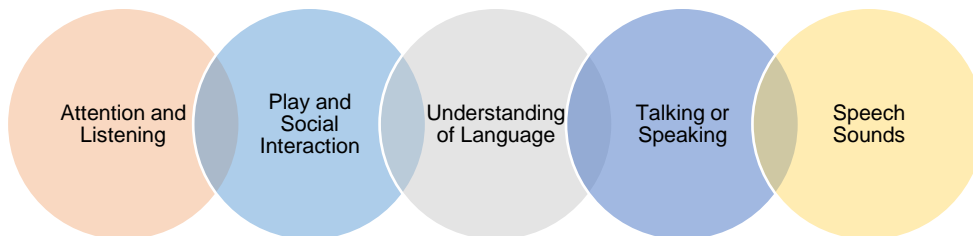


Waltham Forest Early Years Guidance

Identifying Speech, Language and Communication Difficulties

Speech, Language and Communication difficulties are common in young children, with up to 50% of children having difficulties in some settings. It is important to identify children's difficulties as early as possible, so that appropriate support and intervention can be put in place.

- **Know what to expect** – all children go through a process of 'normal' speech, language and communication development. Learn what is expected at the ages of the children in your setting. This is important so that you can identify when a child is having difficulties. Use the resources below to find out more information.
- **Learn about speech, language and communication** – you may be concerned that a child is not talking, but what about the other areas of their speech, language and communication development? Young children often have difficulties in several areas and it is important to have an understanding of their listening, attention, play, social interaction skills, as well as their understanding of language and behaviour. All of these areas are part of speech, language and communication.
- **Speak to Parents** – parents / carers are a great source of information. Find out as much as you can through an informal chat, this will also help to start building a good relationship with the parent / carer for any more difficult conversations that might come later. For example, you could ask them how their child communicates at home, how many words their child is using, whether there are any other languages spoken at home and if they have any concerns.



- **Make observations** – observe the child in a range of different situations and activities. Record your observations and examples of language and consider the child's skills, as well as their difficulties. Consider **ALL** areas of speech, language and communication. This will help guide you in working out how to best support the child.
- **Share your concerns** – speak to other practitioners in your setting and also the SENCO. They will help support you in planning your next steps.
- **Make a referral** – signpost parents / carers to local Speech and Language Therapy drop-in sessions delivered by HENRY within the Children's Centres. Alternately, if children have difficulties in more than one area, make a referral to Speech and Language Therapy at Wood Street Health Centre.
- **Make a Plan** – use your knowledge of the child to include speech, language and communication targets in their next steps. Use the child's skills and interests to support them, as well as advice from the Speech and Language Therapist. Use our 'Top Tips for Supporting Children' to get you started.

Further reading and useful Information

- [Universally Speaking - The Communication Trust](#)
- [Development Matters](#)
- [All Talk Project](#)
- [All Talk Facebook](#)

