

# Nursery Policy For Language Development

## Principles

"Language development is crucial to living and learning and is concerned with more than the growth of vocabulary. Language is used to talk to people, to share and release feelings and to give and obtain information. Language is important in the development of understanding and refinement of ideas."

CCEA (1997)

## Statement Of Intent

The Staff of Ballycastle Integrated Nursery Unit organise and plan activities and experiences which foster the development of language in relation to talking and listening, early reading and early writing. It is our aim to develop, extend and enrich the children's communication skills so that they may share and express feelings with others, obtain and deliver information, understand ideas and develop their personal thoughts. We aim to encourage language and literacy through all areas of the pre-school curriculum and to develop positive attitudes towards language through activities which promote and extend vocabulary which is relevant to the child's current age and stage of development.

## Procedures

Talking and listening experiences are promoted in Ballycastle Integrated Nursery Unit by:

- ❖ Ensuring that all children have access to a wide variety of play experiences and are then encouraged to talk about their experiences, ideas, feelings and achievements to one another and to adults during the course of their play.
- ❖ Adults will initiate conversations by the use of careful open-ended questions to help children to participate and extend their conversational skills.
- ❖ Encouraging parents to share information about their child's home experiences with staff in order that staff may use this as a starting point for conversations.
- ❖ The use of positive non-verbal communication to encourage children to communicate e.g. sitting at child's physical level, nodding, smiling and responding appropriately.
- ❖ Promoting language and listening skills through books, songs, rhymes and pictures.
- ❖ Using drama as a medium for expressing and developing language.
- ❖ Incorporating circle time into weekly events and experiences.
- ❖ Incorporating books and magazines throughout all play areas e.g. home corner, display areas imaginative play areas and sand and water areas.
- ❖ Providing attractive reading areas with a range of story books and information books suited to the children's needs, interests, race and culture.
- ❖ Ensuring that opportunities arise for children to communicate on a one to one basis, one to small group and one to large group basis in the nursery setting.

Early Reading and Writing experiences are promoted in Ballycastle Integrated Nursery Unit by:

- ❖ Reading a range of books, both fiction and non-fiction whilst helping the children to understand that the picture as well as the words carry meaning and tell the story.
- ❖ Focusing children's attention upon environmental print in the nursery and in the wider community in order to help children understand that print represents meaning. E.g. labels on food

Policy for Language Development updated April 2014

Ballycastle Integrated Nursery Unit

packaging, name on uniform, captions on displays and photographs, words in books and on posters and instructions on games etc.

- ❖ Provide a range of sequencing activities e.g. sequencing cards, sequencing puzzles, helping children understand the appropriate sequence of events such as the nursery day.
- ❖ Encourage children to recall personal events in an appropriate sequence.
- ❖ Provide a range of writing or mark making materials (pens, pencils, crayons, chalk, paint, felt-tips, and paper) in a wide range of play areas e.g. creative area, role play areas, outdoors etc.
- ❖ Encourage children to represent their ideas and experiences through painting and pretend writing.
- ❖ Writing children's name on paintings and creations etc.
- ❖ Recording children's ideas and thoughts within captions and reading these aloud to children.
- ❖ Promote early understanding of left to right directionality by writing children's names on the left hand side of the page and by using left to right sweeping gestures on occasions when reading books, captions and posters etc.
- ❖ Providing name cards and magnetic letters to match
- ❖ Using symbols and name cards during the year for snack and dinner routine.

In considering and fulfilling these objectives, the nursery staff will:

- ❖ Be aware that they themselves are role models for the children.
- ❖ Value the lifestyle choice, culture and religion of each child
- ❖ Liaise with other agencies when needed to support each individual child's language development, i.e. Speech therapists, paediatric consultants, MASTS team etc...

### **Nursery Planning**

To achieve the aims of the nursery, a programme of activities based on free play and adult supported activities will be implemented. The programme design will ensure that there is opportunity for children to communicate with peers, nursery staff and other adults and visitors to the nursery. The children will also have experience of and opportunity to use gesture as a means of communication. For children who are experiencing delay, the nursery staff, after consultation with the SENCO/Principal and parents may use Makaton sign to support communication.

The nursery staff are aware that English may not be the first language of all the children and appreciate that in such cases the nursery will offer close support to that child.

### **Assessment**

Assessment will take the form of unobtrusive observations/photographs/records of children's conversations/comments. This will record the children's knowledge and understanding, attitudes and skills regarding language and communication. This will inform curriculum planning so that the needs of individual children are met.

### **Parents as Partners**

It is the policy of Ballycastle Integrated Primary School and Nursery Unit to encourage parents as partners in their child's education and to remind parents how crucial language and communication skills are to the child's development. It is therefore the policy of the nursery to:

- ❖ Encourage parents to foster an interest in books and reading with their children

Policy for Language Development updated April 2014  
Ballycastle Integrated Nursery Unit

- ❖ Encourage parents to become involved in the nursery lending library, storytelling sessions, and share other talents they have
- ❖ Use notice boards, newsletters and song and rhyme sheets to inform parents what is happening in nursery so that they can support their child at home