# **Communication Friendly Environment Checklist for Early Years Settings**

This checklist can be used as a tool to help you review or plan your early years environment to ensure that it provides the best possible opportunities for speech, language and communication development.

Keeping the children at the centre, we have divided the checklist into three sections – the physical space, the activities and routine that take place in that space, and the interaction of adults. All three areas are key!

We encourage you to reflect on each question and include examples of positive practice in your setting, alongside any areas you could develop further.

**Developed by: **

**In conjunction with:**  

# **Physical Environment**

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| **Questions to consider** | **Examples in your setting** | **Next steps or actions (include who will do this and when)** |
| Do adults regularly observe how children are communicating in different spaces? Is this discussed/shared and used to plan any changes? |  |  |
| Does the physical space allow for different groupings, e.g., cosy/smaller spaces for small group interactions? |  |  |
| Does the layout/position of furniture allow children to be face to face with their peers and/or adults? |  |  |
| Can children easily access quiet spaces where noise levels are reduced? |  |  |
| Can children easily access spaces where visual distractions are minimised? |  |  |
| Does the way into the setting allow for gradual transition, e.g. spaces to sit quietly as they arrive before starting their day? |  |  |

# **Activities and Routines**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Questions to consider** | **Examples in your setting** | **Next steps or actions (include who will do this and when)** |
| Are children supported (visually as well as verbally) to understand routines and to transition from one activity or space to another? |  |  |
| Are opportunities for good quality interactions build into daily routines? |  |  |
| Do focussed/adult led activities include outcomes for communication appropriate to stage of development? |  |  |
| Do activities and routines encourage communication for different purposes? E.g., greeting, asking questions, describing, problem solving, negotiating, requesting etc.  |  |  |
| Is new vocabulary learning targeted routinely and appropriately to stage of development? |  |  |
| Are routines and planned activities carried out at the best times of day? (e.g., is story always before lunch when children are hungry and adults are busy setting up?) |  |  |

# **Adult Interactions**

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| **Questions to consider** | **Your comments** | **Next steps or actions (include who will do this and when)** |
| Do adults have a good level of skills and knowledge around speech, language and communication? |  |  |
| Do adults ensure they are face to face during interactions with children? |  |  |
| Do adults always get children’s attention before giving information?  |  |  |
| Do adults give children sufficient time to engage in interactions? |  |  |
| Do adults encourage *extended* interactions?  |  |  |
| Do adults use more comments than questions? |  |  |
| Do adults use effective strategies to teach new vocabulary? |  |  |
| Do children have opportunity for supported small group interactions (e.g., stories, talking time)? |  |  |
| Do adults model speech, language and interaction skills at an appropriate level for individual children? |  |  |
| Do adults use strategies to support children’s understanding of language? |  |  |
| Are children supported to understand their own and others’ feelings? |  |  |
| Are children supported to understand the rules and boundaries for appropriate interactions? |  |  |

**Now you have considered all three areas, have a think about your priorities for development. Can you identify 3 key actions?**

1.

2.

3.

**Setting: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Completed by: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**