# Social Communication Developmental Milestones

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Social Communication</th>
<th>Strategies to develop social communication</th>
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| Up to 6 months | - Beginning to respond to familiar adults' voice.  
- Show an interest in looking at faces, particularly when being spoken to.  
- Vocalises differently to indicate happiness and unhappiness. | - **Universally Speaking (Birth to 5)**  
- Make eye contact when speaking to your child.  
- Play 'peek-a-boo' or similar games. |
| By 1 year    | - Imitating sounds (babbling).  
- Copying actions such as blowing raspberries and clapping hands.  
- Anticipates and shares enjoyment playing a people game together such as 'peek-a-boo'. | - **Universally Speaking (Birth to 5)**  
- Respond to your child's attempts to communicate. |
| By 18 months | - Pointing towards items of interest and back to the adult to show and share the enjoyment. | - **Universally Speaking (Birth to 5)**  
- Watch and comment on what your child is doing.  
- Engage in activities together such as looking at a picture book or playing ‘ready, steady, go’ type games. |
| By 2 years | • Communicating primarily with words supported by other means including gestures and pointing.  
  • Able to shift their attention from a toy to a person when playing.  
  • Begin to show an awareness of their own feelings and the feelings of others. |
|------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|            | • **Universally Speaking (Birth to 5)**  
  • Watch and comment on what your child is doing.  
  • Engage in activities together such as looking at a picture book or playing 'ready, steady, go' type games. |
| By 3 years | • Joining in play with other children and beginning to engage in more spontaneous pretend play.  
  • Able to take turns in conversations although they may find it difficult to stay on topic. |
|            | • **Universally Speaking (Birth to 5)**  
  • Engage in conversations with your child and use more comments rather than questions. |
| By 4 years | • Share toys with other children.  
  • Take turns in games without assistance from an adult.  
  • Initiate and join in play with other children.  
  • Engage in imaginative play and role play.  
  • Able to use language for different social reasons such as greeting, commenting, asking questions. |
|            | • **Universally Speaking (Birth to 5)**  
  • Play games that encourage turn taking such as ‘Pop Up Pirate’ or ‘Buckaroo’. Take turns with other activities such as blowing bubbles, building a tower from bricks or posting shapes/pictures.  
  • Encourage imaginative play by providing your child with dress up clothes or toys for example toy food and plates to play at working in a restaurant. |
| By 5 years | • Choose their own friends and begin to develop friendships.  
  • Take on different roles within imaginative play. |
| Between 5-11 years | • Able to take turns in group conversations.  
• Beginning to demonstrate an understanding of jokes, sarcasm and metaphors.  
• Join in and organise role play with friends.  
• Adapts their language and interaction skills with different people in different social situations with some adult guidance.  
• Able to communicate about their own and other people’s feelings. | • **Universally Speaking (5-11)**  
• Explicitly teach behaviours necessary to engage in group work or conversations including waiting for a turn to speak, listening to other pupils, commenting and asking questions.  
• Social stories can be used to teach some pupils about appropriate communication in different situations.  
• Identify pupils within the class group who are willing to help and could act as “buddies” or a circle of friends to help develop peer relationships. |
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| Between 11-16 years | • Adapts their language to suit the situation and/or the listener independently.  
• Able to negotiate with friends to resolve conflicts.  
• Understands sarcasm and uses slang terms within their speech. | • **Universally Speaking (11-16)**  
• Explicitly teach behaviours necessary to engage in group work or conversations including waiting for a turn to speak, listening to other pupils, commenting and asking questions.  
• Social stories can be used to teach some pupils about appropriate communication in different situations.  
• Identify pupils within the class group who are willing to help and could act as “buddies” or a circle of friends to help develop peer relationships. |

Social Communication skills not present in 2 age categories below their actual age e.g. not initiating, joining in play or sharing toys with other children at 6 years  
Social Communication skills not present in 1 age category below their actual age e.g. not taking on different roles within imaginative role play or beginning to develop friendships at 6 years  
Social communication skills are age appropriate