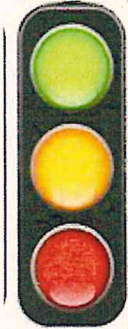


What is WellComm?

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 2: (12-17 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 you can 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.



Section 2: (12-17 months)

2.1 Understanding single words

Can the child give you an item on request?

Why is this important?

Children learn that objects have names by hearing adults using these throughout the day. Children need to hear words many times (approx. 500 times) before they begin to understand and then use them in their everyday environment.

What you can do every day to help?

Name objects of interest (items your child is looking at) for your child to hear. When you name the object, talk about what they are doing with the object as this helps your child to make the link between the name of the object and what they are doing. For example, When a child is playing with a rattle say 'rattle', 'shake, shake', 'oo noisy'. Remember to make your voice interesting.

You could also do this through everyday routines and when you have the object. For example, during a nappy change routine tell them what you are doing 'nappy change', 'trousers off', 'wipe'.



Section 2: (12-17 months)

2.2 Understanding single words

can the child point to the correct picture when asked?

Why is this important?

Children learn that objects have names by hearing adults using these throughout the day. Children need to hear words many times (approx. 500 times) before they begin to understand and then use them in their everyday environment.

What you can do every day to help?

Name objects of interest (items your child is looking at) for your child to hear. When you name the object, talk about what they are doing with the object as this helps your child to make the link between the name of the object and what they are doing. For example, When a child is playing with a rattle say 'rattle', 'shake, shake', 'oo noisy'. Remember to make your voice interesting.

You could also do this through everyday routines and when you have the object. For example, during a nappy change routine tell them what you are doing 'nappy change', 'trousers off', 'wipe'.



Section 2: (12-17 months)

2.3 Understanding what real things are for

Does the child use everyday objects on him/herself?

Why is this important?

Children need to be able to understand what everyday objects are used for (the function) before they are able to use them. This is a basic level of play (symbolic play) and sets the foundation for more sophisticated play. Play is closely linked with language development.

What you can do every day to help?

Collect real objects e.g. cup, brush, keys, spoon and hand them to your child. Encourage your child to show you what to do with it. If they are unsure of what to do, show them how the object is used e.g. by modelling brushing your hair. Hand the object back. Is the child able to copy your actions? If not, hand the object back and help them to carry out the action by moving their hand for them.



Section 2: (12-17 months)

2.4 Learning that toys represent real things/objects (symbolic understanding)

Can the child pretend to use objects on him/herself?

Why is this important?

Understanding what objects are used for is linked to learning language. At first a child watches adults using real objects e.g. putting keys in the door. They then begin to copy this using toy objects e.g. putting their toy keys in the door.

What you can do every day to help?

Give your child toys which represent real things that the child has experience of e.g. spoon, keys, phone. Watch what your child does. If they are unsure of what to do, show them e.g. put the phone up to your ear and talk. Hand the object back and see if your child can copy this. Repeat if needed.



Section 2: (12-17 months)

2.5 Understanding instructions using everyday routines

Can the child follow simple everyday instructions?

Why is this important?

As children learn language, they begin to learn what words mean during everyday routines. Children make links between the words in the instruction and the 'action', which helps them follow the request correctly.

What you can do every day to help?

Choose at least one routine a day e.g. getting washed or dressed and talk to the child about what you are doing. Make the activity fun e.g. hide the socks/pretend you can't find them. Ask your child to help you find them. If your child still finds it difficult then point or look at the socks.



Section 2: (12-17 months)

2.6 Learning to take the initiative/lead

Does the child start a routine/game with you?

Why is this important?

Language has many functions; we use language to ask for help, share information about something that interests us and for social purposes (saying hello). Being able to ask for help or starting a conversation are skills that a child needs to learn.

What you can do every day to help?

Play a game with your child e.g. blowing bubbles and stop to encourage them to use the word 'more'. Model 'you want more'? emphasising the word 'more'. The best way to encourage the use of the word 'more' is by your child making a request for a favourite activity to continue or to be repeated.



Section 2: (12-17 months)

2.7 Pointing to things or people that are interesting

Does the child point to things of interest?

Why is this important?

Children start to 'talk' using 'early language' like pointing. They learn it is a powerful way to get them what they want. When an adult names what the child is pointing to it helps them learn the names of items.

What you can do every day to help?

Put a favourite toy or something of interest where your child can see it but not reach it. This is so they have to point or communicate that they want it. Give the toy to your child and name the object as you do this.

When looking at a book, point things out in the pictures as you share the story together.



Section 2: (12-17 months)

2.8 Using those important 'first words'

Is the child beginning to use words to request things?

Why is this important?

Children begin to make requests by using non-verbal language such as reaching and pointing for things. Through repetition and modelling by adults, children begin to understand what these words mean. They will begin to use these words to ask for something they want or to talk about something that they can see.

What you can do every day to help?

Give your child a phrase to complete. For example, 'Ready Steady Go'. Say Ready, steady... and wait to give the child time to say 'go'. During all routines provide opportunities to name things over and over again.

Use the names of familiar items at every opportunity e.g. body parts, at bath time, clothes as you get dressed etc. Use these words over and over again, encouraging your child to copy them.



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Section 2: (12-17 months)