

## 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 3: (18-23 months)**

## 3.1 Learning to make sense of the world through play

*When playing does your child relate two or three objects together?*

### Why is this important?

Pretend play helps children understand how objects are used in the real world. Play is important for children's learning and in helping them learn to talk.

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

Encourage your child to use real everyday objects in their play. When you are cooking give them an empty bowl and spoon and ask them to do some mixing. If you have plastic cups, give one to your child to have a pretend drink from.

Comment on what they are doing, what you can see using simple language and repeat single words that are important e.g. lovely stirring, drinking, cooking; don't touch the pan, hot pan; delicious, sticky.



**Section 3: (18-23 months)**

## 3.2 Use songs and rhymes to learn single words/body parts

*Can your child point to their eyes/nose/mouth?*

### Why is this important?

Children enjoy singing rhymes and dancing. Doing the actions with your child is not only good fun and exercise, but also allows your child to hear lots of new words and eventually use them as they sing along.

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

As you sing, remember to carry out the actions along with the right words. For example, touch your head when singing the 'head' in the song 'head shoulders knees and toes'.

Using actions when singing helps your child understand what the words mean. You can reinforce the names of body parts when getting dressed and during everyday routines such as bath time.



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## 3.3 Learning what 'doing' words mean (verbs)

Can your child carry out actions on toys?

### Why is this important?

Action words describe what people are doing. They are often harder to learn because children tend to learn words for things they want. They don't need the action word to get others to understand what they want e.g. if they need to **sleep** they may say 'blankie'.

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

Ask your child to perform an action when playing e.g. 'Make teddy *jump*', 'Make the car *stop*'. Keep repeating the action word and emphasis it when you are talking.

When you are in the park take it in turns to tell each other what to do e.g. run, jump, hop, skip and hide.



**Section 3: (18-23 months)**

### 3.4 Understanding simple sentences with two key words

Can your child follow two-word instructions?

#### Why is this important?

Part of language development is being able to identify the key words that carry meaning. To be able to do this children need to listen to the whole instruction and focus on all the words spoken and then work out which ones are important.

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

When playing with your child or during everyday day routines give instructions with two key words:

- ... **Put *teddy* in the *box***
- ... ***Line up* and *wash your hands***
- ... ***Get your socks* and *shoes* please**
- ... **Pass daddy the remote**

**Section 3: (18-23 months)**



### 3.5 Understanding the words only (no cues and out of routine!)

Can your child follow instructions out of the routine?

#### Why is this important?

As children's language develops they begin to understand the meaning of words without visual clues, pointing or gestures. When children are able to follow instructions without any cues we can be confident that they understand specific words.

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

Try and reduce the number of cues you give your child when you are giving them everyday instructions:

Fetch your **coat** please

*but you are still in the kitchen clearing the table after breakfast and usually give this instruction as you are putting your own shoes on.*

Time to get in the **car**

*but you haven't got your car keys in your hand or don't have your bag.*



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**Section 3: (18-23 months)**

## 3.6 Putting two early words together

*Does the child occasionally put two words together when talking?*

### Why is this important?

For children to speak using more than single words they need to learn how to put words together. This is challenging because there often isn't the motivation for children to say much more because single words usually get the child what they want or need.

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

When talking to your child and they use single words add to what they have said for example:

If your child says '*biscuit*' or '*more*' when requesting another, model '*more biscuit*'.

When waving goodbye if your child says 'nanny' model 'nanny gone' or 'bye-bye nanny'.



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**Section 3: (18-23 months)**

## 3.7 Using one word to describe an action

*Is your child beginning to use some action words?*

### Why is this important?

Action words (verbs) describe what is happening or what someone is doing.

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

Play lots of games with your child where you can take it in turns to describe an action for example, when playing Simon Says take it in turns to tell each other what to do, commenting on what each other is doing.

When playing, take it in turns with your child to make teddy or dinosaur do things. Teddy could jump, sit on your head, go to the toilet, hide behind a cushion. Include silly actions to make your interaction fun. Enjoy watching your child have a good time with you.



**Section 3: (18-23 months)**



## 3.8 Naming more everyday things

*Can your child use ten everyday words?*

### Why is this important?

Children will need to hear a word many times before they begin to use it. The more words that they hear, the more words they will learn.

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

Use a bag of objects and ask your child to name them / you name them as you take it in turns to take them out.

Name objects when you are out shopping, going for a walk or looking at a book together.

Talk to them about what you are doing as you are doing it for example when you are putting the washing away.



**Section 3: (18-23 months)**

## 3.9 Using/copying actions in rhymes and songs

Does your child join in with nursery rhymes /action songs?

### Why is this important?

Nursery rhymes and songs are repetitive and easily become familiar. This helps children become confident in being able to predict what happens next and encourages them to have a go.

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

Sing nursery rhymes or songs to your child and join in with the actions. If you want to learn some new songs visit your local library to borrow a book.

Pause and maintain eye contact to help, encourage and cue your child to say the missing word.

In *row, row, row your boat*, leave out the word 'scream'.

Praise your child for saying the missing word.



**Section 3: (18-23 months)**

## 3.10 Talking about what I have seen or done

*Is your child starting to tell you about things they have seen?*

### Why is this important?

Children need to learn that talking is not just about them getting what they want or need – chatting to others is fun! Children learn to do this by sharing something. How an adult responds is an important part of the conversation.

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

When your child points to something that interests them name the objects they are pointing to.

Make the conversation fun for example, “You're looking at the dog, woof woof, the dog goes woof! I like the dog too”.



**Section 3: (18-23 months)**