

VISION

2030

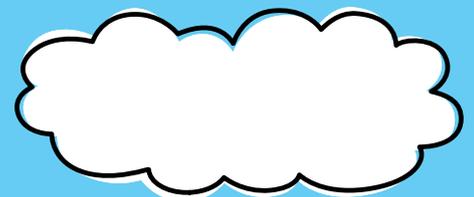
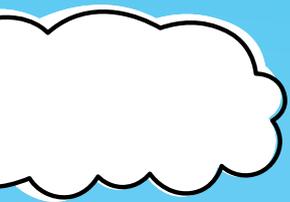


Alder Hey Children's
NHS Foundation Trust

**ALDER HEY
COMMUNITY SPEECH
AND LANGUAGE THERAPY**

Communicating a Sound Future

**PRIMARY SCHOOL
SPEECH, LANGUAGE &
COMMUNICATION TOOLKIT**



Dedication

This book is dedicated to the children of Liverpool and Sefton, you make coming to work an absolute pleasure. We hope we have helped in some small way, to give you a way of communicating your wonderful ideas and thoughts and have enabled you to access the words used in your classroom to help you to reach your full potential.



Foreword and Acknowledgements

Welcome to the Community Speech and Language Therapy Service's information for Primary schools Toolkit. This resource was created for primary teachers, SENCOs, teaching assistants and anyone with a child in their class who has speech, language or communication needs.

The need for this toolkit came from initial professional discussions about how we can support the children while they are waiting to access the Speech and Language Therapy Service, as waiting times had increased following the COVID-19 pandemic. The discussions then turned into soul-searching concepts about who is best placed to support the children with speech, language and communication needs in their school. Schools were also asking what they could do to support children with speech, language and communication needs.

A group of Speech and Language Therapists then dedicated their time and expertise, which to create this information pack, collating their years of knowledge and experience to create an accessible collection of strategies and resources to share with colleagues in education. It has been inspirational to watch this resource come into fruition.

The initial draft was then shared with colleagues in education across the Liverpool and Sefton Local Authorities to gain their valuable feedback. We are proud to be working together and we are aiming to support teachers to implement the SEND Code of Practice and the Graduated response and to use their best endeavours to make sure

that a child with SEN gets the support they need – this means doing everything they can to meet the needs of children and young people's SEN including speech, language and communication needs.

I feel it important to share thanks to the following members of the Speech and Language Therapy Team. Thank you for the inspiration and dedication Claire Bimson, Janette Hutchings, Stephanie McCormick, Paula Chapman and Hannah Rothwell. Other Highly Specialist Speech and Language Therapists Emma Dawes, Hilary Liddle and Claire Sutherland have also contributed their expertise which was truly appreciated.

We hope this resource is useful and something you can rely upon when you are in need of strategies and ideas to support the child with speech language and communication needs in your class.



Hannah Cottrell
Principal Speech and Language Therapist
July 2023

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VISION
2030

A Healthier, Happier and Fairer Future for Children and Young People

OUR ASPIRATION
To be world-leading

The Needs
of Children,
Young People
and Families

Get me well

Personalise my care

Improve my life chances

Bring me the future

Outstanding care and experience

Collaborate for children & young people

Revolutionise care

Support our people

Pioneering breakthroughs

What do Speech and Language Therapists do?

A Speech and Language Therapist's (SLT) role involves working collaboratively with children, their families and people working closely with the child (for example, teachers and learning support assistants). SLTs have a role in assessing a child's speech language and communication needs and then (if specific needs are identified), developing an appropriate intervention plan based on the individual child's needs.

Speech and Language Therapy may involve some 'direct' face-to-face (or virtual) sessions with the Speech and Language Therapist, however direct SLT will not be sufficient on its own. Speech and Language Therapy can also include training, written programmes and developing a communication-friendly environment, which will all play a vital part on the child's intervention plan.

School staff (and parent / carer(s)) play a vital role in Speech and Language Therapy and contribute to the effectiveness of the programme. An important part of the SLT role is to upskill those who work closely with the child, to empower them to deliver the strategies across the day. This may include training sessions, demonstrations of therapy approaches and activities and coaching school staff and parents to deliver specific strategies.

As part of the collaborative approach, the child's speech, language and communication goals should be combined into their Individual / SEN Support Plan and integrated into a range of classroom activities.

Speech and Language Therapists consider the following areas of speech and language development, and each of them will be covered in this Toolkit with strategies and activities provided to support each aspect.

Toolkit

Attention and Listening

This area is about listening, attending and focusing on tasks and sounds. Attention and listening skills are essential foundation skills which help with all of the areas of speech and language.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary refers to names, action words (verbs) and describing words (adjectives). Some children have limited exposure to new words, others have difficulties accessing and retrieving a stored word.

Understanding Language

This includes understanding what words mean, understanding the meaning of a sentence and grammar, applying world knowledge and remembering the information. It is a complex process.

Expressive Language

Using words, phrases and sentences to express ideas in a meaningful way.

Speech Sounds

Some children have difficulties with specific speech sounds, and/or producing sounds within words. Children may replace trickier sounds with sounds they find easier to say.

Stammering

Someone who stammers may repeat sounds or words, stretch or prolong words, or have a silent block. This can occur with other behaviours, such as looking away or appearing tense. This may not always be obvious.

Social Communication

This includes understanding and following 'unwritten' social rules, understanding and using non-verbal communication, and using language in a meaningful way to support interactions with peers and adults.

Selective Mutism

Selective Mutism is an anxiety-based mental health disorder which usually commences in early childhood. Those with SM speak comfortably in some situations but remain consistently silent in others.

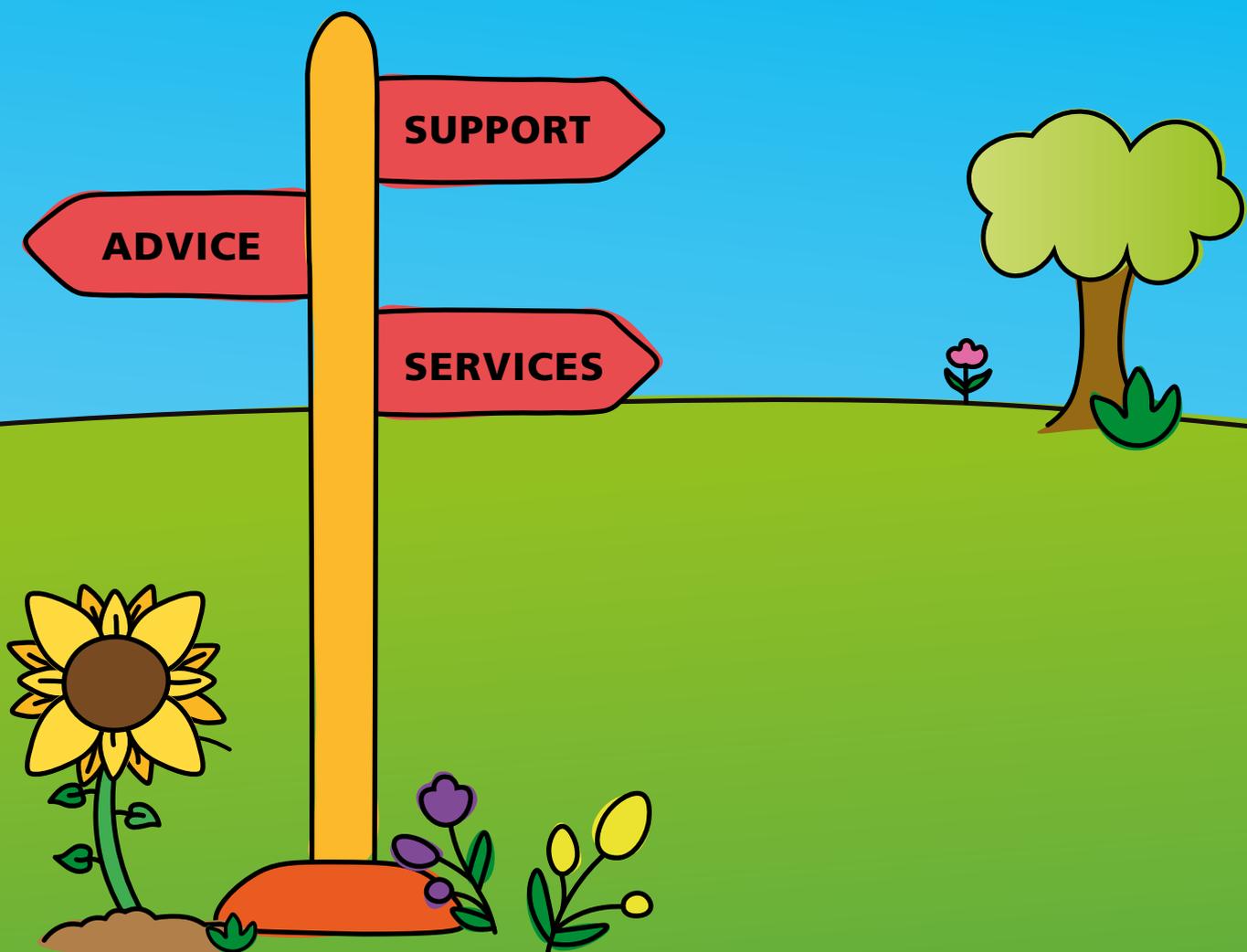
Voice

The sound of our voices; many voice disorders in children are associated with symptoms of huskiness, breathiness, hoarseness or sometimes complete loss of voice.

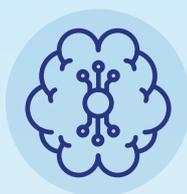
2 Areas Supported By Other Services:

Being a confident communicator, and having good speech, language and communication skills involves a range of other developmental areas that can impact on a child or young person functionally.

Below we have detailed areas that Speech and Language Therapists do not provide intervention for, and provided some signposting to help you access the right professionals to gain the most appropriate advice.



We are unable to offer advice and support in the following areas:



Sensory Processing Difficulties

Sensory processing is about how the brain sorts, makes sense of and then acts on (if needed) sensory information from the world around us. Sensory information can come from: touch (tactile), sounds (auditory), visual information, smells, taste, muscle and joint movement (proprioception), balance and head movement (vestibular), and what's going on inside our body (interoception).

If a child has difficulties processing and organising sensory information, they can find daily tasks difficult. Below are some useful organisations that provide advice and services:

<https://www.alderhey.nhs.uk/services/occupational-therapy/occupational-therapy>

<https://liverpool.gov.uk/children-and-families/occupational-therapy-for-children/sensory-processing-difficulties>

(Sefton) <https://www.seftondirectory.com/kb5/sefton/directory/service.page?id=rHV0eMgmgLo>

<https://youtu.be/NC1Z7O5mp1w>

Families can complete this e-learning training that is an introduction to sensory processing:

<https://apps.liverpool.gov.uk/Sensory-Processing-Intervention/story.html>

ADDvanced Solutions is an organisation that works with children, families and professionals to provide advice, training and resources to support children with

neurodevelopmental conditions and support regarding sensory processing.

Their email address is

info@advancedsolutions.co.uk

<https://www.advancedsolutions.co.uk/services-for-families/families-in-liverpool>

<https://www.advancedsolutions.co.uk/services-for-families/families-in-sefton>



Emotional Regulation

Emotional Regulation is the ability to manage and control your emotion in a variety of circumstances which may include highly stimulating situations.

Emotional literacy and regulation

'The zones of regulation' (developed by Leah Kuypers).

<http://zonesofregulation.com/index.html>



Difficulties regarding reading and writing skills:

Speech and Language Therapists support children with communication needs. Literacy advice for schools can be sought via School Improvement Liverpool

www.schoolimprovementliverpool.co.uk, and **SENISS (Special Educational Needs and Inclusion Support Service).**

www.fsd.liverpool.gov.uk

Tel: 0151 233 5988

Email: seniss@liverpool.gov.uk.

Sefton: Tel: 0151 934 2347

Email: SENIS@sefton.gov.uk

See SENISS Top Tips for reading, spelling, and writing:

<https://search3.openobjects.com/mediamanager/liverpoolfsd/files/reading.pdf>

<https://search3.openobjects.com/mediamanager/liverpoolfsd/files/spelling.pdf>

<https://search3.openobjects.com/mediamanager/liverpoolfsd/files/writing.pdf>

For those children who are struggling with learning to read, there is strong, high quality evidence to support the use of Phonological Awareness intervention. Phonological awareness, which is an individual's awareness of the sound or phonological structure of a spoken word (Gillon, 2004), is the ability most strongly related to literacy. Children should have robust syllable level skills and emerging phoneme level skills to be ready for learning phonics (the matching of letters to sounds) (e.g. Anthony & Francis, 2005; Carroll et al., 2003). Children who start school are entered into phoneme level literacy instruction straight away; if they do not have good syllable level skills, they will not be able to progress with phoneme level skills. It is crucial that syllable level skills are assessed on entry to school and support is provided at this level to children who need it.



Difficulties with Phonological Awareness Skills

Teachers and school staff are the people best-placed to implement phonological awareness interventions, as the basis for learning to read and spell. It can be interwoven with classroom activities, provided one-to-one or in small groups, given by teachers, teaching assistants or parents.

The Newcastle Assessment of Phonological Awareness (NAPA) signposts the starting point for intervention, and the Newcastle Intervention for Phonological Awareness (NIPA) provides session plans and activities, taking you through the sequence of phonological awareness skills. Both the NIPA and NAPA can be downloaded for free here: <https://research.ncl.ac.uk/phonologicalawareness/assessmentandintervention/>



Rate of speech

All people naturally talk at different rates. Some children may speak very quickly, particularly if they feel under pressure to get their message across.

Adults can provide a slower model of talking, ensure the child knows that they will have time to be listened to and try to provide opportunities for individual rather than group conversations to support an appropriate rate of speech.



Learning English as an Additional Language (EAL)

If a child's speech and language skills are developing as expected in their home language (first language), it is expected that they will develop their English language skills without difficulty and they are unlikely to require a referral to our service.

However, if it becomes apparent that the child's speech and language skills in their home language is not developing as expected, it is likely that the child will also have difficulties learning and using English.

Schools can utilise the **targeted** strategies suggested in each section of this toolkit. It is vital that schools liaise with families to support them to implement the strategies in their home language too.

EMTAS – Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service which aims to raise the educational attainment of ethnic minority pupils: <https://www.schoolimprovementliverpool.co.uk/teams-emptas> (Liverpool)
Sefton Education: <https://www.seftoneducation.uk/Page/21149> (Sefton)

Schools may also like to look at <https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org> which provides lots of advice, information and activities to help support children learning English.

The Bell Foundation, also has a range of information, resources and an assessment framework for schools who are supporting children who have English as an additional language. <https://www.bell-foundation.org.uk/what-we-do/eal-programme>

Sound the Alarm. If the child does not make progress having implemented the recommended '**targeted** approaches' they may require input from a Speech and Language Therapist, in this case a referral to the service will be required.



Developing confidence with communication

Whilst confidence can increase as a by-product of speech / language therapy, we do not work directly on confidence. Many factors affect feelings of confidence, such as, general achievements or skill levels, self-esteem, and the level of support people have around them, therefore it is not possible to work on confidence outcomes based purely on SLT interventions.

For children and young people who stammer, the Willy Russell Centre (<https://www.alderhey.nhs.uk/services/speech-and-language-therapy/willy-russell-centre/>) may provide some support around confident communicating.

Developing friendships and peer group relationships

School is one of the main places children and young people interact with one another, and therefore they are perfectly placed to support and develop children and young people's friendship and peer relationships.

There are lots of published resources which provide assessment frameworks, planning and evaluation sheets, and intervention plans, please see the Targeting Sound Social Communication section of this kit.

Some organisations will provide training to school should they require it around social skills groups. <https://www.advancedsolutionstraining.co.uk/training/social-and-communication-groups.html>
<https://autisminitiatives.org/local-authorities/services-for-children-and-young-people/lossme>



Language development / impairment which fits with a diagnosis of Autism

Children with a diagnosis of Autism may display a range communication needs consistent with the diagnosis.

Having repetitive and rigid language, narrow topic of conversations, inferencing difficulties and social use of / understanding of language needs are all part of an Autism presentation

and are not supported directly by the service. Autism is a lifelong condition and Autistic children are likely to have ongoing differences with their social communication and interaction style. Below are some websites which may provide further advice or support:

<https://www.alderhey.nhs.uk/services/autism-spectrum-disorder>

<https://www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk>

<https://www.seftondirectory.com/kb5/sefton/directory/advice.page?id=gGYo8lv5Vdg>

<https://www.advancedsolutions.co.uk/home.html>

<https://autisminitiatives.org>



Elocution or changing accent

We do not provide intervention for elocution or to modify accent related speech differences.



Global Developmental Delay

For children with a diagnosis of a Global Developmental Delay we would aim for language skills to be developing consistently, at the same rate as their overall level of learning rather than at a level expected for their chronological age.

3 Levels of Support

There are different levels of support that are required to support the development of the range of speech, language and communication skills detailed above. Not all speech, language and communication needs require speech and language input from a Speech and Language Therapist directly. Some skills can be supported through strategies and activities offered in the classroom setting.

There are 3 levels of support that we will discuss throughout this toolkit:

Specialist Support:

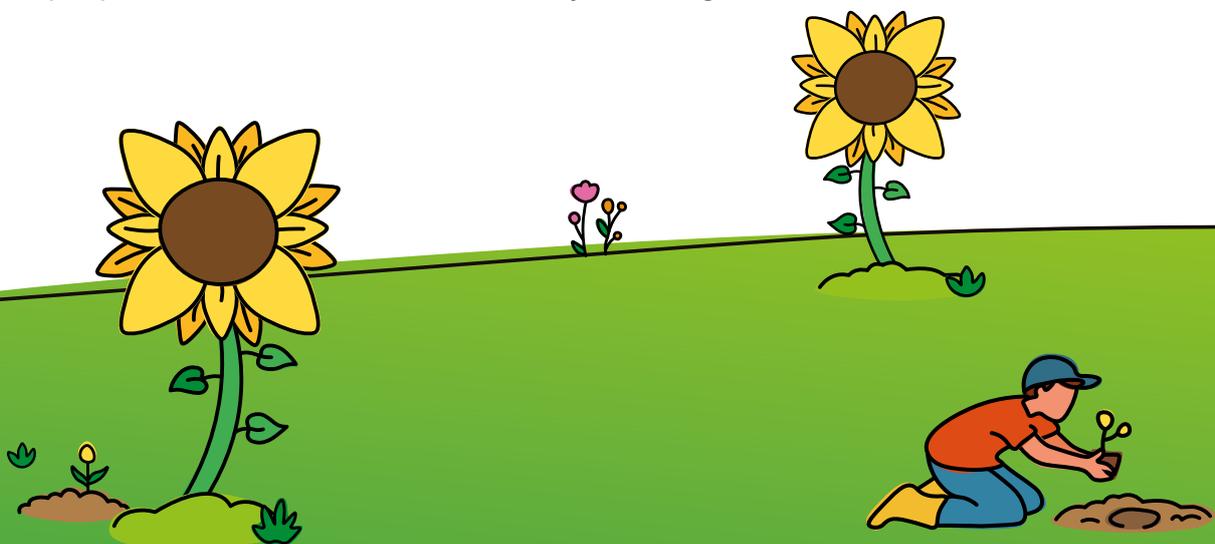
This is for children who specifically need input from a Speech and Language Therapist, and therefore need to be referred to the Speech and Language Therapy service.

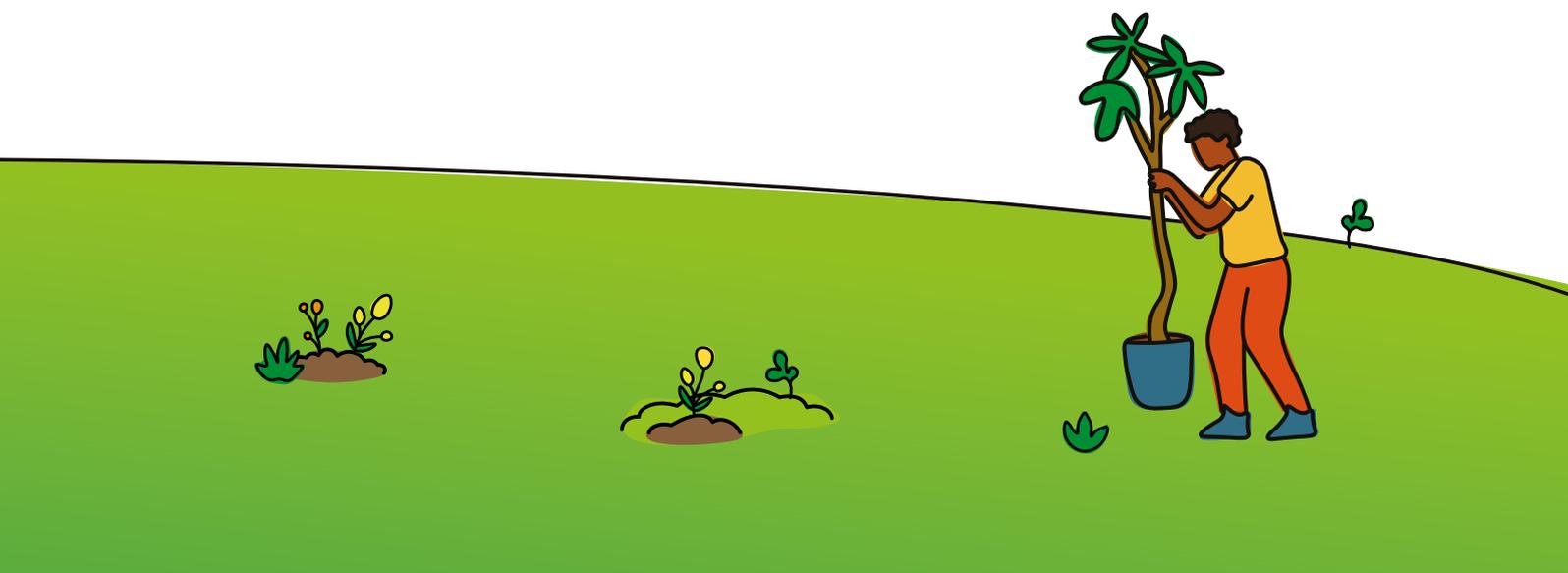
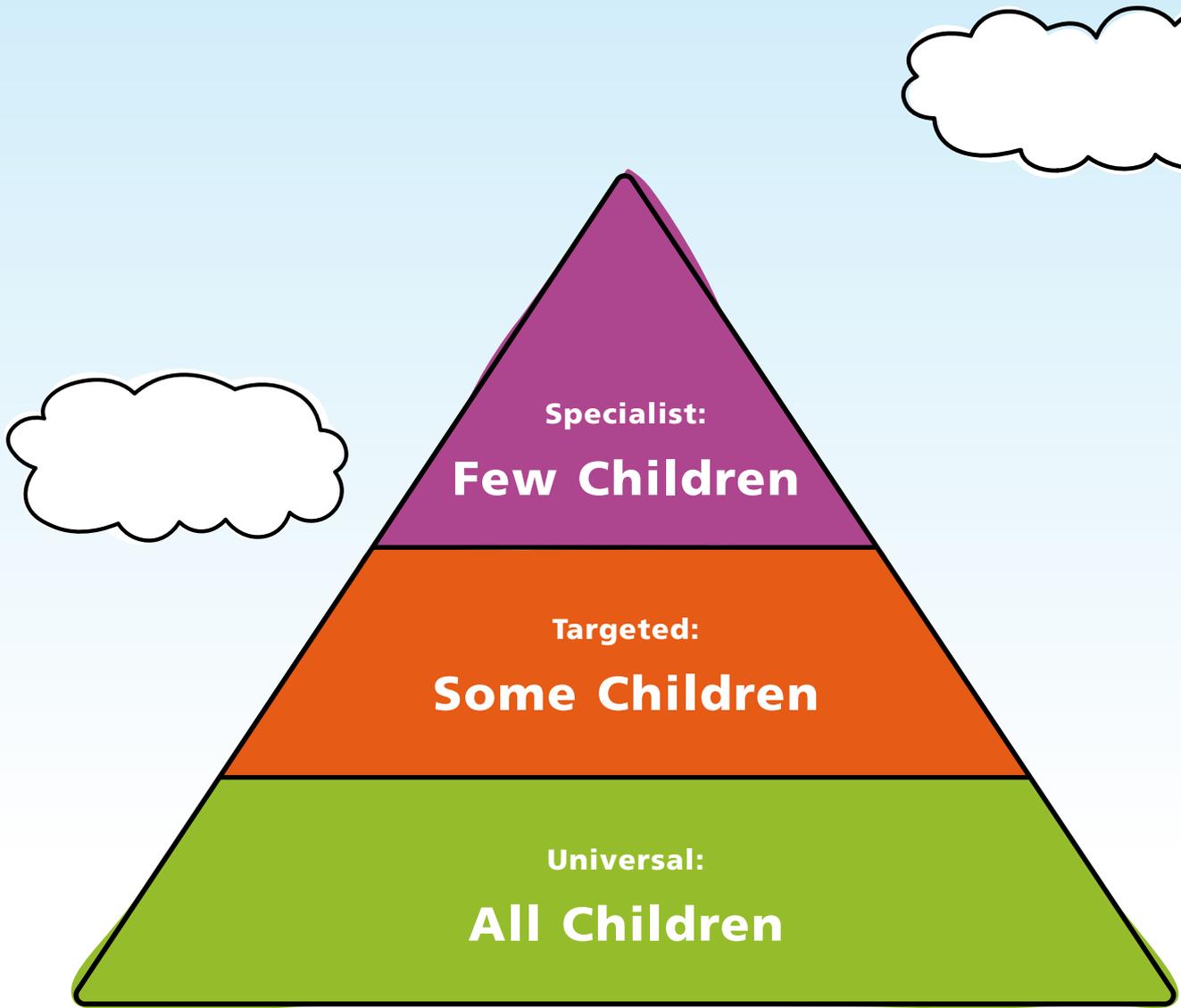
Targeted Support:

These activities and strategies will benefit a range of children in the classroom, including children that you may have some concerns about, regarding development of their speech language and communication skills. Examples of **targeted** support include language groups, WellComm interventions and Advice line support.

Universal Support:

All children will benefit from this support. Including **universal** strategies into the classroom will enrich all of the children's speech, language and communication skills. Examples of **universal** support include: Quality First Teaching, Key messages, developing a communication-friendly setting, top tips for classrooms and vocabulary learning.





Speech, language and communication is at the heart of school life, and vital for children to succeed; however parents and schools were becoming increasingly frustrated with not being able to easily access support for children with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN). This reflected the entire service model being too heavily focused on the specialist level, waiting for input from a Speech and Language Therapist.

This document will support school staff to implement **universal** and **targeted** strategies which will be of benefit to children in your classroom. Given the numbers of children who require support for communication, this approach is vital. In areas of high social deprivation in the UK, between 40% and 56% of children start school with language delay (Law et al., 2011).

In response to schools wanting to know how they could better support children with SLCN in their school, we have developed this toolkit which sits within a wider training model, and will allow more timely access to Speech and Language Therapists for children who require **specialist** intervention.

The toolkit and training model are built on the current evidence base and what we know to be good practice from the research literature.

This toolkit has been developed to provide advice and strategies, and to signpost to interventions which schools can use to support children's speech, language and communication skills. We will now consider each area of speech and language development, and provide strategies that will support all pupils (at a **universal** level) and most pupils (**targeted** level) with specific needs identified in these areas.

The Toolkit will provide advice and strategies at the **universal** level, which can be used with all pupils and should be embedded as part of a communication-friendly classroom. This section will be colour coded as **green**.

The **targeted** section, colour-coded as **orange**, will sign-post schools to published resources which can be used to develop specific areas of need. This will be provided by education settings. The information in the **targeted** section, will also be useful for many pupils who may require **specialist** support.

It is important to remember that for children who may require **targeted** and / or **specialist** support, while paper-based resources have a place, communication occurs through the day and supporting children's speech, language and communication development will be much more effective functionally, if we are supporting their development in the day-to-day context.

It is important to ensure that everyone who works with a child who requires **targeted** or **specialist** support understands that child's individual profile, and uses strategies to facilitate a communication rich environment.

There will be children in your education setting that will need to be referred to the Speech and Language Therapy Service; specific identifiers for these children will be detailed in this Toolkit and marked with the colour **purple**.

Please remember that speech, language and communication needs can't be resolved or supported by just one person.

This toolkit is intended for use by SENCos and teachers working within mainstream schools, and it is to be used in conjunction with Liverpool and Sefton SEND Graduated Approach Handbook.



When you see this icon in the guide it indicates that you may find it useful to call the **Speech and Language Therapy Team** on **0151 295 3990 (Liverpool)** or **0151 247 6109 (Sefton)** and ask to speak with the Duty Therapist for further advice or guidance. There are Speech and Language Therapists on duty every day to answer these queries.



'Sound the alarm'

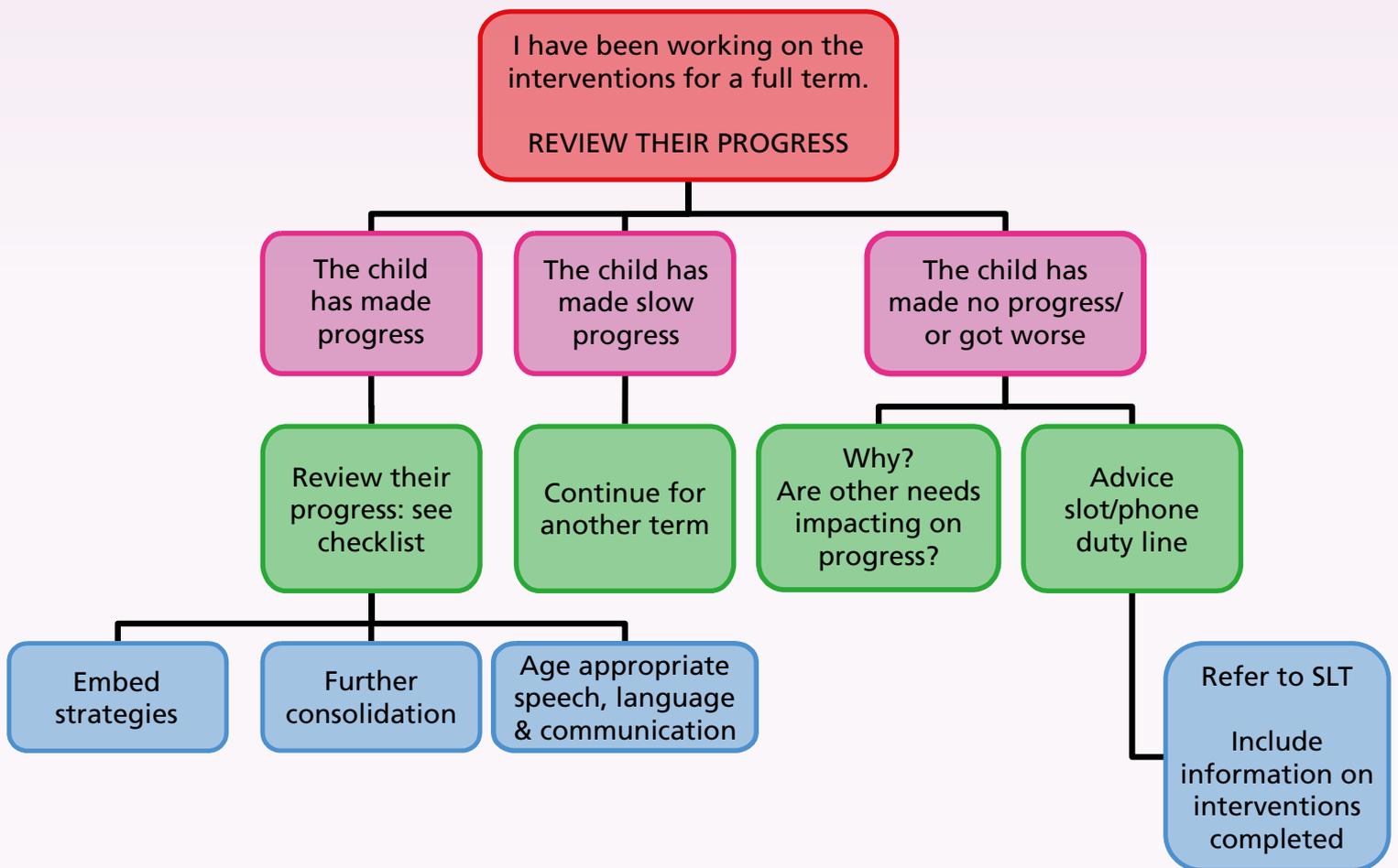
When you see this icon in the guide, it indicates that a child may require a referral to a **Speech and Language Therapist** for **specialist** advice.

4.1 Specialist Input: When to sound the alarm to a Speech and Language Therapist



There may be children that do not make progress following the recommended **'targeted'** approaches' and require input from a Speech and Language Therapist, in this case a referral to the service will be required. Detailing the interventions you have tried will support the referral process.

If you have been working on the recommended **targeted** interventions but you still have concerns, please follow the next steps.



5 Supporting Sound Speech, Language and Communication

5.1 Creating Sound Communication Environments

The following universal strategies are helpful for every classroom and will support every child's access to the routines and language used in the classroom.

Environmental Modifications

A child's learning environment can make a big difference to their communication skills. We can enhance the classroom environment to create a communication-friendly space. Speech and Language UK (previously ICAN) describes a communication-friendly environment as:

A communication-friendly environment should make communication as easy, effective and enjoyable as possible. It should provide opportunities for everyone to talk, listen, understand and take part. A communication-friendly environment will support the development of all children's communication skills and usually includes features which will also be particularly beneficial for children and young people with Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN). Developing a communication-friendly environment can also be seen as removing barriers to communication. A communication environment will also support learning, social and emotional development.

In a communication-friendly school, all barriers to communication are removed so everyone can access and participate in learning. Supports are in place so all children can make sense of their environment, understand others and be independent.

Where to start?

A good place to start is to review what is in place at the moment in the classroom. There are many classroom assessment / audit tools available and they can help you identify what is going well and what changes and adaptations you can put in place.

You may find it useful to complete the Speech and Language UK (ICAN) Communication Supporting Classroom Observation Tool: <https://speechandlanguage.org.uk/talking-point/for-professionals/the-communication-trust/more-resources/classroom-supporting-tool>

Create a communication friendly environment in your classroom by trying some of the ideas in this section.

Visual Supports

Visuals last longer than spoken words: they often gain a child's attention to focus more quickly and are more tangible / real for the child to understand.

When we talk about visuals they may include signs, symbols, photographs, objects or written words. Demonstrating activities is also a visual support.

Golden Rule: Be consistent in using visuals across the day; using them consistently to represent a task or a prompt, this will give the children lots of opportunities to learn and understand the task.

Things to Try:

- Visual timelines and task lists. This can be for the whole class or for the individual child, or both.



- Use prompt cards to teach and reinforce class rules, for example, good looking, good listening, good sitting, thinking time.
- Use demonstrations to explain new activities. Don't just rely on the verbal instructions, back it up with a demonstration: this will show children what equipment is needed (without having to remember a long list), also what order the task should be completed and the finished result.

- Sand timers are a useful visual support in the classroom. Real sand timers and also digital sand timers are useful resources.
- Resources can be labelled with written words and also photos / symbols; this will encourage children to be more independent in the classroom setting.



Routines

- Children respond well when they are familiar with what is happening and know what they need to do, a good way of encouraging this is to use routines in your classroom.
- Golden Rule: establish clear and consistent routines.

Things to try:

- Clear, consistent routines; check, does everyone know what they are doing and when?
- Introducing new routines; mark the start and end of each activity clearly.
- Make children aware of changes in routines (visual timelines can really help with this).

- Visuals can be used to support routines (task lists, visuals timelines).
- Songs also help to mark specific transitions.

Transitions are changes between activities or places in the classroom setting. They can be challenging as children may not know where they are going or what is happening or what to expect, which can be a cause of worry for children.

Things to try:

- A count down.
- Visual supports, such as a now and next board, lanyard symbols or traffic lights.

- Now and next boards are a really useful support: the 'now' is the activity of the adult's choosing and the 'next' is a motivating activity of the child's choosing. You can use symbols or even draw a now / next board on a portable whiteboard.

- Traffic Lights.

Start with activities that have a clear beginning, middle and end, like snack time. Once your child understands the concept, you can use these in all situations. Be consistent with the strategy.

Traffic lights strategy

The Green Traffic Light indicates an activity is about to start. Verbally state to the student, '... is starting' whilst holding up the green symbol. Ensure that the student looks at the green traffic light. You can encourage the student to touch the traffic light.

The Yellow / Orange Traffic Light is the most important of the three. When an activity / event is nearly finished or when access to something is about to be withdrawn, hold up the yellow traffic light whilst simultaneously stating '...is nearly finished'. As above, ensure that the student looks at the traffic light and is encouraged to touch it. You can show the student the yellow traffic light to tell them to wait, e.g. 'It is nearly time for....' or 'waiting' or 'we are waiting for ...'

The Red Traffic Light is used to indicate that an activity / event is finished or that access to something has been withdrawn. Hold up the red traffic light whilst simultaneously stating '...is finished'.



Layout of the Classroom

Learning areas are clearly defined throughout the classroom.

Golden Rules for your classroom:

- Make it easy to navigate.
- The children need to be able to see your face when you are speaking.
- Opportunities to talk in smaller groups or with a friend.
- Make sure that the environment is not too 'busy' in terms of colour and displays to avoid sensory chaos.

Opportunities for Communication

- Make sure there are things to talk about.
- Comment on the child's play instead of asking lots of questions.
- Pause and wait; (saying less sometimes encourages a child to say more).
- Give time for children to formulate what they want to say.
- Encouraging contributions in a range of ways; e.g. sharing photos, using recordable photo books.

Other things to consider:

Distractions...

Be the most interesting thing in the room!

Strategies need to be established to regain the children's attention; this could be a sound (e.g. 'listening bells'), a song / rhyme (e.g. 'Hocus Pocus, let's all focus!') or an action (e.g. hands in the air or 'freeze' game).

5.2 Attention and Listening

Some children find it difficult to listen and keep their attention on the topic. In order to listen, it is important to be able to keep your attention long enough to hear the words. Attention and listening are essential foundation skills for speech, language and communication.

What does this look like in the classroom? The child may be:

- Easily distracted
- Appears to ignore you
- Struggles to sit still
- Talks when they should be listening
- Cannot tell you what you have been talking about
- Does not appear to know what to do when given instructions
- Can only concentrate on one thing at a time
- Does not settle with one game / toy but flits from activity to activity

How does attention and listening develop:

• Fleeting Attention	• 0-1 years	• Child not able to attend to what is said	• Approx 7 minutes concentration span
• Rigid to Single Channelled Attention	• 1-3 years	• Child can attend to own choice of activity for longer but can only focus on that on activity	• Approx 9 minutes concentration span
• Focusing Attention	• 3-4 years	• Child able to look at an adult if stops an activity • Beginning of shared attention but needs an adult to help achieve this	• Approx 13 minutes concentration span
• Two-Channelled Attention	• 4-5 years	• Can move attention from task to speaker or speaker to speaker with prompts	• Approx 15 minutes concentration span
• Towards Integrated Attention	• 6+ years	• Child listens more and attends well in large groups • Makes reasonable choices to prioritise one task over another • Remains 'in tune' with those around them	• Up to 60 minutes concentration span

Reference: Cooper, Moodley and Reynell (1978) 'Helping Language Development'

Key strategies to try with the whole class:

- ✓ Focus the child's attention before giving an instruction
- ✓ Keep it visual! Visuals last longer than spoken words, including objects, pictures, written words, and drawings
- ✓ Keep activities short and varied
- ✓ Teach the rules of listening, remind the children of the rules at the start of an activity
- ✓ Praise good looking, good listening and good sitting in the classroom regularly
- ✓ Give one piece of information / instruction at a time
- ✓ Keep our instructions short and simple; picking out the key message
- ✓ Give processing time (wait...)
- ✓ Mark the start and end of each activity clearly

5.3 Vocabulary Development

A child needs to know a range of words to help them understand what is said to them day-to-day, and then, be able to use those words as part of their expressive language.

A child will need to hear the name of an object, an action word or a concept word many times and in a variety of contexts before they are able to understand it, and certainly before they will start to use the word expressively.

The size of a child's vocabulary is linked to academic attainment and so it is a vital part of every child's language development. Vocabulary learning can be difficult for some children and so the use of additional strategies will support them in this area.

The strategies advised here will support vocabulary learning in class.

Universal Strategies to Support Vocabulary Development

The following advice and strategies will help to support the vocabulary learning of all children in the classroom and will continue to be useful for children who may need more **targeted** or **specialist** support.

- ✓ Expose children to a wide range of vocabulary and words every day.
- ✓ Highlight interesting words as you come across them. Talk about their meaning and reinforce them.
- ✓ Display key words and vocabulary you are learning around the classroom and share them with home so parents/carers can help

to talk about them and reinforce them. This is really important for bilingual children, so vocabulary being learned in English can be reinforced and learned in the child's home language.

- ✓ Encourage children to listen out for new words, and every so often stop what you are doing and ask, "did you hear any new words?". Talk about the meaning of the words the child / children identify.
- ✓ Encourage children to ask when they hear a word they do not know.
- ✓ Praise children when you hear them use a new and interesting word "what a great word, John!".
- ✓ Teach new, key words related to a topic explicitly at the start of the topic and review the key words regularly. Remember to only introduce a few new words at a time.
- ✓ Use a multi-sensory approach to word learning as often as you can.
- ✓ Link new words to words the child already knows and are in the child's own experience.
- ✓ **REMEMBER:** A child must hear a word many times in different contexts before they will confidently understand it, and before they will start to use the word as part of their expressive language.

WORD WALL

Squirrel



Hedgehog



Fox



Hare



Deer



THIS WEEKS WORDS:
Countryside Mammals

Bat



Targeting Sound Vocabulary Development and Word Learning

Children can have gaps in their vocabulary development due to lack of exposure or experience of specific objects / words. Some children also have specific difficulties learning words, storing words and retrieving words.

It is important that children are supported to develop their understanding of, and use of a wide and varied vocabulary.

Difficulties learning and using vocabulary, what will it look like in the classroom?

- Limited range of vocabulary.

- Difficulties learning new pieces of vocabulary.
- May struggle to find words quickly and accurately.
- May use less specific vocabulary such as "thingy", "you know...", "doing", rather than specific words.
- May use many fillers such as "err...", "umm".

First, consider completing a basic Vocabulary Checklist which includes object words, action words and concept words. See what gaps there may be for you to target.

Concept words are often the most challenging words for children; these can include words related to colour, size, shape, texture (attributes), or time words such as before, first / next / last, yesterday, tomorrow. These types of words are often difficult as they can be abstract and change depending on the context. They can also have more than one meaning e.g. "light".

For older children you may need to consider vocabulary related to specific topic areas. You need to think about the key words associated with that topic and all the words the child isn't aware of but probably should be.

Identify core vocabulary that the child needs to learn and start to target them specifically.

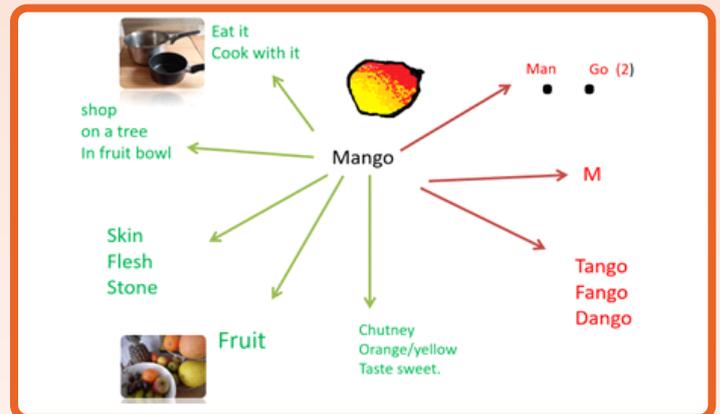
IMPORTANT:

Children with literacy difficulties often miss out on word learning opportunities through reading which provides another avenue for vocabulary development.

For older children, don't assume basic vocabulary knowledge as lots of children have gaps in these areas, and that makes it difficult for more complex vocabulary to then be learnt.

- ✓ Only introduce a few new words to learn at a time.
- ✓ Target no more than 10 concept words at any one time. It is okay to target less depending on each individual child.
- ✓ Share a list of target vocabulary with home so that it can be worked on and reinforced there. The vocabulary selected should be differentiated as appropriate, depending on an individual child.

- ✓ Use "Word Maps" to help children learn about semantic and phonological information related to target vocabulary.
- ✓ The ELKLAN Language Builders 5-11 (yellow book) covers many strategies and activities to encourage vocabulary skills. [https://www.elkklan.co.uk/Shop/Language Builders for 5-11s](https://www.elkklan.co.uk/Shop/Language_Builders_for_5-11s)



- ✓ Build a "Word Map" dictionary.
- ✓ Continue to reinforce target vocabulary over a long period of time and then evaluate the child's knowledge of the target vocabulary.
- ✓ Create Knowledge Organisers.

A Knowledge Organiser is a way to summarise key information about a topic or area of the curriculum in a visual way. Often the organiser is created using a template on 1 sheet of A4 paper. The organiser is created with a grid template and a list or brief description of the essential points for the child to learn in each section / topic / area. The sheet then acts as a summary of the facts and key knowledge on a topic, which makes the information easier to recall.

You may include key facts, key words / vocabulary in a topic with their meanings detailed and any other visual supports to help the learner.

Here is an example from TES (formerly the Times Educational Supplement) (<https://www.tes.com/teaching-resource/location-knowledge-united-kingdom-knowledge-organiser-12141636>)

And vocabulary ninja <https://vocabularyninja.co.uk/knowledge-organisers/>

Published Resources and Interventions to Target Vocabulary Development.

Aims / Outcomes of Targeted Support Vocabulary Development:

Below are some examples of the outcomes you should aim to achieve from your **targeted** work. This list is not exhaustive and can be adapted to suit individual children.

- The child will show understanding of the basic concepts... (e.g. light, behind, next, smooth) on 5 separate occasions. You may wish to look at Mathematics concepts that a child needs to know for that year.
- When given a pre-taught vocabulary word, the child will provide the meaning of the word with no prompts or support in 4 out of 5 opportunities across 2 sessions.
- The child will use vocabulary strategies (e.g. type of word, similar words, word map, context clues, dictionary use) to define unfamiliar words found in their reading book, when given visual support, such as, a word map to complete.

Published interventions will often provide very structured programmes with provided outcomes.

1) WELLCOMM and The Big Book of Ideas.

2) NELI Programme. The Nuffield Early Language Intervention (NELI) <https://www.teachneli.org>

The programme involves a trained teaching assistant providing short small-group and individual teaching sessions to around 3-6 reception-aged pupils for 20-weeks. Evaluations of the approach found NELI children made on average 3 months of additional progress in language.

3) ELKLAN Language Builders – Advice and activities to encourage children’s communication skills.

Yellow book-2012 edition Pages 49-69. Promoting vocabulary Development. https://www.elklan.co.uk/Shop/Language_Builders_for_5-11s

4) ELKLAN Language Builders – Advice and activities to encourage children’s communication skills.

Yellow book-2012 edition Pages 49-69. Promoting Vocabulary Development https://www.elklan.co.uk/Shop/Language_Builders_for_5-11s

5) ELKLAN Language Builders – Advice and activities to encourage children’s communication skills.

yellow book-2012 edition Pages 55-57. “Word Investigations” which covers Word Maps. https://www.elklan.co.uk/Shop/Language_Builders_for_5-11s

6) ELKLAN PORIC –

Concepts in developmental levels.

PORIC provides a wealth of ideas to assess and develop the linguistic concepts (descriptive vocabulary) needed to access the Foundation and Key Stage 1 curricular.

<https://www.elklan.co.uk/Shop/PORIC>

7) Word Aware

Word Aware is a structured whole school approach to promote the vocabulary development of all children.

https://www.routledge.com/topics/word-aware?srsltid=AfmBOop9swo0PoGIRi7IbEwOc0svi_pgE8LJMQ2vohkb8tRwr3_Q-hdB

A twelve minute YouTube video explains this approach. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G-v61HNtG4c&t=71s>

8) PTV

Pre Teaching Vocabulary (Pip St John), contains free resources and demonstration videos of a whole class approach to vocabulary learning, recommended by “What Works” website:

<https://www.naplic.org.uk/pre-teaching-vocabulary-and-sentence-builder-resources/>



Vocabulary Development and Word Learning – When to Sound the Alarm...

Word Finding Difficulties

Some children can have a specific difficulty storing and retrieving words.

When we learn words, we store information about the semantic (meanings) and phonological (speech sounds) properties of words and link them to other words that we already know which have similar properties. This helps us to create a giant 'filing cabinet' in our brains, storing the words we learn in an organised way. Children who have Word Finding Difficulties can be described as having a disorganised 'filing cabinet'.

Unlike children who may be experiencing difficulties with vocabulary due to lack of experience and exposure to particular words / objects, children who have Word Finding Difficulties know the words but cannot retrieve them quickly or accurately.

You may notice that the child:

- seems to know the meaning of the word they want to use, but it's stuck 'on the tip of the tongue'.
- takes longer than you might expect to reply or to find a word.

- appears to "search" for the word they are trying to find – sometimes they may tap their head or roll their eyes as if trying to seek out the word.
- uses words which don't quite fit or make sense in the context of what they are talking about.
- replaces the word they are searching for with a word that has a similar meaning.
- uses general words such as 'thing' or 'that' when they are talking.
- They may get some of the sounds wrong when trying to say the word.

If a child's **had lots of experience and exposure to words / objects** and seems to "know" the words well and yet still appears to be having difficulties "finding" these words when speaking, it may be that they are experiencing a specific Word Finding Difficulty.

Specialist support from our service regarding Word Finding Difficulties, will involve providing those around the child with advice which they can implement to help the children store vocabulary effectively, and have strategies they can draw on to aid retrieval. Many of these strategies are covered in the **targeted** section.

5.4 Understanding Spoken Language

In order to understand what someone is saying we need to be able to:

- Focus on the speaker
- Understand the vocabulary being used
- Understand the concepts being used
- Understand the grammar and / or syntax being used
- Understand the questions being asked
- Understand what is meant rather than what is said

It's important to note that understanding language also involves a number of other skills such as attention and listening, vocabulary knowledge and working memory skills. Difficulties in any of these areas will impact on a child's understanding of what is said to them.

Universal Strategies to Support Understanding of Spoken Language.

- ✓ **Always make sure the child is attending** to you before you give them an instruction or ask a question. Say their name and get down to their level.
- ✓ **Use visuals timetables** to set out what the day will look like. These can be done using objects, pictures or symbols. The concept of time is abstract and can be

difficult for children to understand, so visual timetables can really help with this aspect. They can also reduce anxiety and help children to focus better as they know what to expect during their day.

- ✓ **Consider the vocabulary** you are using. If a child doesn't know or understand a word, they aren't going to be able to follow your instruction.
- ✓ **Consider whether to break instructions down** into smaller parts and give them in the order you want them to happen. Children can find it hard to remember long instructions and to understand concepts such as "before".

So, rather than saying "Before you line up for play time, tidy away your table and put your coat on, it's cold outside."

Try:

"Tidy your table." (wait for the class to tidy their table)

"Put your coat on." (wait for the class to put their coats on)

"Line up" (wait for the children to line up)

- ✓ **Talk about what we want** children to do, rather than what we don't. Children who have difficulties with "negatives" can misunderstand instructions that contain them, and may do the very thing you are asking them not to do. So, rather than saying "Don't run", instead try "Walk please".

- ✓ **Emphasise important** words and use gestures to support your instructions.
- ✓ **Think about the questions** you are asking. “how do you know”, “problem solving” and “why” questions are all hard questions; consider whether the child is able to answer this type of question.
- ✓ **Avoid sarcasm and figures of speech.** Be specific and clear about what is expected. Instead of saying “You’re going out in a T-Shirt, it’s raining cats and dogs out there.” Try “It’s raining outside, put your coat on”.
- ✓ **Use a slower rate of speech and give 10 seconds before expecting a response.** This will help give children lots of processing time.
- ✓ **Check whole group instructions** have been understood by everyone. Some children will need them to be given individually.
- ✓ **ALWAYS** encourage children to seek support and clarification if they haven’t understood.

Targeting Sound Understanding of Spoken Language:

Some children can find it difficult to understand what is said to them, to follow instructions and to answer questions. Children who could be experiencing difficulties understanding spoken language may:

- Have poor attention and listening skills
- Not follow instructions provided
- Need instructions repeated more than once
- Only carry out part of an instruction
- Watch their peers and copy them
- Not respond to questions

- Not take part in group question and answer activities
- Provide incorrect or “odd” answers to questions
- Have difficulties understanding implied meaning

In this section you will find ideas to help you target children’s understanding of spoken language.

We have also provided some examples of the outcome you could aim to achieve from your **targeted** work. This list is not exhaustive and can be adapted to suit individual children.

Published interventions will often provide very structured programmes with provided outcomes.

Following instructions with increasing number of Information Carrying Words:

Reference: Knowles w and Masidlover, M (1982) The Derbyshire Language Screen. Derbyshire County Council.

Information Carrying Words (ICW) are the number of words contained within an instruction that carry meaning.

A child needs to be able to understand each of the Information Carrying Words in an instruction before they will be able to carry it out successfully.

Identify the number of Information Carrying Words a child can understand. Then either 1-1 or in a small group target their understanding of instructions with an increasing number of Information Carrying Words.

IMPORTANT - When thinking about Information Carrying Words you must consider the child's understanding of specific vocabulary being used such as object words, action words, positional words (for example -in / on / under / behind / in front) and describing words (for example- colour, shape, size). If a child doesn't understand a specific piece of vocabulary, they will not be able to follow the instruction provided.

Published Resources and Interventions to Target Understanding of Spoken Language:

- 1) **WELLCOMM and the Big Book of Ideas.**
- 2) **ELKLAN Language Builders – Advice and activities to encourage children's communication skills.**

yellow book-2012 edition Pages 28-31.
Working With Information Carrying Words.
<https://www.elklan.co.uk/Shop/LanguageBuildersfor5-11s>

3) **ELKLAN Language Builders – Advice and activities to support Autistic Pupils.**

Blue book – 2009 edition. Pages 70-74.
Working With Information Carrying Words.
<https://www.elklan.co.uk/Shop/LanguageBuildersforAutisticPupils>

4) **ELKLAN EYBIC Word Pack – Early Years Based Information Carrying Word Pack.**

EYBIC provides a structured framework which helps children increase the amount of information they can remember. At the same time EYBIC will develop their knowledge and language of everyday topics including: Ourselves, Food, Clothing, Toys, Animal, Home.
<https://www.elklan.co.uk/Shop/EYBICWordPack>

5) **ELKLAN -CuBIC Word Pack – Curriculum Based Information Carrying Word Pack.**

CuBIC Word Pack incorporates Information Carrying Word principles to use with curriculum topics (eg History, Geography and Science) for pupils aged between 4-7.

It provides a structured framework to facilitate the control of the number of words in a sentence that a child has to understand in order to carry out an instruction.
<https://www.elklan.co.uk/Shop/CuBICWordPack>

6) CLEAR: Pictoys Resources:

Pictoys are a unique type of resource - part pictures, part toys. They are a series of ten interactive resource sets that explore sentence building at different levels increasing the number of Information Carrying Words a child needs to understand and use to complete and provide instructions.

<http://www.clear-resources.co.uk/ClearProductsPage.html>

7) Blacksheep Press: Barrier Games.

Helps to develop understanding of concept words using an increasing number of Information Carrying Words.

<https://www.blacksheepress.co.uk/product/barrier-concepts-listening-skills>
<https://www.blacksheepress.co.uk/product/barrier-worksheets>

8) Language Steps

Language Steps targets language comprehension and expression using Information Carrying Words format. The programme includes language activities targeting one to four Information Carrying Words.

<https://www.integratedtreatmentservices.co.uk/our-approaches/speech-therapy-approaches/language-steps/>

9) Twinkl

<https://www.twinkl.co.uk/search?q=information+carrying+words&c=244&r=parent>

Aims / Outcomes of Targeted support for Information Carrying Words

- The child will be able to complete instructions that contain 1 Information Carrying Word for both functional everyday object and action words with 90% consistency without any adult prompting as part of a classroom activity.
- The child will be able to complete instructions that contain 2 Information Carrying Words with 90% consistency without any adult prompting as part of a classroom activity. They will be able to do this for instructions which contain: noun+noun, and noun+verb, and verb+noun.
- The child will be able to complete instructions that contain 3 information Carrying Words 90% consistency without any adult prompting as part of a classroom activity.

Please note: this list is not exhaustive and can be adapted to suit individual children.

The BLANK Language Scheme or the Language of Learning model

References:

- 1) Blank, Rose and Berlin (1978) The Language of Learning: The pre-school year. New York: Grune and Stratton Inc.
- 2) McLachlan, H and Elks, L. (2012). Language Builders. Advice and activities to encourage children's communication skills (ELKLAN). <https://www.elklan.co.uk>

This model considers the language we use when talking to children and breaks it down in to 4 levels. With level 1 being the most concrete and having the least demand on language. Moving through to level 4 which use the most abstract language and places the greatest demand on language. Children who have social communication difficulties or a diagnosis of Autism can find language structures which required them to think from another persons perspective, make predictions and make inferences difficult. This means they often find language structures at BLANK level 3 particularly challenging, and some language structures at BLANK level 4 too.

Consider a child's understanding of language structures at BLANK level 1-4, identify any gaps and begin to target these specifically.

It's important to remember that: day to day adults should use language structures at the BLANK level / s the child is confident with, including just a few structures or questions at the next level up- using supportive scaffolding, modelling or providing the correct response as needed.

A child's ability to process language will be

impacted by their emotional state. When a child is happy, and calm and regulated they may be able to understand language structures which they will not when they are upset, stressed and dysregulated. **Adults should adapt the language they use appropriately at such times.**

Published Resources:

1) WELLCOMM and the Big Book of Ideas.

2) ELKLAN Language Builders – Advice and activities to encourage children's communication skills.

Yellow book-2012 edition Pages 39-48. The BLANK language scheme or the language of learning model.

<https://www.elklan.co.uk/Shop/LanguageBuildersfor5-11s>

3) ELKLAN Language Builders – Advice and activities to support Autistic Pupils.

Blue book-2012 edition Pages 54-69. The BLANK language scheme or the language of learning model.

<https://www.winslowresources.com/language-for-thinking-book.html>

4) Language For Thinking:

Is a structured approach to develop children's language from the 'here and now' to the 'how and why'.

<https://www.winslowresources.com/language-for-thinking-book.html>

5) Language for Behaviour and Emotions:

This practical, interactive resource is designed to be used by professionals who work with children and young people who have Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs and Speech, Language and Communication needs.

<https://www.routledge.com/Language-for-Behaviour-and-Emotions-A-Practical-Guide-to-Working-with-Children-and-Young-People/Branagan-Cross-Parsons/pl/book/9780367331832>

6) Speaking and Listening through

Narrative: ages 5-7

Teaches the concepts of 'Who', 'Where', 'When', 'What Happened Next' and 'The End'. This Narrative framework can be applied to many typical classroom activities e.g. retelling events, story comprehension and planning as well as supporting explanations in verbal and written form.

<https://www.blacksheepress.co.uk/product/speaking-and-listening-through-narrative-ages-5-7>

7) From Oral to Written Narrative: ages 7-11

The resources build on the 'Speaking and Listening Through Narrative- age 5-7', extending the 'what happened' element of the story into more 'problem – solution' scenarios and additional resources are provided to support children's understanding of the thoughts and feelings of the characters and how to incorporate dialogue into their oral and written narratives.

<https://www.blacksheepress.co.uk/product/from-oral-to-written-narrative-ages-7-11>

8) Twinkl

<https://www.twinkl.co.uk/resources/speech-language-and-communication-areas-of-need->

[primary-send-inclusion-teaching-resources/understanding-language-salt-inclusion/blanks-levels-question-words-words-and-vocab-english-curriculum-support-sen](https://www.twinkl.co.uk/resources/speech-language-and-communication-areas-of-need-primary-send-inclusion-teaching-resources/understanding-language-salt-inclusion/blanks-levels-question-words-words-and-vocab-english-curriculum-support-sen)

Example Aims / Outcomes of Targeted support For BLANK levels

- The child will be able to answer "who" and "where" questions with 80% consistency when asked as part of a classroom activity. (BLANK Level 2)
- The child will demonstrate understanding of the function of objects with 80% consistency as part of a classroom activity. (BLANK Level 2)
- The child will be able to make a prediction about what might happen next with 80% consistency as part of a classroom activity. (BLANK Level 3)
- The child will be able to problem solve from another person's perspective with 80% consistency as part of curriculum-based activities. (BLANK Level 4)

Please note: this list is not exhaustive and can be adapted to suit individual children.

Blank Level 1: Naming

Key Skills: Matching and naming.

Examples: Find me the, Show me, What's this? (label an object)...

Helpers: use objects and pictures, label items repetitively in play and everyday tasks, use a multisensory approach.

Blank Level 2: Describing

Key Skills: Focusing on objects and situations in more detail.

Examples: Who? Where? What are they doing? What's happening? Function of objects (what can we cut with), grouping and categorising things that go together, concepts (size, quantity, shape, colour, texture).

Helpers: This level is about the here and now and things I can see, use a multisensory approach. Provide choice of answers (is it X or Y) or model the answer.

Blank Level 3: Think about it

Key Skills: Making predictions and retelling.

Examples: What happens next? What could he say? How do they feel? When? Instructions with parts / steps (first, next and last), exceptions (find me a cup that isn't plastic), sequencing pictures, retell a story, describe a sequence.

Helpers: Use own photographs of events / activities for sequencing and retelling, relate questions to child's own experience, role play situations – think about what people might say, feel, do next. Provide a choice of answers (could they do X or Y) or model a right answer.

Blank Level 4: Reasoning

Key Skills: Solving problems and justifying.

Examples: Why? How do you know? What would you do?

Helpers: Relate questions to the child's own experience, role play situations, use picture cues, provide a choice of answers (could they X or could they Y), model the answer.

Monitoring understanding of language and seeking help / clarification.

Children who find it difficult to understand language benefit from learning how to recognise what has gone wrong and seek the appropriate help from an adult. E.g. "I don't understand", "I've forgotten what you said", "I don't know what X means".

Supporting children to monitor their own understanding and seek clarification when something has gone wrong empowers them to take some ownership with regard to the things they find difficult and have some control over how adults support them.

Some children may feel very confident asking for support day to day in the classroom, however others may not. For these children, the teacher, TA and child should agree a discreet signal which lets the adult know that some support is needed e.g. placing a rubber at the top of their desk.

Support and teach children how to monitor their understanding and seek appropriate help and clarification. Children will need practise to help them monitor their understanding and seek appropriate help.

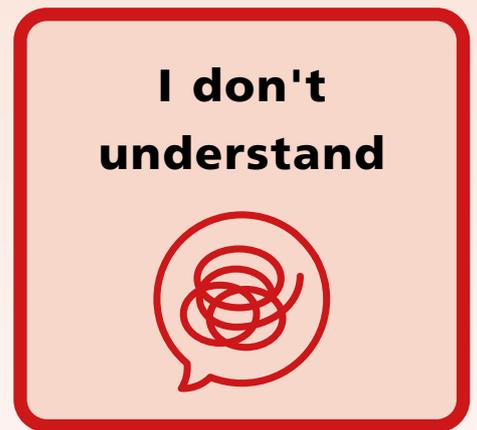
Published Resources:

- 1) **ELKLAN Language Builders** – Advice and activities to encourage children's communication skills. Yellow book-2012 edition pages 99- 100. "Speak Out". <https://www.elklan.co.uk/Shop/LanguageBuildersfor5-11s>
- 2) **Elsbeth McCartney – Language Therapy Manual, pages 23-55.** "Comprehension Monitoring". https://pure.strath.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/5681935/language_therapy_manual.pdf
- 3) **Active Listening for Active Learning.** <https://www.qed.uk.com/product-page/active-listening-for-active-learning>
<https://coursebeetle.co.uk/resources/alfal-digital-resource-Digitalversion>
- 4) **Lanyard-Sized Comprehension Self-Monitoring Cards** from www.twinkl.co.uk

You could informally screen a child's ability to request for clarification during any listening task, to identify what the child does when they are given directions that they don't understand. Before you start, you should introduce the idea that some messages might not be understood, for example: "I'm going to give you some instructions to follow whilst we do x (e.g. complete this worksheet / play 'Simon Says' or use the Maths shapes etc). If the instructions are not clear and you don't understand, then please tell me. Ok? Are you ready?".

Give some instructions that a child can easily understand, mixed with the following messages: instructions with unfamiliar vocabulary, instructions that are too long / complex, verbal utterances that are too quiet / can't be heard / incomplete, and ambiguous commands. Observe what a child

does when they do not understand. Knowing that you haven't understood, and what you can do to request for clarification is a skill that may need to be taught. Children who have comprehension difficulties are at risk of becoming passive learners in class.



Aims / Outcomes of Targeted support for Comprehension Monitoring:

- The child will indicate non-verbally that they do not understand a question or instruction.
- The child will recognise when someone is speaking too quietly / too quickly and what they can do / say.
- The child will recognise when somebody has asked them to do something that

is impossible or ambiguous, and what clarification strategy they can use.

- The child will indicate when an instruction is too long, and what they can say to help themselves remember the information.
- The child will request for clarification of an unfamiliar word.

Please note: this list is not exhaustive and can be adapted to suit individual children.

5.5 Expressive Language

Sentence building

- ✓ Provide a language rich environment with good sentence models for all children.
- ✓ Give time for a response. Don't be afraid of silences as these may encourage a child to 'fill the gaps'.
- ✓ Comment on what a child is doing to allow them to hear the appropriate language. Avoid the use of too many questions as this can put pressure on the child and aim to give at least 4 comments, e.g. "The scary monster is thinking" to every question that you ask.
- ✓ Using modelling strategies e.g. repeating back what the child has said expanding on the information the child has given. Expand on a child's sentence by adding a few words - to show how they can make their sentence longer, sometimes referred to as expansion.

Grammar

Children learn to use grammatical markers by listening to and learning from those around them. They also learn rules which are over applied in the early stages. For example, a young child will say "I caught the ball" rather than "I caught..." This is because they have learned the rule of adding "-ed" to mark past tense. This is a normal phase in development. Adults around the child should provide a model by repeating back a corrected version of what the child has said and emphasise the changed word,

e.g. "oh yes, you caught the ball." It is not recommended to make the child say it again.

Please note that some children with speech sound difficulties will not be able to use some grammatical markers at the end of words until their speech sounds have developed.

Story Telling (Narrative) Skills

Narrative skills are essential to enable a child to talk about events, retell and create stories and describe something to someone else so they understand. Narrative skills involve giving enough information, giving the right information and then organising the information into a clear structure for the listener.

To support every child's narrative skills please try the following tasks:

- ✓ use story time in the classroom talk about: who is in the story, where and when the story takes place, what might happen next?
- ✓ recap the story at the end; can we remember the details of the story?
- ✓ talk about the sequence of the story, talking about; first, next, and last concepts.
- ✓ think of alternative endings.
- ✓ encourage families to do this at home and complete the tasks often detailed in the back of the child's reading book as they often cover these types of activities.

- ✓ You may want to support these concepts with signs or pictures as prompts and cues in 'show and tell' activities or sharing.
- ✓ You could also use these prompts and cues in 'show and tell' activities or sharing news tasks.
- ✓ Practice the skills daily in the classroom.

Targeting Sound Expressive Language Development:

Children who struggle to express themselves using sentences:

- May have difficulty constructing well-formed and longer sentences like their peers.
- May make errors or miss out grammatical elements, such as plurals and tense markers etc.
- Be difficult to understand due to mixing up the word order.
- May experience difficulties using words to reason and predict.
- May rely a lot on pointing or gestures to get their message across.
- Spoken difficulties, such as reduced sentences, may be evident in written language.

Sentence building

Interventions targeting sentence construction skills include:

Nuffield Early Language Intervention (NELI) www.teachneli.org The programme involves a trained teaching assistant providing short small-group and individual teaching sessions to around 3-6 reception-aged pupils for 20-weeks. Evaluations of the approach found NELI children made on average 3 months of additional progress in language.



Talk Boost targeted interventions for children with delayed language in KS1 and KS2 help boost their language skills to narrow the gap between them and their peers. Differentiated for children between the ages of 3-10 years, the programmes aim to accelerate children's progress in language and communication by an average of six months, after a nine-week intervention. www.speechandlanguage.org.uk/talk-boost

Language steps is a pack of activities designed to develop comprehension and expression in spoken language from a one- to a four-word level. There are photocopiable session plans, activities and resources to develop the number of information carrying words a child understands and uses in an utterance. Vocabulary, basic concepts and grammar have been kept to a minimum. www.winslowresources.com/language-steps

CLEAR Pictoys are a set of ten interactive resources which explore sentence building at different levels, for example, understanding

and using 2-3 words, including big and little, prepositions in, on, under, using negatives etc. <http://www.clear-resources.co.uk/ClearProductsPage.html>

Example Aims / Outcomes of Targeted support For Sentence Building:

- When producing sentences to describe pictures and / or events, the child will use more than 30 verbs (as evidenced through staff notes on the child's production of verbs) in simple sentences.
- The child will put two words together in a simple phrase e.g. "dog eating" / "me running" / "pushing car", on 10 occasions.
- The child will produce describe a 2 step sequence about their school day, using a connecting word like 'and / then', e.g. "me ran outside and play football".

Grammar

- Numerous resources were introduced to schools to support Year 6 SPAG tests. These can be used to target specific grammatical areas (such as, irregular tenses, irregular plurals, comparatives, superlatives, etc) if a child is struggling with any of these areas.
- Use written passages to identify grammatical markers and highlight how they should be used in the child's own written work.

- If a child omits small grammatical function words when speaking or writing (e.g. is, a, the, to, etc), practice highlighting these in a text with the child.

Example Aims / Outcomes of Targeted support For Grammar:

- For the child to produce regular past tense words (verbs which have a "ed" word ending; jumped, kicked, brushed), in person / subject + verb + object / place sentences with 80% accuracy with no support.
- The child will produce correct plurals (horses, mice, cars) in their spoken language, with 80% success.

Story Telling / Narrative Skills

Narrative therapy is an approach that supports storytelling and describing things / events. The approach was devised by Speech and Language Therapists Becky Shanks and Judith Carey. Narrative skills involve giving enough information, organising the information into a clear structure for the listener. The Narrative Therapy intervention works on the individual components that make up a story and gradually combining these elements using a structured framework that children are then taught to use for themselves. The sessions can be delivered in small groups. A colour coding system is used for the components of a story; when and where the story is set, who the characters are, and what happens in the story.



Narrative Therapy Packs (Becky Shanks and Judith Carey) packs are available to purchase from Blacksheep Press:

- <https://www.blacksheepress.co.uk/product/nursery-narrative>
- <https://www.blacksheepress.co.uk/product/reception-narrative-narrative-skills-for-age-3-5-years>
- <https://www.blacksheepress.co.uk/product/speaking-and-listening-through-narrative-ages-5-7>
- <https://www.blacksheepress.co.uk/product/from-oral-to-written-narrative-ages-7-11>
- <https://www.blacksheepress.co.uk/product/three-part-sequences-sequencing-skills>
- <https://www.blacksheepress.co.uk/product/4-part-sequences-sequencing-skills-2>
- <https://www.blacksheepress.co.uk/product/story-starters-constructing-story-sequences>

ELKLAN Language Builders – Advice and activities to encourage children’s communication skills. yellow book-2012 edition Pages 84-94.

[https://www.elklan.co.uk/Shop/Language Builders for 5-11s](https://www.elklan.co.uk/Shop/Language_Builders_for_5-11s)

Example Aims / Outcomes of Targeted support For Narrative:

- The child will retell the ending of the story ‘The Gruffalo’, when an adult has just read the story, and his / her keyworker points to the pictures on the final two pages during 1:1 time (4 / 5 times).
- The child will give information about something they did at the weekend using narrative elements ‘when’, ‘who’, ‘where’ and ‘what happened’ when given visual, colour coded prompts, on ten separate occasions.
- The child will use 5 different time concepts (such as, ‘Last week’, ‘Once upon a time’, ‘One stormy day’, ‘Millions of years ago’) when planning a story / generating their own narrative for written work.



Developmental Language Disorder

– When to Sound the alarm

A Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) is a persistent condition which impacts on communication skills throughout life. It has a varied presentation which may involve any of the areas described in this document, i.e. attention, understanding, vocabulary learning, expressive language and speech. It is the Speech and Language Therapist's role to identify and diagnose this profile.

It is estimated that 7.6% of children present with DLD. This equates to approximately two children in every classroom. The strategies and resources in this document are appropriate for children presenting with a Developmental Language Disorder. Further information on this condition can be found at <https://radld.org/> The following links, produced by Speech and Language UK (ICAN), give a detailed view of DLD and how this condition can be supported in the classroom.

- <https://speechandlanguage.org.uk/educators-and-professionals/resource-library-for-educators/developmental-language-disorder-dld>
- <https://speechandlanguage.org.uk/educators-and-professionals>
- https://speechandlanguage.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/ican_dld_guide_final_aug4.pdf

Both the **universal** and **targeted** advice and ideas in this toolkit will support children with a diagnosis of DLD.

Please refer to speech and language therapy if a child is:

- unable to access the language used in lessons even when the suggested strategies have been put in place.
- giving up on conversations with others as they are unable to get their message across.
- struggling to use words in the correct order when constructing sentences and / or they use generic all-purpose words like 'thing / doing / that' which lack reference when trying to express themselves.
- Unintelligible, appearing to use some true words mixed with jargon in their utterances.

It is recommended that you seek advice and support from a Speech and Language Therapist when using the specific programmes Colourful Semantics and Shape Coding, which are **specialist interventions for sentence construction and grammar.*

An introduction to these approaches can be found here:

- Colourful Semantics
https://www.elklan.co.uk/Shop/Colourful_Semantics
- Shape Coding
<https://www.moorhouseinstitute.com/the-shape-coding-system-part-1>

5.6 Supporting Speech Sounds

We refer to children with speech sound difficulties as children with reduced intelligibility, owing to errors using sounds within words. Speech sound difficulties can occur on their own, or co-occur with language / communication difficulties.

Speech sounds are the sounds we make, using our mouth, to form words. To make sounds the brain needs an idea to communicate. It then sends the idea to the mouth telling it which words to say, the sounds to use, then it puts the word together, and sends signals to the muscles that control the tongue, lips and jaw.

Difficulties with speech sounds, what will it look like in the classroom?

- Talking and not being understood by others (being unintelligible / hard to understand), particularly by those outside the family, could affect peer relationships or mean that they are reluctant to attend school, as it may be frightening for them to be with new adults / children who do not 'tune in' to what they are saying.
- Literacy difficulties: learning to read and spell is very closely related to phonological awareness (an individual's awareness of the sound structure of a spoken word). Children with speech sound disorders are at a greater risk of experiencing literacy difficulties, particularly those whose speech errors have not resolved by school entry (at age 5).

Typical speech sound development - what should you expect?

Children's speech develops gradually throughout childhood, beginning with vowel type sounds when babies coo then babble, all the way through to complex sound sequences. Although all children develop speech sounds at a slightly different rate, there are some generalisations that can be made about when children develop specific sounds.

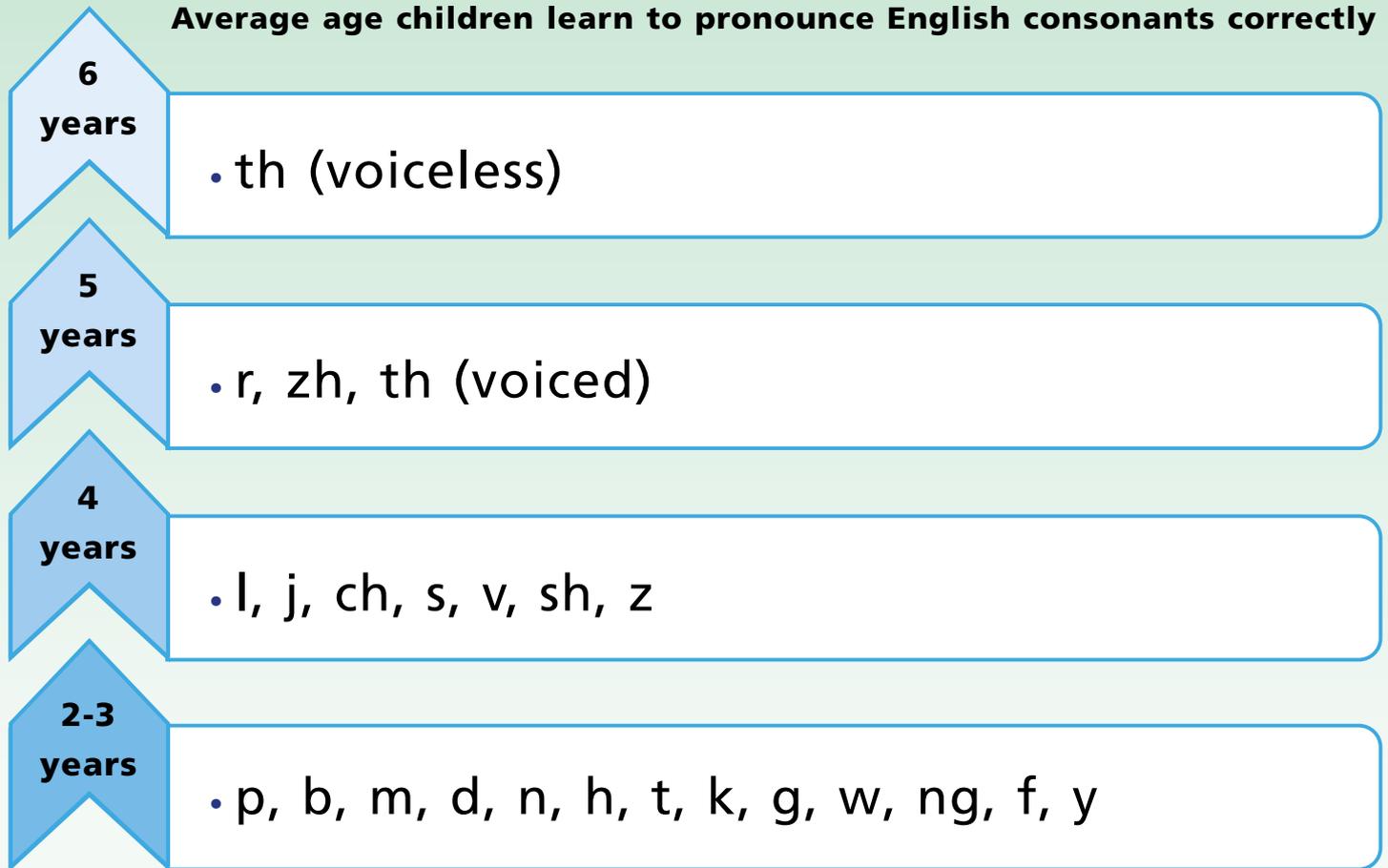
Children with delayed speech have speech patterns / errors that would be typical in younger children, but have not resolved at the expected age. Some children make unusual error patterns, which do not occur in younger children's speech; this would be described as a speech sound disorder.

If you have concerns about a child's speech, discuss your concerns with parents and agree together whether a referral is needed. If unsure, please contact the department and ask to speak with an SLT to discuss with you whether the child's speech difficulties can be supported at home / school or whether a referral is required. The therapist will consider the number of speech error patterns the child has, whether the child's speech is age-appropriate and how intelligible their speech is within conversation.

Some patterns of sound errors are seen in typical speech sound development. The diagram and table below give information on

when sounds are acquired, age-appropriate speech sound patterns, and when these errors usually resolve.

Average age children learn to pronounce English consonants correctly



Reference: McLeod, S. & Crowe, K. (2018). Children's consonant acquisition in 27 languages: A cross-linguistic review. *American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology*, 27, 1546-1571.

Speech Process	Definition	Approximate age process is no longer seen
Final consonant deletion	Missing off a consonant at the end of a word, e.g. house becomes "how" and soap becomes "sew".	2 years
Voicing and devoicing	Mixing up 'noisy' (voiced) and 'quiet' (voiceless) sounds, e.g. pear becomes "bear" and dog becomes "dock".	3 years
Assimilation	Changing a sound in a word so it matches another sound in the word, e.g. dog becomes "gog".	3 years
Stopping	Replacing a 'long' sound with a 'short' sound, e.g. sea becomes "tea" and four becomes "bour".	3 years 5 months
Fronting	Replacing a back sound with a front sound, e.g. car becomes "tar" and go becomes "dough".	4 years
Weak syllable deletion	Missing out a 'quieter' syllable in a word e.g. tomato becomes "mato".	4 years
Cluster reduction	Missing off a consonant when there are two or three consonants together, e.g. small becomes "mall".	4 years for 2 consonant clusters (e.g. sm, sn, sp, st, sc...) 5 years for 3 consonant clusters (e.g. scr, str...)
Deaffrication	The affricates 'ch' / 'tch' (as in 'chocolate' and 'watch') and 'dg' / 'j' (as in 'jigsaw' and 'badge') are produced as just a short sound "t" and "d" respectively.	5 years
Gliding	Replacing the sounds 'r' and 'l' with "w" and "y", e.g. red becomes "wed" and like becomes "yike".	6 years

Reference: adapted from; Dodd, B., Hua, Z., Crosbie, S., Holm, A., and Ozanne, A. (2006). Diagnostic Evaluation of Articulation and Phonology (London: Pearson Publications).

Universal strategies to support speech sound development:

- ✓ Listen to what your child says and not how they say it.
- ✓ Always be positive about your child's speech and use praise for effort and things that you notice about your child's

communication that you like, such as persevering to tell a story, listening well, having a good vocabulary.

- ✓ Repeat words clearly back to your child without asking them to copy (this is called modelling). It may feel like the right thing to do to correct a child's speech, however it tends not to help. The child might not have the skills to change their speech errors

at this time. Remember that if a child was able to make their speech clearer and be understood more, they probably would! The child may be unaware that they are saying words differently from you, so correcting them with what they have said may lead to confusion... it is better to repeat the word back to them clearly. For example:

adult (pointing at a picture of cat):

"what's that?",

child: "tat",

adult: "yes a cat"

- ✓ Repeat the target sound in words lots of times when possible. Effective modelling would sound something like this for the target word 'cat': "yes that's a cat, a big cat, it's not a ginger cat, it's a black cat. I think that cat is the cat who hides in our garden... remember seeing that cat behind the shed? I was worried that the cat was lost" etc. In this example the child would've heard the correct word form, eight times.
- ✓ Try to be patient. They are not being 'lazy'. It is very difficult to change the way you speak, so it may take your child a long time to learn a new sound.

Phonological Awareness

All school staff must ensure that a child has age-appropriate phonological awareness skills in order to learn to read and write. Phonological awareness is the child's awareness of the sound or structure of a spoken word. The explicit knowledge of the structure of words allows a child to make connections between the spoken form of a word and its written representation. Please note that a child must have syllable level skills before working on single phonemes (individual

sounds). You can assess Phonological Awareness using the Newcastle Assessment of Phonological Awareness (NAPA), and provide intervention using the Newcastle Intervention for Phonological Awareness (NIPA); which can be accessed here: <https://research.ncl.ac.uk/phonologicalawareness/assessmentandintervention/>

It is particularly aimed at children with speech sound disorder, vocabulary and literacy learning difficulties that are linked to poor phonological awareness.

Published resources:

1) Time for Sounds, Reception Level – sound awareness. (Blacksheep Press)

A complete programme of structured group sessions and related activities which aim to develop the sound awareness skills of children who are failing to make progress in their acquisition of phonics. <https://www.blacksheepress.co.uk/product/time-for-sounds-reception-level-sound-awareness>

2) Phonological Awareness – Improve reading and spelling. (Blacksheep Press)

This resource aims to develop phonological awareness and improve reading and spelling skills. It contains a background information section on phonological awareness, three teaching modules, complete with activities, strategies and picture resources which target syllables, rhyme & sound makers. Ideal for whole class teaching or **targeted** groups. <https://www.blacksheepress.co.uk/product/phonological-awareness-improve-reading-and-spelling>



Speech Sounds - When to sound the alarm

Please make a referral to the Speech and Language Therapy Service if a child:

- Makes speech errors which are not described in the table above, such as, difficulties with vowels, missing consonant sounds off from the beginning or middle of words (e.g. producing the word 'four' as "oar", 'cat' as "at", 'happy' as "ha-ee"), and using a preferred sound for a range of consonants. Children with unusual speech error patterns, which are not seen in the speech of younger children would be classified as having a speech sound disorder.
- Says words differently each time they try to say them, for example 'butterfly' is produced as "dufly", "bubufai" and "buderfai".

- Is not able to make speech sounds in isolation at least one year after they should have developed (see **Average age children learn to pronounce English consonants correctly** diagram above).
- Uses any speech pattern beyond the age at which it is typically no longer seen, e.g. a three-and-a-half-year-old who is presenting with final consonant deletion.
- Has reduced intelligibility (being understood by others), and parents / school staff are concerned.

For 'average' children, performing in the 50th percentile, (Hustad et al.) expected multiword intelligibility to have reached:

50% by 2;10 (34 months)

75% by 3;10 (46 months)

90% by 5;2 (62 months); which would mean that a stranger could understand **90% of a 5 year old's speech.**

Reference: Hustad, K. C., Mahr, T. J., Natzke, P., & Rathouz, P. J. (2021). Speech Development Between 30 and 119 Months in Typical Children I: Intelligibility Growth Curves for Single-Word and Multiword Productions. *Journal of Speech, Language and Hearing Research*.

How can you support a child to communicate who has speech

sound difficulties:

- Ask the child to tell you another way, for example, by showing you what it is, using actions or gestures, drawing what it is or describing it.
 - Ask questions around what the child is trying to say to gain more information e.g. did this happen at home or at school?
 - It may be helpful to avoid asking questions which are open-ended and have no context such as “what did you do over the weekend?”
 - Build up effective home / school liaison which may take the form of a diary. This will enable both parties to jot down any information of note which the child is likely to discuss, for example, weekend activities.
 - Build up a list of names of key family members, pets, and friends. Names are often the hardest words to decipher.
 - If you do not understand all that a child has said, repeat back the sentence to the point where you got lost; it is less laborious for the child to repeat back a small chunk rather than the whole sentence.
 - Try to avoid making non-committal noises if you cannot understand a child;
- Communicate with a child face-to-face; children with speech difficulties sometimes compensate by using more facial expression or gesture.
 - For children whose speech is very unintelligible, it may be helpful to have a book with pictures of important words in, so they can point if they need to, for example to toilet, important people, food or drink.
 - If you have been given specific activities from an SLT to practise, try to do these every day for five – ten minutes. Practising speech sounds little and often is most effective. Turn off the TV, radio and iPads whilst you practise so your child can hear you and other people speaking.
 - When carrying out literacy activities, be aware that a child who cannot produce certain sounds will need an alternative way of demonstrating to you that he / she has letter-sound correspondence. Instead of expecting a child to say the sound, test sound knowledge using pictures or signs (such as Jolly Phonics symbols / actions). Be aware that when the child reads a word, he / she will say the word using her current speech error pattern, e.g. for a child who replaces / s / with [d], when reading SUN the child is likely to say the word as “dun” (even if he / she has the skills to recognise the letters and blend sounds, and knows that the word says ‘sun’).



If you suspect that a child has speech sound difficulties, please seek advice from a Speech and Language Therapist before embarking on any speech sound work.

5.7 Stammering

How to help children who stammer at school:

- ✓ Keep natural eye contact with the child when they are talking, especially during moments of stammering. Listen patiently and calmly. Give them time to finish what they want to say, without interrupting or finishing their sentences.
- ✓ Let them know (explicitly or through your body language) that you value their ideas and participation.
- ✓ Slow your own speech down to a relaxed rate and use more pauses. This reduces the pace of interaction and helps the child to feel that there is plenty of time to speak. Don't tell them to 'slow down', 'take a breath', or 'think about what you're saying' etc. These suggestions will not help and may make talking more difficult.
- ✓ Reduce the number of direct questions that you ask. Too many questions, especially open questions that require more complex answers, can be difficult for a child who stammers. Try to simplify questions, where possible, by providing two choices, for example, change an open question, such as, 'What is the book about?' to a simpler question, such as, 'Is the book about a lost dog or a burglar?' Also consider using a comment instead of a question, for example, rather than asking 'What have you drawn?', you could say 'That's a lovely picture!' and wait to see if the child responds.
- ✓ If the child does not seem to be aware that they are stammering, do not draw attention to it.
- ✓ Children who are aware of their stammering may appear concerned or frustrated, comment on their talking, or stop speaking before they have finished their sentence. If this happens, and the child is alone with you or with a group of supportive students, it may be helpful to acknowledge the situation and reassure them. Respond in the same way as you would with anything else they find difficult. Be calm, matter-of-fact, and reassuring; you could say something like 'You got a bit stuck there, but it's okay, I'm still listening' or 'I could see that word was a bit bumpy / stuck then, but it's okay, you got there in the end'.
- ✓ If a child is aware of their stammering, it may be helpful to check whether they find any activities in school particularly difficult and, if they do, find a solution together. Examples of adjustments could include raising hands for registration instead of answering verbally or reading aloud with another child rather than alone. When you are discussing this with the child, try to look calm and relaxed and use neutral language about their stammering, e.g., refer to it as a different way of talking, rather than a problem, and talk about stammering more / less, rather than good / bad days.

Remember, it is better to involve the whole class in any changes, rather than singling out the child who stammers.



- If you notice other children reacting to the child's stammering, help them to know how to respond appropriately and listen well. Consider completing whole class activities that emphasise diversity and difference, including different ways of talking.
- Reinforce conversational turn-taking rules with the class. Knowing that they will be listened to, and not interrupted, can help a child who stammers to feel more confident about speaking. Although, it is important to let children who stammer finish their sentences, it is also important for them to understand and follow the same turn-taking rules as others.
- Build communicative confidence by praising the child for things they do well (not related to stammering). Point out what you noticed, and what was good about it, e.g. 'You explained that very well'.
- Ensure that all staff, including lunchtime staff, are aware of the child's stammering and the best ways to help.

There isn't a targeted section for stammering...

Unlike other aspects of communication which have clearly defined **universal** and **targeted** sections, for children who stammer, it is felt that intervention and specific guidance should be led by a Speech and Language Therapist. For stammering, school staff can really help to promote a supportive environment where children can speak confidently, whether they are stammering or not. **Targeted** interventions in school, to reduce or 'fix' stammering is not recommended, and could in fact, be anxiety-inducing and unhelpful for a child who stammers; therefore, there are no **targeted**-level activities for stammering in this toolkit.



Stammering: When to refer

Many children who stammer communicate confidently. However, it is important to refer a child to Speech and Language Therapy if stammering is having a negative impact on them, for example, they may feel frustrated or upset about stammering or they may lack confidence in speaking in some situations or avoid using words that they find difficult to say. It is also important to refer children if their parents seem concerned about their stammering.



If you are unsure about whether to make a referral for a child who stammers, please contact:

- **Specialist** Speech and Language Therapists at the Willy Russell Centre on **0151 295 3858** or WillyRussellstammeringcentre@alderhey.nhs.uk (for children with a Liverpool GP) <https://www.alderhey.nhs.uk/services/speech-and-language-therapy/willy-russell-centre>
- Sefton Community SLT Service to make a referral and / or telephone the Sefton duty line on **0151 247 6109** (for children with a Sefton GP).

5.8 Social Communication

Social communication refers to the way a child uses language within a social situation. There are often 3 parts:

1. **Using language** for different purposes or reasons... to request things, make comments, to find out information, to give information or to greet others.
2. The ability to **adapt language** to meet the needs of the listener or situation, such as, talking louder if you are in a noisy environment so the listener can hear you, speaking differently to a baby (vs an adult), talking about a topic the listener may not know much about so adapting the amount of information they need.
3. **Conversation rules** - these are often 'unspoken rules' like taking-turns, looking at the speaker plus using facial expression and gesture. It is important to note that the rules of conversations can differ across different cultures.

This is a very complex area of speech and language development and some children have difficulties understanding other people and using their language skills in order to communicate effectively. This can cause frustration for the child and confusion for the listener. Social communication skills are important to be able to build social

relationships with others and this is really important in the classroom as children often work in small groups and in pairs so it can impact on a child's access to the curriculum.

Children with language disorders and also children with a diagnosis of Autism can have social communication differences or difficulties.



What might social communication difficulties or differences look like in the classroom?

The child may:

- have difficulty with peer relationships, making friends and joining in with group work.
- find it difficult to join in and play with other peers.
- find it difficult to see things from another person's point of view.
- find it difficult to start, join in and maintain conversations. They may interrupt, give too much information, may switch topic without signal or talk a lot about a favoured topic.

- find it difficult to understand and use non-verbal communication e.g. body language, eye-contact, personal space and tone of voice.
- not understand non-literal language including jokes, idioms (where the meaning is not communicated through the exact phrase e.g. 'it costs an arm and a leg', 'things are up in the air') and metaphors (describing an object or action in a way that is not literally true e.g. 'he is a shining star', 'life is a rollercoaster').
- find unstructured activities such as 'break time' particularly challenging.

You may notice that:

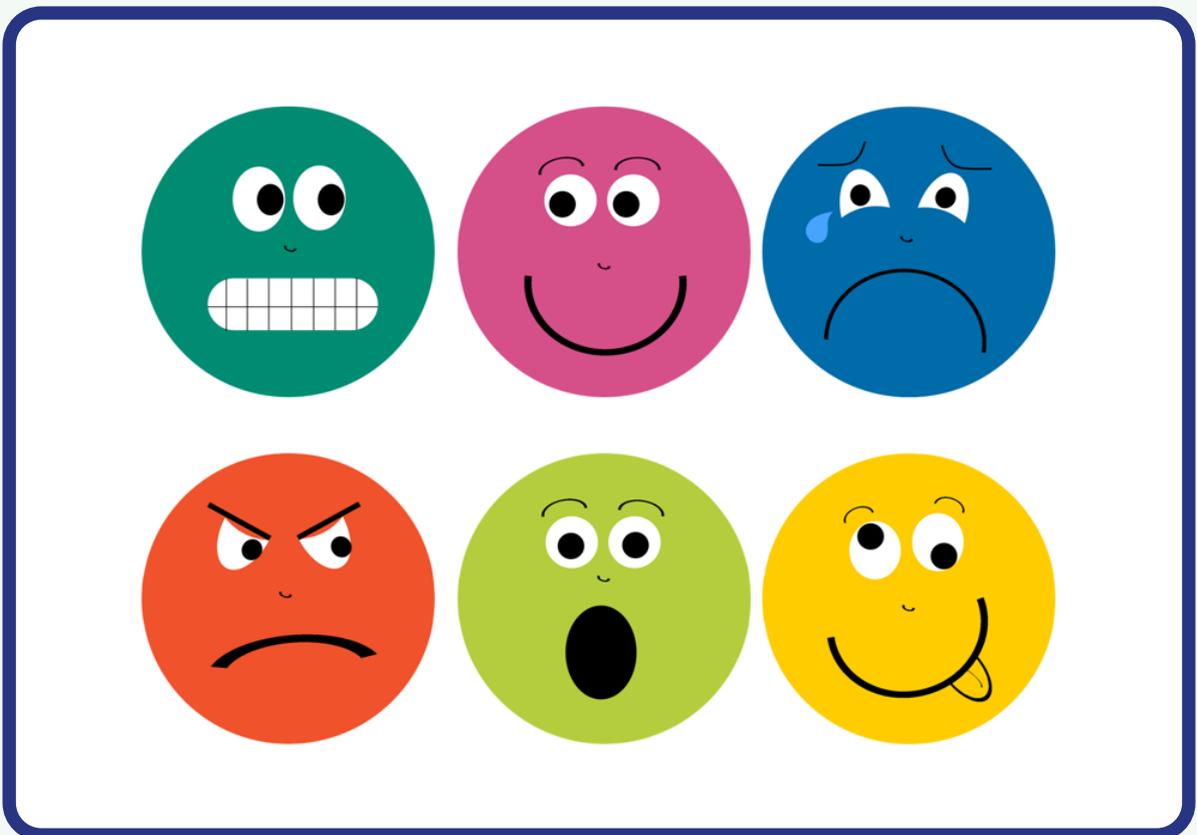
- The child shows some disruptive behaviour.

- The child may have difficulty adapting to new or unfamiliar social situations.
- The child has difficulty remaining 'on topic'.
- The child can tell stories or retell events in a disorganised way.

Useful universal strategies for the whole class

- ✓ Reinforce expected social skills in the class by using visuals, like a symbol for taking turns and waiting for your turn.
- ✓ Use visuals to give structure and manage expectations, such as visual timetables.
- ✓ Use clear, concise language – say what you mean and mean what you say!

- ✓ Support pupils in giving the appropriate amount of information. Let the children know if they have not given you enough information.
- ✓ Model appropriate social phrases such as when greeting someone.
- ✓ Talk about your own feelings and model appropriate responses.
- ✓ Use real life situations as an opportunity to discuss solutions to a problem e.g. "We haven't got enough chairs. What should we do?".
- ✓ Help students to 'check-in' and say how they are feeling using visual support.



Targeting Sound Social

Communication:

Whilst using the resources below please remember you are not striving to make children communicate like a Neuro-typical child, but instead are discussing the differences between communication styles and allowing any child to advocate about their own communication style.

Some children may benefit from **targeted activities** that focus on a particular area of social communication. Some of these activities can be done individually and some are for small groups. The interventions and resources below cover a range of social communication skills including conversation skills, using and adapting language for different situations and social understanding. Many children in the class may benefit from the resources below.

Resources to support Social

Understanding:

Reception – KS1 'Talking about friends: situational understanding'

(Blacksheep press)

<https://www.blacksheepress.co.uk/product/talking-about-friends-situational-understanding-2>

TALKABOUT series (developed by Alex Kelly)

<https://www.routledge.com/go/talkabout>

Think Social / Social Thinking Thinksheets

– Michelle Garcia Winner

https://www.thinkingbooks.co.uk/buy/thinksheets-for-teaching-social-thinking-related-skills_30.htm

'Socially Speaking: a pragmatic social skills programme for primary schools'

(developed by Alison Schroeder)

<https://www.ldlearning.com/product/social,-emotional-and-mentalhealth/social-skills/games/socially-speaking/admt00416>



Lego based therapy: this is play based intervention with the aim of developing collaborative play skills in a small group. Each child is given a role in the group and the group has to work together to create a model; it helps to practice information giving, listening, asking and answering questions and clarifying information.

The clear structure including a clear start and end point means this approach is very motivating for children and lots of fun. There are packs and resources available on Twinkl but also have a look at the following video by Bryony Rust (SLT) on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qrI9XKKouos> as a good introduction about how to build social competence through LEGO-based therapy.

Further useful Resources include:

Socially Speaking: this is a book resource which also has a board game with tasks and challenges along the way. <https://www.ldlearning.com/product/social,-emotional-and-mental-health/social-skills/games/socially-speaking/admt00416>

The Friendship Formula

<https://www.ldlearning.com/product/social-skills/friendship/the-friendship-formula/agma10788>

Talkabout – A Social Skills Package

<https://www.routledge.com/Talkabout-A-Social-Communication-Skills-Package/Kelly/p/book/9781909301542>

Talkabout – For children 1.

Developing self-awareness and self-esteem.

<https://www.routledge.com/Talkabout-for-Children-1-Developing-Self-Awareness-and-Self-Esteem/Kelly/p/book/9781138065253>

Talkabout for children 2.

Developing social skills.

<https://www.routledge.com/Talkabout-for-Children-2-Developing-Social-Communication/Kelly/p/book/9781032293608>

Talkabout for children 3.

Developing friendship skills.

<https://www.routledge.com/Talkabout-for-Children-3-Developing-Friendship-Skills/Kelly/p/book/9781138065765>

Talkabout - Building self-esteem and relationship skills.

<https://www.routledge.com/Talkabout-Relationships-Building-Self-Esteem-and-Relationship-Skills/Kelly/p/book/9780863884054>

ELKLAN Language Builders Advice and activities to support Autistic Pupils.

Blue book – 2009 edition. Pages 97-125.

<https://www.elklan.co.uk/Shop/Language-Builders-for-Autistic-Pupils>

Comic Conversations – created by Carol Gray, they use stick figures to represent social interaction and conversations, making them more concrete and easier to understand.



Social Stories - created by Carol Gray, these are short stories written with the child / young person in order to describe what the child can expect in a particular situation. They can be used to support a range of areas, including coping with change, and modifying behaviour, to help with understanding how others may respond / behave or to provide positive feedback about a situation.

These stories need to be written in a specific way and are not meant to be 'bossy books' telling the child / young person what to do.

Resources for Comic Strip

Conversations and Social Stories:

- **ELKLAN Language Builders – Advice and activities to support Autistic Pupils.** Blue book – 2009 edition. Pages 79-84. <https://www.elklan.co.uk/Shop/Language-Builders-for-Autistic-Pupils>
- <https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/communication/communication-tools/social-stories-and-comic-strip-conversations>

- Books can be ordered to support use of social stories and comic strip conversations. <https://carolgraysocialstories.com>

Emotional literacy

ELKLAN language builder (red book page 101-103).

Non-literal language

'Mystifying Metaphors'

<https://www.elklan.co.uk/resources/mystifying-metaphors>

'120 idioms at your fingertips'

[https://www.elklan.co.uk/Shop/120 Idioms At Your Fingertips#:~:text=This%20extremely%20useful%20resource%20will,are%20amusingly%20illustrated%20and%20defined](https://www.elklan.co.uk/Shop/120%20Idioms%20At%20Your%20Fingertips#:~:text=This%20extremely%20useful%20resource%20will,are%20amusingly%20illustrated%20and%20defined)

Pragmatics (using language)

ELKLAN language builder (yellow book page 105-106, red book page 96-100).

5.9 Selective Mutism

Selective Mutism is:

"Consistent failure to speak in specific social situations where speaking is expected. Despite speaking in other situations."

It must have persisted for longer than 1 month and is not due to a child learning English as an additional language or due to a communication disorder such as stammering.

General strategies:

- ✓ Ensure all members of staff from teachers to cleaners know the child has anxiety around communicating and that they can smile and say 'hello'. Encourage others to do the same, ensuring no-one takes it personally if the child keeps a blank expression and does not actively engage – both are signs of anxiety rather than aloofness.
- ✓ Acknowledge anxiety – knowing that you understand their anxiety can often be a relief and a weight off their shoulders.
- ✓ Avoid doing or saying everything for the child. Use phrases such as 'for now' and 'yet' e.g. you don't have to answer the register yet, just put your hand up for now? These phrases will help the child understand that they will not be silent forever.
- ✓ Avoid giving the child an expectation that they have to talk e.g. asking them direct questions. Instead make chatty comments.

- ✓ Spend time engaging in activities with the child / young person where they do not need to communicate e.g. colouring alongside one another, doing a puzzle together. Try to use activities the child / young person is interested in.
- ✓ Encourage the child to use non-verbal communication as well, e.g. gesture, nod / shake of the head, smile / frown, writing, pictures etc.
- ✓ Ask the child quietly if they understand the instructions for the lesson as they will find it very difficult to initiate conversation and ask for help.
- ✓ Avoid asking the child questions across the room so they don't have to answer in front of other people.
- ✓ Try to build up expectations gradually, e.g. speaking in a one-to-one, then with a very small group, then a slightly larger group, before expecting the child to speak out confidently in front of the whole class.
- ✓ Acknowledge written requests and follow them up by talking things through quietly in ways that do not draw unnecessary attention to the child.
- ✓ Allow the child to make their contribution later on a one-to-one basis or in writing.
- ✓ If the child does speak it is important not to make a fuss. Speaking to others is a normal everyday thing to do and it's important not to make the child feel they are different than anybody else who speaks.

- ✓ Make sure the child / young person is sat next / near to a peer that they feel comfortable with and may communicate with.

Key communication moments in school

Answering the register:

Having to say their name in a large group at register can be very daunting. Lots of schools have found other ways for all children to reply to the register, or alternative ways to do the register. These include:

- Waving.
- Clapping a rhythm whilst they speak – a child who's feeling less confident can clap without speaking.
- Picking a 'monitor' who goes round to greet each child e.g. by shaking their hand.

Asking for the toilet or a drink:

- Ensure they have access to these things without the need to communicate.
- Try a signing out system. E.g. the whole class has to sign out for the toilet.
- Have drinks bottles readily available in class.
- Reassure the child / young person that you will not question them if they get up in class and move around.

Letting staff know they are unwell:

- Discuss with parents key changes in behaviour that may be recognised if the child is becoming unwell.
- Ensure all staff are aware of this.
- Reassure the child they can let a friend or member of staff they communicate with know when they feel unwell.

Access further advice from:

- Contact SALT department and speak to Duty Therapist / **Specialist** Selective Mutism Therapist on 0151 295 3990.
- SMIRA website – <http://www.selectivemutism.org.uk/>
- Free online training from NHS Kent: <https://www.kentcht.nhs.uk/childrens-therapies-the-pod/speech-and-language-therapy/selective-mutism/>



Selective Mutism – When to sound the alarm

- If the child / young person has remained silent with staff and / or peers in setting for longer than half a term.
- The general strategies in the universal section have been used and no difference in the child's level of communication has been observed.
- The child's communication level deteriorates.
- The child is frozen, unable to participate in tasks.



If you are unsure about whether to make a referral for a child who may be presenting as Selectively Mute, please contact the SALT department and speak to the Duty Therapist on **0151 295 3990 (Liverpool) / 0151 247 6109 (Sefton)**.

5.10 Voice

Voice disorders are a range of conditions which affect the larynx (voice box). They can cause changes to the voice called dysphonia or loss of voice aphonia. These changes can affect the way the voice sounds, for example, making it sound hoarse, croaky, squeaky or weak; voice disorders can also affect pitch and volume.

Voice disorders can have an impact on day-to-day life for example, it may be difficult to be heard by other people, or it may affect sense of identity or make children vulnerable to bullying. Voice disorders can also cause frustration or low mood.

Voice disorders have many different causes, these might be to do with how a child is using their voice or it could be a symptom of a serious medical condition.

If you are concerned that a child or young person has a voice that doesn't sound right, or they are often losing their voice you should discuss this with their parents to consider if a GP consultation would be helpful. If a child or young person experiences a change in voice for more than 3 weeks, they should be seen by their GP where a referral to ENT (Ear Nose and Throat) should be made.

Advice to help your voice

The following strategies can help to protect the voice:

- ✓ Voice Rest

This should only be for a short period of time for example 10 minutes once a day (depending on circumstances).

An ideal time for voice rest could be when watching T.V. or when you are reading a book.

Things not to do:

- Shout or scream
- Loud laughing
- Singing or humming – particularly when trying to sing along with music and trying to sing above the music
- Raising your voice over background noise – the TV in the car, over others at dinner time
- Whispering
- Coughing or clearing your throat – try to sip water rather than coughing

Things to encourage:

- ✓ Use of gesture or mime during voice rest
- ✓ Putting hands up in class to get the attention of others

- ✓ Gaining attention of others by clapping or tapping someone on the shoulder rather than shouting them
- ✓ Walking over to a person rather than shouting across the room or upstairs
- ✓ Drinking water! – this will hydrate the vocal folds

Adapted from J Hunt & A Slater (2003) Working with Children's Voice Disorders.

Further information about voice disorders and how to look after your voice can be found at the British Voice Association

<https://britishvoiceassociation.org.uk>

Targeted level activities addressing voice is not advised. Please seek specialist advice by making a referral if you are concerned about a child's voice.



Voice – When to sound the alarm

Most children with voice disorders need an individualised therapy plan to be agreed and provided by a Speech and Language Therapist.

If you are unsure about whether to make a referral for a child who may be presenting with a voice disorder, please contact SALT department and speak to Duty Therapist on **0151 295 3990 (Liverpool) or 0151 247 6109 (Sefton).**

5.11 Transition to Secondary School

Some children will require an enhanced transition to High School to prepare them for this move.

General Advice

- Have a box in class where pupils can anonymously ask questions about High School.
 - Arrange extra visits to High School if possible.
 - Make a “Communication Passport” on a side of A4 to pass on to High School to give strategies as to how to support the pupil’s communication skills.
 - Identify a key person in High School that the pupil knows how to contact if there are any concerns.
 - Provide a map of the school layout with key areas highlighted for the pupil to look at over the summer holidays.
 - Provide photos of key people and places in High School for the pupil to look at over the summer holidays.
 - Encourage parents to hang up school uniform a few weeks before the start of term for the pupil to get used to seeing in their room.
- Encourage parents to discuss travelling to High School with the pupil and to do some practice runs together over the summer holidays.
 - Pass all information to High School SENCO in relation to the pupil’s needs and how these can be supported.
 - Consider using a published transition resource with a small group of pupils who may require additional support.

Published resources

1) Black Sheep Press “Secondary School Readiness”

<https://www.blacksheepress.co.uk/product/secondary-school-readiness-transition-to-secondary-school>

2) Black Sheep Press “Talking About Secondary School”

<https://www.blacksheepress.co.uk/product/talking-about-secondary-school-online-resource>

3) Twinkl

<https://www.twinkl.co.uk/search?q=transition+to+secondary+school&c=244&ca=22&ct=ks1&r=teacher&fa=2.3>

6 Summary

This toolkit has been developed to provide advice and strategies, and to signpost to interventions which schools can use to support children's speech, language and communication skills.

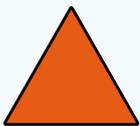
Speech, language and communication needs can't be resolved or supported by just one person, it requires collaborative working of those people around the child to achieve the best outcomes. If you have concerns about a

child's speech, language and communication development there are a range of strategies you can try before referring to Speech and Language Therapy or whilst the child is waiting for their appointment.

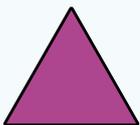
Remember



Universal strategies will support all children's speech, language and communication skills in the classroom setting.



Targeted support can be used to support children that are showing signs of speech, language and communication difficulties; including strategies and programmes that can be delivered in small groups or in one-to-one activities or within class-based tasks.



Some children will require **Specialist** input from a Speech and Language Therapist and this guide shares key indicators for when a Speech and Language Therapy referral is required.



If you require further advice or support, please do not hesitate to contact the Speech and Language Therapy Teams on **0151 295 3990 (Liverpool)** or **0151 247 6109 (Sefton)** and ask to speak with the Duty Therapist for further advice or guidance. There are Speech and Language Therapists on duty every day to answer these queries.

Thank you for reading and good luck with the strategies!

Acknowledgments

This toolkit has been jointly written by a group of Speech and Language Therapists who work for Alder Hey NHS Children's Trust, across Liverpool and Sefton. Guidance from education staff, including SENCOs and teachers, has been invaluable and we are hugely grateful for their input.

Thanks for the feedback...

"Perfect for SENDCOs and teachers... I looked forward to seeing what was going to be suggested each time I turned the page!" The "toolkit makes it clear that there is a clear pathway to follow without jumping straight to specialist support".

Suzanne Lipsey - Specialist Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD) Assessor and Teacher, All Saints Catholic Primary School, Anfield.

"So so useful! I wish I'd had this when I was teaching."

Eleanor Hadfield, Senior Lecturer in Teacher Education (Primary and Early Years), School of Education, Education Building, Liverpool.

"I thought this was a much needed document that will be invaluable in supporting key staff." "NAPA / NIPA links are fabulous! Speech Sound Development Section... the development table will be invaluable!"

Lorraine Chester, Inclusion Consultant Sefton Council.

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If you want to explore how we might support each other to create a healthier, happier and fairer future for children and young people, contact us at:

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