

## What is WellComm?

WellComm is a screening tool used by professionals. It helps identify children who might have a language difficulty.

Using the WellComm tool children are given a traffic light score of **green**, **amber**, **red**.



Children who are **green** are not considered in need of any extra help.

Children who are **amber** need extra support from you to help develop their language skills.

Children who are **red** need extra help from you to develop their language skills and may require help from a specialist referral.

Please do not panic if your child doesn't score green.



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Sandwell and West  
Birmingham Hospitals  
NHS

**Section 8: (48-59 months)**

## Why is it important?

For most children, how much language they hear impacts on how much language they learn. In turn this affects their talking. Talking to your child can make a world of difference.

## Research tells us that:

- ... 4-year olds who are spoken to frequently have experience of **45 million words**. Whereas, 4-year olds who are only spoken to when they are being told to do something have experience of less than **13 million words**. **This is a massive difference of 32 million words!**
- ... How quickly children learn to talk by the time they are 2½ years old is affected by how much time adults speak to them.

## What can you do everyday to help your child with their talking?

Did you know talking to your child will help them to increase their vocabulary? Talking to your child during shared activities such as joint book reading, play or shared household chores can help.

Use these *WellComm* cards to help to give simple ideas on how you can support your child's language.

*If your child does need a little bit of extra support from a professional there's lots of help in Sandwell for them and for you.*



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**Section 8: (48-59 months)**

## 8.1 Learning the meaning of 'when'

Can the child respond appropriately to 'when' questions?

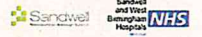
### Why is this important?

'When' questions are an important part of everyday conversations and routines. It can be a hard concept for children to grasp, as it requires them to have an awareness of time.

### What can you do every day to help?

Ask questions relating to 'when' things happen. E.g. 'When do we have a bath?' 'When do we use an umbrella?'

Draw a simple timetable of the child's day, with pictures for activities that happen every day. Ask questions such as 'When is lunchtime?' Encourage responses such as, 'After we go to the park.'



**Section 8: (48-59 months)**

What did you do to support language development?



Section 8: (48-59 months)

## 8.2 Understanding that things that go together are not always the same

Can the child link words that go together, even when there are differences between them?

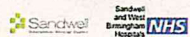
### Why is this important?

Children need to learn how words relate to each other, e.g. 'apple' and 'carrot' are both food words. One describes a fruit and the other describes a vegetable.

### What can you do every day to help?

Collect some food items that you have in your cupboards. Choose two groups, e.g. things that you eat for breakfast and those that you eat for tea.

Encourage your child to help to sort the food items and talk about how they have been sorted. You can do the same with fruits versus vegetables, clothing for different seasons, etc. Talk about why you have grouped certain objects together.



**Section 8: (48-59 months)**

What did you do to support language development?



Section 8: (48-59 months)

## 8.3 Learning the meaning of 'after'

Can the child show understanding of the word 'after'?

### Why is this important?

'After' is used to describe something that happens later than another event. This is important for children to learn before school as it helps to understand when things happen. It teaches them about ordering events and helps them retell a story.

### What can you do every day to help?

Use your daily routines to practise using the word 'after'. For example, 'We will go to the park after we have had our lunch.' Remember to emphasise the word 'after'. You can support this with visual prompts like Makaton signs, a visual timetable or a now and next board.

You can do this during play by acting out the series of events using toys, e.g. 'Teddy can brush his teeth **after** he has had his drink.'



**Section 8: (48-59 months)**

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## 8.4 Understanding post-modified sentences

Can the child make connections with new information and what they already know?

### Why is this important?

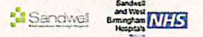
Children learn to pay attention to grammar and the finer details of language as their communication skills develop. Children learn to link a new piece of information to something they already know and understand how this influences the overall meaning.

### What can you do every day to help?

Gather together some toys, e.g. big and little ducks (or other favourite toys).

Include some big and little objects (e.g. cup/chair/bed). Say to the child, 'The duck sitting on the bed is little. The duck holding the cup is big.'

You will need 'big' and 'little' objects as well as ducks, because the child may process the last part of the sentence as 'the bed is little' rather than 'the duck is little.'



What did you do to support language development?



Section 8: (48-59 months)

## 8.5 Understanding sentences containing 'either' and 'or'

Can the child understand 'either' and 'or' when making choices?

### Why is this important?

The words 'either' and 'or' are important when making choices in everyday situations, e.g. at home, an adult might say, 'You can **either** have milk **or** juice.'

### What can you do every day to help?

Gather together a selection of toys. Ask the child to point to something, e.g. 'Point to **either** the monkey **or** the teddy.'

When sharing books, ask your child to describe the pictures using either/or, e.g. 'Point to **either** the goat **or** the troll.'



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## 8.6 Using an increasing range of prepositions: 'behind', 'in front', 'next to' and 'between'

Can the child use a range of words to describe where an object/person is?

### Why is this important?

Prepositions are used to describe the placement of objects or people. They help children to describe the world around them.

### What can you do every day to help?

Place several toys around the room– put them 'behind', 'in front of', 'next to' and 'between' other objects. As the child locates the toy, ask them, 'Where is monkey?' If the child gets it right, reinforce by repeating back straight away, e.g. 'Well done, monkey is next to the sofa!' If they don't respond or respond incorrectly, offer a choice, e.g. 'Is monkey behind the sofa or next to the sofa?'



**Section 8: (48-59 months)**

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## 8.7 Understanding emotions from facial expressions

Can the child recognise how someone is feeling by looking at their facial expression?

### Why is this important?

Facial expressions help us to understand how others feel. Being able to recognise and describe emotions in others helps with children's emotional development.

### What can you do every day to help?

Use a Mr or Mrs Potato Head to demonstrate different facial expressions. Ask question such as 'Is Mrs Potato Head happy or sad?' Encourage your child to copy this expression as they look in a mirror.

Talk about the feelings of different characters in stories when sharing books, e.g. 'How is Baby Bear feeling? How do you know? Can you show a sad face?'



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**Section 8: (48-59 months)**

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## 8.8 Understanding question words using stories

Can the child respond appropriately to a range of questions about stories?

### Why is this important?

Children need to understand different question words in a range of situations. Questions are a way of finding out what children know, what they can remember and encourages their thinking skills.

### What can you do every day to help?

Read a simple story together. Choose one of your child's favourite books. Ask questions about the story, e.g. 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar'. Ask them a range of questions, e.g. 'What did the caterpillar eat? How did he feel after eating all the food? Why did he make a cocoon?'

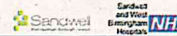


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Section 8: (48-59 months)

## 8.9 Learning to remember and then say five things

Can the child recall five components of an instruction?

### Why is this important?

Understanding instructions is like having a list of things that need to be remembered in order to carry out a task. E.g. for the instruction, 'Wash doll's face and hands', the child has to remember 'wash', 'doll', 'face' and 'hands'.

### What can you do every day to help?

Give children instructions that have four or five words, e.g. when shopping and at the fruit aisle you can say, 'Get the apples, pears, grapes, blueberries and bananas.'



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## 8.10 Using superlatives: 'biggest' and 'tallest'

Can the child use the words 'biggest' and 'tallest' to describe the size of objects?

### Why is this important?

A superlative is a word that describes the 'most' or 'highest' version of something e.g. tallest, biggest, best and longest.

### What can you do every day to help?

Use construction toys, such as Lego or Duplo, to build towers. Build towers together and talk about their size, e.g. 'This tower is short, this tower is shorter and this tower is the ....' Point to the towers as you describe what they are and pause to see if your child is able to finish the sentence with the word 'shortest'.

If they are not able to do so, model and say the word for them. The more they hear the word being used in context the quicker they will learn what it means and then go on to use it in their talking.



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