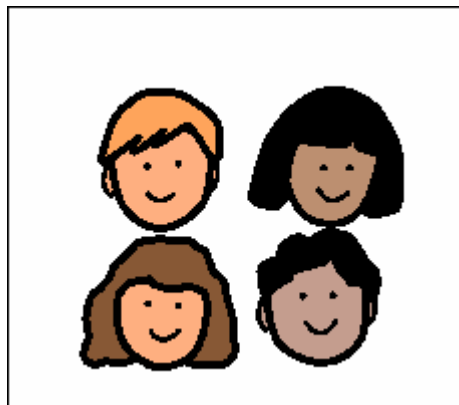


SPEECH AND LANGUAGE RESOURCE BOOKLET



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Hearing and Communication.

Even a mild or temporary hearing loss can greatly affect a child's speech and language development. It is therefore very important that all adults are aware of the signs of hearing difficulties.

The ear is made up of three parts the outer ear, which is the visible part of the ear, the middle ear, made up of three small connecting bones and the inner ear, where the sounds are processed and transmitted to the brain. There are different types of hearing loss, some are caused by problems in the outer ear, such as wax build up, when this occurs it is best to take them to your doctor to have their ear cleaned and/or use ear drops to soften the wax. Trying to clean the wax out yourself e.g. using cotton buds can cause the ear to produce more wax and can also make the problem worse. Problems can also occur in the middle ear and the most common problem here is known as glue ear, where fluid builds up in the middle ear and stops the bones from moving freely.

Hearing difficulties can affect a child's ability to communicate and can also cause the child to present with behaviour and attention and listening difficulties.

Some possible signs of hearing difficulties include:

- Showing no awareness to everyday sounds in their environment, e.g. not turning to look if a siren moves by or not looking up when a noisy plane or helicopter flies over.
- Difficulty in locating the source of sounds, the child may be able to hear you call their name but may not turn to respond to you in your direction.
- A possible delay in their understanding of language and concepts
- A possible delay in their use of language
- Attention difficulties
- Constantly asking for repetition
- Mixing up sounds in their words and mispronouncing words and sounds
- Behavioural problems
- They may speak louder than is appropriate.

General Strategies that may help children presenting with hearing difficulties.

- Gain the child's attention by saying their name, or if appropriate lightly pat them on the arm to gain their attention before speaking to them.
- Be aware of back ground noise, try to always sit them at the front of the group during mat time, and if you are giving them an instruction try to give it in a place with as few environmental noises as possible.
- Check the child's understanding of what you have said by asking direct questions, e.g. **"What will you do now?"** not "Did you hear me?" and not "do you understand"
- Use a clear voice with normal intonation. Shouting or speaking too loudly can distort the sound and make it harder to understand, it also reduces the cues they may pick up from your lip movements.
- Face the child while you are speaking, remember that only a very small proportion of communication is verbal so emphasise appropriate facial expressions and gestures.

Listening and Communication

Some children may have no difficulties with their hearing but can find it difficult to listen and pay attention long enough to process and follow instructions given to them.

Some ideas that may help with developing listening skills

- Make sure that you have your child's attention before speaking. Remove as many distractions as you can e.g. TV, dishwasher, so that the child is not distracted by other sounds and can concentrate on what you are saying.
- Slow down your talking; try counting to 10 in your head before continuing or repeating the instruction, to allow plenty of time for the child to process your instruction.
- Support the child's understanding with gestures and actions, e.g. mime putting on their coat or point to the sink to wash hands.
- Have the child repeat or rephrase what you have said to check that they have understood. Do not just ask, "Do you understand?"
- Model good listening behaviours. Take the time to listen. If possible stop what you are doing. Give your full attention as you listen.

Activities to Develop Listening Skills

The following are a few ideas for helping to develop attention and listening skills. (Activities adapted from "Early Communication Skills" by Charlotte Lynch and Julia Kidd, and "Activities to develop attention and listening skills", provided by the Speech and Language Therapy department of the Lambeth PCT). Remember when engaging in these activities to put the toys/objects away before your child loses interest, then the toys will remain interesting when you bring them out another day.

1. Bubbles:

Blow bubbles for your child to watch. Catch or pop them, sing songs about bubbles together.

2. Inset puzzles:

Complete the puzzle together, naming all the pictures as you do. Hide one piece and ask the child which one is missing; or hide a piece in one hand and let the child guess which hand it is in. Match the puzzle pieces to real objects.

3. Posting Boxes:

Post shapes and pictures into the posting box. Show your child 2-3 pictures/objects, ask them to place one in the box, e.g. show them a picture of some apples and some carrots, and ask them to post the picture of the carrots.

4. "Catch the ball" game:

At least three people sit in a circle; before you roll or throw the ball to someone say their name. You always say the name so that the child throwing and the child receiving both have to listen for the name.

5. Waiting to "go":

Play stopping and starting games, e.g. the child must begin running or jumping when you say go and then finish when you say stop.

6. Musical statues:

Children begin to dance when they hear the music but then must stand still when the music stops until it begins to play again.

7. Copying the clapping rhythm:

Ask the child to repeat/copy a short rhythm that you have clapped, or tapped on a drum.

8. Books and Songs:

Use lift the flap books, read the story and encourage the child to wait for you to indicate when it is time to lift the flaps. Sing songs and rhymes with actions so that the child has to listen for the correct part of the rhyme to perform the actions.

9. Listening walk:

Go for a short walk together or sit still in a moderately busy place. Listen for sounds and noises together and identify any that you recognise, e.g. a dog barking, a car driving past, a bird singing. Imitate any sounds that you hear together.

10. Find it:

Look around the room and think of something you can describe by where it is e.g. a black board, "it is at the back of the room, next to the dress ups, it has chalk on it"

If the above activities are too tricky for the child you can try some of the activities on the next few pages. These activities can be used with all children not just children who you are concerned about.

Speech and Language Therapy Activity to encourage your child's
Listening and attention skills

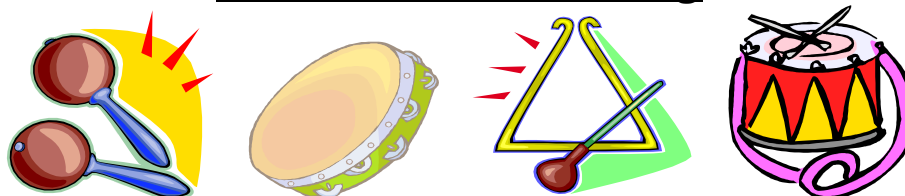


Bricks in the tube

- Sit on floor with group of 2 – 6 children
- Go round group asking children their names
- Give each child some bricks
- Say a child's name, who then has to put one brick down the tube
- Each child has to listen and wait for his/her turn
- Praise the child for 'good listening' and 'good waiting'
- You can make it more difficult by not looking at the child so that they have to rely on listening only i.e. no eye contact
- Once tube is full and each child has had a few turns, slowly lift the tube up to reveal a tower of bricks
- The children can now knock the tower down!
- This activity also encourages turn-taking skills

A game for Foundation Stage Children:

Instrument Matching



- Place 1 set of instruments (bells, shaker, and clacker) on floor or table.
- Place identical second set on the table, so that the children cannot see them (e.g. behind a screen/or upturned table).
- Pick up each instrument off the floor in front of the children, and let them hear the different sounds they make. Let the children have a turn playing the instruments to get familiar with playing them
- One at a time, go round the group making a noise with a hidden instrument
- The child has to listen and match the sound, by pointing or playing the same instrument on the floor.
- If the child has difficulty matching the sound, show them the instrument whilst making the noise and encourage them to pick up the same instrument emphasising it's the same noise

To encourage and develop:

Attention and listening and to link in with the Foundation Stage Curriculum areas

Language for Communication and Thinking and Creative Development

A game for Foundation Stage Children:

What's in the Box?



- Put a range of familiar and interesting objects in a box
- Everybody pat the box and sing (to the tune of 'The Farmer's in his den') :
"What's in the box?
What's in the box?
(Child's name), (child's name) what's in the box?"
- Let the child then open the box and tell everyone what they have found. Give them time to say what it is, but don't pressure them to name it
- If a child doesn't give a verbal response help them by giving them a choice e.g. "is it a hat or a ball"
- If they are still unable to name the item, name it for them or use a gesture to give them a clue
- You can extend the child's language and understanding by asking 'what do you do with it' to encourage the child to talk about the function of the object

To encourage and develop:

Talking and link in with the Foundation Stage Curriculum areas:

Language for Communication and Creative Development

Speech Sound Development

It can be difficult to describe what is normal in speech sound development because speech sounds develop over a long period of time (up until 8 yrs+), Sounds usually develop in relation to how easy the sounds are to make. Vowel sounds (a,e,i,o,u) generally develop earliest and these are usually correctly used by 2 $\frac{1}{2}$, all should be achieved by 4 years. /th/ and clusters of sounds e.g. /st/, /sp/, are often the later sounds to develop. Please refer to the Speech sound development chart at the end of this information for approximate ages that speech sounds can develop

Individual Sound Errors.

Children may substitute one sound for another e.g. 'cat' becomes 'tat', 'pot' becomes 'pop', Some of these errors are considered normal at certain ages as children substitute sounds they find difficult to say for sounds they find easier to say, these errors often self correct with age. If these errors continue, as the child gets older, then it may be necessary to refer the child for assessment by a Speech and Language Therapist.

Children may also distort a sound, e.g. they may produce excess sound through their nose or make their /s/ sound 'slushy'. This will often not correct itself spontaneously and a referral to a speech and language therapist is advisable.

Patterns of sound changes.

Children may also 'process' words to make them easier to say, these are referred to as phonological processes and there are many different types of these that can affect children at different ages and stages.

Some of the more common phonological processes that you may come across include:

- Leaving off the final consonant in a word, e.g. hot becomes ho_ and cold becomes col_, known as Final Consonant Deletion (FCD)
- Dropping the unstressed syllables in a word, e.g. banana becomes __nana, (known as syllable deletion).
- Repeat the first syllable of a word; e.g. 'baba' for baby. (Known as syllable repetition).

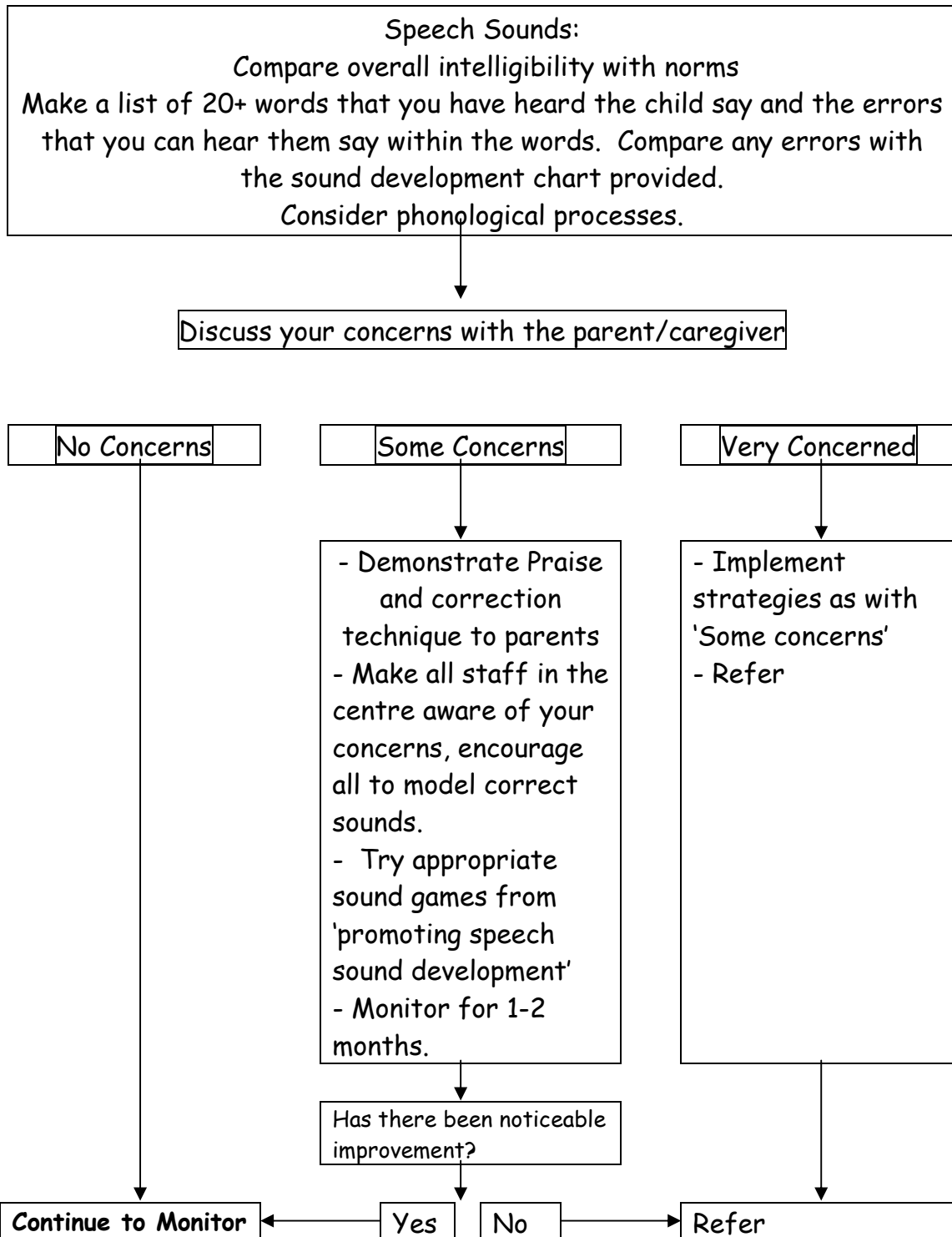
These three examples usually stop by three and half years. Some different processes can last for much longer such as simplifying the groups of consonants by deleting one, e.g. 'blue' becomes 'bue'.

Intelligibility

Sometimes a child can produce all of their speech sounds to a developmentally appropriate way and still be very difficult to understand. As a general rule of thumb the following levels of intelligibility can be expected:

- By 2 years:** Approximately 25% intelligible - understood by familiar adults who are with them everyday.
- By 3 years:** Able to be understood by adults who live and work with children.
- By 4 years:** 90% intelligible - understood by most peers and adults.

Speech sound errors - How you can help:



Language Development

As with Speech Development, there is a wide range of what is considered normal in language development. There is a progression of development that a child's language can be expected to follow. The following provides a checklist of things to consider when looking at children's communication development at different ages and stages. It is by no means a complete list and is more to give examples of skills at each age and stage. You can use this checklist to gain an idea of how a child's language development is progressing.

(adapted from Developmental Norms, Exchanges 2 - Department of Education, Queensland, Australia and Talking Point for Parents - www.talkingpoint.org.uk)

3-6 Months

Aware of Surroundings
Looks and Listens, watches your face as you talk.
Makes Throaty Sounds, Vocalises happy and unhappy sounds (laughs, cries etc.)
Makes 'noise' when talked to
Smiles
Cries

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6-8 Months

Attends to one thing at a time
Begins to learn cause and affect, (How one thing affects another)
Early turn taking with actions, (e.g. will smile in response to adult greeting)
Laughing, Crying, Coing, Babbling
Spontaneously responsive

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8-12 Months

Copies Adult Behaviour e.g. Waving, Clapping.
Understands object permanence, (e.g. understands something still exists even if they can't see it)
Enjoys peek a boo type games
Develops an intention to communicate, may try to communicate by actions or gestures.
Initiates Interaction
Babbling, experimenting with sound, may try to repeat your sounds.
Understands 'no-no'

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By 18 Months

Single Word Stage... uses about 20-30 words, (should have at least 6 meaningful words by 18 months)
Jargon common - unintelligible words and/or sentences that can sound like the child is trying to say something.
Will dance or bounce to music
Follows simple one step commands e.g. "Pick up teddy"
Looks at person talking
Gains your attention by looking at you and pointing.
Waves Bye bye
Turns to name
Can attend to a book or toy for about 2 minutes.
Answers simple questions nonverbally

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Two years

Puts 2 words together e.g. bye teddy, more drink
Uses words to request desired objects rather than just name
Can ask questions - what's this? Where?
Answers what's this? questions
Can follow simple 2 part instructions
Uses negatives...no
Points to some body parts when asked, eyes, ears, nose.
Finds it difficult to take turns or share

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Asks for common foods by name
Begins to use pronouns such as 'mine'
Makes animal noises such as 'moo'

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By Three years

Uses sentences of three or more words - not grammatically correct e.g. me go now, or daddy push car.
Has a vocabulary of several hundred words
Talks about the actions of others
Refers to self with full name
Enjoys repeating words and sounds
Can listen attentively to short stories and books
Watches others at play
Starting to develop concepts, big, little, happy, sad, hot, cold, all
Starting to make up simple stories
Beginning to share toys

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Four Years.

Sentences become increasingly complex.
Asks and answers whose, who and why questions
Recognises common everyday sounds
Can carry out series of two related commands, e.g. go to the fridge and get the juice.
Understands some concepts of time such as now, soon and later.
Able to describe the use of common objects e.g. car etc.
Groups objects such as foods, clothes etc.

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Some General Strategies that can help in Language Development.

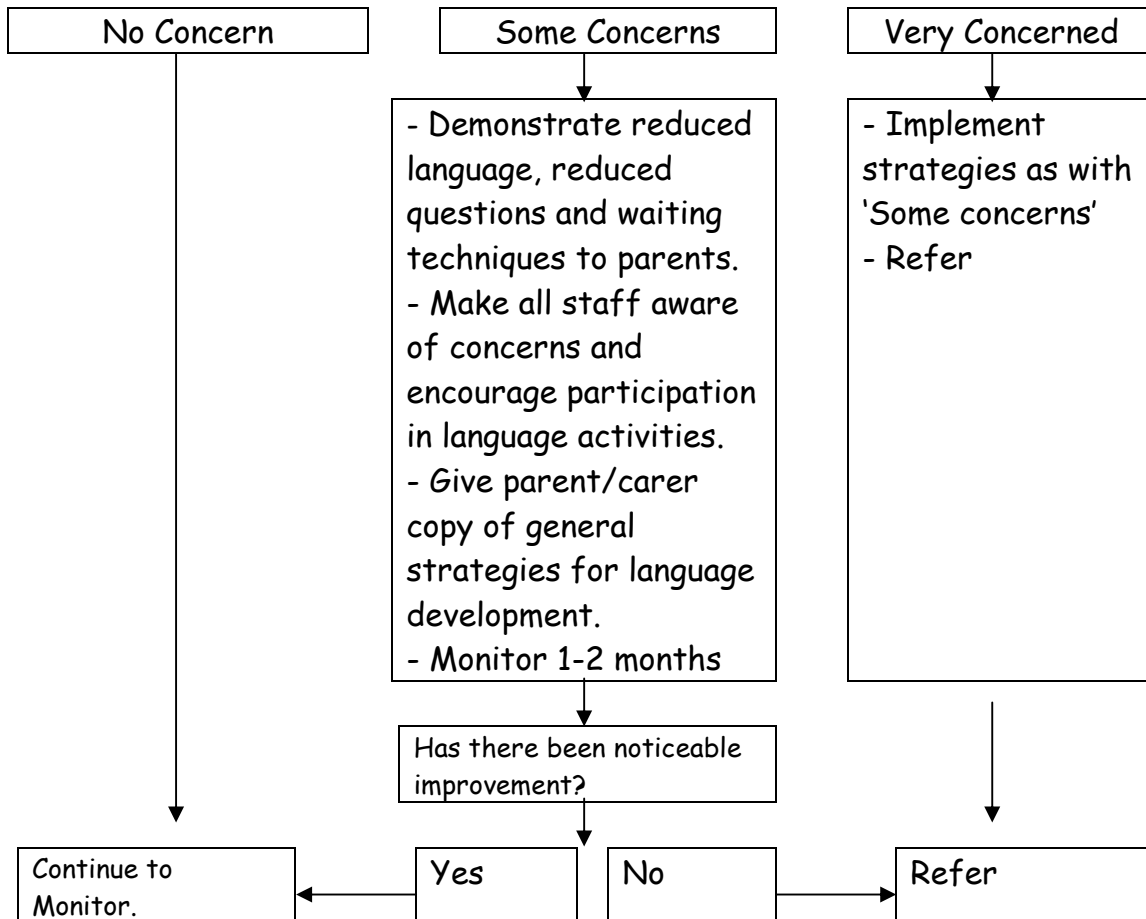
- **Make Language Meaningful**
Talk about things the child is doing and enjoying rather than topics that you initiate. Follow their lead, get down on their level and talk about things that interest them.
- **Be aware of distractions**
Be aware that a child can be easily distracted by the sound of the television or the dishwasher and may not be able to fully focus on what is being said to them.
- **Keep it short and simple**
Make your sentences short, try to speak to the child as you would like them to speak to you, If a child is speaking in single words, try to speak using 1-2 word utterances. (please ask for more information if needed re: reduced language)
- **Be clear**
Give specific instructions, e.g. "put the book on the table", rather than "put it over there"
- **Pause**
A child needs time to process what has been said to them and plan a response, do not assume that they are not going to answer, instead try pausing for at least the count of ten and see if they communicate.
- **Don't anticipate**
Create situations where a child would be expected to talk, don't anticipate what you think the child wants to say, if a child hands you jar, don't assume that they want it open. Instead wait for them to gesture or verbalise in some way that they want help.
- **Repeat!**
Children learn language through repetition, and may need to hear a word or phrase hundreds of times before they will say it, when working through a routine, try to use the same language each day so that they hear a consistent model.
- **Reduce the number of questions**
As mentioned above children learn through repetition and so if they hear "what's that?" all the time, it is likely that this is what they will say, it is much more beneficial if you comment, I see a lion, rather than point to the lion and ask "what's that?" Asking a question also places pressure on the child, as they often realise that there is a right and wrong answer, and so they will stay silent rather than answer incorrectly.

Language Development - How you can help:

You have concerns re:
 Language Development:
 Check child's development on checklists above.
 Make a note of the age and stage that they are up to and check age appropriateness.
 Take a language sample of 20+ phrases/sentences that the child is saying; consider the average length of their sentences.
 Consider Social Use of Language.



Discuss Concerns with Parents/caregivers.



Specific Strategies for the Development of Language

- Commenting:

As mentioned in 'general strategies' commenting can be a far more effective way of encouraging language development than question asking. Commenting allows you to focus on what the child is doing, so that you can extend them verbally and physically. Talking about things happening in the here and now can make the comments more relevant and easy for the child to relate to and re-use.

- This is not to say that you can never use questions but to try and ration the amount that you do use, a good idea is to think in terms of the fingers on your hand, when talking with your child use four comments (your fingers) to every question (your thumb).

- Sentence completion:

This technique allows your child to know that a response is expected of them without the pressure of a question. This technique can progress from single words through to phrases:

- e.g. The girl is in bed.
The girl is in ... "bed"
The girl is ... "in bed"
The girl ... "is in bed"

As the child get familiar with the activity leave off more words for them to complete.

- Choice Questions:

It is nearly impossible to cut all questions out of your communication, so it is important to realise that some questions are better than others. When you do use questions some questions will encourage language development more than others, choice questions are good for eliciting one-word responses.

- e.g. Do you want juice or water?
Was it inside or outside?

This technique can also be used when trying to interpret information that the child is trying to give you, e.g. if they are telling you about something that has happened use this technique to identify key words. E.g. "You were at nursery, were you inside or outside?... on the bikes or in the sand?"

- **OWL (Observe, Wait and Listen)**
 - Observe - recognise their feelings through facial expressions and body language, by observing them carefully it can be easier to choose a time to follow their lead and to feed in language at appropriate times.
 - Wait - It is not a normal response to pause after you have spoken if your conversational partner does not reply immediately. Take time to pause and give the child time to respond to what you have said, it can take a child a long time to process what you have said and then think of an answer. It can be hard to fight the reaction to just answer or assume on behalf of the child, but waiting encourages the child to respond by non verbally providing an expectation for communication.
 - Listen - By listening to your child you are giving them encouragement without placing pressure on them to respond.
- Interpret what your child is trying to say:
Respond to all of your child's attempts at communication, (crying, babbling, looking, pointing, smiling, reaching, gesturing) Provide the words, say what your child is trying to say, e.g. If they are reaching for a biscuit, say "want biscuit", the intonation you use can demonstrate it as a comment or a question, (you can still say no, if you don't want them to have one!)

With practise all of these specific and general strategies can be used in your day-to-day interactions with the child without the need of setting up extra activities to focus on language development.

Social Use of Language Checklist

(Sourced from Much More than words - SES team, New Zealand)

Before age two years:

Children's use of language is usually erratic and disjointed. The child is not yet aware of the listener's needs and will often talk about things of which the listener has no experience or knowledge. Parents and other conversation partners usually end up doing most of the 'work' to make sense of interactions.

By age three years:

The child has learned many things about conversations. The child will initiate dialogue and has learned how to obtain and hold a listener's attention. Conversational turn taking is developing. Knowledge of how to respond to someone is also growing e.g. answering questions with an appropriate answer.

From age 3-5 years:

This is a period of great development of social language skills. There is a big increase in awareness of social factors which make for a successful conversation; e.g. correct forms of address and polite terms such as please and sorry. The child learns to anticipate when the conversation might break down; e.g. they may repeat utterances that are unclear.

Stammering/Dysfluency

It is generally acknowledged that there is no one cause for stammering, and it is unknown how many different factors can be involved. We do know, however, that early intervention given as soon as concerns arise significantly decreases the chances of ongoing stammering.

Fluency refers to the rhythm at which speech is produced, if it is disrupted a child can be said to be dysfluent. The disruptions are generally one of three types:

- 1) Blocks - When the word may seem to get stuck, the child may begin to form the word with their mouth, but then their mouth movement may seem to freeze.
- 2) Repetitions of Syllables - they may repeat sounds or syllables in a word e.g. t t t t teddy or ted ted ted ted teddy.
- 3) Prolongations, they may make a sound last for much longer than normal, e.g. mmmmmmmummy

All of these stammers may be accompanied by other movements in the body, e.g. excessive eye blinking or stamping their foot, their body may become noticeably tense.

It is also not uncommon for children with a stammer to use a lot of 'filler' words or phrases, e.g. um or like.

Many children go through a period of what can be referred to as normal dysfluency, this is often considered to be a sign that they are rapidly developing, they are learning lots of new words and have a lot to say. This period of normal non - fluency often lasts for 3-6 months and can vary in severity.

A referral for non - fluency is appropriate if...

- There is a history in the family of stammering, while there is no known genetic link, there is an increased risk of a prolonged stammer if others in the family have stammered.
- The stammer is accompanied by other movements as described above.
- The child experiences dysfluency that lasts more than three months.
- The child shows anxiety or frustration about communicating.

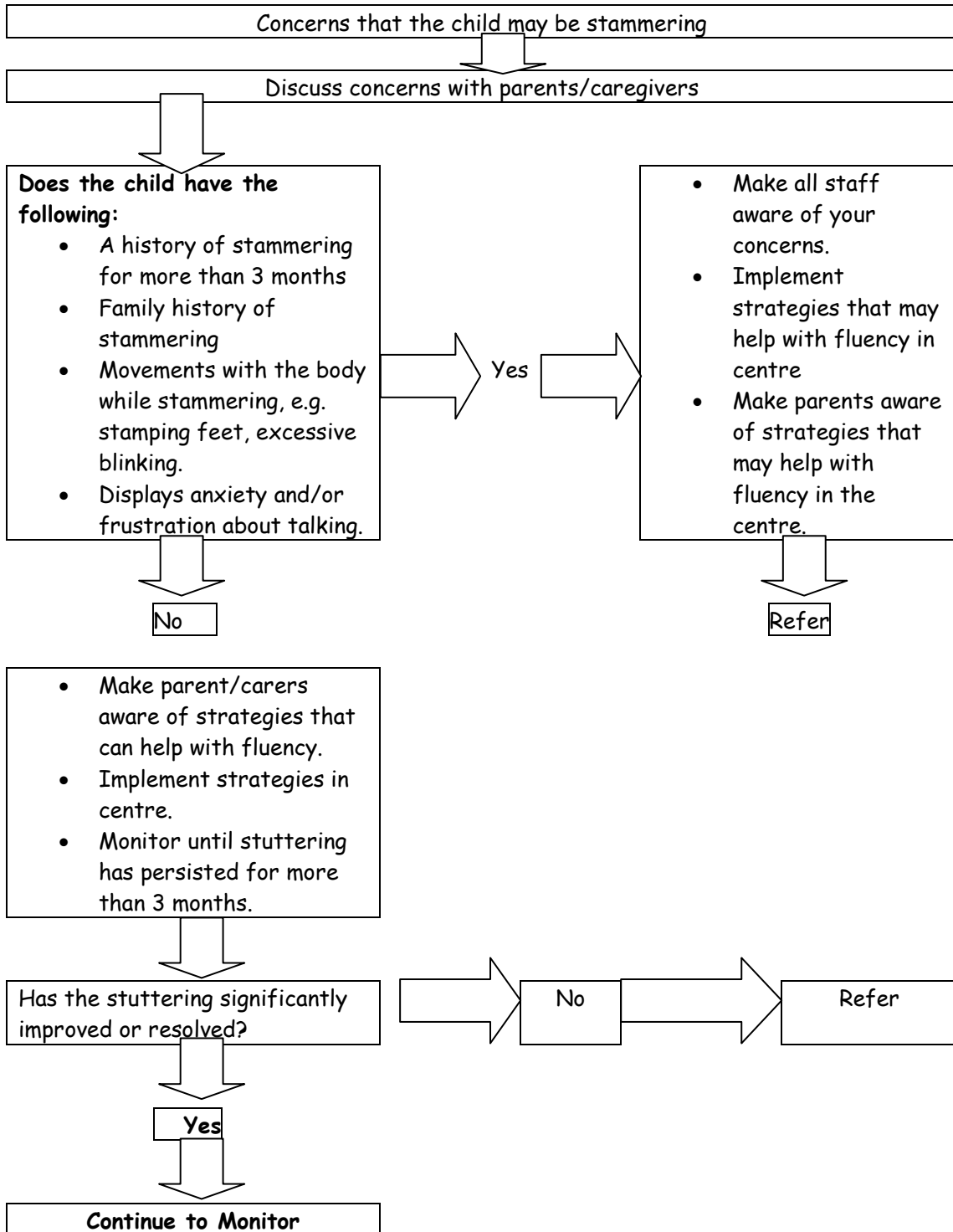
Some Ideas that may help Fluency.

- Keep your own speech slow and calm, by demonstrating good speech patterns to the child you can help them not to feel rushed or hurried.
- Give the child time to talk, do not rush them through what they are saying so that they know that you are interested in what they are saying.
- Reduce the focus on speech; spend time together that does not require a lot of talking.
- Give lot of time for the child to finish what it is they are going to say, do not assume and talk for the child or finish their sentences.
- Increase your pauses - this lets the child know that it is alright for them to pause as well during speech.
- Use short simple sentences.
- Maintain eye contact.
- Try not to ask too many questions.
- Praise the child for fluent speech; e.g. "Wow, that was really smooth talking - well done"

DO NOT

- Tell the child to speak more slowly.
- Interrupt what they are trying to say.
- Make the child repeat what they are trying to say.
- Look away while they are trying to finish their sentences.
- Demand speech, e.g. do not ask them to "say hello, say thank you"
- Do not correct errors with speech sounds.

Stuttering/Dysfluency - How you can help.



Ideas to focus on sounds on their own.

(Ideas sourced from SES - Much more than words resource)

The following is some suggestions to help with sounds in play. The more these sounds are practised the clearer they will be come. When practising sounds, only practise them on their own; do not add extra sounds until you have checked with your Speech and Language Therapist.

When you are practising these sounds, exaggerate both the sounds and your facial expressions to give the child extra cues to help learn the sound. If the child is unable to make the sound, do not try to force them, leave that sound and move on to other and come back to it at a later date. Remember to practise the sound and not the letter, e.g. 'buh' not 'bee'

SONG CHOOSING BOARDS

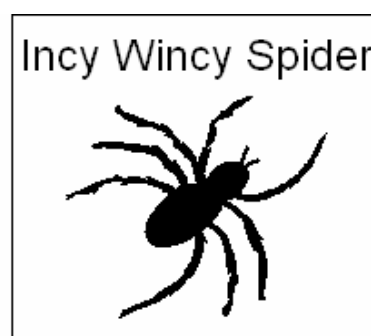
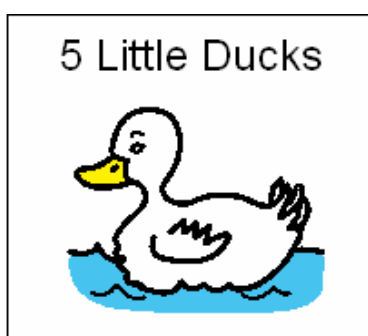
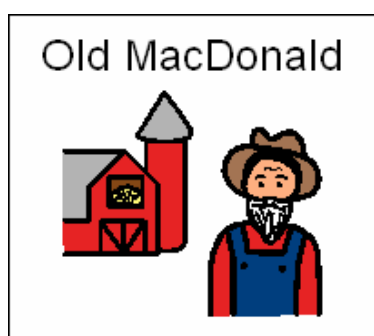
Aim: For child to request a song during a small/large group activity by choosing the picture that represents that song.

How to set it up:

1. Laminate and cut out symbols/drawings for songs you regularly sing in the nursery. Ensure the song's name is written on each card.
2. Laminate a large piece of cardboard with "Songs We Sing" written on it.
3. Attach Velcro or blue tack to each of the song cards. Stick 5-6 song cards onto song choosing board.

How to use it:

- At the start of singing session tell the children what songs they are going to be singing pointing to each of the song symbol cards.
- Ask a child to come up and chose a song by taking it off the board. Encourage them to name the song. If they don't name it model the name of the song.
- Keep selecting a child to choose a song until all the songs are removed from the board.

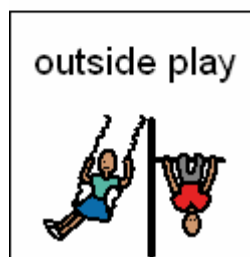
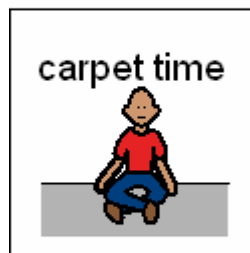


VISUAL TIME-TABLES

Aim: Daily time-table using symbols or photos showing the activities the child/children have to do each day as part of the nursery routine. This helps children understanding what is happening throughout the day and anticipate routines.

How to set up:

1. Laminate and cut out symbols or clear photos of the daily activities in the nursery (e.g. hang coat up, carpet time, singing, outdoor play, snack time..... home time).
2. Make a long laminated long strip of coloured card, attach this to the wall (horizontally or vertically) then attach Velcro dots to this. You can also add a pocket with “finished” at the bottom of the strip.



How to use it:

- Place time-table on wall where it can be easily seen. Take child to time-table when they arrive, point to first picture and label (e.g. “coat off”), remove card and perform activity. When finished return to time-table (you can place card in finish pocket) and go to next card.
- You can use this in the large group. All children can benefit from learning routine through pictures.
- You can use it for more specific tasks to teach a sequence e.g. hand washing, craft.

References

National Network for Childcare, Ages and Stages Series.
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