



Staged Pathway Toolkit



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Introduction

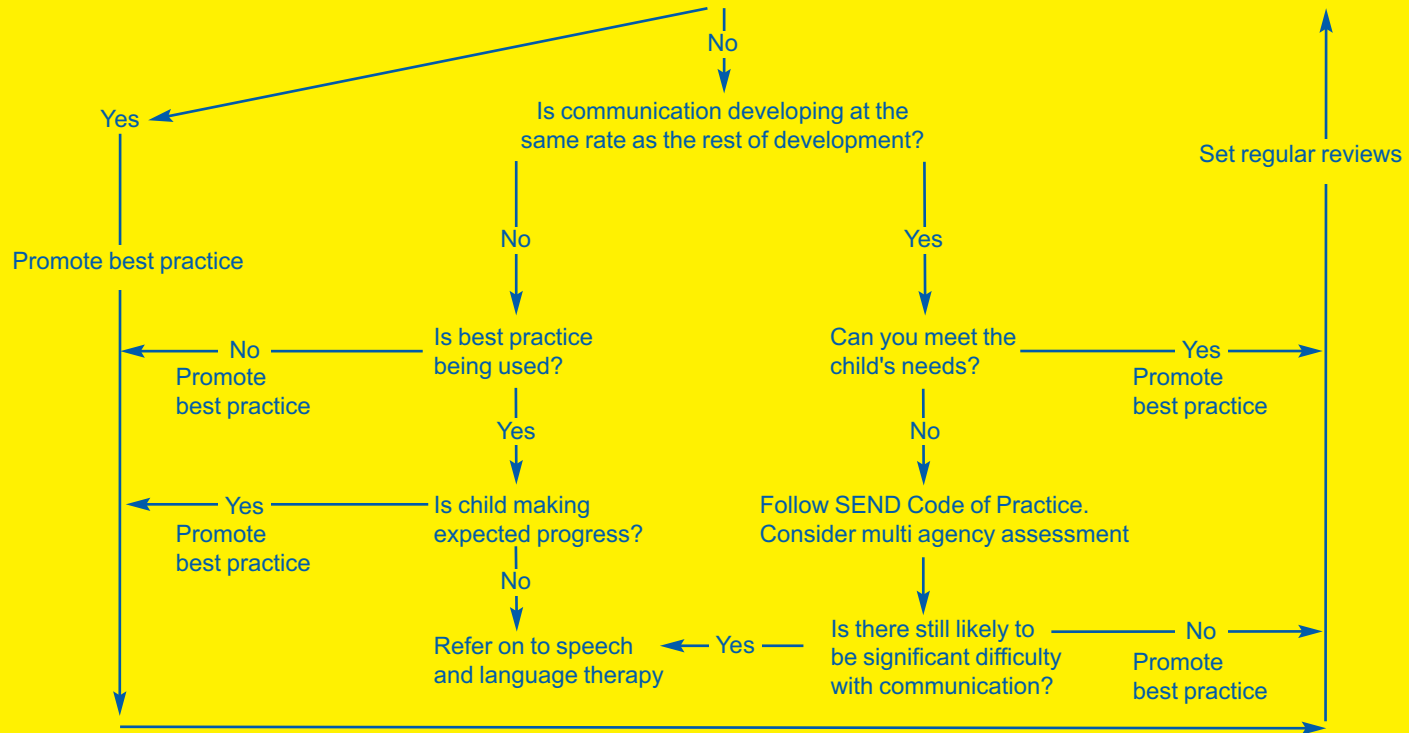
This toolkit has been produced through partnership working with a wide range of agencies. It is intended to be used alongside the Stoke Speaks Out training framework for communication to identify children who need support and signpost those who need a speech and language therapy referral.

Staged Pathway for Communication

This pathway should be followed for all children where there is concern over communication development to inform whether referral on is necessary.

Gather evidence of developmental milestones / ask fact - finding questions Involve others in your decision making - parents / carers / professionals Include all areas of development including communication skills Promote best practice

Is the Child's development age appropriate?



Guidance on completing the speech and language therapy referral form:

All referrals must be on the official form.

All sections of the form must be completed - incomplete forms will be returned.

If a section is not applicable please state this on the form.

1. Is the child's development age appropriate?

In this section consider all aspects of the child's development including physical, social and emotional and communication development. Use child development norms to formulate your decision and state how you have made your judgment.

2. What are the main concerns regarding this child's communication?

Hearing - state if this has been checked and if so when and with what outcome. If another agency is involved regarding the child's hearing please list them under the other agencies section. If you have concerns regarding the child's hearing please ensure this is being investigated alongside making a referral to SLT.

Guidance continued

Listening and Attention - this describes how well the child can maintain their concentration on a task and listen to others for conversation.

Describe roughly how long they can sit and concentrate. Can they concentrate with toys? Can they concentrate for conversation/ instructions? Is this impacting on their listening for communication?

Understanding of Language - this is receptive language or comprehension: looking at whether children can follow what is being said to them. Understanding usually happens before expression i.e. a child can generally understand what is said to them before they can say it themselves.

Expressive Language - this is what the child says. It describes whether the child is saying a range of words and how well the child can link these words to make a sentence. It is not concerned with how clear the words sound.



Guidance continued

Speech - this is looking at how clear the words sound. Make a note of whether a child can be understood by close family and by strangers.

Make a note of whether the child seems to be able to imitate sounds and whether they have any physical difficulty which makes some sounds difficult - e.g. tongue tie. Also note whether the child is aware of any speech difficulties they have.

Fluency - this relates to hesitation, repetitions and blocks during talking. Some children go through a normal non-fluent phase as language starts to develop (around two and a half years).

This usually improves as the child gets more proficient with language. Note down if this causes frustration for the child.

Social Use of Language - this is how children use the speech and language they have to hold conversations, take turns and get their needs met. This also involves non-verbal communication e.g. gestures, body language, facial expression. Some children can supplement language delay by having enhanced social skills.



Guidance continued

Voice - this refers to the quality of the voice produced. Persistent hoarse or husky voices are not part of normal development and may need advice. Comment on how long the voice has had a poor quality and whether there are any associated medical factors e.g. persistent laryngitis.

Feeding and Swallowing - please comment on any difficulties with feeding and swallowing. Is the child fully weaned? Can the child chew lumps? Does the child ever choke on food or regurgitate food?



- 3. What strategies have been put in place and how are they working?**
In this section list any things you or other people have tried to improve the child's speech and language skills. This may include advice to parents, groups, specific strategies e.g. small group work, attendance at a language enhancing group at a Children's Centre.

Guidance continued

4. What contributing factors are there and how have you minimized these?

This may include hearing difficulties, medical needs or family issues which need resolving in order to allow the parents to concentrate on working with the child. It also includes things which can impact on child development such as use of dummies and bottles, constant background noise, lack of opportunity to play, lack of a good quality model.

5. What support do the parents/carers need and is this in place?

Consider literacy issues, ability to attend appointments, lack of organisation - will the family need someone to remind them to come to appointments? Can the family speak English and if not is there access to an appropriate interpreter?

Are there home issues which will mean the family are not likely to attend e.g. domestic violence, new baby imminent or health issues?



Guidance continued

Questions to ask:

- Does your child turn to sound?
- How does your child respond when you call them?
- What vocalisations/noises does your child make?
- How does your child let you know when they want something?
- Does your child have a dummy/bottle?
- Is your child responding to familiar words e.g. where's duck? When in the bath?

SEND Code of Practice: The Children and Families Act 2014 has introduced a new approach to the way children, young people and their families are supported.

A SEND Code of Practice provides information and guidance for education, health and care professionals to work together to meet on going educational needs.

Consent: This section is essential to show that parents are willing for us to receive the referral and to share information. By completing this section it allows us to discuss children's attendance, assessment results and progress.

By the Age of One

Attention and Listening

Interested in environment. Turns to sound. Attends to interesting sounds.
Concentration span limited.

Understanding of Language

Understands a few key words eg. 'no', 'juice', 'bye bye'. Turns to their name.

Expression

Babbles tunefully. Uses some simple recognisable words e.g. 'mama' 'car'. May pull or point to get message across.

Speech

Uses a wide range of sounds in babble. These are starting to sound more like words but may not be clear.

Social Interaction

Interested in people - particularly faces. Uses some facial expression e.g. smiles, shows discomfort.



By the Age of One continued

Questions to ask:

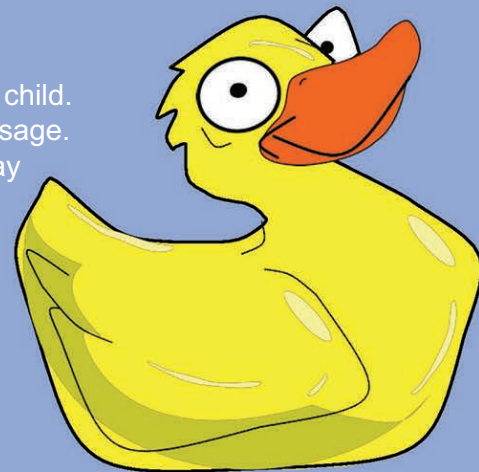
- Does your child turn to sound?
- How does your child respond when you call them?
- What vocalisations/noises does your child make?
- How does your child let you know when they want something?
- Does your child have a dummy/bottle?
- Is your child responding to familiar words eg wheres duck?
When in the bath?

Strategies to try:

- Encourage carer to completely remove use of dummies and bottles by the age of 1 year.
- Reduce background noise to encourage listening development. Ensure there are quiet times.
- Encourage carers to regularly talk to and play with their child. Advise attendance at local toddler groups or infant massage.
- Encourage parents/carers to spend some time every day reading, singing, talking and playing with their child.
- Signpost parents to useful websites

Refer If:

- child does not respond to sounds
- child is regressing
- child shows limited exploration of the environment and little interest especially in people



By the Age of Two

Attention and Listening

Concentrates on self-chosen activity for brief periods. Shows increasing interest in others and environmental sounds.

Understanding of Language

Understands range of single words and by 2 years may understand 2 key words e.g. find big bear.

Expression

Uses a range of single words and by 2 years may be linking two words together. Vocabulary rapidly expanding.

Speech

Is unlikely to be clear but will use a range of sounds including p,b,m,n,t,d.

Social Interaction

Uses pointing and gesture. Takes turns in simple games like building a tower of bricks.



By the Age of Two continued

Questions to ask:

- Does your child have a dummy or bottle?
- What does your child like to play with? How long will your child play for?
- How much of what you say does your child understand?
- Can they find an object if you ask for it? Could they remember 2 objects?
- What words/combinations of words does your child use/say?

Child observations:

Use everyday objects e.g. Where's the cup, sock, teddy, ball, keys, cup, spoon

Ask: What's this?..... (to look at expression)

Ask: Can you find the(to look at understanding)

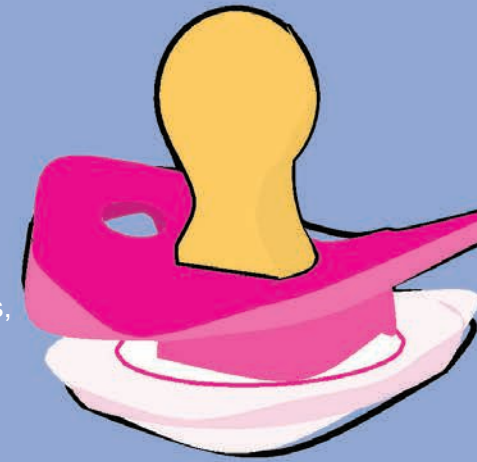
Now can you findand(to look at understanding)

Strategies to try:

- Ensure no dummies or bottles are being used.
- Encourage parents /carers to spend some time every day reading, singing, talking and playing with their child.
- Encourage attendance at local groups eg toddler group.
- Model language clearly.
- Make use of everyday opportunities for talking e.g. going to the shops, cooking the dinner
- Signpost families to useful websites

Refer If:

- No words by the age of 2 years and no symbolic noises (e.g. woof, broom broom, moo)
- No understanding of familiar words
- Child appears to be regressing
- Child shows little/no interest in communication



Picture Page By the Age of Two



By the Age of Two

Questions:

Point to the apple / sock / duck etc.

What's this?

What does the duck say?

What does the dog say?

By the Age of Three

Attention and Listening

Child concentrates on a task of their own choosing but can be directed by an adult to a different activity.

Comprehension

By the age of three children will be beginning to understand 3 information carrying words e.g. give me the big, red cup. They may follow a short sequence of familiar instructions e.g. "tidy up the toys and come and sit on the mat".

Expression

By the age of 3 years children should have a wide range of words and be able to link these together in short sentences. Grammar may still be immature e.g. "me goed to the park".

By the Age of Three continued

Speech

Should be using p,b,m,t,d,n and all vowels. May not yet be using k,g,s,z,f,v,sh,ch,j,l,r,th or 2 consonants together - speech may still be difficult to understand at times in longer sentences or out of context.

Social Interaction

Will initiate interaction with a range of people. Will respond to adults and children. Will take turns in simple conversations and in simple games.

Fluency

Child may repeat sounds or words at times when tired, excited or using longer sentences, but is generally fluent in talking.

By the Age of Three continued

Questions to ask:

- Can your child understand instructions that are out of context or not part of an everyday routine? (understanding)
- Can your child use short sentences for a range of different purposes: e.g. asking questions, commenting, directing? (expression)
- Can familiar people understand what your child says most of the time? (speech)
- Will your child happily play turn-taking games with some help? (social interaction)

Child observations:

Use everyday objects e.g. bear, sock, cup, key, book, spoon and pictures

Ask:

- Put the key in the cup (understanding),
- Touch teddy's nose (understanding)
- Give mummy the sock and the spoon (understanding)
- Put the object in various places e.g. spoon in cup and ask child "what have I done?" (expression)

By the Age of Three continued

Strategies to try:

- Make sure your child has time to talk where there is no background noise distracting him/her.
- Gain your child's attention then break down long instructions into smaller chunks to assist understanding.
- Acknowledge what the child says despite any errors - show them that you are listening to them.
- Model correct language. Make sure you are face-to-face when communicating with your child.
- When your child is unclear model the correct speech back but do not correct the child e.g. "Dats a pish" - "yes that is a fish."
- Play lots of games which involve copying sounds and mouth movements e.g. blowing bubbles, copying funny faces and funny sounds, sucking and blowing through straws.

Refer If:

- The child is having difficulty listening to and responding to simple instructions.
- The child is very unintelligible even to familiar adults.
- The child is getting frustrated by not being able to communicate.
- The child mainly uses less than 3 words together
- The child is stammering frequently particularly on part words over a period of months.

Suggested questions for this picture are overleaf.
You may wish to add or amend these to vary language
levels.



By the Age of Three

Questions:

Point to the big apple
(understanding)

Point to the girl's eyes
(understanding)

What is the baby doing?
(expression)

What is the dad doing?
(expression)

Who is dad giving the teddy to?
(expression)

By the Age of Four

Attention and Listening

Child can attend to a task of an adult's choosing. They may still be distracted but can be directed back to the task.

Comprehension

Beginning to understand up to 4 information carrying words eg make teddy jump on the big table. Can understand time related words e.g. yesterday, tomorrow, colour and number.

Expression

Will use 5-8 words in a sentence and will be beginning to link sentences together. Can talk about recent events. Using past tense but may make some errors e.g. runned for ran, dranked for drank. Will use prepositions: on/in/under/infront/behind. Will use pronouns: he/she/they/we.

By the Age of Four

Speech

Beginning to sound clearer. May still have difficulty with sh,ch,j,l,r,w,th. Should be developing use of k,g,s,f.

Social Interaction

Will be playing co-operatively with other children.

Fluency

Should be fluent most of the time.

By the Age of Four

Questions to ask:

- Is your child able to understand instructions? Can your child do this when it is something s/he is not familiar with ?
- Can your child speak in sentences for a range of different purposes e.g. asking questions, commenting, directing?
- Can family understand what your child is saying?
- Will your child happily play turn-taking games with others with a little help?

Child observations:

Use everyday objects e.g. big and little bear, red sock and blue sock, red cup and blue cup, key, big and little book, spoon, ball and pictures.

Ask:

- Make big teddy jump on the book (understanding)
- Give me the sock, the cup and the ball (understanding)
- Put the red sock into the blue cup (understanding)
- Make the teddy carry out some actions e.g. sleeping on the book
- ask what's teddy doing?

By the Age of Four continued

Strategies to try:

- Make sure there is time to talk.
- Reduce background noise as much as possible
- Have quiet times within the day where there is no TV or DVD on.
- Regularly read, talk and play with your child.
- Break down long instructions into smaller chunks to help understanding.
- Acknowledge what your child says despite any errors
- Make sure you are face-to-face .
- Provide a good clear model of correct language.
- Make sure you are talking with your child when you are carrying out daily activities eg shopping, walking along the street, cooking and doing household chores - this will increase the opportunities to practice talking.

Refer If:

- The child's speech is unclear to familiar people
- The child is often frustrated when trying to communicate
- The child is stammering frequently
- The child cannot join in a conversation

Suggested questions for this picture are overleaf.
You may wish to add or amend these to vary language
levels.



By the Age of Four

Questions:

Age of 4

What are they doing? (point to people playing football)

What has happened? (point to the football about to go into the goal)

What is the baby looking at?

What is the mummy doing?

Age of 5

Why is the boy dirty?

What is the mummy going to do?

What sports do you like playing?

What do you think will happen next?

By the Age of Five

Attention and Listening

Child can attend to a task of an adult's choosing. They may still be distracted but can be directed back to the task.

Comprehension

Beginning to understand up to 4 information carrying words e.g. make teddy jump on the big table. Can understand time related words e.g. yesterday, tomorrow, colour and number.

Expression

Will use 5-8 words in a sentence and will be beginning to link sentences together. Can talk about recent events. Using past tense but may make some errors eg runned for ran, dranked for drank. Will use prepositions: on/in/under/in front/behind. Will use pronouns: he/she/they/we.

By the Age of Five continued...

Speech

Uses k/g. Starting to use blends of sounds and can imitate these eg sp-spider, bl-blue, pl-play. Starting to use ch and j. Largely intelligible and mostly fluent.

Play

Plays imaginatively and co-operatively with other children



Suggested questions for this picture are overleaf. You may wish to add to or amend these to vary language levels.

By the Age of Five continued...

Questions:

- Does the child follow instructions in the classroom?
- Are they able to contribute to class discussions?
- Can you understand the child when they are talking about something they are playing with?
- Do they need a lot of prompts to sit and listen at circle time?
- Do they play with other children?
- Do they get frustrated when they are trying to communicate?

Child activity: use the picture overleaf and ask relevant questions eg

What is the boy doing?

Who is at the top of the beanstalk?

What will happen next?

How does the boy(Jack) feel?

By the Age of Five continued....

Strategies to try:

- Encourage regular opportunities for one-to-one or small group talking time.
- Ensure there are quiet times/areas throughout the day to encourage listening skills.
- Attention/Listening: Use simple board games for taking turns.
- Prompt good looking/listening.
- Praise good sitting and good listening.
- Language: use open questions e.g. What have you had for lunch?
- Ask questions about recent or present events.
- Model back correct grammar and speech. Break down instructions to assist understanding.
- Give the child time to process language.
- Model slow, clear speech. Use picture cues to emphasise difficult sounds.
- Use advice from Letters and Sounds document - Phase 1. Primary National Strategies 2007

Refer If:

- Child is struggling to understand everyday instructions
- Child has limited vocabulary
- Child is not connecting sentences
- Child has difficulty thinking of the correct word and has unusual word order
- Child's speech is very unclear

By the age of Six or Seven

Attention and Listening

Should be able to sustain attention to tasks for longer periods and can follow adult direction.

Comprehension

Understands everyday conversation. Has an understanding of time and the words that describe time e.g. 'later today' Understands all basic concepts.

Understands narrative language i.e. can follow a story of at least 5 events.

Beginning to infer meaning e.g. can predict what can happen next. Rapidly expanding vocabulary including words outside their direct experience e.g. influenced by written material.

Expression

Uses language for a range of purposes eg observing, describing, comparing, recounting recent experiences in chronological order.

Predicting future events. Uses language to plan and organise and problem-solve. Mastered irregular nouns and verbs. Uses compound sentences

e.g. links phrases with conjunctions can express more complex ideas e.g.

Queen Victoria lived a long time ago, she was real but she's dead now.

By the Age of Six or Seven continued....

Speech

Most children will have clear well articulated speech and be intelligible in most contexts. Some children may still make errors with th, r + l.

Play

Children at this age should be able to play games with rules and be able to involve other children in this. They should have highly developed sequences of imaginative play and be able to take turns with others.

Refer If:

- Speech is unintelligible
- Child is struggling to understand instructions
- Child has difficulty thinking of the correct words
- Child has limited vocabulary
- Child's speech is not fluent
- Child struggles to put full sentences together

