

Non-verbal communication in early years

Our spoken language makes up approximately 10% of our communication and the other 90% is done through our non-verbal language.

Think about the impact your non-verbal language has on your practice and the messages babies in your care are receiving through your non-verbal language.



Non-verbal communication/body language can include:

- Ways of talking (pauses, stress on words)
- Posture
- Appearance
- Head movements (nodding etc.)
- Hand movements (waving etc.)
- Eye movements
- Facial expressions (smiling, frowning etc.)
- Body contact
- Sounds.

Remember to think about the messages you may be giving through your non-verbal communication. Your body language may be the complete opposite of what is leaving your mouth e.g. saying you feel happy whilst slouched in a chair with a sad-looking face!

When supporting non-verbal children, you must think about the different ways in which you can give each child a voice in the setting:

- Think about having activity books with photos of all your resources so children can point to the ones they wish to play with or take outdoors etc.
- Use props during song time so children can select the prop for the song they wish to sing
- Use photographs of children and staff so they can choose who they are going to play with, sit next to, share a story with etc.
- Observe non-verbal children closely so you can pick up on signs or signals they use to communicate their needs and wishes.