

How to... Use balloons to support your child's communication

We can support our child's communication using toys we have at school and at home. Children learn best through play and games. Below are some ideas of how to support and encourage your child's receptive and expressive language using balloons.

Creating opportunities to communicate

Balloons can be used as a highly motivating game. To do this we can put our balloon somewhere the child can see but cannot reach so that they need to communicate with you to get it. They can do this by pointing and we can point and say 'balloon', if the child is using one word to request the balloon for example 'balloon' we can say 'I want balloon'.

Making choices

Choices are an important way to teach communication and independence. We can hold up two coloured balloons and say, "shall we do the yellow balloon or the red balloon?" the child will then make their choice verbally or non-verbally by pointing, looking, or saying. If the child is more able, we can say "shall we do big balloon or small balloon?" or "shall we do fast blow or slow?".



Anticipation games

We entice the child to come over and see what motivating toy we have, e.g. "come and have a look, I've got a balloon lets blow it up together" We then say "one...two...three..." to engage the child and elongate attention span, we then leave a pause for the children to independently communicate 'go' this can be through smiling pointing or saying 'go'. We respond and say "...Blow" and do the action, this teaches them that communication is two ways, they ask for something and we respond. We can then let the balloon go and see it whizz around the room. We then say, "shall we do more" and repeat.