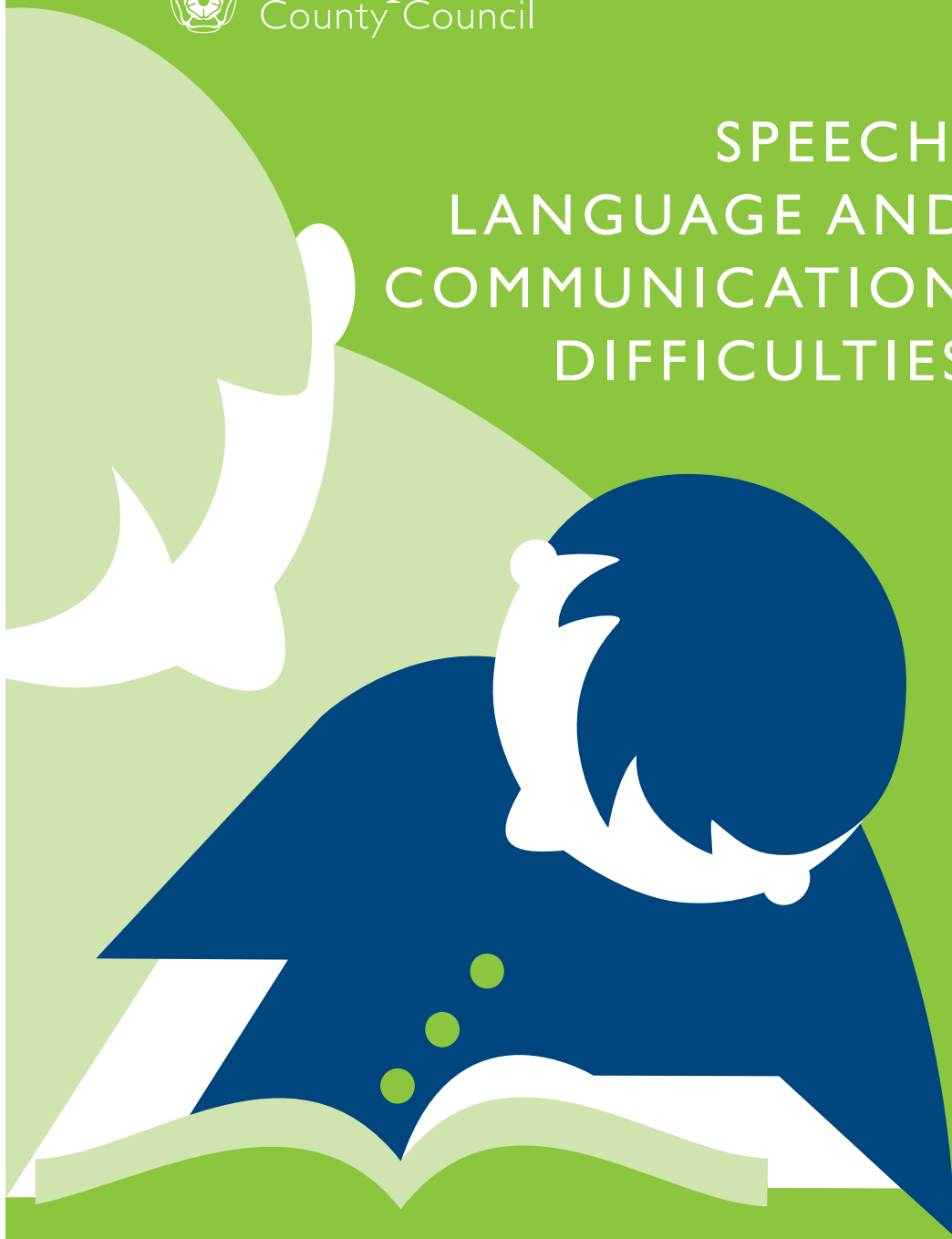




Hampshire  
County Council

SPEECH,  
LANGUAGE AND  
COMMUNICATION  
DIFFICULTIES



*Children with special educational needs*



# Speech, Language and Communication difficulties

## *A guide for parents and carers*

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 communicating their needs, feelings or ideas.

Everyone wants children to be understood easily by the adults and children around them. Every child needs to be able to communicate 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 emotional and behavioural 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. Perhaps without realising, you and your family may have adapted your language to help your child. However, you or others working with your child may notice that your child has 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 concerned that your child may have a speech, language or communication difficulty, please discuss this with your child's teacher or others working with your child. The help your child needs can often be provided in school or early education setting. However, if your child needs to be referred to the Speech and Language Therapy Service they will discuss with you how this is done.

Staff working in schools and early education settings receive advice, support and training. This enables them to know how best to help your child. They have a range of resources to enable them to provide support for children with different levels of special educational need.

An educational psychologist may, with your consent, become involved with your child if his/her needs are thought to be very significant and long term.

## What could happen?

Different types and levels of support may be suggested. Once your child's needs have been identified, the teacher will help your child to understand and communicate most effectively. If your child's skills make it difficult for National Curriculum work to be achieved, 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.

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

## How can I help?

Children 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
- singing songs and rhymes
- reading to them often and sharing books
- talking about any stories they have read or heard
- discussing what you 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 where appropriate.

## For more information

### **Special Educational Needs Service**

#### **Hampshire County Council Education**

County Office, The Castle

Winchester SO23 8UG

Tel: 01962 846452

[www.hants.gov.uk/TC/inclusion/senhome.html](http://www.hants.gov.uk/TC/inclusion/senhome.html)

### **Parent Partnership Service**

#### **Hampshire County Council Education**

County Office, The Castle

Winchester SO23 8UG

Tel: 01962 845870

[www.hants.gov.uk/TC/edpp/pphome.html](http://www.hants.gov.uk/TC/edpp/pphome.html)

**AFASIC**

Local Contact  
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E-mail: [info@ican.org.uk](mailto:info@ican.org.uk)  
Website: [www.ican.org.uk](http://www.ican.org.uk)

**Speech and Language Therapy Service**

Contact your General Practitioner or Health Visitor

This leaflet is available in large  
print – please contact the  
SEN Service on 01962 846452

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