**Raising awareness of language and communication skills in the classroom**

*An activity for younger students*

Aim: to raise awareness of the importance of language and communication skills and Developmental Language Disorder.

**Instructions to be read to students**

“Communication involves speaker and listening. Messages go back and forth between the speaker and listener. Sometimes things can go wrong. The listener’s job is to let the speaker know when they have not understood.

I am going to read you some instructions. Your task is to listen and do what I say. The trick is that some of the instructions will be hard to follow. When you notice that I give you an instruction that you can’t understand put your hand up. We will then talk about what I could have done to help you understand”.

**“Everyone, stand up”.**

**“Close one eye”.**

*(Speak in an almost inaudible voice)* “**Cover your left ear with your left hand”.**

*This should lead to some discussion about volume. Summarise the discussion with ‘I should have spoken at the right volume’ and write this on the board.*

**“With your right hand touch your left patella”.**

*‘Patella’ is kneecap, so this should lead to discussion about vocabulary. Summarise the discussion with ‘I should have used words/vocabulary that you could understand’ and write this on the board.*

**“Clap your hands three times”.**

**“Before you touch your toes, but after you touch your head, touch your shoulders and your knees”.**

*This should lead to discussion about amount of information and order. This is ‘heads, shoulders knees and toes’. Summarise the discussion with ‘I should have used shorter sentences in the right order’ and write this on the board.*

**“Rub your tummy with your right hand”.**

*(Do not point when you read this)* “**Now make sure you are looking very closely at that over there”**.

*This should lead to discussion about what words the listener needs and also the use of gesture to support talking. Summarise the discussion with ‘I should have used the words that helped you and pointed too’ and write this on the board.*

On the board you should now have:

* right volume
* words others can understand,
* short sentences,
* in the right order, using words the listener needs and using gesture

(Or words to that effect).

Either in small groups or as a whole class children take in turns giving instructions to each other. The listeners give feedback against the ‘good speaking rules’ written on the board. For instance: ‘you used a good volume and gesture, but I did not know which finger is my index finger.’

Once completed bring the class back together and talk about how as a group they can remember how to be better speakers and listeners.

Optional extra:

Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) is a condition which makes it hard to talk and understand.

Play the video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rwOfkj0dj\_0 for students to gain a greater insight into DLD.