

Series Overview

Come along and explore all the ways we can communicate and play! In this series we explore multiple ways people and animals communicate, connect, play and engage with others. Over these episodes we explore using our voice, body, face and symbols to share messages. We explore simple words in other languages, including Spanish, Hindi and French – touching on how different languages can be used in play.

Come along and join Sofya, Alex, Abi, Leah, Teo, Matthew, Kaeng and some special guests as we *connect and play*.

Episode 1

Sofya, Alex and Abi communicate through symbols. They send messages using emojis and practice sign language to communicate through [Auslan](#). Alex explores mime artists performing in the city and we follow two children going a puppet show ‘Through the Windows’.

Learning about how our face and facial expressions can communicate feelings and intentions is an important social skill for children. Emojis often accentuate these expressions and so can be a good way to talk about emotions and how we can communicate through facial expressions.

Follow up ideas:

- Use paper plates and scraps of paper to create your own set of emojis. Use this collage experience for children to talk about their own emotions and what can make them feel a certain way, inside and out. Regular discussions like this help to build children’s emotional literacy.
- With a partner, children can draw a face representing an emotion then take turns to act out the emotion. Swap drawings, then children can try acting out each other’s expression.

Link to EYLF Outcomes including; 1.3, 3.1, 5.3 and 5.4.



Dramatic play is an important way to build social skills and an opportunity for children to “practice” new ways of communicating. In the episode we see drama through mime and as two girls visit a theatre to watch a puppet show. Put on a show of your own, complete with tickets, a program and of course acting out a drama!

- Use mime to act out simple messages or play a simple game of charades (e.g. acting out a meal you’re eating and trying to guess the meal).
- Act out a familiar story or book, creating a show for your friends, family or toys. Don’t forget to make a program and tickets for your audience!

Link to EYLF Outcomes including; 5.1, 4.3, 4.4.

Episode 2

Join Leah and Teo as they make puppets, control a robot and go on a crazy ride into space. In this episode we explore sending a video message and using our voice, face and body to communicate.

Follow up ideas:

- Use upcycled materials to create your own puppets! Educators can ask families to bring in suitable materials for children to use as part of this creative project (boxes, socks, paper bags, containers etc).
- Imagine what might be found on an adventure into space. Children could draw and describe what they might see, hear or feel!

Episode 2 continued

The told story in this episode is called 'Buster the Cockatoo'. It explores how the volume and tone of communication effects how others might relate to us. We also see Leah and Teo experiment with the sounds or tones that various instruments make.

- Experiment with the pitch, volume and tone or timbre (musical quality) of instruments. You could use handmade instruments to do this. For example:
 - Explore volume and timbre with a shaker made from a clean bottle ¼ filled with stale rice or dried legumes.
 - Make a water xylophone to explore volume and pitch – use a teaspoon to gently tap the side of glasses filled with water at different levels.
- Make a pretend remote control from recycled materials, using an old bottle top as a volume knob. Then children can practice turning their (or a friend's) volume or speed up or down. This can be a great activity to explore while reading a familiar book, investigating how volume or pace can change the meaning or feeling of a story.

Link to EYLF Outcomes including; 4.2, 4.3, 4.4 and 5.3

Episode 3

Alex and Matt help us explore how animals communicate and connect in this episode. With the help of a special guest (Elphie, the beautiful Border Collie) we look at how animals use their bodies and movement to communicate. As we look 'Through the Windows', we continue to explore animal connections – this time with Toby as he explains how his sheep dogs carry out special duties on his farm.



Follow up ideas:

- Encourage children to pretend to be a favourite animal – how could children use their body to communicate like that animal? Visit the ABC Kids Early Education collection of 'Through the Windows' [Sustainability and Nature](#) videos for added inspiration.
- Check out Play School's [Going Wild](#) series (ep 1.) and see Sean Choolburra performing some wonderfully expressive Australian animal movements unique to Aboriginal culture.
- Listen to ABC Kids Listen's [Noisy by Nature](#) to find out about some of Australia's most weird and wonderful creatures! Use these episodes to inspire more animal movement and dramatic play experiences.
- In this episode, we discover how Elphie the dog communicated with the farmer and rounded up the sheep – encourage children to brainstorm other ways a cat, a fish or another favourite animal might communicate.
- Make an animal tail using an old pair of tights stuffed with newspaper. Attach this to clothes (a safety pin or ribbon belt can be a good way to do this). Experiment with how your tail can move and have some fun like Matt and Alex did in the story.

Link to EYLF Outcomes including; 4.1, 4.3, 4.4, 5.5.

Episode 4

In this episode we explore connecting to written messages and signs. Alex and Leah visit the library, make a book for Humpty and then Leah and Humpty follow a treasure hunt of messages to find a special party.

Written text helps us communicate and connect in many ways, e.g. we see signs to categorise books with a specific genre or text type in the library. Recognising that written text conveys a message is an important pre-reading skill. Taking time to point out the shared meaning is important. You can do this in many ways, e.g. writing shopping lists together or talking about signs and print in your environment (such as road signs, billboards and street signs). Talking about text together with children can be fun and playful.

Follow up ideas:

- Go on a sign hunt! Where do you see signs in your everyday life (e.g. at the library, supermarket, while driving in the car, or around your early learning setting, or while out on an excursion)? Take photos as you go, then recall the meaning of signs when you get back.
- Hunt through books you have at home or in the library and look for different text types, e.g. a factual information book, a fictional story book – or even hunt for a dinosaur counting book like little ted!
- Make a scrap book of favourite recipes. This is a great way to think about instructions and a good chance to talk about “every day” and “treat” foods.

Link to EYLF Outcomes including; 3.2, 4.2 and 4.3.

‘Through the Windows’, Leon made a wildlife video. He used toys in a playground to create environments for different animals and shared “fun facts” about nature as he played. Digital stories can be a great way to communicate, connect and play.



For our youngest children not yet writing or reading, recording video or taking photos can be a great way to share stories, ideas and facts. Leon uses a camera on a phone – but this could just as easily have been a toy camera, or a home-made phone.

- Use your toys and create habitats for them outside, take photos or video to share with friends or family.
- Use technology such as book creator apps or word processing programs to make a book for a friend, toy or family member. What messages, images or photos will you include? You could be like Leon and share some “fun facts” about an interesting animal, place, character or person.



Episode Five

Kaeng and Leah welcome a special guest, [Ty King-Wall](#) from the Australian Ballet, to explore how we can use our bodies to connect and communicate. Ty demonstrates some ballet movements and explains the French words to label and describe each movement. Ballet and other forms of dance often use movement and gesture to tell a story. We see some children sharing their [Bhangra](#) dance in the beautiful Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney.

Where do you connect through dance in your life? Do you do a happy dance when something good happens or perhaps a dance from your culture? Dance is also a great way to be physically active and to build fundamental movement skills.

Follow up ideas:

- Research some traditional dances from your culture or a region you're interested in. See if you can copy some of the moves.
- You can access joyful music for Bhangra dancing online (just search 'Bhangra music').
- Explore how different music makes you feel, perhaps finding some happy music, or music that helps you calm down.
- Invite children to invent some special dance moves and suggest children teach them to a friend or one of their toys. Ask children; *What will you call your dance move? Can you draw a picture of it?* Try making a slow-motion video as children dance so they can revisit and explain the special move afterwards.
- In this episode's story, Josephine the kangaroo loved to dance ('Josephine Wants To Dance' By Jackie French). Encourage children to imagine how different animals might dance. Children can bring their animal dances to life with music or a beat tapped out with instruments, children in the audience can guess what animals are moving and grooving!

Link to EYLF Outcomes including; 2.1, 4.1 and 5.3.



Kaeng and Leah use music to inspire a painting and then use a tablet and puppets to create a digital art story. Here we see how art can be used to share a story or idea. They create an art gallery and take Jemima and Kiya to see the artworks. There are many ways you could extend on this idea, maybe exploring different art forms or looking at creating art that is influenced by music.

Follow up ideas:

- Use a phone or tablet and video record a simple puppet show or use the ABC Kids [Play School Art Maker](#) app and create a movie with your favourite Play School characters.
- Use time-lapse mode to video record the process of making an artwork. This is a great way to revisit making an artwork, while also creating an interesting piece of digital content.
- Have a go at setting up your own Art Gallery! Children can collect some of their artwork and curate an exhibition at home or in your early learning setting. Include different types of art (such as sculpture, drawings, paintings). Investigate what else is included in an art exhibition, e.g. ways to frame and display, name and date of artwork, artist profiles, writing little stories to explain the meaning of the artwork. Check some of the online galleries at the [National Gallery of Australia](#) to find out more.