Dr Cassie & Associates
Speech and Language Therapy

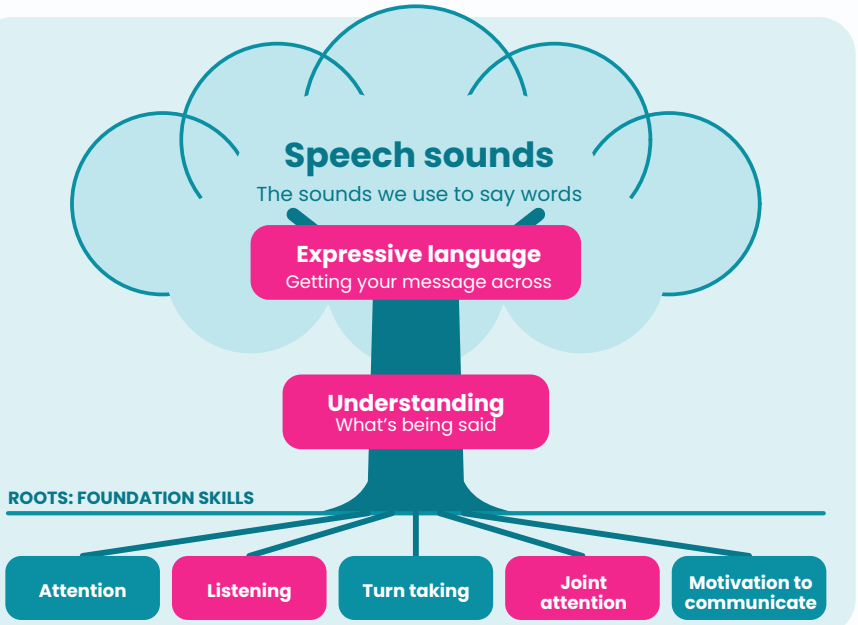
Dr. Cassie & Associates
ASD | ADHD | OT | SaLT | Dyslexia

How Communication Develops

FACT SHEET

Communicationis howweconnect with others, share ourthoughts and feelings, express our needsandwants, andmakesense ofthe world around us.

For children, communication is a skill that develops over time. It starts long before their first words, through looking, listening, gestures, facial expressions, sounds, play and interactions with others. Gradually, children learn to understand messages, share their own ideas and use words and language to communicate with the people around them. These skills grow step by step, a bit like a tree. The skills we can see and hear, like words and sentences, depend on strong roots underneath.



How the parts interact

Thedifferent parts of the treegrow together, rather than one at a time. Strong roots support understanding, and understanding helps a child know what to say. Clear speech sounds help children express their ideas so that others can understand them. A wobble in one part of the tree can show up in another. So, when we think about a child's communication profile, we look at the child's skills across the whole tree.

The world around the tree

To growand flourish,trees need a suitable environment. The people around a child are like soil, water and sunlight: communication partners who listen, wait and respond, and everyday opportunities to chat, play and share, to support communication development.

Means, reasons and opportunities

Childrenneedthemeans,reasonsandopportunitiestocommunicate. Small, everyday interactions can make a big difference.

MEANS
How we communicate

There are many different means a child may use to communicate, including facial expression, signing and pointing. You can help by:

- Getting down to your child's level so you can share the moment together.
- Using simple language and adding a word or two to what your child says.
- Sharing books, songs and rhymes.
- Using gestures, facial expressions and actions alongside your words.

REASONS
Why we communicate

We communicate for many different reasons, including commenting, requesting, refusing and expressing feelings. You can help by:

- Following your child's lead and joining in with what interests them.
- Commenting on what is happening rather than asking lots of questions.
- Offering choices and creating little opportunities for your child to communicate.
- Making everyday activities fun and interesting to share.

OPPORTUNITIES
When, where and with whom

Creating chances for children to communicate. Children need time, space and supportive people around them to practise and develop communication.

- Pausing and waiting. Give your child time to respond in their own way.
- Building communication into everyday routines, play and activities.
- Enjoying back-and-forth games, songs and interactions.
- Making sure children can communicate with different people in different situations, such as family, friends and familiar adults.
- Reducing distractions and background noise, such as the television.

When to seek advice

www.drcassie.co.uk

Every child developsat their own pace, but if you have concerns about any aspect of your child's communication, it is worth seeking advice. To find out more about our speech and language therapy service, please see the QR code. **You know your child best. Trust your instincts and don't be afraid to ask for help.**

Scan here to visit our website

Based on the Means, Reasons and Opportunities model (Money and Thurman, 1994; Money, 2002)