



Communication

At Clare House we understand that good communication is integral to our roles as early years educators. We acknowledge the importance of developing our own skills to continually improve the effectiveness of our communication, with each other, with parents, with children and with members of our community.

Various aspects of speech language and communication are a regular focus for staff training. As a team we regularly reflect on the impact of our own personal and everyday communication, to ensure the effectiveness of all aspects of our policy and practice at Clare House. Effective communication is a theme that runs across most of our documentation and policies, the purpose of this document is not to repeat but to demonstrate how effective communication is an overriding principle in all aspects of our work.

Being an effective communicator

Communication impacts on our emotional, physical, social and intellectual well-being and it is therefore important for us to find ways to improve our skills to become as good at communicating as we can be. Whilst always striving to be an effective communicator we must also be mindful that communication comprises a complex range of skills which we use throughout our waking hours, and so we must always be sensitive to the challenges that this presents ourselves and others. At Clare House we understand that being mindful of the following will help us to become effective communicators;

- Communication is a two-way process, requiring a balance between listening and understanding and expressing and verbalising.
- We must allow time for communication and will allow a child at least 10 seconds to think and respond.
- When communicating it is important to get down to a child's level,
- Some people do not respond well to close eye contact and we need to be sensitive to a child's responses to this when communicating with them.
- Observing waiting and listening is an important aspect of communication
- When engaging with children we will mirror their actions and then comment, we will endeavour to listen/observe 70% and speak 30% of the time.
- We will not interrupt, or finish others sentences, doing this to children may limit their communication
- When communicating with young children we will ensure that most of our communication relates to the here and now and is relevant to the child's first-hand experiences.
- We will use actions gestures pointing and signs consistently to support verbal communication

- Where possible we will use tools such as objects pictures photographs and other images to support our verbal communication.
- Limiting the use of questions, and using comment based on shared experiences is an effective way of engaging with young children
- Commenting to reflect on shared experience builds confidence in communication.
- We will avoid the use of negative language and will use positive language when telling children what we want them to do
- Using words and simple short phrases to describe feelings and emotions helps to develop emotional literacy
- We will plan activities which encourage social interaction both verbal and non-verbal
- We will demonstrate and model the positive aspects of communication and ensure that children learn and understand that communication is enjoyable.

Communication within the staff team

As a team we understand that we are role models and therefore demonstrate effective and courteous communication at all times, and we do this through our open, honest and friendly approach with each other and to all those who we have contact with through our work. As a staff team we use many different methods of communicating with our colleagues, including spoken, written and word-processed text, we try to ensure that our messages are positive and clear and free from judgement or prejudice. Staff are expected to report the use of prejudiced, offensive or inappropriate communication as this will always be challenged if used within our setting or if linked with our work.

As a team we have undertaken training in various aspects of communication including
 Inclusive Communication
 Every Child a Talker
 Talk Boost

Communication with parents/carers

At Clare House we take pride in our open honest and compassionate communication with parents and we believe this to be a strength of our setting. We believe that the child's care and home life must be complimentary; whilst recognising that there may be considerable differences in the language and or style of communication used in the home environment. We will take time to understand these differences and will work with parents to enable their children to communicate well in both environments. Parents are always welcomed into our setting, and we work hard to ensure that they feel comfortable about approaching us for advice, information and support regarding their child's care and education. Staff will always make themselves available to have brief discussions with parents and will arrange informal meetings required by either key person or parents/carers at a time that suits both parties.

We work hard to keep parents fully informed about all aspects of their child's time with us.

- Informal and formal discussions
- Planned and informal meetings
- We use photographs alongside written documents to keep parents informed about events in the nursery

- Tapsetry
- Formal documents written documents including 2-year check
- Focus month sheets are completed and shared with parents and carers to fully involve them with their child's learning journey.
- When necessary, we contact parents by phone, email, text as appropriate at the time

All information about Clare House is made accessible to parents/carers. Where necessary we can have information translated to ensure it is accessible to parents.

We share general information with parents in the following ways

- Photos and job titles of all staff concerned with the care of their children.
- We have a setting website
- Notices posted are posted on our portal account giving advanced warning of events, meetings, holiday dates, closures or any changes to opening or closing times.
- We have regular newsletters for parents
- Current insurance and Ofsted registration certificates are displayed for parents.

Communication with children

Communication is central to our practice as carers and educators of young children. As previously stated we are committed to being effective role models in both the methods we use and the messages we convey. We work hard to ensure that our communication with each child is appropriate to their level of understanding and stage of development. We routinely use actions gestures and signs to ensure that our core messages are understood. The routine in each of our rooms is carefully planned to maximise all aspects of children's learning and development. We are particularly mindful of the challenges associated with transition times and give particular consideration to our communication at these times. We use a variety of documents to track children's speech language and communication development including the following....

Observations,

Birth to 5 matters

EYFS Development matters

2-year developmental check

6 monthly review and transition documents

Every child a talker ECAT monitoring tool

Home and pre-school communication profile

English as an additional language

At Clare House we understand that ...

The process of learning an additional language can take several years and is different for each bilingual child. For children entering a setting where a different language is spoken, it can take three months for them to begin to understand. It may take two years before they can hold a conversation and up to seven years to have full cognitive understanding of the new language (Reference Birth to Three Matters).

We will work hard to provide children who have EAL with speaking and listening opportunities to enable them to develop their skills at their own pace and readiness

We also know that ...

Young children learning one language at home and another at the setting/school need to use their home language as much as possible. Parents should be encouraged to speak their home language with their child. This builds a firm foundation for the second language. Without this foundation, both first and second language can be delayed or disrupted.

For families where English is an additional language, we are able to seek external support and translation services. We can also call on services which to the setting to work with children

For children who have English as an additional language we will work closely with their parents to understand the child's abilities and skills in their home language/languages

Speech Language and Communication needs (SLCN)

We know that in our setting many children whether due to age, ability, background or temperament may require more time, patience and understanding for the adult to recognise what they are trying to communicate.

We are aware that 'approximately 10% of all children have long-term speech, language and communication needs. In some areas of deprivation, more than 50% of children start school with SLCN. (Reference Public Health England)

Our experience tells us that speech language and communication needs can be both expressive and receptive so that children

- Might have speech that is difficult to understand
- They might struggle to say words or sentences
- They may not understand words that are being used, or the instructions they hear
- They may have difficulties knowing how to talk and listen to others in a conversation
- They may be distracted or not be able to give attention to those communicating with them

We are aware that some children may have a combination of these needs, and these can also be combined with other diagnosed learning difficulties or autistic spectrum conditions. We make provision to meet all children's needs please refer to our Equalities / SEND policy.

Communication and language is a prime aspect of the EYFS and we recognise the central importance of communication when meeting different needs. We therefore ensure that our planned interventions for any individual children will always include an aspect of communication development.

In our setting we observe children carefully to identify those who may have a speech language or communication need. We use a variety of assessment tools to identify and then monitor children's speech and language development. These include

Birth to 5 Matters
EYFS Development matters
ECAT monitoring tool
Communication profiles
Our own curriculum

We use a variety of strategies and interventions to support children who have speech language and communication needs. The strategies we use we have learned through our training and we have also gained knowledge through experience of working alongside professionals including speech and language therapists and our Area SENCO. We plan individual small and large group communication focussed activities to support children to develop their communication skills.

Inclusive communication

All children will use and develop non-verbal communication skills before learning to speak, it is therefore important that adults recognise and acknowledge all forms of non-verbal communication which includes movement, actions, gestures including pointing, body language, facial expression, sign language, behaviour and social interaction. Objects pictures symbols and other images may also be used to support both verbal and non-verbal communication. We use Inclusive Communication strategies in our setting

At Clare House staff are trained in using signs and gestures. We use Inclusive communication strategies which means using non-verbal strategies alongside spoken language. Staff are trained to use signs and gestures, as well as objects photographs and symbols to complement and enhance verbal communication. The purpose of this is to enhance children's understanding of spoken messages and to act as a role model to help children to learn both verbal and non-verbal skills.

For some children who have speech language and communication needs we can help them to use alternative and augmentative (Inclusive Communication) as their main method of communicating. We recognise that for some children this will be their main and possibly only way of communicating.

We understand that the environment can impact on children's communication we take time and care to create a communication friendly environment. When organising our learning spaces, we pay particular attention to creating spaces for communication. We plan activities to encourage and enable social interaction on a daily basis.

We undertake regular Environmental Audits to reflect upon the effectiveness of Inclusive communication within our setting.

Communication with professionals

We work with professionals across all paediatric services in both the statutory and non-statutory sectors. We have regular face to face meetings with our local health visitors and the Area SENCO team. Where necessary we communicate with professionals via telephone, video call, and email. Parents are always informed when communication is about their

child, we adhere to all data protection legislation with regards to the recording and storage of personal written information.

Communication with the wider community

Information about our setting can be found on our website. We welcome interest and enquiries from the wider community.

To find out more about our setting please go to our website

<https://www.clarehouse.org.uk>

References

<https://www.unicef.org/parenting/child-care/9-tips-for-better-communication>

<https://birthto5matters.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Understanding-the-steps-of-learning-for-children-with-EAL-in-the-Early-Years-21.3.17.pdf>

<https://www.icancharity.org.uk/about-slcni/>

<https://speechandlanguage.org.uk/>

<https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk>

<https://www.foundationyears.org.uk>

<https://www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/>

[Public Health England Document](#)