



Speech, Language & Communication Handbook

Contents

- Why support early communication and language?
- Language acquisition
- Tools and resources
- Information to share with parents
- Making referrals


**Why support early
communication
and language with
0-3 year olds?**

Babies are primed communicators but need adult help -They show a preference to gaze at a human face and can reciprocate some facial expressions from birth. A study by Moon et al (2012) has suggested that babies as young as 30 hours old can differentiate between vowels heard in their native language and foreign vowel sounds.

Supporting parents to develop the best home environment can have a huge impact on future learning- A study carried out by Holmes and Kiernan (2013) found that children who were read to regularly scored highly in their cognitive functioning, other benefits included an increased ability to regulate their behavior. Other favourable findings that arise from developing early communication skills include improved logic and reasoning skills (Taggart et al. 2006)

Signs of the need for support are there early- research into early life experiences on later outcomes have suggested that by 22 months a child's development can be used to predict their outcomes in adulthood with poverty and economic deprivation being cited as considerable barriers to development. (Feinsten, 2003, Blanden and Machin, 2010)

By 2 years old -75% of brain growth has occurred. Neural pathways that are not used will fall away as part of the natural pruning system involved in brain functioning.



Without effective help, a third of children with speech, language and communication difficulties will need treatment for mental health problems in adult life

More than half of children starting nurseries in socially deprived areas in England have delayed language

Vocabulary at age 5 is a strong predictor of academic achievement

7-10% of children in the UK have language and communication difficulties

Facts and figures taken from Gascoigne MT (ed) 2012 Better communication – shaping speech, language and communication services for children and young people. London: RCSLT.

Adults are a powerful role model to facilitate communication. Infant directed speech, observed when adults and older children change their pitch, intonation and facial gestures when communicating to infants has been shown to have demonstrable impact on language acquisition. This is particularly influential when coupled with quality interaction, examples of this include adults tuning into children's interests and responding to non-verbal cues such as pointing and eye gaze (Giknikoff et al. 2015)



For a child to talk, they must have something to say, the opportunity to say it, and the encouragement and satisfaction to make the effort worthwhile.

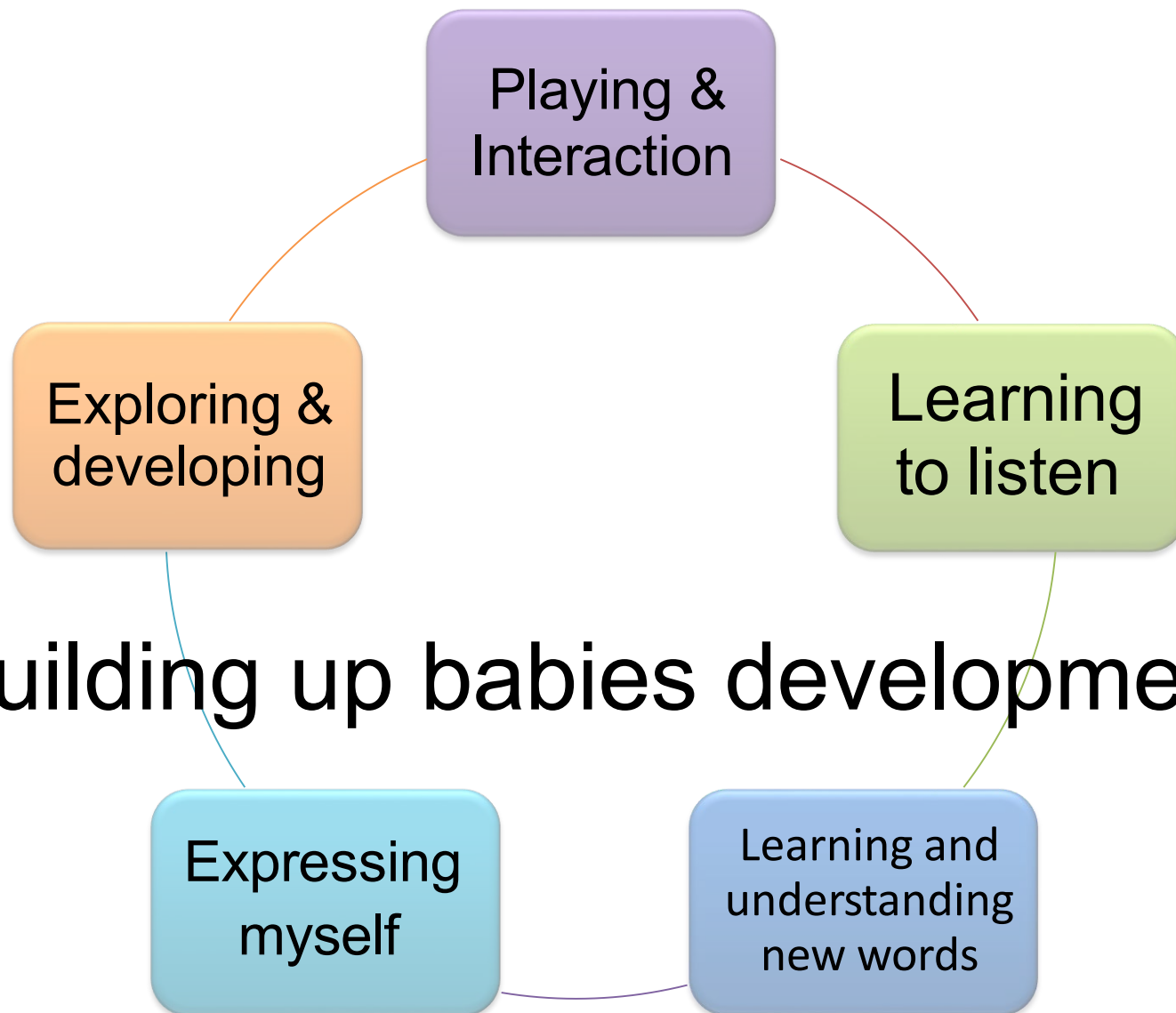
A 2 year old child whose parents talk to them frequently, compared to babies parents who rarely speak to them, have up to 300 more words.



**How do children
acquire the skills they
need for
communication and
language?**

Communication Triangle



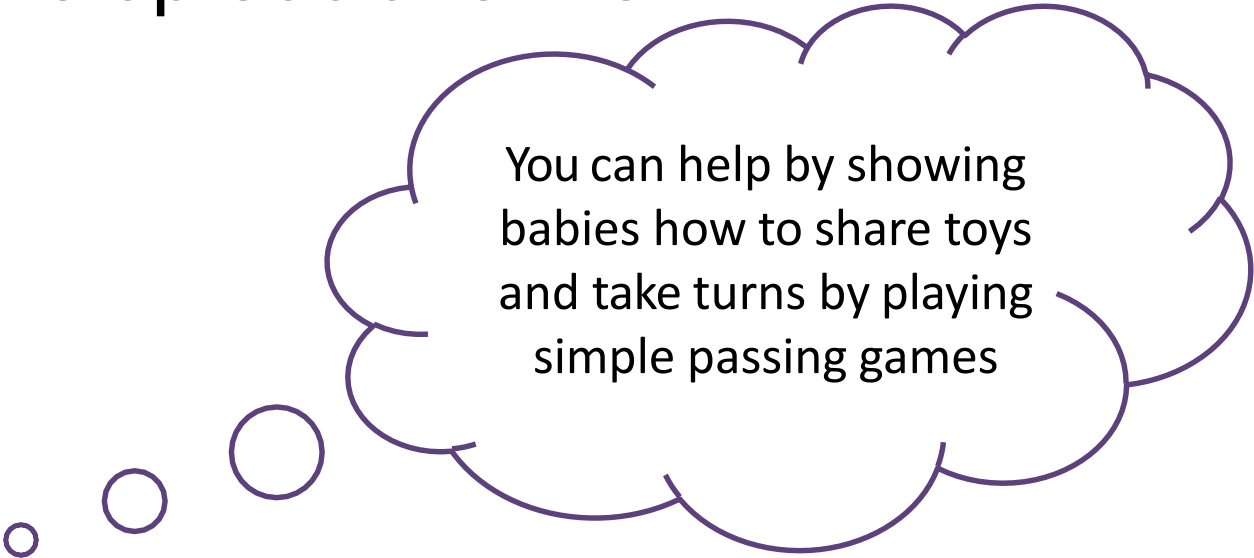


Building up babies development

Paying attention & listening **Understanding what is said** **Learning new words**

Playing & Interacting

- Through play and interaction babies learn about the world around them. They learn how people communicate with each other and develop social skills.

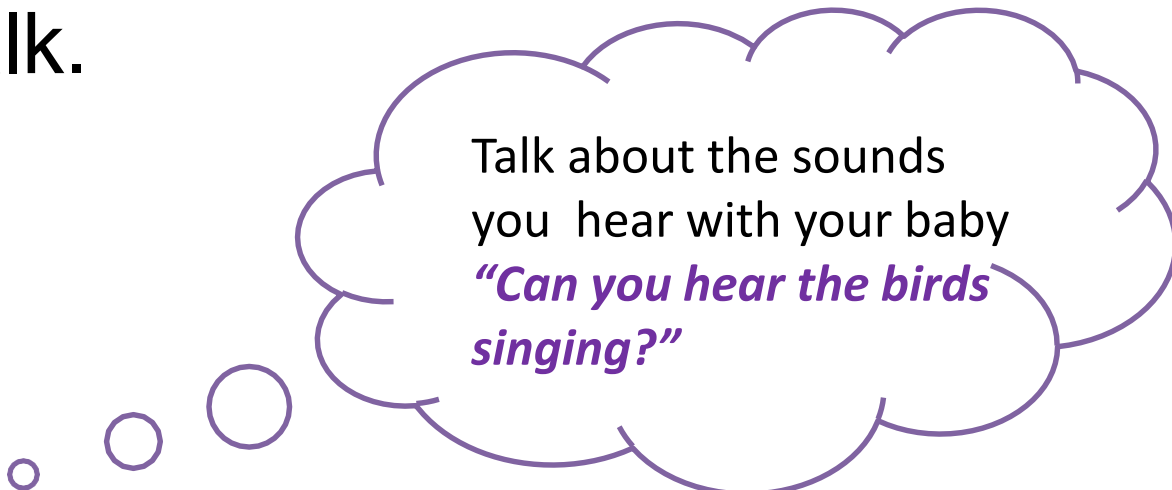


You can help by showing babies how to share toys and take turns by playing simple passing games



Learning to listen

- Babies and toddlers need to learn how to listen. They need to tune in to everyday sounds like washing machines, traffic, birds, dogs barking or rain on the window...
- Next, they will tune in to speech sounds and begin to talk.

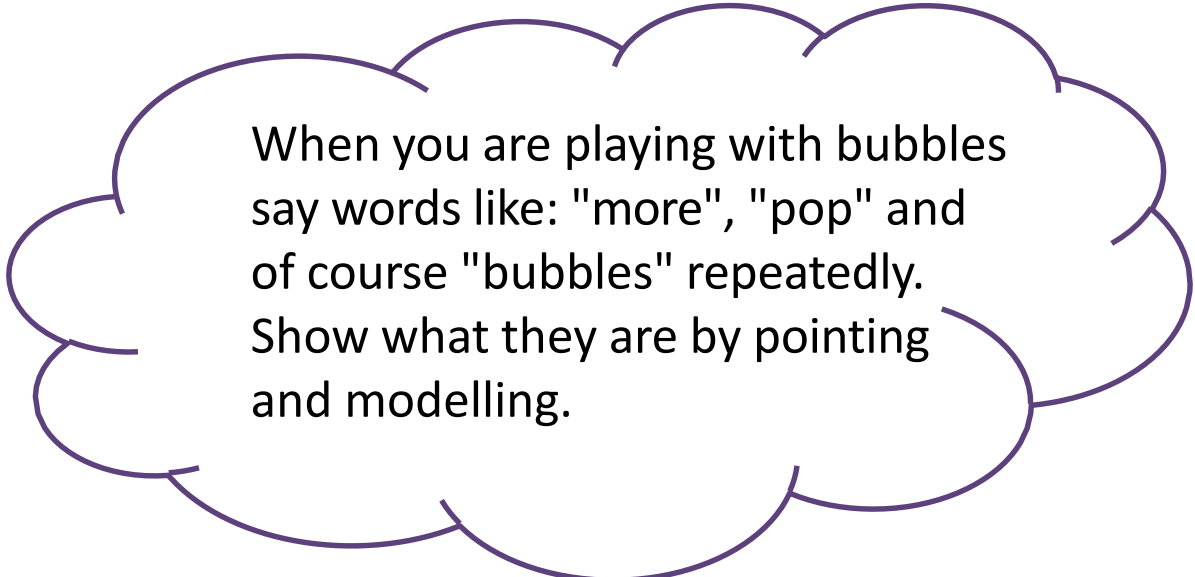


Talk about the sounds
you hear with your baby
***"Can you hear the birds
singing?"***



Learning & understanding new words

- Everything a baby does is an opportunity for them to learn new words. There is no need to “teach” babies new words, they learn best from hearing words in real life situations and during play.

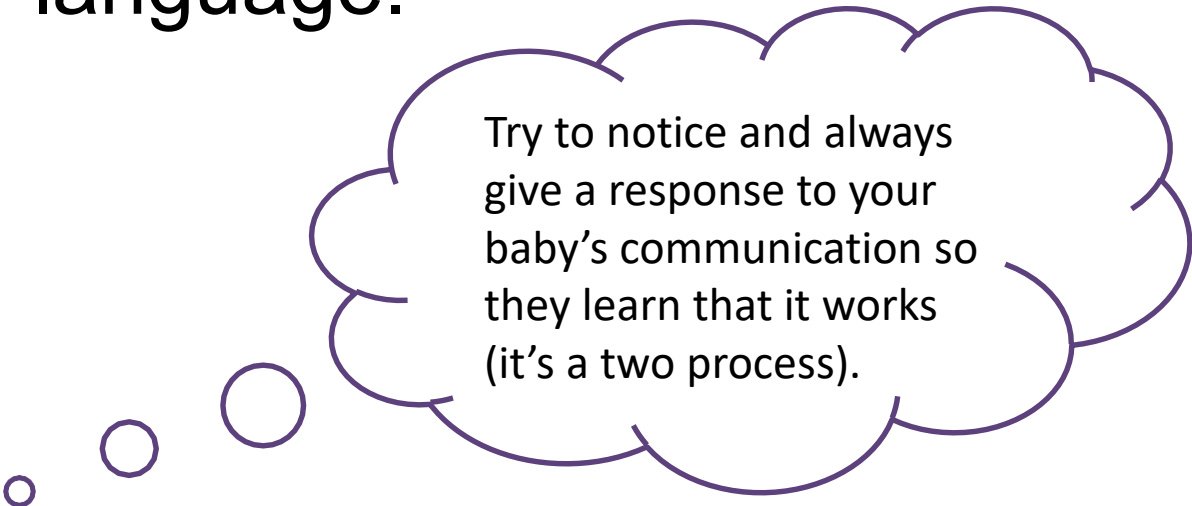


When you are playing with bubbles say words like: "more", "pop" and of course "bubbles" repeatedly. Show what they are by pointing and modelling.



Expressing myself

- As babies grow and have experiences of playing and interacting with others they learn new ways of communicating. These include different cries, facial expressions and body language.

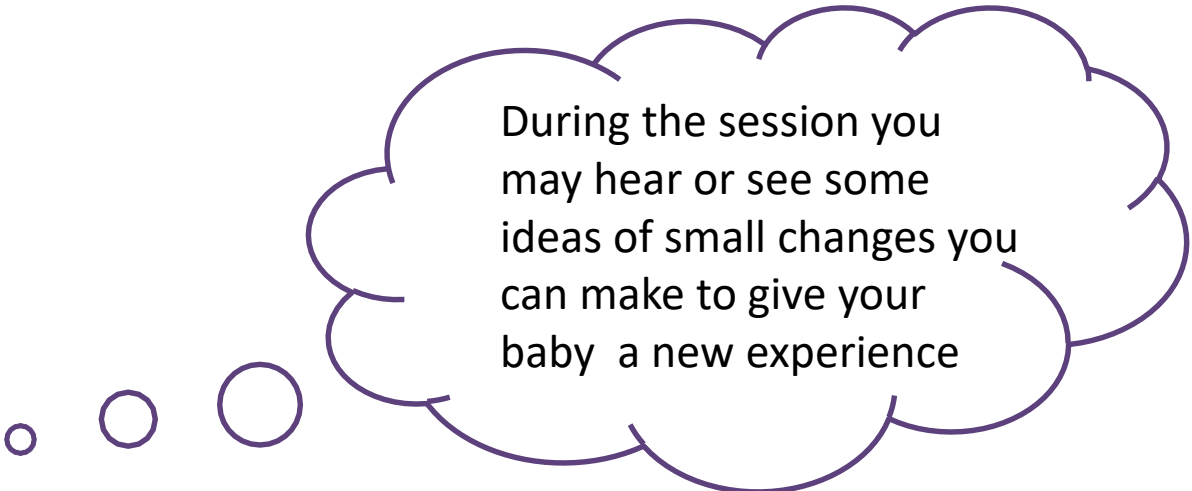


Try to notice and always give a response to your baby's communication so they learn that it works (it's a two process).



Exploring & developing

- Babies rely on adults to provide new and interesting experiences for them. These don't have to be new toys or new places. Even small changes to the environment can provide a lot of interest for babies.



During the session you may hear or see some ideas of small changes you can make to give your baby a new experience



Tools and resources

Universal support for practitioner's

- [ECAT](#) (National Strategies)
- Communication [Toolbox](#) (City of York Council)
- [Phase one letters and sounds](#) (National Strategies)
- [Early Language Development- Talking point](#)(ICAN)
- [Communication Friendly Spaces](#) (Communication Trust)
- [Communication Friendly Checklist](#) (Communication Trust)
- [Universally Speaking](#) (Communication Trust)
- [Early Years Commitment](#) (Communication Trust)
- [Speech, Language and Communication Framework](#) (Communication Trust)

Universal support for practitioner's

[Leicestershire-every-child-a-talker-ecat](#) (Leicestershire LA)

[Help for early years providers-communication and language](#)
(Gov.uk)

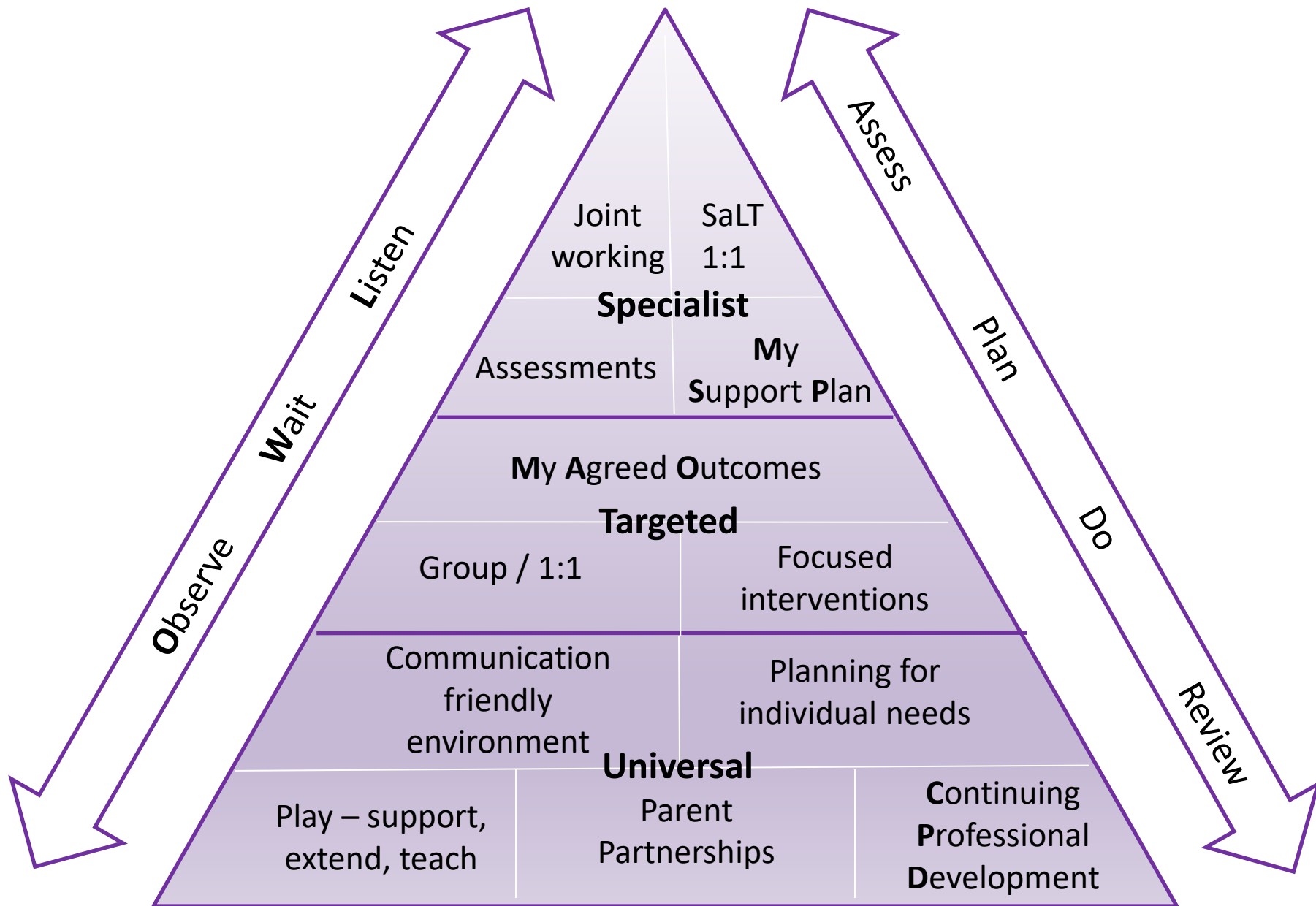
[WellComm toolkit](#) Subsidised offer from CYC

Training

[EYSEND Partnership \(ican.org.uk\)](#)

[CPD short course \(ican.org.uk\)](#)

[How to use - SLCF - The Communication Trust \(slcframework.org.uk\)](#)



CRACKING THE CODE!

Speech, language and communication needs and the SEND Code of Practice

We all know that speech, language and communication are foundation skills for life. Everyone has a responsibility to identify and help children who are struggling - early support leads to better outcomes.

How do I know if a child needs more support? Be alert...

...to emerging difficulties. Keep an eye out for children who:

- Might be struggling with settling in, joining in with others, understanding setting routines and instructions or expressing themselves
- Aren't where you would expect them to be when you look at expected development for their age
- Aren't reaching their early learning goals for communication and language

For more info on identifying emerging difficulties, go to www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/early-years

'All those who work with young children should be alert to emerging difficulties and respond early.'
(SEND Code of Practice, p.79)

What do I do if they do need more help? Respond early.

The 2014 SEND Code of Practice says that effective support for children with special educational needs should follow a graduated approach - this means regularly planning for, implementing and reviewing the support that you give using an 'assess-plan-do-review' process.



Review. How have things gone?

Discuss with others involved about how effective your support has been. Check back against your observations and planned outcomes. At this stage think about any further colleagues or specialists who might be able to help before you begin the process again.

Assess. Use your observations to:

- Identify what the child is struggling with, but also make a note of their strengths - "I love playing with other children but I struggle to use my words"
- Begin or continue conversations with others (e.g. parents, professionals, SENCo) about what you can do to help



Keep the child and their family at the centre of your planning and support. Use the graduated approach resource on our website to help you with this process.

Do. Put your support in place:

Implement support as planned and continue with your observations so you can see how the child is responding to your support.



Plan. Have a discussion or meeting to:

Speak with parents, colleagues or any specialists who are involved to plan for what support will be put in place.

Make your plan outcome focused - what do you all want to improve for the child?

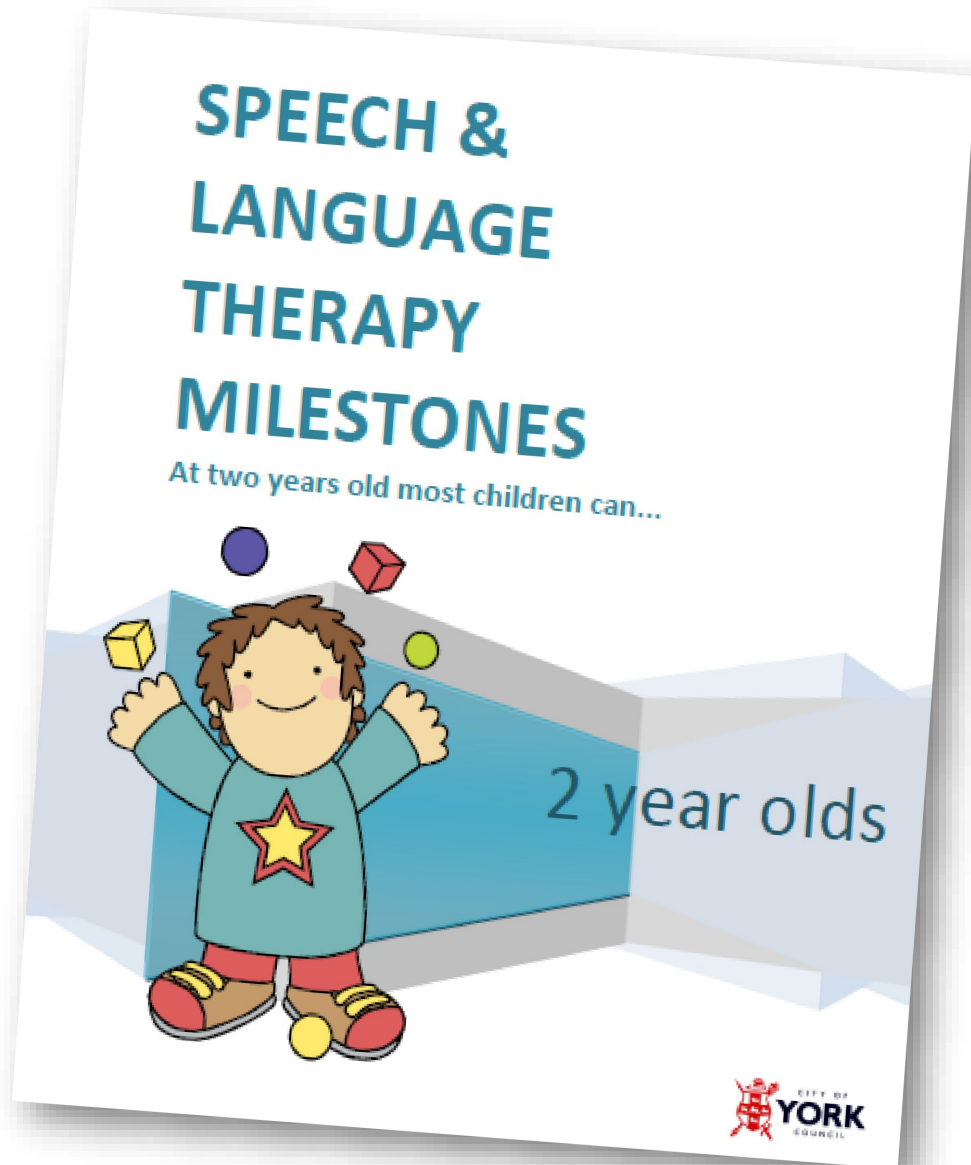
www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/early-years

Universal support



Universally speaking is a booklet that can be downloaded from **The Communication Trust**. It highlights the typical ages and stages of communication development from birth to 5 years. Link to booklet is on pg17

Leaflet for
professionals
specifically around
2 year olds.
Share with
parents before the
Progress check at
age two



Stage	Listening and Attention	Understanding (Receptive Language)	Talking (Expressive Language)	Social Communication
0-11 months	Turns toward a familiar sound then locates range of sounds with accuracy. Listens to, distinguishes and responds to intonations and sounds of voices. Quietens or alerts to the sound of speech. Fleeting Attention – not under child's control, new stimuli takes whole attention.	Stops and looks when hears own name. <i>(by 12 months ☞)</i>	Gradually develops speech sounds (babbling) to communicate with adults; says sounds like 'baba, nono, gogo'. <i>(by 11 months ☞)</i>	Gazes at faces and copies facial movements, eg. sticking out tongue. Concentrates intently on faces and enjoys interaction. Uses voice, gesture, eye contact and facial expression to make contact with people and keep their attention. <i>(by 12 months ☞)</i>
8-20 months	Concentrates intently on an object or activity of own choosing for short periods. Pays attention to dominant stimulus – easily distracted by noises or other people talking. Moves whole bodies to sounds they enjoy, such as music or a regular beat. Has a strong exploratory impulse.	Responds to the different things said when in a familiar context with a special person (e.g. 'Where's Mummy?'; 'Where's your nose?'). Understanding of single words in context is developing, e.g. 'cup', 'milk', 'daddy'	Uses single words. <i>(by 16 months ☞)</i> Frequently imitates words and sounds. Enjoys babbling and increasingly experiments with using sounds and words to communicate for a range of purposes (e.g. teddy, more, no, bye-bye)	Likes being with familiar adult and watching them. Developing the ability to follow an adult's body language, including pointing and gesture. Learns that their voice and actions have effects on others. Uses pointing with eye gaze to make requests, and to share an interest. <i>(by 18 months ☞)</i>
16-26 months	Listens to and enjoys rhythmic patterns in rhymes and stories. Enjoys rhymes and demonstrates listening by trying to join in with actions or vocalisations. Rigid attention – may appear not to hear.	Selects familiar objects by name and will go and find objects when asked, or identify objects from a group.	Beginning to put two words together (e.g. 'want ball', 'more juice') <i>(by 24 months ☞)</i> Uses different types of everyday words (nouns, verbs and adjectives, e.g. banana, go, sleep, hot) Beginning to ask simple questions.	Gradually able to engage in 'pretend' play with toys (supports child to imagine another's point of view). Looks to others for responses which confirm, contribute to, or challenge their understanding.
22-36 months	Single channelled attention. Can shift to a different task if attention fully obtained – using child's name helps focus. <i>(by 36 months ☞)</i> Listens with interest to the noises adults make when they read stories. Recognises and responds to many familiar sounds e.g. turning to a knock on the door, looking at or going to the door.	Identifies action words by pointing to the right picture, e.g., 'Who's jumping?' <i>(by 30 months ☞)</i> Understands 'who', 'what', 'where' in simple questions (e.g. Who's that/can? What's that? Where is.?). Developing understanding of simple concepts (e.g. big/little)	Learns new words very rapidly and is able to use them in communicating. Uses action, sometimes with limited talk, that is largely concerned with the 'here and now' (e.g. reaches toward toy, saying 'I have it'). Uses a variety of questions (e.g. what, where, who). Uses simple sentences (e.g. 'Mummy gonna work'.) Beginning to use word endings (e.g. going, cats)	Uses language as a powerful means of widening contacts, sharing feelings, experiences and thoughts. Holds a conversation, jumping from topic to topic. Enjoys being with and talking to adults and other children. Interested in others' play and will join in. Responds to the feelings of others.
30-50 months	Listens to others in one to one or small groups, when conversation interests them. Listens to stories with increasing attention and recall. Joins in with repeated refrains and anticipates key events and phrases in rhymes and stories. Focusing attention – still listen or do, but can shift own attention. Is able to follow directions (if not intently focused on own choice of activity).	Understands use of objects (e.g. 'What do we use to cut things?') Shows understanding of prepositions such as 'under', 'on top', 'behind' by carrying out an action or selecting correct picture. Beginning to understand 'why' and 'how' questions.	Beginning to use more complex sentences to link thoughts (e.g. using and, because). Can retell a simple past event in correct order (e.g. went down slide, hurt finger). Uses talk to connect ideas, explain what is happening and anticipate what might happen next, recall and relive past experiences. Questions why things happen and gives explanations. Asks e.g. who, what, when, how. Uses a range of tenses (e.g. play, playing, will play, played)	Beginning to accept the needs of others, with support. Can initiate conversations. Shows confidence in linking up with others for support and guidance. Talks freely about their home and community. Forms friendships with other children.
40-60+ months	Sustains attentive listening, responding to what they have heard with relevant comments, questions or actions. Maintains attention, concentrates and sits quietly when appropriate. Two-channelled attention – can listen and do for short span. Integrated attention – can listen and do in range of situations with range of people; varies according to the demands of the task.	Understands humour, e.g. nonsense rhymes, jokes. Demonstrates understanding of "how?" and "why?" questions by giving explanations. Able to follow a story without pictures or props. Understands instructions containing sequencing words; first...after...last, and more abstract concepts – long, short, tall, hard soft, rough.	Extends vocabulary, especially by grouping and naming, exploring the meaning and sounds of new words. Links statements and sticks to a main theme or intention. Uses language to imagine and recreate roles and experiences in play situations. Uses talk to organise, sequence and clarify thinking, ideas, feelings and events. Introduces a storyline or narrative into their play.	Has confidence to speak to others about their own wants, interests and opinions. Initiates conversation, attends to and takes account of what others say. Explains own knowledge and understanding, and asks appropriate questions of others. Shows awareness of the listener when speaking. Expresses needs / feelings in appropriate ways. Forms good relationships with adults and peers. Works as part of a group or class, taking turns

Early Communication and Language

PROFESSIONALS GRID


The National Strategies

Notes on monitoring early communication and language

Observation and best-fit judgements

- Judgements of a child's stage of development are made through a process of ongoing observational assessment.
- Observation involves noticing what children do and say in a range of contexts, and includes information from the family about what children do and say at home.
- For children learning English as an additional language, it is important to find out from families about how children use language in their mother tongue and how they communicate at home.
- The assessment is a 'best fit' match to a stage band. This involves considering what is known about the child, and matching it to the development described in the bands. This should be considered separately for each strand of communication and language.
- Within each band, a judgement will be made in two levels – either 'Emerging' when a child shows some development at that level, or 'Secure' when most of the statements reflect the child's current development.
- Development of speech sounds need not be assessed specifically, but it is useful to be aware of typical development which is described in the table to the right.

Checkpoints

- Alongside the 'best fit' judgement, certain 'Checkpoint' statements are included. Marked with a flag  and a specific age, these are particular statements which should be noted.
- Where a child has not reached a Checkpoint by the age indicated, this is not necessarily a sign of difficulty. The Checkpoint statements serve as an alert for close monitoring including discussion with the family, and perhaps further assessment or support.

Guidance on typical development of speech sounds	
Stage	Speech sounds (Developing speech and being understood applies to all languages. Order of acquiring specific sounds – here in English – may vary with other languages)
0-11 months	Babbles using a range of sound combinations, with changes in pitch, rhythm and loudness. Babbles with intonation and rhythm of home language ('jargon').
8-20 months	Speech consists of a combination of 'jargon' and some real words and may be difficult to understand.
16-26 months	Many immature speech patterns, so speech may not be clear. May leave out last sounds or substitute sounds (e.g. 'tap' for 'cap'). Uses most vowels, and <u>m, p, b, n, t, d, w, h</u> .
22-36 months	Speech becoming clearer, and usually understood by others by 36 months although some immature speech patterns still evident. May still substitute sounds or leave out last sound. Emerging sounds including <u>k, g, f, s, z, j, y</u> .
30-50 months	Speech mostly can be understood by others even in connected speech. Emerging use of <u>ng, sh, ch, j, v, th, r</u> – may be inconsistent. Sound clusters emerging (e.g. <u>pl</u> in play, <u>sm</u> in smile) though some may be simplified (e.g. 'gryeen' for 'green').
40-60+ months	Overall fully intelligible to others. May be still developing <u>r</u> and <u>th</u> . May simplify complex clusters (e.g. <u>sksr</u> , <u>str</u>).

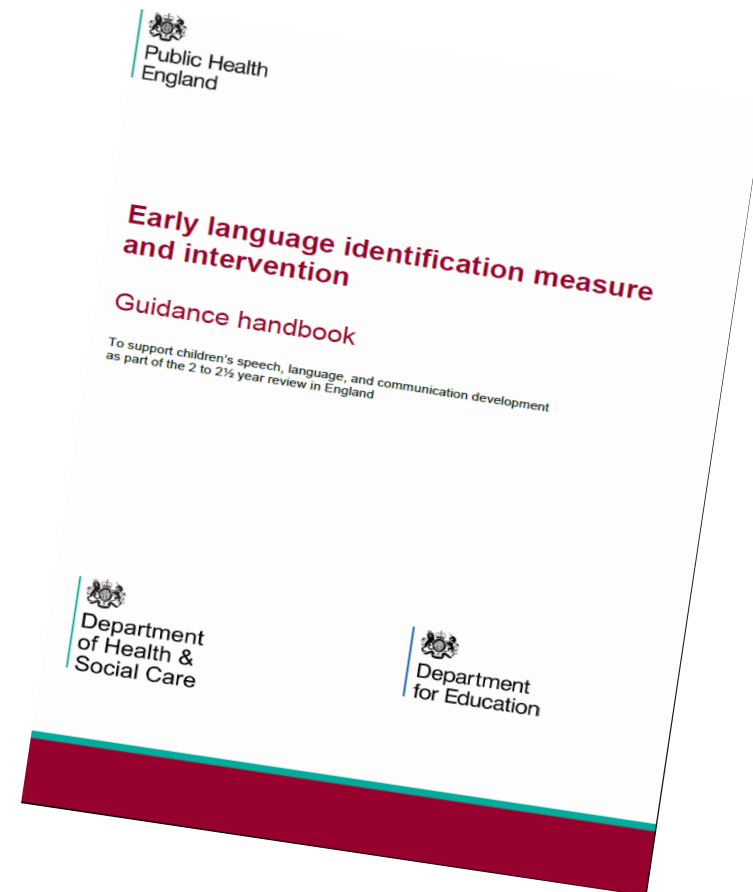
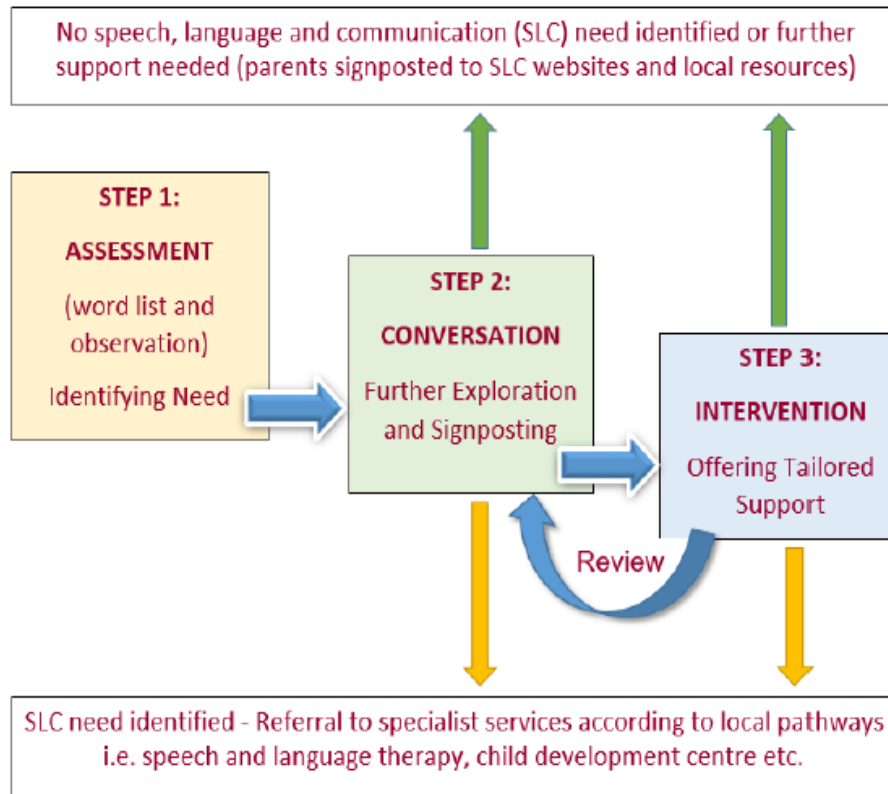
Making good progress

- The goal of monitoring children's development is to plan and provide more accurate support for each child to make good progress.
- How well a setting helps children to make good progress can be determined by analysing the proportion of children who are at risk of delay, as expected, or ahead of expectations in each strand of language and communication. If children are making accelerated progress, the proportion of children at risk of delay should decrease over time.
- In considering whether a child is at risk of delay, as expected, or ahead in each strand of language and communication, it is necessary to consider the child's actual age in months in relation to the overlapping age bands. If a child is within two months of the end of the age band and development is not yet within the band or is judged to be 'Emerging', then a judgement of 'risk of delay' would be appropriate.

ELIM- Early language identification measure

Dec 2020

Figure 1: Flowchart of the Early Language Identification and Intervention process.



Information to share with parents

Five Key Messages

1.

Talk to your baby right from the start. Babies love to hear your voice and see your face when you talk to them.

2.

Talking to your baby is really important because they learn most things from you.

3.

Talking will help your child to be happy, make friends and learn.

4.

Talking is easy – just chat about what you are doing or what they are interested in.

5.

Music, noisy video games and the TV are a big part of our lives, but try to make some noise-free time so that your baby can hear what you are saying.

*changing
the conversation
about language*



Get
the child's
attention first

Use simple
repetitive
language

Be careful
with
questions

Build on what
the child says
to you

Give the
child time to
respond

Rather than
criticise, demonstrate
the right way

Make
learning
language fun

Use
the full range
of expression

Use all
the senses to
help teach
new words

Imitate
the child's
language

Top techniques to develop children's speech and language
A guide for early years practitioners

Get the child's attention first
Get down to the child's level and engage their attention before speaking or asking a question. Young children find it difficult to listen and carry on with an activity at the same time. Saying their name first encourages them to stop and listen.

Imitate the child's language
With very young children, simply imitate their words and sentences. This will show them that you're listening to them and will encourage them to keep on talking.

Use the full range of expression
Speak in a lively, animated voice and use gestures and facial expressions to back up your words. You'll be giving more clues about what your words mean, which can be very useful if the child is struggling to understand language. You'll also be demonstrating the importance of non-verbal communication.

Use simple repetitive language
Keep sentences short. Describe your everyday activities. As you talk about what you're doing (I'm washing the cup), I repeat your words slowly and clearly. Saying things more than once helps children to join in and pick up new words.

Use all the senses to help teach new words
Make learning new vocabulary fun and memorable. For example, if you're teaching the names of fruits, encourage the child to feel and smell the various fruits as they learn the words. Another idea is to use familiar songs and rhymes as a learning tool by mixing out words for the child to fill in.

Build on what the child says to you
Talking very clearly, add one or two more words to the child's sentence. For instance, if the child says 'look, red car', you could say 'look, red car'. By doing this you'll be signalling that you've heard what they've said and modelling the next stage of language development.

Give the child time to respond
Children often need time to put their thoughts together before answering, so give them longer to respond than you would with an adult. Make sure to maintain eye contact as you wait for them to complete their remark.

Be careful with questions
Try not to ask too many questions, especially ones that sound like you're constantly testing the child. The best questions are those that challenge the child to think rather than give an instant answer (like yes or no). Too many questions can easily block the flow of natural conversation.

Rather than criticise, demonstrate the right way
Praise the child's efforts, even if the mistake isn't perfect. If a child makes an error in a word or sentence, simply say the correct version rather than pointing out the mistake. For example, if the child says, 'I went to the park', you might say 'Wow, so you went to the park!'

Make learning language fun
Play around with words, sounds and sentences. Don't be afraid to talk in funny voices or have silly conversations. The more children see you experimenting with language, the more likely they'll be able to do it themselves. And experimenting with language is a vital aspect of learning.



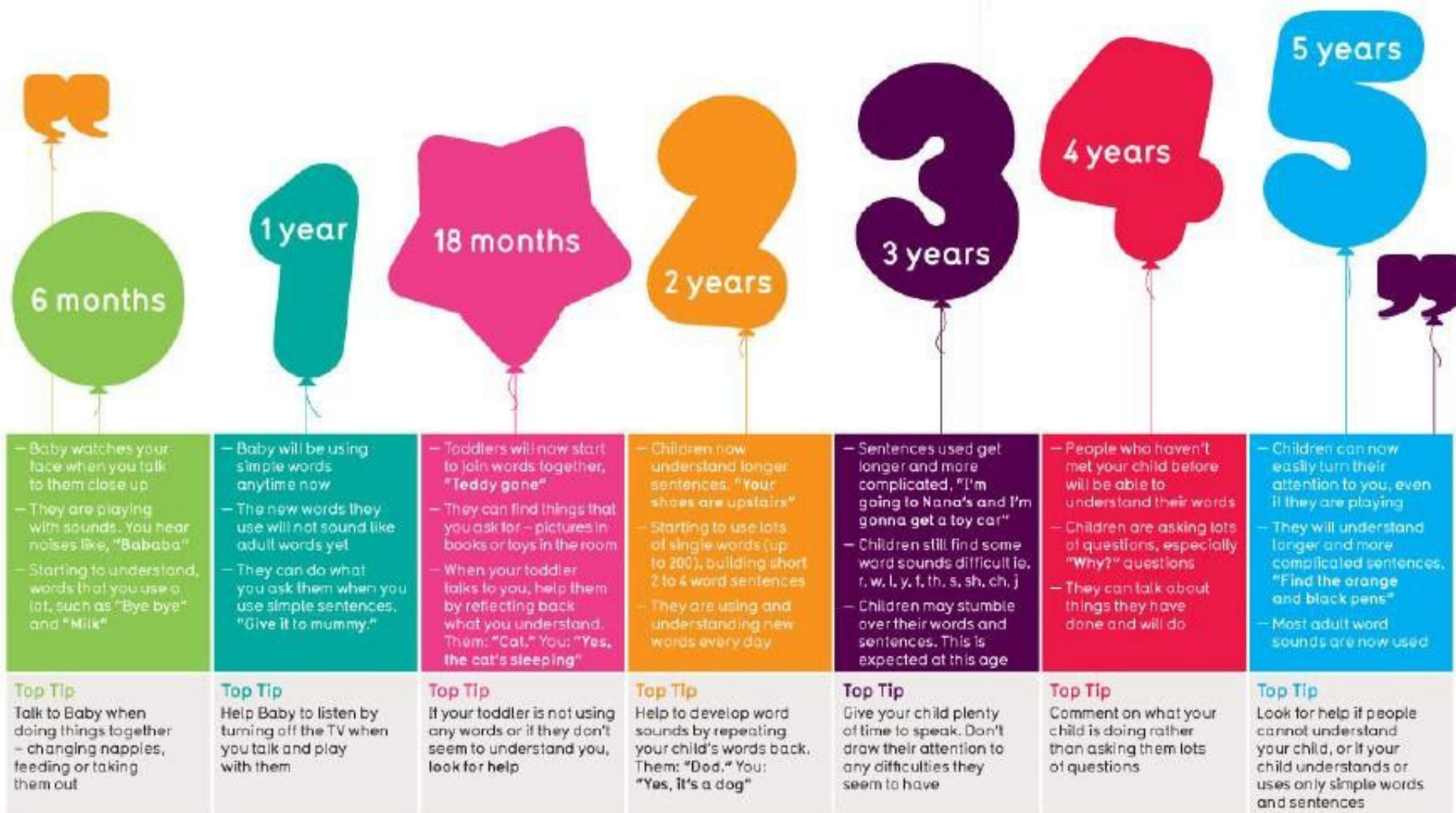
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the better world campaign BT iCan Help children communicate LEARNING TO TALK TALKING TO LEARN

www.ican.org.uk www.talkingpoint.org.uk

First words

Talk to your child using the language you would naturally use at home. If your child is not doing what is shown for their age, look for help: talk to your health visitor, GP or contact your local speech and language therapist directly. For advice and further information, visit:
www.talkingpoint.org.uk



Disadvantages to the use of dummies

www.talkingpoint.org.uk

There are a number of disadvantages linked with the use of dummies, most of which impact upon the child's speech and language development. Other concerns raised by some professional groups include the increased risk of:

- **Stomach and mouth infections.**
- **Ear infections.** This is due to the fact that sucking opens the ear tube, which links the nose and middle ear, and this can allow germs in.
- **Dental problems** such as open bite and cross bite.
- **Overdevelopment of the muscles** at the front of the mouth compared to those at the back of the mouth which may lead to a persistent tongue thrust and positioning of the teeth.
- **Less babbling and experimentation with sounds.** When a baby or young child has a dummy in their mouth they are less likely to copy sounds adults make or to attempt to babble and play with sounds themselves. This is important in the development of speech skills.
- Some people say that it is better to let a baby suck on their own fingers or hands, rather than an artificial object, as they will get more sensory feedback which is comforting, and they are more likely to stop the behaviour when they are developmentally ready.



Progress checker

The [Progress checker](#) have been developed by speech and language therapists, based on typical developmental milestones

- They are intended to be used as a guide only. No diagnosis can be made as children are not seen face to face.
- It's based on what we know about how language develops in babies and children. It's not the same as a standardised measure a specialist would carry out but it should give an idea of how a baby or child is developing and whether they need some support or further advice to help them.
- It can be used as a possible tool where concerns are highlighted but may identify when there are not issues with children's speech and language. If in doubt, check with a health visitor or speech and language therapist.
- Covers ages 6 months to 11 years old.

Further support for parents

- [Literacy trust](#) ideas on how to share books with your baby and talk with them.
- [NHS information about parenting](#) sign up for weekly email updates during pregnancy and first year (then monthly). Cover a wide variety of information for mums dads and wider family including baby's development, learning, play ideas etc.
- [Parenting track](#) information for parents on key stages of a child's development.
- [Look, say, sing, play](#) campaign aimed at parents of young babies. Parents can sign up through the NSPCC website for weekly tips on early communication and how to tune in to children.
- [Booktrust](#) support children to develop a love of reading.
- [Children's therapy service](#) for further information about making a referral to the speech and language therapy service children's therapy service
- [Family learning](#) offer workshops and on-line courses to support Home learning.
- [Hungry little minds](#) ideas on how to support your child's learning through play and interactions
- [Learning to talk](#) provides information on universal services for the under 5's and how to support your child to learn to talk

Making referrals

- [Children's therapy pack](#) and referral forms
- [Talking to parents](#) about their child's communication, speech and language
- [Specialist Early Years Support Team](#) (SEYST)