

Early Communication Screening Tool – What next?

The Early Communication Screen provides a snapshot of whether a child is on track or below expected levels with their language skills.

Looking at which questions a child found challenging, will help to identify their needs and improve their understanding and spoken language.

This document offers suggestions from a range of resources to help support children to understand the concepts and vocabulary, which they may have found challenging during the screening.

Does the child ..?		Suggested storybook / rhyme	Letters and Sounds : Phase 1	Development Matters guidance
Point to these body parts	eyes, feet, tummy, mouth	If your clothes are very red Books and Rhymes 2 Year Olds – Sheringham Nursery (sheringham-nur.org.uk)	Story sounds (p.17)	Around their second birthday, can the toddler jump with both feet off the ground at the same time?
Understand commands containing 2 key words	Following-Instructions-2-Key-Words.pdf			
Understand concepts	big and little	Dear Zoo (Rod Cambell)	Enlivening story (p.12) e.g. 3 Billy Goats Gruff	Use the language of size in everyday contexts e.g. little and big bears, shoes, cups, bowls etc.
Understand these verbs	jump	5 little monkeys jumping on the bed Five little monkeys jumping on the bed - BBC Teach	Listen to the music (p.20)	Encourage toddlers to jump with both feet off the ground at the same time.
	sleep	Sleeping bunnies Sleeping Bunnies song lyrics - BBC Tiny Happy People	Noisy neighbour 1 (p.21)	Join in with pretend play, modelling 'putting baby to sleep'.
	drink	Polly put the kettle on Polly put the kettle on - BBC Teach		Start pouring their own drinks.
	eat	Little Jack Horner https://www.nurseryrhymes.org/nursery-rhymes.html		Start eating independently.
	clap	If you are happy and you know it Nursery Rhymes and Songs - A to Z - BBC Teach	Action songs (p.20)	Join in with children's movement play when invited and if appropriate, clapping to the music.

Does the child ..?		Suggested storybook / rhyme	Letters and Sounds : Phase 1	Development Matters guidance
Understand commands containing 2 key words	Following-Instructions-2-Key-Words.pdf			
Understand question words	who	My first Gruffalo: Who lives here? (Julia Donaldson & Axel Schffler)	Bertha goes to the zoo (p.32)	When talking with young children give them plenty of processing time (at least 10 seconds). This gives them time to understand what you have said and think of their reply. They will be learning to understand simple questions like ‘who’, ‘what’ and ‘where’ (but generally not ‘why’).
	where	Where’s Spot? (Eric Hill) Have you seen Elephant? (David Barrow)	Socks and shakers (p.11)	
Use words ending -ing	running painting	Baby Bear, Baby Bear, what do you see? (Bill Martin Jr / Eric Carle)	Hidden instruments (p.17) (<i>running / skipping etc. to find the instruments</i>).	Create an obstacle course encouraging the children to practice crawling, running, jumping. Create a large outdoor painting area with large brushes, rollers etc.
Use plural – s ending	apples flowers	The very hungry caterpillar (Eric Carle) The wheels on the bus The Wheels on the Bus: Nursery Rhymes for Babies - BBC Tiny Happy People	Action songs (p.20)	Model accurate use of plurals. “Look there are two apples”. Helping toddlers to say words properly by recasting How to help when toddlers say words wrong - BBC Tiny Happy People

	Does the child ...?	Suggested storybook / rhyme	Letters and Sounds : Phase 1	Development Matters guidance
36 – 41 months of age	Understand commands containing 3 key words	Following-Instructions-3-Key-Words.pdf		Observational checkpoint: can the child follow instructions with 3 key words like: ‘Can you wash dolly’s face? ’
	Understand positional words	in	Rub-a-dub, dub Rub-a-dub dub - BBC Teach	Use spatial words in play, including ‘in’, ‘on’, ‘under’... Suggestion: “Let’s put the troll under the bridge and billy goat on the bridge.” Describe children’s climbing, tunnelling and hiding using these positional words.
		under	Little Boy Blue Little Boy Blue come blow your horn - BBC Teach	
			Rosie’s Walk (Pat Hutchins)	
		on	The wheels on the bus The Wheels on the Bus: Nursery Rhymes for Babies - BBC Tiny Happy People	
	Understand question words	Who	Who sank the boat? (Pauline Allen)	When talking with young children, give them plenty of processing time (at least 10 seconds). This gives them time to understand what you have said and think of their reply.
		Where	Where’s my teddy? (Jez Alborough)	
	Use plural – s ending	apples flowers	Handa’s Surprise (Eileen Brown)	Model accurate use of plurals. “Look there are two apples”.

Does the child ..?		Suggested storybook / rhyme	Letters and Sounds : Phase 1	Development Matters guidance
Understand commands containing 3 key words	Following-Instructions-3-Key-Words.pdf			
Understand positional language	in front of	We are going on a bear hunt (Michael Rosen)	Which instrument? (p.15) Matching sound makers (p.16)	Discuss routes and locations, using words like ‘in front of’ and ‘behind’. Use spatial words in play e.g. “Let’s put the troll in front of the bridge and the billy goat behind the tree.”
	behind		Mirror play (p.34)	
Understand concepts	empty full			Model language that promotes thinking: “I can see that’s empty – I wonder what happened to the snail that used to live in that shell?”
	long short		Words about sounds (p.22) Chain games (p.38)	Encourage the children to collaborate with each other to manage moving long and short planks safely.
Use the comparative ending -er	bigger taller	Owl Babies (Martin Waddell) Dinosaurs Dinosaurs - BBC Teach		Use the language of size in everyday contexts. Provide objects with marked differences in size e.g. dolls’ and adult chairs, tiny and big bears, shoes, cups and bowls, blocks and containers.

48 – 59 months of age	Does the child ..?		Suggested storybook / rhyme	Letters and Sounds : Phase 1	Development Matters guidance
	Understand commands containing 4 key words	Following-Instructions-4-Key-Words.pdf			
	Understand positional language	in front of	We are going on a bear hunt (Michael Rosen)	Matching sound makers (p.16)	Discuss position in real contexts. Set up obstacle courses, interesting pathways and hiding places for children to play with freely. When appropriate, ask children to describe their route and give directions.
		behind		Mirror play (p.34)	
	Understand negatives	no not	Not now Bernard (David McKee)	Rhyming Pairs (p.27) Odd one out (p.28)	
	Understand concepts	first last	Peace at last (Jill Murphy)	Grandmother’s footsteps (p.15)	Talk about patterns of events, in cooking, gardening, sewing or getting dressed ‘first’, ‘then’, etc.
	Answer questions	how	Farmer Duck (Martin Waddell & Helen Oxenbury)	Voice sounds (p.37)	Make sure children can answer who, where and when questions before you move on to why and ‘how do you know’ questions: “I wonder why this jellyfish is so dangerous?”
		why		Favourite sounds (p.11)	
	Use pronouns	he she	Lima’s red hot chilli (David Mills & Derek Brazell)	I know a word (p.28)	Commentate on children’s play e.g. “Sara is smiling. She really wanted a turn with the truck.”
	Use the ending -est	biggest tallest	The gigantic turnip (Aleksei Tolstoy & Niamh Sharkey)		Build upon their incidental talk: “Your tower is the tallest I have seen all week. Do you think you’ll make it any higher?

Does the child ...?		Suggested storybook / rhyme	Letters and Sounds Phase 1	Development Matters guidance
Understand commands containing 4 key words	Following-Instructions-4-Key-Words.pdf			
Understand concepts	before after	Whatever next! (Jill Murphy)	Tony the Train’s busy day (p.32)	Talk about patterns in cooking, gardening, sewing or getting dressed. Suggestions: ‘first’, ‘then’, ‘after’, ‘before’.
	first last		Grandmother’s footsteps (p.15)	Talk about the sequence of events in stories.
Use pronouns	his her	The Gruffalo (Julia Donaldson & Axel Schffler)	I spy names (p.31)	Narrate events and actions. “I knew it must be cold outside because he / she was putting on his / her coat and hat.”
Talk about the future using ‘will’	This girl is drinking. Next this girl will drink.	The Little Red Hen (traditional tale)		Ask open questions – “What will happen if you do that?”
Use –ed verb ending	Yesterday, this girl painted ed . Yesterday this girl cleaned ed her teeth.	Mr Gumpy’s outing (John Burningham)		Instead of correcting, model accurate irregular grammar such as past tense, plurals, complex sentences: “That’s right: you drank your milk quickly; you were quicker than Darren.”

Speech sounds:



What is it?

In order for children to speak clearly, they need to be able to hear differences between sounds, remember and say sounds accurately, and then sequence them into words.

Children can present with a number of difficulties which can impact on their ability to speak clearly and be understood by others – we refer to these as speech sound difficulties. These can include difficulties with:

- Making a specific sound
- Coordinating the movements of the tongue and lips to sequence sounds in words
- Organising speech sounds accurately so they can be used in words

All children have immature speech skills when they are learning to speak. It is important to remember that it is normal for children to make certain errors in their speech, such as replacing trickier sounds with easier sounds or missing sounds out in words that they will use in others. The table below shows the patterns that we may see in a child with typically developing speech (sound development as children grow and develop).

A child may have speech sound difficulties, if their difficulties continue beyond the ages shown or they present with patterns that are not usually seen in typically developing speech. In some cases, these may be temporary and resolve without intervention. For other children, the difficulties will not go away without support from a Speech and Language Therapist

Speech sounds – expected errors:

Changes	Examples	Expected age
Missing sounds off the end of words	'park' – 'par' 'tap' – 'ta'	Up to 3 years
Using the same sounds in words	'soap' – 'poap' 'case' – 'cake'	Up to 3 years
Changing quiet sounds in words – p,t,k to noisy sounds – b,d,g	'pot' – 'bot' 'tap' – 'dap' 'cat' – 'gat'	Up to 3 years
Changing long sounds – f,s to short sounds – p/b, t/d	'feet' – 'peet' or 'beet' 'sun' – 'tun' or 'dun'	Up to 3 years, 6 months
Changing back sounds – k to front sounds t/d	'car' – 'tar' or 'dar' 'bike' – 'bite'	Up to 4 years
Changing 'sh', 'ch', 'j'	'fish' – 'fis' 'children' – 'tildren' 'orange' – 'oranz'	Up to 5 years
Changing two sounds to just one sound	'tree' – 'tee' or 'dee' 'grass' – 'dass' or 'gass' 'spots' – 'bots'	Up to 5 years
Changing 'l' and 'r'	'leaf' – 'jeaf' 'roof' – 'woof'	Up to 6 years

Related documents and training:

- [Attention & Listening 1 training video](#)
- [Child's Progress checker - Speech & Language UK](#)
- [Development Matters - Non-statutory curriculum guidance for the early years foundation stage](#)
- [early-speech-and-language-development-chart.pdf](#)
- Letters and Sounds Phase 1 [Letters and Sounds - DFES-00281-2007.pdf](#)
- [Supporting Children with Selective Mutism](#)
- [Supporting and Developing Vocabulary and Concepts in the Early Years training video – YouTube](#)
- The Communication Tree [14269.pdf](#)
- [Tiny Happy People - Tips and advice for children's speech and language](#)
- [CPD schedule and booking details | Shropshire Learning Gateway](#)
(details of future Early Talk Boost training sessions)