some of their own ideas (which you can discuss through further questions).

- Handa is thinking about her friend Akeyo and about the fruit. She looks like she feels happy and excited.

- Handa believes throughout the story that the basket is still full of the selection of fruit.

- She doesn't know that animals have taken the fruit as she hasn't seen it.

- Later, she doesn't know about the tangerines, still believing that the basket is full of the initial selection of fruit.

- Handa believes she's still carrying the selection of fruit. She carries on to Akeyo's home because she doesn't know the animals have taken fruit.

- Handa wanted to take a selection of fruits to Akeyo. At the end she feels surprised. She may feel disappointed. Akeyo is delighted with the tangerines and happy with one type of fruit, not knowing about the others.

- Throughout the book, Handa wonders what Akeyo will think or feel about her gift of different fruits.

- Handa might feel surprised about the tangerines but happy that Akeyo is happy.

- She may later feel cross upon finding out that the animals had taken the fruit, or confused and left wondering what happened.

84. Browne, E. (2006). *Handa's Surprise*.

Book 2: 'Eat Your Peas' by Kes Gray[85]

Overview of book

Mum attempts to encourage her daughter to eat her peas. Mum's attempts to persuade increase using exaggeration in phrases such as, "If you eat your peas, I'll buy you a chocolate factory." The story ends with the daughter's exclamation that she will eat her peas if Mum eats her brussels sprouts.

What can deaf children learn through this book?

This book focuses on using language and what you know about how other people think (Theory of Mind) to persuade them.

How will I know if my child understands the concepts?

Children may be able to acknowledge and explain these events either independently or through your questioning. They may also raise some of their own ideas (which you can discuss through further questions).

- Daisy is becoming more and more cross/Mum is getting more and more frustrated.

- Mum's lip is "beginning to wobble" means she's becoming upset.

- Mum is becoming cross as Daisy will not do what she wants her to do.

- Daisy knows that Mum wants her to eat her peas and is thinking of ways to encourage her to do so.

- Mum believes that Daisy will feel persuaded by her offers.

- Mum is lying about what Daisy will get if she eats her peas.

- Daisy knows she will not get these things – it's persuasion.

- Mum felt it was OK to persuade Daisy to eat her peas but felt differently when Daisy tried to persuade her to eat her sprouts.

85. Gray, K. and Sharratt, N. (2007). *Eat Your Peas*. Random House.

Book 3: 'Arthur's Tractor' by Pippa Goodhart[86]

Overview of book

A farmer believes that the strange noises he hears are caused by his tractor, but behind him a fairy story unfolds, as the noise is created by a princess escaping from a dragon. He's unaware of what's happening in the background as he doesn't see it.

What can deaf children learn through this book?

Seeing leads to knowing – an important part of developing Theory of Mind. If we can understand that we must see something to know about it, then we're able to understand about the things other people don't know.

How will I know if my child understands the concepts?

Children may be able to acknowledge and explain these events either independently or through your questioning. They may also raise some of their own ideas (which you can discuss through further questions).

- The princess fears the dragon.

- Arthur has the false belief that his tractor is making the noises.

- Items from the background story (sword, dragon's fire, princess's dress) appear to be things to fix a tractor with.

- Arthur doesn't know about the story unfolding in the background because he didn't initially see or hear it.

- Arthur attributes noises he hears to faults with the tractor.

- He continues to concentrate on fixing the tractor because of his false belief.

- Throughout the book, Arthur continues along a trajectory that he may not have done if he could see what the reader sees or if he'd been told.

- Arthur has no evidence that the strange noises are made by the tractor. Nobody told him, but he makes a guess that makes sense of the situation he's in.

86. Goodhart, P. (2003). *Arthur's Tractor: A Fairy Tale with Mechanical Parts*. USA: Bloomsbury

Book 4: 'Mrs Rainbow' by Neil Griffiths[87]

Overview of book

Bright colours make Mrs Rainbow happy. Her house is brightly painted. The town council tells her to paint it grey. She paints the house grey and this impacts on her mood and emotions. Eventually, the other people in the village paint their houses bright colours and she's allowed to repaint her house in the colours she likes.

What can deaf children learn through this book?

This book can help deaf children understand that certain events impact on how others think and feel. People act on what they believe and not necessarily the truth.

How will I know if my child understands the concepts?

Children may be able to acknowledge and explain these events either independently or through your questioning. They may also raise some of their own ideas (which you can discuss through further questions).

- Mrs Rainbow experiences a range of emotions in the book.

- Having colourful things in the house makes Mrs Rainbow happy.

- Removing the colour from her home makes her sad and withdrawn.

- It appears to Mrs Rainbow that no one likes the rainbow house as the Planning Committee decided the house should be repainted.

- The reader and Mrs Rainbow both know about the council decision because of the letter, but the villagers don't appear to know until they see the house painted grey.

- Believing that others don't like her house makes Mrs Rainbow feel sad. The belief makes her stay indoors.

- Buying items for the home at the school fair fulfils her wishes and makes her smile.

- She's happy in the end when her desire to have a brightly coloured house is fulfilled.

- The villagers know that Mrs Rainbow is happy in the end.

- Mrs Rainbow believes that the villagers felt kind towards her.

- The villagers feel proud of their actions.

- The councillors feel embarrassed to be hugged at the end because they know they made poor decisions and changed their minds.

87. Griffiths, N. (2006). *Mrs Rainbow*. Corner To Learn Limited.

Appendix 5 – Idioms

Idiomatic phrases for feelings

Feeling	Idiomatic phrases
Happy	He was over the moon
	On top of the world
	High as a kite
	Grinning like a Cheshire cat
	Walking on air
	Grinning like a cat that got the cream
	Tickled pink
Relaxed and calm	He was as cool as a cucumber
	Chilling out
	Laid back
	Water off a duck's back
	Keep cool
Annoyed/cross	You're in my bad books
	He's got a bee in his bonnet
	A pain in the neck
	He got out of the wrong side of the bed
	He's got the hump
	Bite your head off
	She hit the roof

	He blew his top
	His bark is worse than his bite
	Lose your head
	Explode
Shock/fear/worry	Jump out of my skin
	Shaking in my shoes
	Knees knocking
	Keep your fingers crossed
	Cross that bridge when you get to it
	Get it off your chest
	It's not the end of the world
	I've got butterflies in my tummy
Sad/upset/miserable	Down in the dumps
	Feeling blue
	Feeling low
	Under a cloud
	Having a grey day
	Cry your eyes out
	Heartbroken
	Have a long face
Tired/asleep	He's been burning the candle at both ends
	Up with the larks
	Forty winks

	Cat nap
	Hit the hay
	Ready to drop
	Out like a light
	Sleep like a log
	Asleep at the wheel
Over-reaction	Don't make a mountain out of a molehill
	A storm in a teacup
	To be beside yourself
	To get worked up about something
	Need to let off steam about something
	Get carried away
Solutions to upsets or no solution possible	Look on the bright side
	Cross that bridge when you come to it
	Make the best of a bad lot
	Grin and bear it

Figures of speech and idiomatic phrases

You might as well save your breath	She let the cat out of the bag
He's kicked the bucket	There's not enough room to swing a cat
She jumped the gun	It put a cat amongst the pigeons
Like a bull in a china shop	He was as cool as a cucumber
They have tied the knot	She was as thick as two short planks
They were just treading water	He was sleeping with one eye open
Shake a leg	Somewhere down the line
It's raining cats and dogs	He's got a bee in his bonnet
He's got a chip on his shoulder	You must be joking
In a nutshell	Teaching grandmother to suck eggs
He was over the moon	Has the cat got your tongue?
You can say that again	Pigs might fly!
You're in the dog house	As flat as a pancake
A little bird told me	Spit it out!
You're pulling my leg	He's got ants in his pants
Don't waste your breath	Give me a break
Saved by the bell	My ears are burning
That rings a bell	You're a tough cookie
Don't spill the beans	Hold your horses
Put a sock in it	A pain in the neck
She hit the roof	Keep your eyes peeled
You've turned over a new leaf	Keep mum!

Pull your socks up	That's a rip off
Don't beat about the bush	It's not the end of the world
I've got eyes in the back of my head	You're too big for your boots
You're as fit as a fiddle	He got out of the wrong side of the bed
A storm in a teacup	A piece of cake
Hop out of the car	I've got a frog in my throat
You're in my bad books	His bark is worse than his bite
Money down the drain	That was a close shave
Has the penny dropped yet?	Let's blow the cobwebs away
It cost me an arm and a leg	That's the last straw
I won't bite your head off	He's got the hump
You mark my word	I'm all fingers and thumbs
I'm off colour	Don't make a mountain out of a molehill
It's not my cup of tea	Keep your fingers crossed
He's got a screw loose	Put your cards on the table
Something caught my eye	He's on his last legs
He blew his top	Give me a hand please
You must stand on your own two feet	I'll show you the ropes
Don't cry over spilt milk	He's got green fingers
We're in the same boat	Get it off your chest
It goes in one ear and out the other	The grass is greener on the other side
You're the bee's knees	She's a slow coach
You saved my bacon	All the world and his wife were there

I've got butterflies in my tummy	Let your hair down
Don't put all your eggs in one basket	I've got a trick up my sleeve
You must face the music	She's so stuck up
End of story	You're dancing on thin ice
Don't cross that bridge until you get to it	Two heads are better than one
A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush	There's something fishy going on
Raise a few eyebrows	They were off the mark
He had his day in the sun	Push your luck
Someone walked over your grave	You're sailing close to the wind
Set your heart on something	Have a change of heart
Play it by ear	Have second thoughts
Spread the word	Raise your game
To feel/be at home in the new place	Get the ball rolling
Go with the flow	Fight the decision
You can say that again	Have your work cut out for you
Go up in smoke	Go downhill

Appendix 6 – Setting goals and targets

Reflections

What did I do?	
What did I learn?	
What did I observe?	
How did I change the activity?	
Thoughts for things to do in the future	

Goal:	
Use this space to plan what you'll try and what you observe.	
Home	
School	
Observations	

Glossary

Term	Explanation	Example/context
Dyadic interactions	Two-way interaction between a baby and parent.	Relevant to very young babies and their attention on a parent's face when they are being held.
Elicitation	A technique that's used to draw out a response or reaction from a child.	Not telling your child all the information because you want them to ask questions.
Joint attention	Joint attention or shared attention describes a child and adult focusing at the same time on an object.	It's achieved when one individual alerts the other to an object by eye-gazing, pointing or other verbal or non-verbal indications.
Implied	When you imply something, you don't say it explicitly.	"This jumper makes me so hot." This would be an example of someone implying they would like to take their jumper off.
Inference	When something is inferred, it's not said explicitly.	If you read a book, it may not tell you that a character is happy, but you might infer it from something the author wrote.
Modelling	Giving an example of how to use language.	For example, a parent can model how to ask questions or how to initiate conversations.

Metacognition Metacognitive awareness Metacognitive feedback	Metacognition is thinking about thinking. It involves reflecting on what you know and what you don't know and considering what you can do to learn and make progress.	Children may demonstrate metacognition when learning, for example, by talking themselves through a task or asking themselves questions such as, "What will happen if I...?". Adults can also add metacognitive feedback to the discussion to make the steps children need to use very explicit.
Metapragmatic awareness Metapragmatic feedback	Metapragmatic awareness is the conscious knowledge of what's required in communicative interactions. Feedback is the adult commenting on that awareness.	Children knowing that their explanation hasn't been clear enough for the other person to understand, so they rephrase it. If the adult comments on a child's ability to do this and highlights how they did it, this is metapragmatic feedback.
Non-literal language	Language that isn't meant literally.	Idioms or jokes.
Non-verbal communication	Any type of communication that isn't verbal or signed.	Facial expression or gesture.
Para-linguistic features	Other aspects (not words) that help us to understand what's meant.	Tone of voice or gesture.
Pragmatics	The study of how context contributes to meaning.	Examples are provided in Chapter 2.
Reciprocal/ reciprocity	The idea that interactions go two ways for mutual benefit.	Responding to a baby's babble by babbling back or talking back.

Sabotage	A technique where an adult obstructs an interaction in some way to provide the opportunity for children to step in and use their emerging skills.	Leaving out important details to encourage a child to ask.
Theory of Mind	Understanding the thoughts and feelings of yourself and others.	Knowing that other people might have different thoughts and feelings to yourself. It might involve understanding about beliefs, desires, intentions, feelings and thoughts.
Triadic interactions	Interactions which involve two people and an object or three people.	Joint attention between a baby, adult and a toy is an example of a triadic interaction.