

Speech, Language and Communication Needs

A guide for parents and carers



Children with Special Educational Needs (SEN)



Hampshire
County Council

www.hants.gov.uk



Speech, Language and Communication Needs

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This leaflet is for parents/carers who are concerned about their child's speech and language. It is for parents/carers of children who have difficulty understanding what is said to them or have difficulty expressing their ideas and communicating their needs or feelings. Everyone wants children to be understood easily by the adults and children around them. Every child needs to be able to take part in a group situation, taking equal turns in the conversation and responding to others. For most children this will be achieved by developing spoken and written language.

Who may be affected?

It has been estimated that one in ten school-age children experience some problems with speech and language, whilst one in a thousand children have long-term difficulties. If you are worried about your child there is information about who to contact at the back of this booklet.

Delayed or disordered development of speech, language and communication skills may be associated with other special educational needs, such as learning difficulties, physical disabilities, autistic spectrum disorders, hearing impairment or behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.

How can I tell if my child has a speech, language and communication difficulty?

Sometimes it is not easy to tell when a child has a speech, language and communication difficulty. You and your family may have adapted your language to help your child without realising. However, you or others working with your child may notice that they have more difficulty than others when:

- listening in a small group or whole class situation
- following instructions
- following a story or explaining what has happened in the story
- using long sentences
- using grammar or pronunciation accurately
- giving clear information about every day events.

Who will help?

If you are worried that your child may have a speech, language or communication difficulty, please talk to those working with your child. The help your child needs can often be provided in their early education setting or school. They have a range of resources to enable them to provide support for children with different levels of special educational need. Staff working in early education settings and schools are offered advice, support and training which enables them to know how best to help your child. They can discuss with you strategies that can be used and if your child needs to be referred to the Speech and Language Therapy Service or how you might do this yourself.

If the early education setting or school need more advice they may, with your consent, call upon the help of other professionals, for example, a speech and language therapist and/or an educational psychologist.



What could happen?

Different types and levels of support may be suggested. Once your child's needs have been identified, staff will help your child to understand and communicate most effectively. If your child's skills make it significantly difficult for them to make progress in their school work, then more specific assistance may be appropriate involving the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo).

The SENCo will work closely with teachers, assistants, therapists and you, to monitor the progress being made. An individual education plan may be written to record the steps needed to help your child and to record and monitor the progress he or she makes. The plan might include a programme outlining ideas for practising and improving your child's speech, language and communication skills. Any individual education plan developed for your child will be discussed with you on a regular basis. Records will be kept about your child's progress.

How can I help?

Children of all ages learn best when all those involved with the child work together. Families can help by doing some of the following:

- having time to talk and play together without the television on
- playing with a variety of different toys, board games or interactive games
- singing songs and rhymes
- reading to them often and sharing books
- talking about any stories they have read, heard or seen in popular media
- discussing what you are doing or have done together, for example shopping trips and outings
- giving the child enough time to talk about their interests, and helping them to keep the conversation going, making time to listen patiently and carefully
- keeping your own language simple with pauses to check if the child has understood giving clear instructions supporting non-verbal communication, for example gestures/signs, where appropriate.



For more information

Special Educational Needs Service

Hampshire County Council Children's Services Department

Elizabeth II Court East, The Castle, Winchester, SO23 8UG

Tel: 0845 603 5620

Email: childrens.services@hants.gov.uk

Website: www.hants.gov.uk/sen-home

Parent Partnership Service

Hampshire County Council Children's Services Department

Elizabeth II Court East, The Castle, Winchester, SO23 8UG

Tel: 01962 845870

Email: enquiries.pps@hants.gov.uk

Website: www.hants.gov.uk/parentpartnership

Afasic

20 Bowling Green Lane

London, EC1R 0BD

Helpline: 0845 3 55 55 77

Website: www.afasic.org.uk

I CAN

8 Wakley Street

London, EC1V 7QE

Tel: 0845 225 4073 or 020 7843 2552

Email: info@ican.org.uk

Website: www.ican.org.uk

Speech and Language Therapy Service - contact your local surgery for details.



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