Readiness to Learn at School
Communication and General Knowledge

What is it?
Communication is the ability to clearly communicate your needs and to understand others (i.e., both talking and listening). General knowledge is an interest in the outside world.

Why is it important?
Children who can communicate well, as both listeners and talkers, and who are curious to learn about the world around them, are children who are prepared to succeed—at school and throughout life.

What can I do to build my child's communication skills and curiosity?
Your child is constantly watching and learning from you. This makes you your child's first and best teacher. But you don't need to teach "a lesson"—just look for teachable moments. Start by watching your child. See what he or she is doing, then join in. Children learn by playing, so have fun and be confident that how you are being—attentive, curious, and a good listener—is what they are learning from you, day after day, and this is the best way to ensure your child enjoys school and is successful throughout life. For ideas on strengthening your child's communication skills and curiosity in the outside world, try some of the activities on this tip sheet. Although these activities are grouped into three ages (see footprints below) they may be suitable for children of different ages.

INFANT   **TODDLER**   **PRESCHOOLER**

When holding your baby, respond to what she or he does—if she giggles, you giggle; if he smiles, you smile. Pitch your voice high and low as you make different facial expressions.

Take your child for a walk outdoors. Talk about what you see (e.g., "There's a fire truck, a red fire truck.")

Put a variety of safe and interesting things near your baby (e.g., touch-and-feel books, a child's mirror, a colourful mobile). Describe to your baby what he or she is seeing and touching.

Record the sounds your baby makes and then play them back, while describing the sounds (e.g., "That's your happy sound.")

Play "Name that Thing": Wherever you are, name the items you see around you and your baby.

Read to your baby or child every day and talk about the pictures and the story.

*To download a copy of this tip sheet, visit **www.fsca.ca***

Readiness to Learn at School
Communication and General Knowledge

While reading your toddler's favourite storybook, change or remove some of the most important words in the story. Do it in a fun and obvious way so that your child will catch on and then provide you with the original story line.

Play "What's your Favourite…?"—Take turns asking each other questions, such as "What's your favourite colour?", "What's your favourite animal?" and so on.

Look at family photo albums with your child and talk about the pictures (e.g., "I wonder what Aunt Sue is drinking?" "Grandpa has no shoes on!").

Find time every day to have a conversation with your child, where you give him or her your complete and undivided attention.

Listen to what interests your child and then follow his or her lead. If your child likes animals, go to the library and get some books on animals. Then visit a pet store, the zoo or a farm. Draw pictures and label the different animals.

Put an item that will make a distinct sound into two matching containers (e.g., two containers with dry rice and two with water). Let your child shake the containers and match the sounds.

Take a trip to the library and let your child choose some books. Get a library card for both you and your child. The library staff will be happy to recommend age-appropriate books. Talk about the pictures and story with your toddler (e.g., "What does that animal do?" or "What do you think will happen next?")

Take a walk to your local park and have a scavenger hunt, looking for various items in nature (e.g., pine needles, leaves and so on). When you come home, place them all in a scrapbook and label the items you found together.

Tell your child stories—about the birds outside, his or her toys and stuffed animals, or what you plan to do that day.

*To download a copy of this tip sheet, visit **www.fsca.ca***

Red Deer UEY — Understanding The Early Years

FAMILY SERVICES of Central Alberta

parentLINKcentre

Village Gate Parent Link Centre

Canada