

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.

Before considering a referral to the Speech and Language Therapy team there are lots of things that you can do to help.



Section 1: (6-11 months)

1.1 Responds to own name

Does the child turn towards you when his/her name is called?

Why is this important?

Responding to talk is a very important step towards being able to communicate. For a baby to respond to someone calling their name they will need to be able to move their attention from what they are doing to the person that is speaking. Reacting to sounds is key for building listening and attention skills.

What you can do every day to help?

Call your baby's name in a sing-song fashion. When they turn to look at you, praise them, smile and give some kind of reward, e.g. a toy or a hug.



Section 1: (6-11 months)

1.2 Relates two things together

Does the child relate two objects together in play?

Why is this important?

Being able to make links between two objects shows the beginning of understanding 'cause' and 'effect' relationships. This is important for the development of play and communication because a baby learns 'When I do this, then this happens', e.g. banging two bricks together makes a sound.

What you can do every day to help?

Put out a variety of easy to hold objects, e.g. bricks, stacking pots. Encourage your baby to hold two things, one in each hand. Praise them if they try to put the objects together. If they don't do this help them to carry out the action by moving their hands for them.



Section 1: (6-11 months)

1.3 Understanding that words, sounds and gestures are linked to everyday actions and objects

Does the child look at or point at an object and then look at you?

Why is this important?

Naming things for babies as they reach out or point helps them to understand early words. When you name things the baby is interested in they are more likely to focus on what is being said because you are following their lead.

What you can do every day to help?

Name the things that interest your baby as they reach for or point at them. Say what they see using a single word, e.g. car, doll etc.



Section 1: (6-11 months)

1.4 Following the movement of an object and an adult's gaze

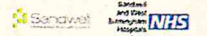
Does the child follow an adult's gaze?

Why is this important?

Focusing on something of the adult's choosing is important for the development of joint attention. Babies become aware of where the adult is looking and they look at the same thing too.

What you can do every day to help?

Use objects that move or make a noise, e.g. a brightly coloured ball. Roll it slowly across the floor and if your baby follows the movement with their eyes, give them lots of praise.



Section 1: (6-11 months)

1.5 Understand language by using non-verbal clues and cues

Can the child follow simple instructions with non-verbal cues?

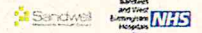
Why is this important?

Babies need and use any kind of clue to help understand what is happening and what is going to happen. To make it easier for a baby to follow an instruction, we can show them objects/items that will give them some clues.

What you can do every day to help?

Use words and sentences that link to what is going to happen next, e.g. say "Let's go for a walk," whilst holding their shoes and coat.

Tell your baby "It's dinner time," whilst holding their bowl and spoon.



Section 1: (6-11 months)

1.6 Use gesture to get an adult to do something

Does the child hold up his/her arms to show he/she wants to be picked up?

Why is this important?

As adults we use language for a variety of reasons; to ask for help, make a comment and respond. Before using words, babies ask for help by using early communication such as crying, fussing or pointing. For example, they might cry to show you they need a nappy change or cuddle.

What you can do every day to help?

You can help your baby to communicate their needs more clearly by teaching them how to use gestures. Your baby may show you they want to be picked up by crying. Model what your baby could do instead e.g. outstretch your arms and say 'pick up'. Encourage your baby to copy your action by pausing, watching and waiting to see what they do. If they don't copy, help them by positioning their arms into a outstretched position prior to picking them up.

Use a word or phrase as you pick them up, such as 'up' to help link the word with the action.



Section 1: (6-11 months)

1.7 Copying actions and gestures

Can the child copy an action/gesture?

Why is this important?

Understanding and using action/gestures develops alongside talking. If babies can use gestures and copy actions, they can begin to communicate their wants and needs.

What you can do every day to help?

Show your baby how to wave 'hello' and 'goodbye' by showing them through modelling everyday. Use gestures as part of your daily routine, e.g. drinking, eating, naptime. Always use the words alongside the gestures to help understanding.



Sandwell Keeps Talking



Sandwell
and East
Dunbarton
Hospitals
NHS

Section 1: (6-11 months)

1.8 Learning to reach and point

Can the child point to ask for something?

Why is this important?

Reaching and pointing are early ways to ask for things (early talk) and teach babies about 'cause' and 'effect' relationships. This is an important part of language development because it teaches the baby 'when I do this (I point)' 'this happens (daddy gives me the toy)'.

What you can do every day to help?

Put some toys out and encourage your baby to reach for the toys. Remember to place the toys close enough so that a baby can reach for them. Encourage your baby to point by modelling how to point. Look at what your baby is looking at (interested in), point and name it for them. Give lots of praise! Show them how to point using a finger for them to try and copy.



Quality Early Years & Childcare Team



Sandwell and West Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership NHS

Section 1: (6-11 months)

1.9 Playing with and listening to different sounds

Does the child babble?

Why is this important?

Babbling is important for social interaction and attracting the attention of all those around. It also stimulates the baby's own sound-making skills.

What you can do every day to help?

Whilst playing with your baby, make the noises that their toys make. Use the following sounds during play; "Mmmm" whilst eating, "All gone" when finished eating. "Brum brum" when playing with cars.

Sing nursery rhymes/songs such as 'The Wheels on the Bus' and 'Old MacDonald.' Use gestures and lots of repetition as children need to hear sounds and words many time before they start to copy them.



Section 1: (6-11 months)

1.10 Making noise and shouting to gain adult's attention

Does the child shout to get an adult's attention?

Why is this important?

Children and babies communicate to get the attention of an adult. Babies may get your attention through cooing, babbling or even making a loud noise. As the adult, it is important to respond to their babbling (early talking) by taking your turn. This teaches the baby about taking a turn in conversation and encourages them to do it again.

What you can do every day to help?

When your baby uses their voice give them your attention. Praise them for calling you and let them know you have heard them by responding. For example baby says 'bbbb', look at them and say 'bbbb, that's a big voice mummy is coming'.



Section 1: (6-11 months)