

**The Communication Chain**

**Communication is a complex process. A child with communication difficulties may struggle with one or more of the elements of communication.**

**Let’s consider the skills needed to communicate:**

Have ideas and decide what to say

**Expressive**

**Language**

**Receptive**

**Language**

Speak fluently

**We call this the Communication Chain. Communication is a two-way process, combining receptive and expressive language skills.**

Speak

fluently

**The Receptive Language side of the Communication Chain requires a child to:**

* **Look at the person speaking and attend to what is being said**
* **Interpret non-verbal communication e.g. facial expressions, gestures and body language**
* **Listen to what is being said and how it is being said**
* **Remember what has been said (auditory memory)**
* **Understand words (semantics) and sentence structure (syntax) e.g. vocabulary, grammar, word order**
* **Understand the meaning of language, both literal and non-literal e.g. sarcasm, jokes, idioms**

**The Expressive Language side of the Communication Chain requires a child to:**

* **Have ideas and decide what to say**
* **Choose the words (semantics) to use and plan the words so that they make appropriate sentences (syntax/grammar), using the relevant vocabulary in a grammatically correct way**
* **Consider the impact the communication will have on others and**

**its appropriateness e.g. *will I upset my friend if I say……***

* **Modify the message so that it achieves its purpose**
* **Select the sounds needed to form the words in the message**

**(phonology)**

* **Articulate the sounds so that their speech is clear to others**
* **Speak fluently and confidently**
* **Self-monitor so that they know, for example, when to stop speaking, whether the listener is interested in what they have said, whether they need to elaborate or explain.**