Communication friendly environments – checklist

You can use this simple checklist to think about how your environment supports children’s communication.

Elements to consider

- **Space, light and layout**
  - Is there good light, with a comfortable temperature and not too many visual distractions

- **Noise levels**
  - Are noise levels conducive to learning – what can be done to minimise unnecessary noise?

- **Use of visual support, this may include**
  - A colour coded map of school or setting, colour coded directions, photographs of staff members, photographs/symbols used to support routines, e.g. washing hands, getting ready for PE
  - Visual timetables used for daily/weekly activities
  - Objects, pictures and symbols used to teach vocabulary, to make stories more active and support engagement in other lessons
  - Displays are used throughout school or setting to support learning

- **Adults who can prioritise communication, this may include adults who**
  - Have knowledge of language development.
  - Understand the language levels of the children and the language demands in the environment.
  - Can adapt their language so it is not a barrier to learning or communication.
  - Give children strategies to say when they don’t understand

- **Routines**
  - Are children aware of rules and expectations?
  - Do they know daily routines; could these be supported visually?
  - Are children given opportunities within lessons to say when they don’t understand?
  - Are they explicitly taught how to listen, how to work together in groups?
  - Are there opportunities for children to interact and use language in different situations, with different people at an appropriate level?