

Communication friendly environments – checklist

You can use this simple checklist to think about how your environment supports children’s communication.

Elements to consider

• Space, light and layout

- Is there good light, with a comfortable temperature and not too many visual distractions

• Noise levels

- Are noise levels conducive to learning – what can be done to minimise unnecessary noise?

• Use of visual support, this may include

- A colour coded map of school or setting , colour coded directions, photographs of staff members, photographs/ symbols used to support routines, eg washing hands, getting ready for PE
- Visual timetables used for daily / weekly activities
- Objects, pictures and symbols used to teach vocabulary, to make stories more active and support engagement in other lessons
- Displays are used throughout school or setting to support learning

• Adults who can prioritise communication, this may include adults who

- Have knowledge of language development.
- Understand the language levels of the children and the language demands in the environment.
- Can adapt their language so it is not a barrier to learning or communication.
- Give children strategies to say when they don’t understand

• Routines

- Are children aware of rules and expectations?
- Do they know daily routines; could these be supported visually?
- Are children given opportunities within lessons to say when they don’t understand?
- Are they explicitly taught how to listen, how to work together in groups?
- Are there opportunities for children to interact and use language in different situations, with different people at an appropriate level?