

Speech & language therapy assessment



Your questions answered.

I think my child is slow with their talking but I'm not sure. Should I get a speech and language therapy assessment?

Children all learn to talk at different rates and some children develop more quickly than others. We do know, however, that there are 'typical' ages by which we expect children to have developed certain skills. There are some children that do struggle with learning to talk and understand and they will need extra help. If you are at all concerned about the way your child is talking or understanding, ask for a speech and language therapy assessment. A speech and language therapist (SLT) will be able to tell you exactly how your child is getting on and if there is a reason to be concerned.

You can find out more on how children learn to talk and check your child's progress on the Talking Point website - www.talkingpoint.org.uk/en/Parent.aspx

I think my child needs to be assessed by a speech and language therapist but I'm not sure how to ask for an assessment. Shall I go through my health visitor?

You can ask for your child to be referred for speech and language therapy by your health visitor or GP. However, you can also make a referral yourself; most speech and language therapy services will take a direct referral. You can find details of your local service on the Talking Point website; click on the link 'Find Local Services' on the right-hand side. Alternatively, ask your health visitor or GP for the contact details of your local SLT service.

My child is due to be seen for a speech and language therapy assessment. What will the assessment involve?

An assessment session will typically last between 30 minutes and an hour. A speech and language therapist (SLT) will usually start by talking to you about your child's early history and development, and by gathering some information about your concerns. The assessment they do will look at how well your child's speech and language are developing compared to what we would expect for a child of their age.

I CAN Help enquiry service www.ican.org.uk/help

Call 020 7843 2544 to arrange a free phone call from one of our speech and language therapists or email enquiries@ican.org.uk

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Visit this website for information about children's communication.

Depending on age and their type of difficulty, your child will do a number of different tasks and activities. For some children, particularly younger ones, the assessment may be done through the SLT playing alongside them, or watching them play. This is known as 'informal' assessment. They will be looking at the way your child understands language, how well they are talking and which sounds they are able to use in their speech.

Sometimes an SLT will carry out a 'formal' assessment. This means they work with your child using a number of published assessments, many of which are standardised. Standardised tests are when the therapist is able to give your child a score comparing them to other children of the same age. Doing this lets them see if a child is developing as they should be, or if their speech and language is delayed.

The speech and language therapist will then tell you how they think your child is doing, and whether they feel your child needs to get some extra help with their speech and language development. They will usually write a report about the assessment.

My child was assessed by speech and language therapy and I have been given a report. I am not sure what some of the numbers on the report mean. Can you explain what scaled scores and percentile ranks are?

These scores are ways of turning the number of answers a child gets right into a 'standardised' score. This score can then be compared to other children of the same age.

The average scaled score is 10 and the typical range is 7-13. This means that if your child has got a score between 7 and 13 then their language skills are what we would expect for their age. If they got a score below 7, then their language skills are delayed.

The typical range for percentile scores is 15-85, with the average being 50. So, if your child has got a score lower than 15 then they will be considered to have delayed language skills.

If you are struggling to understand your child's report, you can get in touch with your speech and language therapist. They will be able to talk you through the report and what it means for your child.

My child has been referred for a multi-disciplinary assessment. I know that he will see a speech and language therapist but I don't know who else will work with him. Can you help?

A multi-disciplinary assessment means that more than one professional will assess your son, and everyone involved will help to work out where his main difficulties are.

Usually a multi-disciplinary assessment will involve a paediatrician as well as a speech and language therapist. Sometimes there will also be a psychologist, physiotherapist, occupational therapist or other professional, depending on the clinic and the way that services are set up locally.

I CAN Centres offer multi-disciplinary assessments for children aged 4-19 with speech, language and communication difficulties. You can find out more from the I CAN website.

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For more information, please go to:

www.talkingpoint.org.uk

www.wordsforlife.co.uk/bilingual

www.londonsigbilingualism.org.uk

www.talkingpoint.org.uk

www.afasicengland.org.uk/publications/glossary-sheets/

www.bilingualism.co.uk

I CAN also run the [Enquiry Service](#), an information line run by qualified speech & language therapists. If you have any questions about the speech, language or communication skills of a child you know, call us on 020 7843 2544 to book arrange a call back at a time convenient for you.

You can also email your questions to help@ican.org.uk .

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