

Early Communication Screening Tool – What next?

To be used alongside the Early Communication Screen
Record Book and Picture Book.

	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 where	My first Gruffalo: Who lives here? (Julia Donaldson & Axel Schffler) Where’s Spot? (Eric Hill) Have you seen Elephant? (David Barrow)	Bertha goes to the zoo (p.32) Socks and shakers (p.11)	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’).
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	
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	Enlivening story (p.12) e.g. Peace at Last (Jill Murphy)	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)	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.
	Where	Where’s my teddy? (Jez Alborough)	Socks and shakers (p.11)	
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.

	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)
		behind		
	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)
	Answer questions	how	Farmer Duck (Martin Waddell & Helen Oxenbury)	Voice sounds (p.37)
		why		Favourite sounds (p.11)
	Use pronouns	he she	Lima’s red hot chilli (David Mills & Derek Brazell)	I know a word (p.28)
	Use the ending -est	biggest tallest	The gigantic turnip (Aleksi 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'. Talk about the sequence of events in stories.
	first last		Grandmother's footsteps (p.15)	
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 painte d. Yesterday this girl cleaned 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

What to look for

Some children have speech difficulties which are not expected during development. These include:

- Over 3 years old and parent / carer cannot understand most of the time.
- Over 3 years old and less than 5 different consonant sounds produced on the Mini Speech Screen.
- Over 3 years old and often does not repeat the words when asked (check words with a dash (-) on the Mini Speech Screen).
- Over 4 years old and new people cannot understand most of the time.
- Over 4 years old and does not repeat p, t, c/k, f, s accurately as single sounds.
- Over 4 years and often did not say the words on their own (check words marked with * on the Mini Speech Screen).
- Any age and always misses sounds off at the beginning of words e.g. 'food', -'odd', 'duck' – 'uck'.
- Any age and always changes the sounds to c/k or g, e.g. 'two' – 'coo', 'sea' – 'key', 'ball' – 'gall'.

Mini Speech Screen

Mini Speech Screen



The Mini Speech Screen is referenced in the table above.

You can download the Mini Speech Screen here:

[Speech Screen Guide](#)

[Speech Screen Pictures.](#)

[Speech Screen Record Sheet](#)

Parents/Carers - you may want to speak to your child's or young person's education setting if you have any concerns with regards to their speech sounds and would like to fill in this Speech Screen. You could also look at the Top Tips with the education setting.

[Speech sounds](#)

The Cat and the Dog Test

The Cat and Dog Test



As children develop their speech and language skills, it is important to think about their **understanding** of language, their **talking** (using words and sentences) and their **speech** (speaking clearly). If we notice a difficulty, it may not be a 'stand alone problem'. If a child has unclear speech or they are not talking as much as other children, they may have problems with understanding language. Please complete the Cat and Dog Test as well as the Mini Speech Screen before making a referral for speech difficulties.

You can download The Cat and Dog Test here:

[The Cat and Dog Test Guide](#)

[The Cat and Dog Test Pictures](#)

[The Cat and Dog Test Record Sheet](#)

[Speech sounds](#)

When to refer for speech difficulties

Complete Mini Speech Screen and The Cat and Dog Test for children aged 3 and above. (Mini Speech Screen is above this section).

Compare how the child is talking with the two tables above (The expected and not expected errors).

Interventions

If the child isn't talking as expected for their age, then the following ideas will help support the child.

- Contrastive Pairs – check with your nursery/school to see if they have received this training. [Our Training](#).
- Top 10 Speech Tips (you will find these below this section)
- [Stoke Speaks Out](#) -this website has lots of ideas to support speech development
- [Speech Link](#) - this is a commercial speech package available for schools to purchase.

Please try out these ideas with the child, if you still have concerns then consider making a referral ([Early Years referral form](#) / [School Aged referral form](#)). Please keep a record of the activities you have tried as we will ask you about these on the referral.

[Speech sounds](#)

Also consider

Children who have speech problems often have language difficulties too. If the child is not regularly putting 3 words together, please refer to advice for children with language difficulties before you refer.

Here are some examples of joining 3 words together.

e.g., I like football.

Mummy's car is blue

Give me the big cup.

Top Tips.

Top 10 Tips for Helping Your Child with Unclear Speech

[Speech sounds](#)

Related documents and training

- **Early Talk Boost**

[Early Talk Boost - Speech and Language UK: Changing young lives](#)

- **Tiny Happy People**

[Tiny Happy People - Tips and advice for children's speech and language](#)

- **Supporting and developing vocabulary and concepts in the early years**

[Supporting and Developing Vocabulary and Concepts in the Early Years training video – YouTube](#)

- **The Communication Tree**

[14269.pdf](#)

- **Supporting children with selective mutism**

[Supporting Children with Selective Mutism](#)

- **Attention and listening**

[Attention & Listening 1 training video](#)

- **Games for attention and listening**

[14006.pdf](#)

Early Communication Screening Tool – What next?

Documents referenced:

Development Matters - Non-statutory curriculum guidance for the early
years foundation stage

Letters and Sounds - DFES-00281-2007.pdf

(Phase 1 only)