

When to refer to Speech and Language Therapy



Universal Speech and Language Therapy Service
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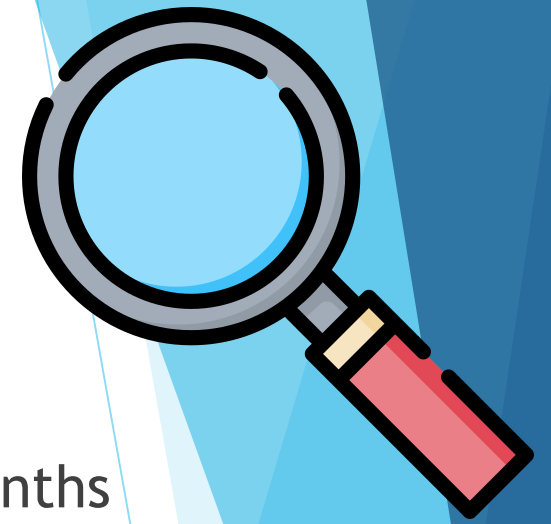
What are we covering

1. Key indicators of SLCN needs
2. Referral Process
3. Case examples
4. Universal support



Key Indicators - What to look for

1. Not using any words at 18 months
2. Appearing not to understand what is being said to them by 18 months
3. Using less than 50 words at 2 years old (across languages)
4. Not putting 2 words together at 2 ½ years old e.g. “want juice” / “go park”
5. Show signs of frustration at getting their message across
6. Not relatively easily understood by 3 ½ years old
7. Have ongoing eating, drinking or swallowing difficulties
8. Not speaking in a setting after 6 weeks or more
9. Having difficulties playing or interacting with other people



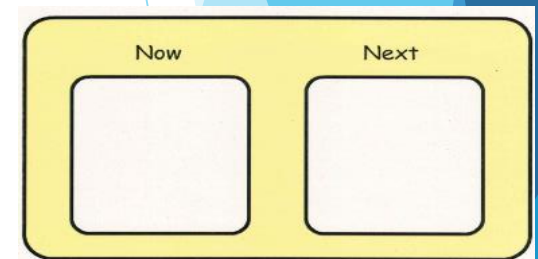
Attention difficulties in class

Key Indicators:

- ▶ Difficulties concentrating
 - ▶ this may look like fidgeting, looking away from work/teacher, taking lots of movement breaks i.e. to sharpen pencil, to the toilet etc.
- ▶ Difficulties completing work tasks.

Top Tips:

1. Use **consistent language** to support all children's understanding of what **good listening** is e.g. good listening, good sitting, good thinking.
2. **Use movement breaks** e.g. hand out books, walk to get a drink
3. Seat the child near, and facing, the front of the class
4. Consider specialist OT advice if available for specific children
5. Incorporate child's interests and visuals in learning tasks



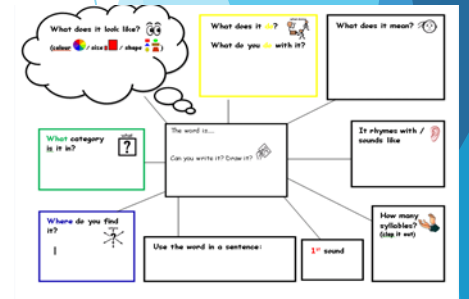
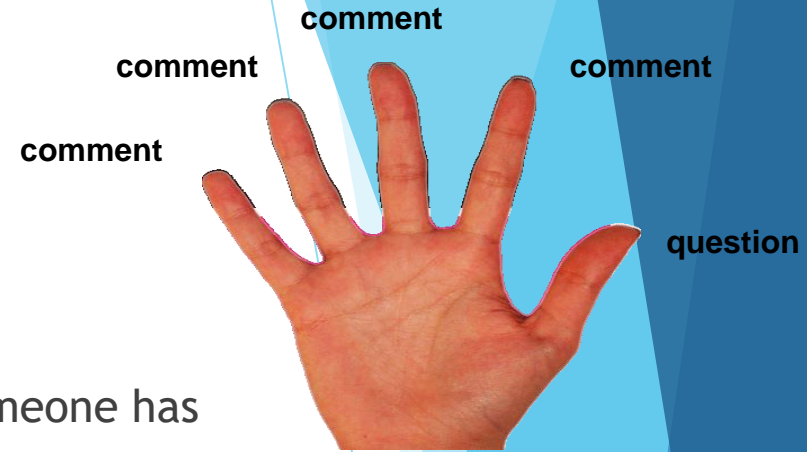
Understanding language difficulties in class

Key Indicators:

- ▶ Difficulties following instructions and learning new words
- ▶ Copies peers and may respond better to routine, predictable instructions
- ▶ May engage in more physical play
- ▶ May appear reluctant to talk or will 'forget' what they have done or what someone has said
- ▶ Are more behind in language heavy subjects (e.g. English)

Top tips:

1. Use the five-finger rule to model and repeat language
2. Add one on / one up rule
3. Pre-teach vocabulary: Use simple language and visuals to explain new concepts
4. Reduce your level of questioning (blanks levels)
5. Try and give instructions in the order you want them to happen



Kate was playing the piano in the hall

Expressive language difficulties in class

Key Indicators:

- ▶ Unable to communicate wants and needs, may rely on non-verbal communication
- ▶ Limited range of vocabulary: May repeat language of conversational partner
- ▶ Difficulties finding the right word and may appear to stammer
- ▶ Difficulties sentence structure, grammar or sequencing ideas
- ▶ Difficulties answering questions: conversation may be effortful or reluctant to talk

Top tips:

1. **Model language:** using five finger rule and add one on strategies
2. **Sentence completion**
3. **Questioning:** Open and closed (closed example: forced alternatives - Give 2 options for the child to recall from 'apple or pear' / 'pyramid or castle')
4. **Prompt:** (i.e. *phonemic*: say the first sound 'p.p.p (pen)/*descriptive*: 'you write with it')
5. **Use of Visuals** e.g. colourful semantics, word webs, written word where appropriate

Social difficulties in class

Key Indicators:

- ▶ Difficulties understand facial expression, body language and intonation
- ▶ Prefers routine and has difficulties with unexpected events or routine change
- ▶ Problems repairing conversation breakdown
- ▶ Difficulties with verbal reasoning, making inferences and understanding abstract language (e.g. jokes/idioms).

Top tips:

- ▶ Plan and model play activities that are highly motivating to the child to support engagement e.g. role play related to transport, if this child's interest
- ▶ Agreeing and writing down/drawing group rules for games.
- ▶ Having a playground 'zone' for structured activities led by a member of staff
- ▶ Label emotions when you see them to support emotional understanding i.e. Charlie is sad because his spilled water on his book.
- ▶ Create opportunities for work in pairs and small groups.



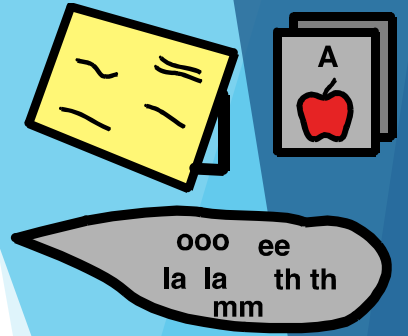
Speech difficulties in class

Key indicators:

- ▶ Inability to communicate needs
- ▶ Relies on non-verbal means to aid communication
- ▶ Irregular/limited grammar and literacy difficulties
- ▶ Difficulty being understood
- ▶ Finds talking an effort, reluctant to talk

Top tips:

1. Repeat back what you have understood
2. If you have difficulties understanding the child, ask them to show you / point / draw, ask clarifying questions
3. **Model** back the correct production e.g. child: “tar” adult: “oh yes a car!”
4. Consider if the child is able to attend a phonological awareness group
5. Go on a listening walk - this could be clapping out words you can see if the child has difficulties with syllable segmentation, or naming items beginning with a sound the child has difficulties differentiating from other sounds (a common one is k vs t)



Bilingualism

“Bilingual is used to refer to those children who have access to more than one language at home and at school. (DFES 2006)”

How might a child who is EAL present in the classroom?

- The child may have a **silent period** of up to 6 months from first being exposed to a new language
- Use of fillers/empty words
- **Interference:** applying rules from first language into English
- **Code switching:** mix languages whilst speaking
- **Dysfluency**

From the point of beginning to be exposed to English, it takes:
2-5 years to become proficient in spoken English
5-7 years to achieve the same level as their native-speaking peers in academic language levels

How to support children with EAL in the classroom?

Refer to strategies for attention and listening, expressive language and understanding language

Selective Mutism

“A consistency failure to speak in specific social situations where speaking is expected, despite speaking in other situations” (DSM 5, 2013)

How might a child who have SM present in the classroom?

- ▶ Body tension
- ▶ Lack of movement
- ▶ Blank facial expression
- ▶ Avoidance of speaking situations
- ▶ Watchful
- ▶ Speaking is comfortable in some situations e.g. at home, in the playground

General strategies to support children with SM

- ▶ Don't ask direct questions
- ▶ Don't act surprised when they do speak
- ▶ If another child comments, tell the class it's okay if she doesn't speak right now and will speak when they're ready
- ▶ Choose a key person to build rapport with
- ▶ Refer to Speech and Language Therapy

Voice and Dysfluency

Voice

- ▶ Continual husky voice quality
- ▶ Shouts a lot
- ▶ Lack of awareness of volume of voice
- ▶ Inability to control volume

Dysfluency (stammering)

- ▶ Frequent repetitions of
 - ▶ Sound 'I th.th.th.thought'
 - ▶ Syllables 'cro.cro.crocodile'
 - ▶ Words 'my cat.cat.cat is black'
- ▶ Frequent Prolongations 'mmmmmoon'
- ▶ Frequent Blocking

Secondary Behaviours

- Eye contact reduced
- Jerking movements

The Referral Process

Observe child in class and in playground

Discuss child with key members of staff
(SENCo/Class teacher/TAs)

Are Universal strategies in place? Has/can the child attend any groups?

Are there trainings which staff can attend to support the child?

Prior to sending referral discuss child with your school's assigned SLT,
and gain parent consent for referral

Example referral:

Gabriel: 6 years old, English as an Additional Language

Presentation:

- ▶ Gabriel can understand simple instructions and uses simple sentences
- ▶ He often appears distracted and requires lots of support to attend to adult led activities
- ▶ Gabriel often doesn't appear to understand simple wh-questions asked in English by school staff. Parents say he presents similarly when asked questions in his home language
- ▶ School staff and parents have difficulties understanding Gabriel's speech and use of language. Gabriel gets upset when others cant understand him
- ▶ Gabriel is interested in play with peers but finds it hard to join in. He will watch peers play or follow peers in the playground.
- ▶ He attends to attention and Lego therapy groups at school



Example referral:

Imogen: 7 years old, Monolingual/Only speaks English

Presentation:

- ▶ Imogen is highly distractible and finds it hard to sit still.
- ▶ She requires a high level of support to attend to whole class and independent learning activities.
- ▶ She uses fidget toys and needs movement breaks frequently
- ▶ Imogen finds reading and writing very challenging. She is often avoidant of lessons with lots of tasks related to these areas.
- ▶ There are no concerns about Imogen's understanding or use of spoken language.



Case Discussion 1

Rohan: 4 years old, English as an Additional Language

Presentation:

- ▶ Rohan often stammers and repeats words. He does not seem to be aware of his stammer or show frustration.
- ▶ He needs regular prompting to attend to adult led activities. He finds it hard to sit still for a long time.
- ▶ Rohan needs adult support to share toys and take turns with peers. Without support, he often gets upset
- ▶ School staff have concerns regarding Rohan's use of grammar when he speaks in English. Parents are not worried about Rohan's use of language in his home language.
- ▶ Rohan often doesn't respond to instructions.

How could Rohan be supported using universal or targeted strategies?

Would you refer Rohan for specialist SLT support ?



Case Discussion 2:

Amina: 8 years old, Monolingual/Only speaks English

Presentation:

- ▶ Amina moved to her new school 4 months ago.
- ▶ Amina often whispers when speaking in class. She does not answer her name when called for the register
- ▶ She feels comfortable speaking to her close friends at school and her family at home.
- ▶ Amina often needs whole class instructions repeated to her directly
- ▶ Amina finds it hard to explain how she is feeling or what to do when she is feeling overwhelmed.

How could Amina be supported using universal or targeted strategies?

Would you refer Amina for specialist SLT support ?



Universal Support: Training for school staff

- ▶ Central training - Not running in Autumn term but will running in the Spring Term (dates TBC)
- ▶ Universal Team is running training on:
 - ▶ Colourful semantics
 - ▶ Social Communication



Using Colourful Semantics in Class

Ran By Ealing's Speech and Language Therapy's Universal team

Aim: to support student's spoken and written language learning across the curriculum, for teachers in Key Stages 1-3.

3-4 PM

Monday 25th November, 2024

Online, via Zoom

Sign up via Ealing CPD Online

<https://schools.ealingcpd.org.uk/courses>


Ealing Community Partners



Supporting Social Communication in the Classroom:

Using Neurodiversity-affirming principles

Ran By Ealing's Speech and Language Therapy's Universal team

Aim: to consider the "why" behind behaviours and support children reach their potential, for all school staff in Key Stages 1-3.

3-4 PM

Thursday 28th November

Online, via Zoom

Sign up via Ealing CPD Online

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Ealing Community Partners

Universal Support: Parent Workshops

Workshop	Date/time	Location
<i>Supporting Children Who Speak at Home but not at School</i>	Thursday 14 th November 12-1pm	Online via Zoom
<i>Understanding Behaviours and Managing Emotions</i>	Monday 18 th November 1-2pm	Online via Zoom
<i>Using Visuals to Support Communication</i>	Tuesday 26 th November 1-2pm	Carmelita House, W5 2PJ
<i>Supporting your Child with Friendships</i>	Thursday 5 th December 12-1pm	Online via Zoom
<i>Supporting Speech Sound Development</i>	Monday 9 th December 4-5pm	Online via Zoom

"Very informative with lots of useful resources"

"I would love to attend more sessions in the future!"

"All parents need this kind of workshop to help us feel better and brighter"

"Gave me strategies to try in the future"

Thank you for attending!

Any Questions ?

Feel free to send us an email with any questions on our advice line:

wlm-tr.ealing.sltadvice@nhs.net



Ealing children's speech and language therapy advice line

for parents and professionals



o o o o



We'll get back to you within 5 working days

We can call you back with an interpreter

o o o o

Are you looking for advice about how to support your child (0-18) with their communication at home?

Do you have a general question about speech and language?



Email: wlm-tr.ealing.sltadvice@nhs.net



Facebook: [facebook.com/SLTEaling](https://www.facebook.com/SLTEaling)