

ESCC Early Communication Pathway Resources

Aims of today's session

- Explore the ESCC Early Communication pathway
 - Toddler Talks
 - Supporting children and families
 - Process of support
 - Additional support
-
- Please use the chat function for questions. We have allowed for time at the end for discussion and questions at which point we ask that you please use the 'hands up' function.
 - Please keep yourselves on 'mute' to avoid feedback.
 - We are unable to give advice for particular children you may have concerns about during this session.

The image shows three overlapping NHS language checker forms. The top form is for 'Early language checker 8-20 months', the middle for 'Early language checker 16-26 months', and the bottom for 'Language checker for 22-36 months'. Each form has a header with fields for Name, Date completed, Activity attended, Date of birth, Age in months, and Location. The forms are divided into sections: 'Listening & Attention', 'Understanding', and 'Talking'. Each section contains numbered questions with checkboxes for 'Yes' or 'No'.

- Complete the language checker based on the child's age not their observed stage of development. To gauge the best understanding of a child's needs, try to be within 2 months of the end of an age band, where possible.
- These are completed every 6 months – at which point you update the monitoring tool.
- There is some helpful general SLC information on the reverse of each form.
- Some points may need further explanation or examples to support parents understanding.
- The language checkers are translated into 13 other languages too.

Language Checkers

If there are concerns raised from either the monitoring tool or in fact the child's parents, then a Toddler Talk would be the next stage of support. During a Toddler Talk a practitioner would complete a language checker **with the parents**. Due to current COVID guidelines these can be completed with the parent over the phone or via video call.

The aim of the Toddler Talk is to identify how both the practitioner and the parent view the child's language development and to encourage a partnership of support. This conversation allows the practitioner to share advice, strategies and activities for the family to implement at home that are also followed in the setting. This will provide consistent support for the child that is directed specifically to meet their SLC needs.

The parent is the child's first and most enduring educator – their input into this process is essential and should be valued and encouraged.

eastsussex.gov.uk

East Sussex
County Council

NHS

I'm 3 years old... just try keeping me quiet!

Early Years Speech, Language and Communication Development



Your child should be starting to:

- ask lots of questions to help them learn about the world
- answer simple 'who', 'what' and 'where' questions
- follow longer instructions with three key words; for example, "Find the *cup* and put it in *Kim's bag*"
- use descriptive words
- use sentences of around four to six words
- use plurals, prepositions (in, on, under) and pronouns (me, him, she)
- join in with others' play
- understand many of the things you say but will still need help to learn new words
- express emotions using words, not just actions and sounds; and
- talk clearly enough to be understood by different people, but some sounds will still be hard to say.

From the ICAN Stages of Speech and Language Development

No matter how old I am – one of the best ways to help my speech and language development is to have some quiet time with me so we can talk, sing songs or look at books.

It is always best to make sure that the TV and music are switched off when we play.

Helpful hints for 3-4 years

Because my language is developing so much, I might start to stumble on some words. This is ok, just give me lots of time to talk and try not to draw attention to the stumbles.

I love make-believe games and really enjoy it when you play these with me.

Call my name first when you're talking to me, so I am ready to listen.

Read my favourite book to me over and over again. Encourage me to join in because I like to pretend I can read too.

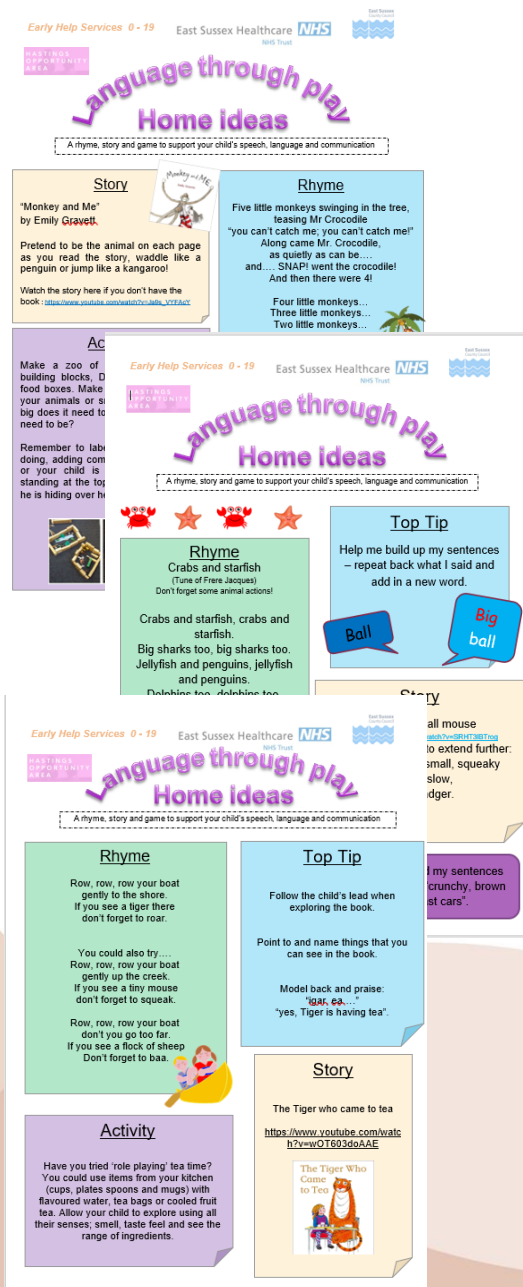


I feel really good when you look at me while I'm talking. It lets me know that what I'm saying is important.

Say words to me how I would say them if I could. If I say "I *buyed* the book", say back to me "*Yes, you bought* the book". I will copy when I'm ready but don't make me.

Parent advice leaflets

One of the aims of a Toddler Talk is to provide families with a clear understanding of what is expected at a certain age and stage of language development. This is covered in the conversation with the parent when completing the language checker but sharing these leaflets enables parents to revisit this new information in their own time. Another main aim is to provide advice and strategies that can be implemented easily at home during play and everyday interactions to reduce the possibility of impoverished language. Again, these leaflets provide some general strategies that can be discussed in the Toddler Talk but also revisited later at home and shared with other family members. There are only a few basic strategies shared within these leaflets, it may be appropriate to also (or instead) share some more specific strategies for their child's needs.



Home learning advice

As well as providing families with strategies to try at home it is useful to also share some activities in which these strategies can be implemented. To the right are the parent advice sheets that are part of the Pathway resources. They detail several activities that can be easily implemented at home or outside and ensure that they follow a 'low cost – no cost' approach so they are accessible for all families. They again are split into the different ages and stages and further divided into the four aspects of language development.

The documents to the left are home learning ideas developed by the Early Communication Support Worker team that detail a 'top tip' (a strategy), an activity in which it can be implemented, a story and a song that will further support the strategy too. These are shared with families and settings who take part in the Early Communication Support Worker project currently running in Hastings and St Leonards.

It is important to regularly 'check in' with the family to see how they are finding the strategies and activities shared and if any further support is needed.

If your child is between 16-26 months, try doing these things together...

To support your child's listening skills and attention:

Hide and find it: Show your child a toy and let them explore what it looks like and how it feels. Hide the toy under a blanket and ask "Where's the ... gone?" Try getting your child to hide and name things.

Say and sing: Take time to share action rhymes and songs with your child as you go about your day. This will help them become familiar with the rhythms of language. Songs and rhymes help your child learn to read and write when they are older.

To support your child's understanding of language:

Talking tasks: Whilst carrying out everyday chores such as unpacking the shopping or loading the washing machine, ask your child to help you by passing you items.

Walk talk: Go for a walk with your child. Talk about what you can see and collect any things they are particularly interested in; for example leaves, twigs and stones. Talk about what you collected when you get home.

To support your child's talking skills:

Wait and see: Try to give your child long enough to respond to you. At this age your child might need up to 12 seconds to think about what you have said and respond.

A family affair: Gather together objects which are important to your child; for example one of their shoes, a special person's shoe (dad/mum/brother), a hat, pictures of family members, a child's rattle or a child's sock and talk about them.

To support your child's social communication skills:

Choose a story: Find a quiet five minutes to share a story with your child. Remember children love looking at the same books again and again and it is good to re-visit favourite stories.

Pretend play: When you are cooking, try giving your child some kitchen objects to play with such as a pan and some dried pasta, a wooden spoon and some empty food cartons. They can then pretend to do what you are doing.

You and me: You are the best toy your child has and they love to spend time with you.

East Sussex County Council permits the use of the document to be used free of charge on behalf of the CYPT. Any sale of this document, without the prior written consent of East Sussex County Council, is prohibited. Permission is required before any part of this document is redistributed. This notice must remain intact and included in all reproductions.

© East Sussex County Council 2014. The moral rights of the author have been asserted



Interventions

It may be appropriate at times to offer a family an intervention following a Toddler Talk if you feel this would be beneficial to support the parents interaction with their child and to provide opportunity to model the strategies to support the parents implementation of these. The two interventions below are already proven successful in supporting families by the Early Communication Support Worker team and some settings in Hastings and St Leonards. These can be adapted to the needs of the setting and the family.

Language Through Play

3-4 play-based sessions for a small group of children and their parents (these can also be delivered 1:1). It is an opportunity for a practitioner to model and share home learning ideas and model language appropriate for the children's development. There is a focus around 'low cost-no cost' to ensure accessibility for all and demonstrates how resources can be used in a variety of ways.



Bookstart Corner Programme

4 play-based sessions with a focus around books, sharing stories, singing songs and using props. These are usually held 1:1, with a parent, child and practitioner.

Unlike Language Through Play, Bookstart Corner follows a more structured programme, but this can be tailored to meet the needs of the family and the specific needs of the child including their interests.

All the East Sussex Early Years Speech, Language and Communication Pathway resources can be found on Czone:

Information for Parents - Czone (eastsussex.gov.uk) – language checkers, leaflets and advice sheets

Information for Early Years Practitioners - Czone (eastsussex.gov.uk) – Pathway overview, monitoring tool and link to other resources.

Toddler Talk (Allow time for Home Learning)

4-6 weeks on if appropriate: Invite to Language Through Play or Bookstart Corner

Toddler Talk Review (6 months from initial Toddler Talk)

Further advice and intervention or SaLT/ISEND referral if appropriate

Toddler Talk Review (12 months from initial Toddler Talk)

The process of support

As you can see above once you have established there is a concern about a child's language development there is a process to then follow. During this time as a practitioner you will be continuously implementing the strategies within the setting, supporting the parents to implement these at home and informally reviewing and updating these with the parents.

If at 12 months there is still no progress and you have not already made a referral this would now have to be considered as it may be that the child and the family need support from more specialist services. These services will provide further advice that you can then support the parents to implement and build into the child's support plan at the setting.



Top Tips!

- Be patient
- Repeat, emphasise and extend
- Reduce questioning, ask less comment more
- Create opportunities to hear and use language
- Model short simple language – try staying one word level above them
- Name and label
- Self talk/parallel talk
- Wait and respond (12 second rule)



Strategies

More general activities would include:

- Visuals in print, objects of reference and signing
- Using short simple language – try staying one word level above them (if they use one word repeat back and extend sentence to two words, “cat” “little cat”)
- Using non verbal communication to support understanding; facial expressions, tone of voice, pointing and other gestures.
- Use real items where you can when introducing new words rather than plastic versions for example play food
- Sing rhymes and songs and encourage children to join in with actions and words so they have the opportunity to ‘play’ with language

Just hearing language is not enough, steps need to be taken to ensure that opportunities to use language are promoted too. You can try:

- Offering choices; apple or banana? Whilst you hold the objects
- Pause in favourite songs, rhymes and stories – does the child use a sound, action or word to get you to carry on?
- Ask simple questions “what’s that?” “where’s it gone?” but remember we naturally don’t ask many questions in conversation so try to limit these and comment more
- Copy their actions and sounds, this will encourage the child to carry on making sounds for you to copy! They might want to copy you – make sure you give them time to respond.

Activities to support strategies

The best activities to support speech, language and communication development are those that take into consideration the child's interests, level of development and that are led by the child.

It's also important to consider the language opportunities based in everyday interactions for example; naming items of clothing when getting dressed or naming body parts during nappy change or bath time.

Below are a few popular activities that can also be shared with parents to try at home.

These parent home learning sheets can be used alongside the speech and language leaflets as they describe several activities that promote language development with a 'low cost – no cost' approach.



What's in the box:
place a few
objects in a box
and describe for
the child to guess

Treasure baskets
– naming and
describing objects

Mirror
play

Stop/go musical
statues

Books – explore
illustrations, what can
you see? Pause to
allow them to fill in the
next word and use
different tones of
voice

Inset
puzzles

Listening walks –
what can you
hear?

Nursery and action
Rhymes

Toy telephones/
phone cups

Dressing
up

Pots and pans

Bubbles –
encourage eye
contact and
single/2 words

Annotating and
label actions in play

Small world and role
play

Contact numbers for support

The Early Communication Support Worker for Lewes and The Havens is **Jennie Ungoed**.

Her mobile number is: **07920 700447**

Her email address is: Jennie.Ungoed@eastsussex.gov.uk

The Early Communication Support Worker for High Weald is **Tina Booker**.

Her mobile number is: **07849 079189**

Her email address is: Tina.Booker@eastsussex.gov.uk

Therapy One Point (TOP) is the single contact point for Speech and Language Therapy, Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy (including adaptations), specialist equipment and general enquires.

They can provide advice and support for children on our caseload and for those not known to us. **To contact TOP please phone 0300 123 2650. TOP is open Monday - Friday 8.30-4.30.**

The Health Visiting Team can currently be contacted via the duty system operating on **01323 464000**