Little Wandle Foundations

BUILDING THE FOUNDATIONS FOR LANGUAGE, LITERACY AND LEARNING



Foundations for Language

Parent workshop

Little Wandle Foundations

Early experiences affect the development of brain architecture, which provides the foundation for all future learning, behaviour, and health ...

Centre on the Developing Child, Harvard University

When do you talk with your child?







Foundations for Language

Our setting has chosen to use the **Little Wandle Foundations for Language** programme to give every child the best possible start at school.

We build the foundations for children to succeed in communication and language in Reception.

We do this by using Little Wandle's approach to developing language.



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Communication and language is:
being able to speak, pay attention, listen and understand.
It underpins all other areas of learning.

What is typical language for a Nursery child?

Three- and four-year-old children:

- love stories, songs and rhymes and want lots of them
- love new words and want you to explain what they mean
- understand ‘why’ questions
- might make mistakes with word endings, for example, saying ‘runned’ or ‘goed’
- speak in longer sentences of four to six words.



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Back-and-forth interactions are:
when a child and an adult take multiple turns to talk, listen, ask questions and respond appropriately.

How do we have back-and-forth interactions?

In our setting, we train staff to use a range of **evidence-based techniques** that have been shown to develop language.

Let's look at some of these techniques. You can use them at home, too.



Tune in

Before you talk to your child, take time to **watch** them and **think** about what they are doing and are interested in at that moment.

For example, if your child is playing on their own, watch them and wait for them to speak.

This way**,** they can **start the interaction** and you can **follow their lead**. Children are more likely to continue to talk, if they speak first**.**



Make links

Link what a child is doing to something you have already done with them, or will do soon.

For example, ‘That dog is like the big one we saw at the park the other day. They’ve got the same floppy ears!’

This way, your child builds up their **vocabulary** and their **knowledge of the world**, and develops their understanding of **past and future tense**.

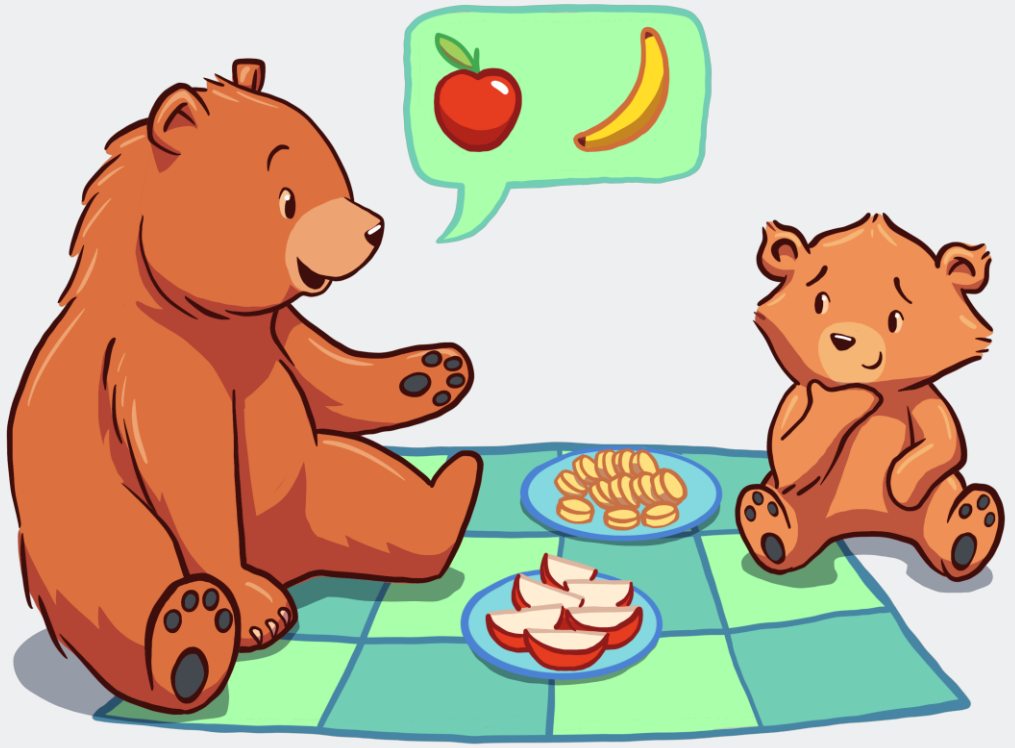


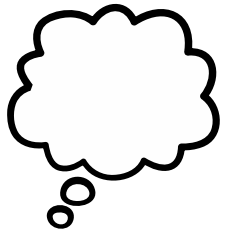
Give choices

Rather than asking a closed question, give your child **two options**.

For example, instead of ‘Would you like a snack?’, you could ask ‘Would you like some crunchy carrots or some cool cucumber?’

This way your child **hears more language** and can **copy it** from you.





Prompt their thinking

Help to **extend your child's thinking** by asking them an open question or by starting a question with 'I wonder … '.

For example, 'I wonder what would happen if you pour more water in the cup?'

This way your child **tries new things** or **thinks about things in a different way**.



Main takeaways

- Research tells us that the way we talk to Nursery-aged children shapes their brains.
- **Little Wandle Foundations for Language** helps our team use back-and-forth interactions to develop children's language.
- You can help at home by:
  - talking to your child lots
  - tuning in before you interact
  - making links to what they have done or will do soon
  - giving them choices
  - prompting their thinking by asking 'I wonder ...' questions.

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Nothing matters more than stopping, listening and responding positively to the young child.

Julie Fisher