Hello
a year to help all children communicate
talk·listen·take part

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The Communication Trust
Every child understood

Universally Speaking

The ages and stages of children's communication development from 5 to 11

Children can all be great communicators

When developing language, children go through the same stages; some will be quicker, others a little slower. But all should have reached certain stages by certain times. **This guide will support practitioners to know whether children are on the right track and identify those who might be struggling.**

Check out the information in this booklet to find out whether the children you work with are on the right track, what helps them learn to talk and listen and what to do if you have concerns about any of the children you work with.

- Use the ***'Children should be able to...'*** sections to learn about typical development
- Use the ***'How to check it out...'*** sections to think about the children you know
- Use the ***'Top 4 things to do'*** to support speaking and listening in school
- Use the pullout ***'Checklist'*** for particular children you're concerned about

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5 top reasons to understand more about communication

1. **Language is the vehicle for learning** – It enables understanding and expression of thought, it supports thinking, problem solving and reasoning and it's accepted as being critical to cognitive development.[1] Being able to talk and listen well is important in school – to learn, make friends and feel confident. Poor language puts children at risk of poor reading and writing, poor behaviour and poor attainment.

2. **Language development doesn't happen by accident** – Children need adults to support their language and communication development and the more we know and understand about language and how it develops, the better position we're in to help.

3. **Supporting communication development is easy when you know how** – It doesn't take lots of thought or planning. Communication is everywhere, so can be supported in all activities by making slight changes to current good practice to make it even better.

4. **To increase your own confidence** – Many practitioners report that they're not confident in knowing what children should be doing at different ages and stages, how to support good language skills and how to spot those children who might be struggling – the information in this booklet will help.

5. **About 1 million children in the UK have long term, persistent difficulties** – Additionally, in areas of social deprivation, around 50% of children start school with delayed language.[2] These children need early identification and early intervention to minimise the impact of poor language and communication skills.

[1] Goswami, U. and Bryant, P. (2007) *Children's Cognitive Development and Learning (Primary Review Research Survey 2/1a)*, Cambridge: University of Cambridge Faculty of Education.

[2] Locke, A., Ginsborg, J., and Peers, I., (2002) *Development and Disadvantage: Implications for Early Years* IJLCD Vol 27 No 1

By age 5...

Attention, listening and understanding

Attention and listening skills are the foundation of language. Without well developed skills in this area, children will struggle to understand and respond appropriately.

In addition, children may have difficulties with understanding language being spoken. If you look carefully, you can often see these children struggling to listen, follow instructions, or copying other children who have understood what to do.

Children at 5 should be able to...

- Understand they need to look at who's talking to them and think about what they're saying
- Listen to and understand instructions about what they're doing, whilst busy with another task
- Understand longer 2 to 3 part spoken instructions
  E.g. "Get changed into your PE kit, then choose a partner and line up by the door"
- Understand 'how' or 'why' questions
  E.g. "How did the family escape from the bear in the story?"

Vocabulary

Vocabulary is key for learning.

Amazingly, research tells us that the level of children's vocabulary at age 5 is a very strong predictor of the qualifications achieved at school leaving age and beyond.

This section is about understanding as well as saying words.

Children at 5 should be able to...

- Understand that words can be put into groups or categories, and give examples from each category
  E.g. Animals, transport, food, etc
- Understand a range of words to describe the idea of time, shape, texture, size and know in which context to use them
  E.g. Soon, early and late; square, triangle and circle; soft, hard, and smooth; big, tiny and tall
- Name objects, characters and animals from a description
  E.g. "It lives in the jungle and is fierce with big teeth and is stripy." Children at this age will ask if they are unsure
- Use words more specifically to make meaning clear
  E.g. "I didn't want my yellow gloves, I wanted the spotty ones that match my hat"

Speech sounds

It's normal for children at 5 to still struggle with some sounds, especially 'r' and 'th'. There are lots of reception age children with 'wabbits' and 'fums'.

Combinations of consonant sounds at the beginnings and ends of words can be tricky. *E.g. pider for spider, fower for flower*

Words with 3 or more syllables can be difficult. *E.g. pasketti for spaghetti, efalent for elephant*

Children at 5 should be able to...

- Produce speech that is clear and easy to understand, though may still have some immaturities
- Develop good knowledge and understanding of sounds and words, which are important for reading and spelling
- Break words up into syllables
  E.g. "Fri..day" – 2 syllables, "Sat..ur..day" – 3 syllables
- Recognise words that rhyme or sound similar
  E.g. "Cat and hat – they rhyme", "Bananas and pyjamas – they sound similar"
- Work out what sound comes at the beginning of a word
  E.g. "Sit begins with 's'. Sun, silly, Sam and sausage all begin with 's'"

Sentence building and grammar

By age 5 children will be using longer and more complicated sentences.

English is a complicated language though, so they'll still make mistakes, usually over-generalising rules of grammar.

E.g. They may say 'fighted' instead of 'fought' or 'gooses' instead of 'geese', 'sheeps' instead of 'sheep'

Children at 5 should be able to...

- Use well formed sentences, longer sentences and sentences with more details
  E.g. "I made a big round pizza with tomato, cheese and ham on top"
- Use some irregular past tense
  *E.g. "I **drank** all my milk", "She **took** my teddy"*
- Join phrases with words such as 'if', 'because', 'so', 'could'
  *E.g. "I can have a biscuit **if** I eat all my dinner"*
- Ask and answer 'what', 'where', 'when', and 'what could we do next' questions
- Show that they can use language to reason and persuade
  E.g. "Can I go outside because it's stopped raining?"

Storytelling and narrative

We tell each other stories all the time, it's one of the ways we communicate and share our experiences.

The key for making good stories is to have a good structure.

Children need to know what important elements are necessary and how to structure them in order to tell a story that makes sense.

Children at 5 should be able to...

- List events with some detail
  E.g. "We went to the seaside and I made the biggest sandcastle ever and we ate fish and chips on newspaper"
- Re-tell favourite stories - some parts as exact repetition and some in their own words
  E.g. "...going on a bear hunt, going to catch a big one, we're not scared...and he chased them all the way home"
- Begin to add something that's gone wrong in their own stories
  E.g. "...but the little boy dropped his big ice cream on the floor and he was very sad and crying..."
- Describe events. These may not always be joined together or in the right order
  E.g. "Daddy was cross. We was late for the football. It was broken. The car tyre"
- Use longer and more complicated sentences within their stories
  E.g. "When he got home he saw an enormous crocodile sitting on the sofa and the crocodile said good morning, because he was a friendly crocodile"

Conversations and social interaction

Conversations are key for social interaction and also for supporting learning and thinking.

These are skills like any others and with practice children will improve and use these skills to develop friendships and support learning.

Children at 5 should be able to...

- Start conversations with other people and join in with group conversations
- Join in and organise role play with friends
- Play co-operatively and pretend to be someone else talking. These games can be quite elaborate and detailed
- Use language to do a wider range of things – such as ask, negotiate, give opinions and discuss ideas and feelings
  E.g. "Can we go to the park after school today – it's a lovely sunny day and it will be fun"
- Give details that they know are important and will influence the listener
  E.g. "Ahmed fell over that stone, Javid didn't push him"

How to check it out....

Check out how children can talk

Listen out for children's language. Watch out for those who struggle

- Ask them to summarise a recent task or event using 'who', 'where', 'when', 'what happened' and 'what could we do next' questions – have some children ask the questions and the others answer.
- Play this quick carpet time game: *How many animals can you think of in 20 seconds?* Children should have no problem listing things that belong to familiar categories.

Do they regularly sound muddled or disorganised when talking? Do they regularly forget words or miss out important pieces of information? If so, they may be struggling.

Check out how children can listen

Check out children's listening and understanding. Watch out for those who watch others carefully or look lost or confused

- Can children understand longer 2 to 3 part spoken instructions? *E.g. "Choose a pencil in a colour you like, then draw round your hand really carefully onto the big yellow paper."*
- Can they listen carefully to a question and focus on the key information needed in the answer? *E.g. "Why didn't the little red hen want to share her bread at the end of the story?"*

Check out how children can take part

Watch out for social interaction skills. Watch out for children who seem isolated or struggle to join in

- Do they use language to ask, negotiate, give opinions and discuss ideas and feelings? *E.g. "If we finish our work quietly, will we have golden time after break."*
- Talk to children about what they enjoyed most in a day – these conversations often include different games or activities they play with friends.

If you're worried about a child in your care there's more information at **www.talkingpoint.org.uk** or talk to the parents about your concerns.

Top 4 suggestions to support development of language and communication

1. Teach them how to listen – encourage them to identify good listening skills in themselves.
2. Use good practice strategies to teach new vocabulary – link new words to what children know already, ask the children what they know about the word, help them fill in gaps of understanding, play around with how the word looks and feels, have a word wall in class.
3. Give explicit structures for supporting narrative skills – stories should have a who, where, when, what happened and an ending.
4. Give plenty of time for children to think and respond to questions.

By age 7...

Attention, listening and understanding

Children become much more able to be selective about what they need to listen to and are able to integrate listening with other tasks.

Children at 7 should be able to...

- Know the key points they need to focus on in order to answer a question or follow an instruction and begin to ignore less important information
  E.g. "Four buses have nine passengers each but two trains are empty. How many passengers all together?"
- Be aware of when a message is not clear and ask for an explanation
  E.g. "Is the author the one that writes the story and the illustrator does the pictures?"
- Understands complex 2 to 3 part instructions
  E.g. "Choose a character from the story we've just read, then talk to your partner about how they feel at the end of the story"

Vocabulary

Children are learning new vocabulary all the time - words they need for general learning and topic-specific vocabulary.

Understanding how words link by meaning as well as how they sound and look can really help children remember new vocabulary.

Children at 7 should be able to...

- Compare words - the way they look, sound or mean
  E.g. "It's weird, bare and bear sound the same, but you spell them different and they mean different things"
- 'Guess the word' when provided with clues using shape, size and function
  E.g. "It's a wild animal, grey and quite fat with thick skin, it isn't an elephant, it has a long name and starts with 'h'"
- Use newly learnt words in a specific and appropriate way
  E.g. "Do you know what symmetry means? If you draw a line down a shape and it's exactly the same on each side of the line, then it's symmetrical"

Speech sounds

There might be occasional errors with some longer words and with words with 2 or 3 consonants together at the beginning or the end of the word.
e.g. ***scr****amble.*

Children at 7 should be able to...

- Use speech that is consistently clear and easy to understand
- Show good knowledge and understanding of sounds and words, which are important for reading and spelling
  E.g. Can identify beginning and end sounds in words
- Spot more complex rhymes
  E.g. Happy / snappy
- Split up short words into sounds
  E.g. D-i-nn-er
- Count syllables in words
  E.g. Cat-er-pill-ar: 4 syllables
- Use sound and letter links to read and spell unfamiliar words

Sentence building and grammar

Grammar is still developing and becoming more complex. Children make fewer errors, though there are still some.

Children at 7 should be able to...

- Ask lots of questions to find out specific information including 'how' and 'why'
  E.g. "How do we know burglars can't get in?"
- Use an imaginative range of descriptive words in sentences
  E.g. "Suddenly, he saw a huge hairy creature"
- Use more complicated grammar and different ways to join phrases to help explain or justify an event
  E.g. "It was scary because even the man with the dog looked worried, so we decided to get out of there"

Storytelling and narrative

Stories about their life and experiences are making more sense, have more detail and are more often told in the right order.

Children at 7 should be able to...

- Tell a story with important key components in place – so they set the scene, have a basic story plot and the sequence of events are generally in the right order
- Describe their own experiences in detail and in the right order
  E.g. About a holiday, weekend activities or visits
- Begin to be aware of what the listener knows already and make checks while telling a story
  E.g. "You know Mr Jones, he's our caretaker, he always wears a hat, well he wasn't in school today..."
- Accurately predict what will happen in a story

Conversations and social interaction

Children are now more grown up in their social interactions. They'll now talk about things that aren't directly linked to themselves or that they aren't that interested in. They can usually keep to a topic in a conversation and can be easily prompted to move on if they're taking over or talking too much.

Children at 7 should be able to...

- Take turns to talk, listen, and respond in two way conversations and groups
- Use language they hear other people using and begin to be aware of current peer language. They're learning that they need to use different styles of talk with different people. The below are used with friends but not teachers
  E.g. Terms like, 'in your face', 'wicked' or 'yeah right'
- Exaggerate in an implausible way, to make stories more exciting
  E.g. "Last year on my summer holidays I made the biggest sandcastle in the world"

How to check it out....

Check out how children can talk

Listen out for children's language. Watch out for those who struggle

- Do they understand learning or topic vocabulary? Have a display with topic vocabulary – get children to choose one of the words and say it in a sentence of at least 6 words. Does it make sense? Have they understood the word?
- Can they use more complicated language to justify or explain? Think of a story they'll know, think of a character in the story and ask the children to say whether the character is good or bad. Then get them to justify why they think that. You can add counter arguments to get them thinking. *E.g. "We know the big bad wolf is bad because he eats grandma, but maybe he's just hungry?"*

Check out how children can listen

Check out children's listening and understanding. Watch out for those who take a long time to respond or watch other children or who are very quiet

- Can children understand more complex 2 to 3 part spoken instructions? *E.g. "In your groups, choose one of the famous people in history we have talked about and decide between you the top 5 reasons they were good or not so good."*
- Do they ask lots of questions to find out specific information? Including 'how' and 'why' and respond appropriately to the answers?

Check out how children can take part

Watch out for social interaction skills

- Do you see them taking turns in groups and with other children to talk, listen and be part of a conversation? Are there any children who seem isolated, who do not join in with other children?
- Have you noticed children being more aware of the need to talk differently to adults and peers? Have you noticed any different phrases being used? Are there children who seem unaware of this?

If you're worried about a child in your care there's more information at **www.talkingpoint.org.uk** or talk to the parents about your concerns.

Top 4 suggestions to support development of language and communication

1. Play word games – have children think up different words for the same thing, opposites, add adjectives to describe an object, add adverbs to describe an action.
2. Encourage longer sentences to explain; have a box full of connectives. E.g. use one of them to explain your science experiment.
3. Give children specific roles for group work. E.g. encourager, questioner, timekeeper, leader, observer – show them what to do and practice what to say. This will facilitate group working and discussions.
4. Encourage an ethos of asking for clarification, saying when they don't understand and what they're struggling with.

By age 9...

Attention, listening and understanding

Understanding skills are becoming more sophisticated. Children understand inferred meaning as well as information that is explicitly presented.

Children at 9 should be able to...

- Listen to information, work out which elements are key and make relevant, related comments
  E.g. "So, we need to go home and ask people of different ages what telly was like when they were young and work out how things have changed. I can ask my granny, my dad and my big sister"
- Identify clearly when they haven't understood and be specific about what additional information they need
  E.g. "So what do we use to measure liquid again? Is it millimetres or millilitres?"
- Infer meanings, reasons and make predictions
  E.g. "Now, class 4, I'm going to count to 10" [Mrs Jones is getting cross, if we don't stop messing around, someone will end up having to go and see the head teacher]

Vocabulary

Vocabulary continues to grow - not only related specifically to topics, but also general vocabulary needed for thinking and learning.

Children at 9 should be able to...

- Use a range of words related to time and measurement
  E.g. "Next Friday we're going on our school trip. Mrs Malaki says we'll be about an hour on the coach – that's not too bad is it mum?"
- Use a wide range of verbs to express their thoughts, or about cause and effect
  E.g. "I think that's a great idea", or "If you hold the bowl still, I'll be able to pour the mixture in"
- Join in discussions about a visit or activity using topic vocabulary
  E.g. "Tutankhamen was about the same age as me when he became a pharaoh. He was buried in the valley of the kings with loads of treasure. Do you believe the mummy's curse?"

Sentence building and grammar

Children speak clearly, fluently and accurately about past, present and future events.

Grammar is complex and can be used for different purposes.

Children at 9 should be able to...

- Use a whole range of regular and unusual word endings, with few errors being made
  E.g. Fought, fell, brought, geese, fish
- Use complex grammar and sentences effectively to communicate in different ways to clarify, summarise, explain choices and plan
  E.g. "We decided that Jenny would go first because she's the fastest and would get us a good start, me and Jack will go in the middle and Waleed will go at the end because he does loads of sport and is really fit"
- Uses intonation linked to grammar to help make sense of information
  E.g. "Helpful?", she cried, "you must be joking!"

Storytelling and narrative

Children tell stories that have a good structure with a distinct plot. They usually include an exciting event with a clear resolution and end point. This is reflected in their writing.

Children at 9 should be able to...

- Put interest into their voices to make storytelling exciting and come to life
- Add detail or leave information out according to how much is already known by the listener
- Understand the interests of the listener
  E.g. "Guess who I saw yesterday..."

Conversations and social interaction

Children understand conversation rules – when to talk and when to listen. They also understand when people may need more or fewer details, depending on the situation.

Children at 9 should be able to...

- Use formal language when appropriate in some familiar situations
  E.g. Showing a visitor around school
- Keep conversations going with a range of people in different situations, by making relevant comments or by asking questions
- Use language for a range of different reasons. This is important for building friendships
  E.g. Complementing or criticising, clarifying and negotiating

How to check it out....

Check out how children can talk

Listen out for children's language. Watch out for those that struggle

- Can they use complex grammar and sentences effectively to plan, summarise and explain choices? Ask the children to plan a party for a group of 3 year olds – encourage them to think of where it might be, what children might do and eat. Get them to summarise their plans and explain why they've made decisions around games, food and the venue.
- Can they discuss visits or activities including topic vocabulary? Give children group roles to discuss a visit or topic.

Check out how children can listen

Check out children's listening and understanding. Watch out for children who are slow to respond or rarely ask for clarification

- Can children tell you when they haven't understood and be reasonably clear about what elements they're struggling with? Give children instructions that contain vocabulary you know they won't understand. How do they respond?
- Can they make inferences? Tell the children you're going to do a quiz, say different statements where they have to infer meaning *E.g. "Today I need my umbrella – what do you know that I am not telling you?"*
- Can they pick out key pieces of information? At the end of a lesson, get the children to tell you the most important points.

Check out how children can take part

Watch out for social interaction. Are there some children who seem isolated, find it hard to join in or come across as rude or immature?

- Do they manage to keep conversations going, ask questions, make comments and show interest in each other?
- Have you noticed children being more aware of the need to talk differently in different situations? *E.g. with school visitors or speaking in an assembly.*

If you're worried about a child in your care there's more information at **www.talkingpoint.org.uk** or talk to the parents about your concerns.

Top 4 suggestions to support development of language and communication

1. To develop concept vocabulary, have a box of words related to time / measurement / size / shape – encourage children to use the word, say what they know about it, how it can be used. *E.g. "octagon is a shape with 8 sides, I remember it because it's like octopus, 8 legs!"*
2. Children may need time to think before responding to questions and instructions. Give them time for thinking and processing.
3. Play inferencing games to build these complex language skills – *"What do I mean when I say... you'll need a warm coat?", "How do you know...".*
4. Encourage children to comment on their own sentences – do they include a connecting word, do they have lots of descriptive words?

By age 11...

Attention, listening and understanding

Children are good at listening and can do so for longer periods of time. They can also notice and may comment on not only what's said but how it's said.

Children at 11 should be able to...

- Begin to appreciate sarcasm when it's obvious
  E.g. "My best vase, broken, now that was really clever"
- Understand different question types:
  - Open questions – *"Can you tell me all about your visit to the museum?"*
  - Closed questions – *"Did you enjoy your trip to the museum?"*
  - Rhetorical questions – *"Wasn't that a lovely trip to the museum?"*
- Understand and enjoy simple jokes and recognise simple idioms, but can't really explain why they're funny or what they mean
  E.g. 'slowly slowly catchy monkey'

Vocabulary

Vocabulary continues to grow, with children using a wider range and more varied vocabulary to describe actions and feelings.

Children at 11 should be able to...

- Use sophisticated words but meaning might not always be accurate
  E.g. "I had to co-operate really hard to get the work done"
- Know that words can have two meanings, uses them appropriately but can't always explain how they're connected
  E.g. 'Watch' (the TV and on your wrist) or 'bark' (like a dog and on a tree)

Sentence building and grammar

Long and complex sentences are used. In conversations, the average sentence length is around 7-10 words, although this can be longer when storytelling and often shorter in conversations.

Children at 11 should be able to...

- Use long and complex sentence structures and more complex joining words to make language flow *E.g. 'Meanwhile', 'therefore' or 'yet'*
- Use questions to help conversations flow
- Explain some rules of grammar and know when a sentence is not grammatically correct

Storytelling and narrative

Storytelling and narrative skills have great importance, both within the curriculum for describing, planning and explaining, and as part of children's social experiences and relationships.

Children at 11 should be able to...

- Tell elaborate entertaining stories which are full of detailed descriptions
- Use everyday language that is detailed and about experiences that may have happened some time ago or are planned for the future
- Incorporate a subplot in telling stories and recalling events, before resolving the main storyline

Conversations and social interaction

Children at this age communicate successfully. They share ideas and information, give and receive advice, offer and take notice of the opinion of others.

Children at 11 should be able to...

- Negotiate an agreement explaining other options and possible outcomes
- Manage and organise collaborative tasks with little adult supervision
- Realise when people don't fully understand and try to help them
- Enjoy organising group games and explain the rules effectively

How to check it out....

Check out how children can talk

Listen out for children's language. Watch out for those who struggle

- Can they explain the rules of grammar and do they know when a sentence is not grammatically correct? E.g. say individual sentences – children hold up a green traffic light if they think it's grammatically correct, a yellow if they're not sure and a red if they think it's not correct.
- Can they use questions to help conversations flow? Have the children pair up and tell each other about a recent event. Encourage them to ask questions of each other. Do some children struggle?

Check out how children can listen

Check out children's listening and understanding. Watch out for children who are slow to respond or rarely ask for clarification

- Have a range of words that have two meanings, can children tell you meanings of the words? *E.g. a pen you write with and a pen where we keep animals.*
- Can they understand different question types? Ask an open question *"What has happened to the sugar?"* – can they give a full appropriate answer? Ask a closed question *"Which is most soluble, icing sugar or brown sugar?"* Can they give the short answer required? Or a rhetorical question – do they know no answer is needed *"What a great experiment."*

Watch out for literacy or behaviour difficulties – these are strongly linked with speech, language and communication needs (see page 22) and can mask underlying language difficulties.

Check out how children can take part

Watch out for social interaction. Are there some children who seem isolated, find it hard to join in or come across as rude or immature?

- Can they negotiate and explain different options and possible outcomes? Set up a class debate – are children able to present clear arguments and evidence, negotiating and using persuasive arguments?
- Can they organise group games and explain the rules effectively?

If you're worried about a child in your care there's more information at **www.talkingpoint.org.uk** or talk to the parents about your concerns.

Top 4 suggestions to support development of language and communication

1. Play around with words – have a range of words with more than one meaning and get children to explain the meaning. Get children to build category trees or word webs for topic vocabulary.
2. Give children plenty of time to think before responding to questions and instructions.
3. Encourage an ethos of asking for clarification, saying when they haven't understood something, or what they're struggling with.
4. Encourage children to make each other think – act like a detective – how do we know this will happen, how do we know this character is good – what evidence can we find?

By age 11...

Top tips for children aged 5 to 11

What can you do to support language and communication with the children you work with?

Using the **right level of language** for children and knowing how to build up their language is key – this is why it's so important to know how language develops.

Use sentences that are the right length for each child – build their language by adding one or two words to the sentence length they already use.

Decide on your top 5 key strategies either from the ones on the next page or from other websites / publications and ensure all staff know and use them.

Practitioner

Things you can do as a practitioner to support communication.

- Ask open-ended questions (which are difficult to give a yes/no or one word answer) and ask children to elaborate to help them develop strong communication skills
- Talk about what children are interested in – let them talk first
- Use comments “what a tall tower” and prompts “maybe it will be as tall as you” rather than questions “what are you building”
- ‘Model’ good communication. Children learn from what they see and hear
- Give children time to work out what you’ve said and what they want to say
- Have conversations about how people feel and how that affects what they do. This is important in order to learn social interaction skills

As a setting

Things your setting can do to support communication

- Use visual support, pictures, photographs, signs and symbols to help understanding and communication
- Encourage an ‘asking friendly’ environment, encouraging children to say when they don’t understand or need help
- Have staff support child to child interaction by organising games, creating quiet areas, or a friendship bench
- Have consistent, predictable structures and routines so children know what to expect. Reduce background noise, e.g. music or radio
- Use your contact with parents to share with them how they can support their child’s language and communication skills
- Ensure all staff know about the links between language, behaviour, learning, play and social interaction

Other important information

English as an additional language

Children learning English as an additional language develop language in the same way as children learning English.

For children learning English as an additional language:

- It's important to recognise and value all languages
- Encourage parents to use their first language at home
- It can take around 2 years to develop a second language adequate for communication and social interaction
- Even children who have developed good social language will need considerably longer to develop the complex language needed for learning within school

Different languages have different sound and grammatical systems; the ages and stages used in this booklet refer to English.

Children with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN)

Around 10% of all children have long term, persistent SLCN and many more have less severe needs. Children with SLCN may have difficulties with:

- **Speech sounds** – they may not be able to say the right sounds in words or they may miss out some sounds altogether, which means their speech is unclear. For example, "a tup of tea"
- **Fluency** – they might have a stammer. They may have a lot of hesitations in their speech and repeat sounds, words or sentences and sometimes they may struggle to get words out altogether
- **Understanding of language** – they may struggle to understand words and sentences
- **Spoken language** – they may not use many words or can't put words together to make sentences or may be very muddled and disorganised when trying to talk
- **Social use of language** – they might use lots of words and can put sentences together, but don't know how to use their language to have conversations, play or make friends with other children

Children with SLCN can also have any combination of the above. You may have children in your setting who have identified SLCN. You may have a speech and language therapist or other specialist you are involved with working together with these children.

For more information on SLCN please go to **www.hello.org.uk/resources** and view the booklet *Misunderstood*.

See also the Inclusion Development Programme (IDP) which includes information on teaching and supporting pupils with SLCN **www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies/idp**

Find out more

Talking Point

www.talkingpoint.org.uk

A resource all about children's speech, language and communication, designed for parents, people that work with children, and children and young people themselves. It contains information about supporting children's speech and language development, and helps you to identify if a child is having difficulties or falling behind. If they're struggling, then it tells you what to do.

If a referral to a speech and language therapist is required or your need further information, you or your setting can search a database to find a number of services by postcode.
www.talkingpoint.org.uk/talkinglinks

The Communication Trust

www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk

The Communication Trust is a consortium of over 40 voluntary sector organisations that bring together their expertise to ensure that the speech, language and communication needs of all children and young people are met. This is done through signposting specialist training, support and guidance to people working with children. The Communication Trust was founded by Afasic, BT, Council for Disabled Children and I CAN.

To find out more about the organisations involved in The Communication Trust please go to:
www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/partners

If your organisation would like to become a member of The Communication Trust's consortium please go to **www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/partners/consortium** for more information or e-mail **enquiries@thecommunicationtrust.org.uk**

Hello is the national year of communication

A campaign to increase understanding of how important it is to develop good communication skills.

Hello aims to make 2011 the year when communication for all children and young people becomes a priority in homes and schools across the UK.

Hello provides information and guidance on typical communication development, how to spot if children are struggling and where to go for help and support.

Visit **www.hello.org.uk** to get further copies of this booklet, sign up for regular updates and find out how you can get involved.

The *Hello* campaign is run by The Communication Trust, a coalition of over 40 leading voluntary sector organisations, in partnership with Jean Gross, the Government's Communication Champion.

The campaign is backed by the Department for Education and sponsored by Pearson Assessment and BT.

Pearson Assessment, publishers of standardised assessments for a range of speech, language and communication needs, are proud to be sponsors of this booklet. **www.psychcorp.co.uk**

Hello is the national year of communication... And Pearson Assessment are proud to be sponsors.

Pearson Assessment, are the number one provider of assessments for Health and Education professionals, including tests for a range of speech, language and communication needs. We are proud to be sponsors of this years, *Hello* national year of communication campaign and of this booklet - 'Universally Speaking'.

Hello is a campaign that taps into our 90 year's history of researching and developing new assessments to a reliable high standard. We have published some of the world's most renowned assessments which can be used by teachers, SENCOs, psychologists and speech and language therapists who wish to assess and support children with speech, language and communication needs.

From our bestselling dyslexia range through to Self Image Profiles, our wide portfolio covers assessments for language, literacy, emotional and behavioural difficulties, access arrangements as well as general ability and cognition. Speech, language and communication needs can have an impact on all these areas of difficulty for children.

If you have any questions regarding any of our assessments, we would be happy to come and say 'Hello' and offer you a solutions package that can meet your needs. Simply contact us on **0845 630 8888** or visit **www.psychcorp.co.uk** to find out more.

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Hello talk·listen·take part

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