



TOTAL COMMUNICATION ENVIRONMENTS

An audit/reflection tool for
Childminders

INTRODUCTION

"For babies and young children good conversation is nourishment for the brain" Anne Fernald

WHAT AND WHY?

This audit tool has been created as part of the TALK Halton project to help all Early Years practitioners working in Halton make their spaces great for communication.

We know that the environment has a massive impact on children's communication development.

We need to carefully plan how we use all aspects of the early years environment in order to support communication fully.

GLOSSARY

For the purposes of this audit tool;

Children refers to all babies, toddlers, and children from birth to the end of the EYFS

Parents refers to all carers of children in the EYFS.

Setting refers to all types of provision delivering the EYFS.

Practitioner refers to all early years professionals who work directly with children in EYFS settings.

Practitioner Guide refers to TALK Halton produced pdf guides

BBI refers to The Big Book of Ideas from The WellComm Toolkit

HOW?

This audit tool can be printed off and used alongside observations and reflections by all practitioners to identify areas of strength in current practice as well as areas for development.

For ease of use we have split the statements into smaller categories. You may find it useful to take one section at a time to reflect on and action.

WHAT NEXT?

At the end of the audit you will find an action planning proforma for you to use to identify some key priorities and next steps.

At the bottom of each audit section you will find suggestions for further reading, resources and/or training in that area.

For more details on TALK Halton online training or resources then please contact the Halton Early Years team

CONTENTS

voice of the child

physical environment

interactions

extending language

understanding

visual supports, routines

and transitions

stories, rhymes and songs

screening and intervention

action plan

TALK Halton resource guide

appendix

"One of the most powerful things we can do to help a child's development is help them to become a better communicator.

Communication underpins children's thinking and learning."

Dr Julian Grenier

THE VOICE OF THE CHILD

Giving children a voice promotes self-esteem and self-worth. By letting children be active participants in their environment and giving them a voice through choice, opinion, feelings and emotions adults can gain valuable information and children learn that they are important and valued.

(Hearing the voice of a child includes observing, listening, and responding)

- ☐ Children's wishes and views are listened to (*e.g. Do the children have a say about the activities in the day? Do you follow the children's interests? Have activities been selected based on the interest of the children?*)
- ☐ Children are consulted in the decision making process (*e.g. choice of toys, trips out, setting up the environment*)
- ☐ There is evidence of respecting diversity and all children's contributions (*e.g. The Mosaic Approach – children take pictures of their experiences/ different abilities of work are displayed*)
- ☐ One-page profiles are used for nonverbal children and these are written in the first person
- ☐ Are the children engaged? (see *appendix A for 'The Leuven Scale for involvement'*)
- ☐ Are the children happy? (see *appendix B for 'The Leuven Scale for wellbeing'*)

THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Young children learn through interactions with their environment. A well-arranged environment will encourage, facilitate and promote good communication development through learning and play.

- ☐ The Environment supports transitions; there are spaces to watch from
- ☐ There is sufficient space for children to sit and move comfortably
- ☐ Areas and activities are consistently referred to by the same name e.g living room, garden, playroom
- ☐ There are spaces available for pairs and small groups to suit different opportunities for talking
- ☐ There are quiet spaces for individuals
- ☐ Quiet spaces and/or those used for story time are less visually distracting
- ☐ There are spaces available for children to relax
- ☐ Softness is evident in the environment through the use of soft furnishings
- ☐ Where possible, furniture is arranged to promote eye contact and face-to-face communication
- ☐ Space is free from clutter, including the walls, ceilings and 'visual' clutter
- ☐ Consideration is given to the colours/shades used to create a calm atmosphere and mood for children and adults

- ☐ Natural light is maximised
- ☐ Artificial lighting is kept to a minimum and where possible lighting is muted and softened
- ☐ Lighting enables children to see people's faces when they are talking
- ☐ Consideration is given to minimising background noise/distractions
- ☐ There are ways to gain people's attention so that everyone can hear and be heard
- ☐ Free play resources are easily reached by the children and/or within their vision
- ☐ Equipment that is available in boxes is clearly labelled with a picture or symbol
- ☐ Open-ended resources are available
- ☐ Resources are available that invite comments from children
- ☐ Practitioners plan for meaningful outings/experiences that build on children's interests and provide rich opportunities for communication and language

INTERACTIONS

Adult-child interaction refers to the way in which we initiate communication, and how we respond to children's attempts to communicate. Interactions are not always going to be perfect, but it's important to get it right as often as we can by being aware of how we as adults can be facilitators of language.

Is there evidence that practitioners consistently...

- ☐ Get down to the children's level for face-to-face interactions (including lying on the floor)
- ☐ Play alongside children without always directing their play
- ☐ Gain children's attention before delivering instructions
- ☐ Use natural gesture and facial expression to support language
- ☐ Give children time to respond (wait for 10 seconds)
- ☐ Talk at an appropriate pace and level for the child's understanding, varying pitch and intonation to maintain the child's attention
- ☐ Model activities and talk about what they are doing
- ☐ Respond positively to all children's efforts to communicate, including accepting non-verbal communication as well as verbal
- ☐ Ensure that all children (including the least verbal or non-verbal) have a turn at expressing themselves with other children and with adults
- ☐ Provide opportunities for children to have supported conversations and interactions with each other without adult intrusion

Is there evidence that practitioners consistently...

☐ Respect children's other "language/s" where relevant (i.e. Mother Tongue, sign language) and provide opportunities to use their own language

☐ Enable children to talk about their own interests other than just the task in hand

☐ Act on children's individual interests

Personal, social and emotional communication

☐ Recognise children's emotions, listen to them empathetically and validate their feelings by naming and talking about a range of feelings and emotions

☐ Encourage children's independence and self-confidence by acknowledging efforts at "having a go"

☐ Facilitate shared play and turn taking

☐ Make use of opportunities to support children in solving their problems and disputes by modelling language appropriately

☐ Model a range of positive behaviour and language, giving children specific praise

☐ Explain to parents/carers the benefits of the interaction strategies you use

EXTENDING LANGUAGE

Adults play an important role in building children's vocabularies through quality conversations, scaffolding and creating a wide variety of activities to support children's communication and language.

"Vocabulary needs to be 'caught' as well as the 'taught'. Therefore it is vitally important to provide children with a language-rich environment." Jean Gross

Is there evidence that practitioners consistently...

- ☐ Comment on what children are interested in/doing at that time
- ☐ Use sensitive, meaningful questioning (avoiding testing questions), ensuring comments outweigh questions (4 comments to every question is a useful guide)
- ☐ Use open ended comments to stimulate turns in conversations "you look really busy today... (wait)..."
- ☐ Use simple repetitive language during everyday activities
- ☐ Extend children's phrases or sentences (e.g. adding a word or idea)
- ☐ Model back to the child the correct word/sentence when heard incorrectly "yes it is a ..."
- ☐ Expose children to a wide variety of vocabulary, using appropriate methods to introduce new concepts and vocabulary both visually and verbally
- ☐ Seek opportunities to repeat and reinforce new vocabulary

TALK Halton practitioner guides; Adult child interaction - extending language, TALK babies

TALK Halton Resources - TALK to me outdoors activity cards

The Big Book of Ideas; developing use of language p209-211



UNDERSTANDING

Comprehension is a vital part of our complex communication system. Being able to understand is key to understanding the language that we need for all aspects of our life.

Is there evidence that practitioners consistently...

- ☐ Ask questions children can understand and answer at their developmental stage (e.g. first yes/no questions and simple 'who' 'what' 'where' questions)
- ☐ Ask open-ended questions to stimulate creative thinking and problem-solving
- ☐ Maximise and create opportunities for children to ask questions
- ☐ Ensure that instructions are at the appropriate level for the children, taking into account the number of information carrying words in a sentence
- ☐ Give regular feedback to check children have understood instructions
- ☐ Show awareness that some children may not understand generic instructions and may need to be cued in using their name
- ☐ Explain to parents/carers the benefits of the language strategies you use

VISUALS, ROUTINES AND TRANSITIONS

Visual supports are a vital tool to support children in their daily routine and providing opportunities to interact with others. Good visual supports and routines help make the unfamiliar familiar and create environments where children feel safe and secure.

Is there evidence that practitioners consistently...

- ☐ Help individual children to settle when they arrive if needed
- ☐ Give clear expectations of rules (verbal and visual)
- ☐ Let children know of expected changes to the day (e.g. visitors or special events)
- ☐ Consider children's level of understanding when choosing visual supports (starting with real objects, then photographs before moving to symbols)
- ☐ Use visual timetables with all children and individualise for specific children when needed
- ☐ Use visual supports with children as needed;
 - o Now and next/first and then
 - o Choice boards
 - o Traffic lights
 - o Mini schedules
 - o Timers
 - o Keychains/lanyards

- ☐ Using gestures/signing (e.g. Makaton)
with all children to support
understanding

Are you using routines which...

- ☐ Enable children to know what is
happening and when
- ☐ Have parts of the day labelled verbally
with shared names (e.g. dinner time,
group time)
- ☐ Allow children to make their own
choices for part of the day
- ☐ Ensure that transitions between
activities are clear, supported and
prepared for (e.g. giving the children a
5 minute warning)

STORIES, RHYMES AND SONGS

Sharing stories and nursery rhymes exposes children to lots of new words that they are unlikely to hear frequently in spoken language and helps children to hear, repeat and understand words.

Is there evidence that practitioners consistently...

- ☐ Create spaces for sharing stories, that include a wide range of high quality books that match the children's interests
- ☐ Give children opportunities to share books and stories with each other
- ☐ Allow time for children to share books and stories individually with an adult when desired
- ☐ Re-read favourite stories with children and use experiences/interactions to support understanding (e.g. splashing through puddles and squelching through mud for the book 'We're going on a Bear Hunt')
- ☐ Use puppets and props to develop play and language around favourite stories
- ☐ Provide books that represent children, their families and the local community.
- ☐ Provide opportunities to share and talk about books in a variety of spaces and places e.g the park
- ☐ Provide opportunities for children to both hear and tell verbal stories (without the use of books)
- ☐ Engage in extended conversations about stories which develop children's ideas and responses (dialogic book talk)
- ☐ Make use of opportunities to talk about print in the environment and what it means

- ☐ Link children's spoken language with written language
- ☐ Provide parents/carers with strategies to share stories with their children and where possible modelling good practice

Rhymes and songs

- ☐ Make time to say/chant or sing rhymes with children and also respond spontaneously throughout the day
- ☐ Support songs /stories with actions, objects, puppets or instruments
- ☐ Enable children to choose songs and rhymes by using song bags, choice boards, picture cards as well as by speaking
- ☐ Encourage children to join in with songs and rhymes, copying sounds, rhythms, tunes, tempo and words
- ☐ Encourage children to tune into the sounds and words in rhymes (e.g. changing the words to traditional rhymes, including children's names in rhymes, pausing to let the children finish the rhyme etc.)
- ☐ Sing/chant songs or rhymes that represent the children, their families and the local community.
- ☐ Share rhymes and songs with parent/carers and encourage them to share theirs with you

SCREENING AND INTERVENTION

"With the right early intervention, children make better progress, longer term impacts are minimised and many children can even catch up" The Communication Trust and Consortium

Do you as a practitioner...

- ☐ Ensure children are WellComm screened once a term (children may be screened by yourself, children's centres, health visitors or other settings they attend)
- ☐ Use the information from WellComm screening to inform children's next steps and planning
- ☐ Use the relevant sections of 'The Big Book of Ideas' to help children work on identified communication goals
- ☐ Stretch and challenge children's communication appropriately using 'The Big Book of Ideas'
- ☐ Use the EYFS packs with children to work on identified communication goals as applicable
- ☐ Implement care plans from other professionals (e.g. Speech and Language) accordingly
- ☐ Explain to parents/carers what the WellComm screening is and explain the outcomes
- ☐ Share the WellComm screening outcomes with other relevant professionals - including other settings the child attends and future settings (subject to parental consent).
- ☐ Share 'The Big Book of Ideas' activities with parents/carers and relevant professionals

WellComm Toolkit (including 'The Big Book of Ideas') - GL Assessment

TALK Halton Online Training - An Introduction to WellComm

TALK Halton Practitioner guide- TALK Support

TALK Halton WellComm resources - including group tracking sheets and profiles

TOTAL COMMUNICATION ENVIRONMENT - ACTION PLAN



Date Completed:

Priority from audit. Area to be developed (Intent)	Timescales for improvement?	What needs to be done to achieve improvement? (Implementation)	Cost implications	What will it look like (Impact)	What was the impact? (Review)

APPENDIX A

Leuven Wellbeing Scale

Well-being refers to feeling at ease, being spontaneous and free of emotional tensions and is crucial to good 'mental health'

Observe the child individually or as a group for about two minutes then give a score for wellbeing and/or involvement using the five-point scale. Unless children are operating at 4 or 5, learning will be limited. It is however unrealistic to suggest that children will be operating at levels 4 or 5 all of the time as levels will fluctuate throughout the day.

Level	Wellbeing	Signals
1	Extremely Low	The child clearly shows signs of discomfort such as crying or screaming, They may look dejected, sad, frightened or angry. The child does not respond to the environment, avoids contact and is withdrawn. The child may behave aggressively, hurting him/herself or others.
2	Low	The posture, facial expression and actions indicate that the child does not feel at ease. However, the signals are less explicit than under level 1 or the sense of discomfort is not expressed the whole time.
3	Moderate	The child has a neutral posture. Facial expression and posture show little or no emotion. There are no signs indicating sadness or pleasure, comfort or discomfort
4	High	The child shows obvious signs of satisfaction (as listed under level 5). However, these signals are not constantly present with the same intensity.
5	Extremely high	The child looks happy and cheerful, smiles, cries out with pleasure. They may be lively and full of energy. Actions can be spontaneous and expressive. The child may talk to him/herself, play with sounds, hum, sing. The child appears relaxed and does not show any signs of stress or tension. He/she is open and accessible to the environment. The child expresses self-confidence and self-assurance.

APPENDIX B

Leuven Involvement Scale

Involvement refers to being intensely engaged in activities and is considered to be a necessary condition for deep level learning and development.

Observe the child individually or as a group for about two minutes then give a score for wellbeing and/or involvement using the five-point scale. Unless children are operating at 4 or 5, learning will be limited. It is however unrealistic to suggest that children will be operating at levels 4 or 5 all of the time as levels will fluctuate throughout the day.

Level	Involvement	Signals
1	Extremely Low	Activity is simple, repetitive and passive. The child seems absent and displays no energy. They may stare into space or look around to see what others are doing.
2	Low	Frequently interrupted activity. The child will be engaged in the activity for some of the time they are observed, but there will be moments of non-activity when they will stare into space, or be distracted by what is going on around.
3	Moderate	Mainly continuous activity, The child is busy with the activity but at a fairly routine level and there are few signs of real involvement. They make some progress with what they are doing but don't show much energy and concentration and can be easily distracted.
4	High	Continuous activity with intense moments. The child's activity has intense moments and at all times they seem involved. They are not easily distracted.
5	Extremely high	The child shows continuous and intense activity revealing the greatest involvement . They are concentrated, creative, energetic and persistent throughout nearly all the observed period.

TALK Halton Resource guide

Parent Resources



TALK at Home Packs

Booklets containing simple and accessible facts, tips and activities to help parents/carers talk more with their children during day to day routines. Each pack contains relevant vocabulary to use, ideas for what to talk about, some play based activities, book recommendations, nursery rhymes, talking top tips and a cut out and keep talking bingo board and relevant 'TALK to me' postcard. There are 12 themes and each theme has both a toddler pack and a preschooler pack. There are also standalone 'TALK at home to your bump' and 'TALK at home Babies' packs.

Themes; *animals, bathtime, bedtime, clothes, family and friends, helping at home, journeys, mealtimes, my body, outdoors, shopping, the park*



Talk to me on the bus

Going on a journey with your child is a great opportunity to develop their speech, language and communication skills.

Talk to your child about all the things they can see on the journey. If it's a journey your child has been on before ask them to predict what they will see next on the journey.

If you are going to visit friends or family talk about who you will see and where they live.

Try making up a story together. It could be based on things you see on the journey or you could let your imaginations run wild! Take it in turns to continue the next part of the story.

Listening is important too! What different sounds can you hear whilst sitting on the bus (e.g. babies crying, children laughing, people talking).

All you have to do is.....TALK!



TALK to me Postcards

A selection of double sided postcards with a small handful of top tips to help parents/carers talk more with their children during day to day routines. The postcards also include a rhyme and positive talking messages.

Themes; *cooking, getting dressed, what's outside, bathtime, bedtime, home, mealtimes, the park, the shops, in the car, in the garden, on the bus, when we watch TV together*

TALK with bricks



Firstly...

Face your child, get down to their level and watch what they do.

Then start to **copy** their play and **comment** on what they're doing:

"You're building a tower....Tall tower. Uh oh tower fell down."

In activities...

Take turns putting a brick on. Repeat 'mummy's turn....***'s turn'.

Offer a choice: 'shall I use a long brick or a short brick?'

Put some bricks out of reach/ in a closed box to encourage your child to ask for help/point/reach.

Model pretend play: 'who lives in the tower? maybe there's a dragon at the top...raawr!'

Words they should hear...

more, again, next

on, up, down

big, small, short, long

fall, build

tower, house, castle, chimney

TALK with toys

One sided advice leaflets with ideas for how to turn common toys into great talking opportunities, including what to do, activity ideas and words to use.

Themes; *balls, blocks, cars, dolls and teddies, dinosaurs, pop up toys, puzzles, sand.*

My child isn't using many words. How do I help them to say more?

Comment, comment, comment

What can I do?

- Say short sentences to match what your child is doing. E.g. "car going fast", "car's crashed"
- Say the words instead of asking questions. E.g. instead of "What are you doing?", say "you're pouring some tea."
- Avoid test questions. E.g. "What's that? What is it? Who's that?" Instead say the words that go with what your child is doing. Then wait to see how your child responds.

Why?

- Your child will hear the right words as things happen.
- Your child is not put under pressure to talk.
- Your child knows you are interested

Jigsaws

- Peg puzzles have nice pictures of early everyday objects on them.
- Name the piece your child is looking at or holding, e.g. "car ... like Daddy's car."
- Give your child lots of time to have a go at repeating the words you use.

Books

- Let your child look at the pictures and turn the pages.
- Name the items that your child is looking at or pointing to, (e.g. cow... pig... house).
- Give them the words to say it as they would if they could.
- When your child tries to say a word, show you are pleased and repeat the word clearly.

Books

- Make bath time a talking time.
- See what your child is interested in.
- Use comments to describe what you are doing. E.g. "Splash... you made a splash" "mummy's running the water"

All daily routines are good for using comments, e.g. dinner time, bed time, nappy changing time.

Parent/carer advice sheets

A selection of 1 and 2 sided parent friendly advice sheets covering a range of different communication strategies and concerns. Each leaflet covers why you might use this strategy as well as plenty of practical ideas and next steps.

Themes; *adding words, commenting, creating opportunities to communicate, dummy advice, EAL advice, getting face to face, following their lead, giving choices, repeating key words, translating, turn taking, waiting.*

Storytime, anytime!

PRESCHOOL

Sharing books with your child is a great opportunity to bond, to laugh and to talk. You will also be helping your child to develop a life long love of books. There is no right or wrong way to enjoy a story together, just lots of fun to be had!

TOP TIPS

- You can read anything! Try sharing picture books, comics, poems, rhymes and information books.
- Let your child choose which story to share, if they are interested it will help to keep their attention.
- Let your child hold the book themselves and turn the pages.
- Talk about the pictures in books, how the characters are feeling and what you think will happen next.
- Make eye time. Pause and help your child understand what new words mean - you can point to the picture, give them a word that means the same thing or give an example of the word from their own experience.
- When your child is familiar with a story they may enjoy acting it out with actions or simple props.

Start their life long love of reading today

Finding just ten minutes a day to share a story with your child makes such a difference to their language development.

Sharing stories together will boost your child's vocabulary as books contain words that they may not hear in their normal daily lives.

Storytime Anytime

A collection of double sided leaflets/posters for parents that cover some age related activities and ideas for sharing stories, why sharing stories is beneficial to children's communication and language, author and book recommendations and also our 'STORIES' top tips.

Age Ranges; *newborn - 9 months, 9-18 months, toddler, preschooler*

BOOK SUGGESTIONS

There are so many wonderful books for your preschool child to enjoy. Here are some of our favourite authors:

Julia Donaldson
Children love the following popular titles: 'The Gruffalo', 'Room on the Brown Broom', 'Slender', and 'What the Ladybird Heard'

Sue Hendra
Children love the following popular titles: 'Superstar!', 'Henry the Fish with the Finger', 'No-Bot the Robot', and 'Herman the Bear with the Silly Shell'

Eric Carle
Children love the following popular titles: 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar', 'Wheels on the Bus', 'The Very Busy Spider', and 'The House on the Hill'

For other book recommendations take a look at: ...

There are a wide range of books available at our local library. Visiting libraries regularly to find new books to read is a great way of staying up to date on the latest books for young age.

To give the local library a helping hand, please return books on time.

TOP TIPS FOR SHARING STORIES

- S** **Startle!** Add a bit of drama. Use sound effects and make your voice go higher.
- T** **Talk** Use simple words and short sentences.
- O** **Observe** Look at the pictures and the story in the book.
- U** **Use** Use the words in the book to describe what you are doing.
- R** **Repeat** Repeat the words in the book to help your child remember them.
- I** **Interact** Ask your child questions about the story.
- E** **Express** Express your feelings about the story.
- S** **Sound** Use sound effects to make the story more interesting.

Rhyme time, anytime!

Singing nursery rhymes and songs to children can help develop their language and communication skills from an early age. Children are unique and learn at different rates, what one child may be learning new words through rhymes and songs, another child may be becoming familiar with rhyming words. Rhymes and songs are fun, and by singing regularly with your child you will be helping them to tune into sounds which is an important communication skill.

V **Voice** Using different voices will help to keep your child engaged. Try making your voice go higher, lower, softer or louder.

O **Offer choices** Children learn more when they are interested so try giving them a choice of what you will sing together.

C **Chant/sing** You don't have to have the best singing voices. Rhymes can be said or sung as it is the rhythm that matters.

A **Actions** Bring rhymes to life using actions, gestures or movements as this will help your child to understand the words better. Being face-to-face gives them the opportunity to copy what you are doing.

L **Let them have a turn** Pausing during rhymes and songs will encourage your child to fill in the missing word, therefore learning them to take a turn.

I **Involve them** Children love it when you include their name in rhymes and songs, and when you relate them to their interests and experiences.

S **Sing it again** Repeating rhymes and songs will help your child to listen, remember new words or sounds, and expand their vocabulary.

E **Everyone, everywhere** Sing rhymes and songs at home or on the go. Invite family and friends to make it even more fun.

Rhymetime Anytime

'Rhymetime Anytime' is a one page handout covering our 'VOCALISE' top tips for singing with children. It also works great as a poster for displaying alongside some of the rhymes from our practitioner's rhyme book.

Top Tips

To give your child a great start on their language journey, think **FAST CARS**

F **Face to face** When you are face to face with your child, it shows you are listening and ready to interact.

A **Attention** Make sure you have your child's attention. Try saying their name first to gain their attention.

S **See what interests them** Follow your child's lead as they show you what they are interested in.

T **Time to respond** Children need time to put their thoughts together before they respond, so give them time.

C **Comment** Make comments and reduce the number of questions you ask, as comments lead to more talking.

A **Add to what they say** Build on what your child says by adding a word (e.g. child says "car", you say "big red car").

R **Repeat** Children need to hear new words lots of times in different situations, so repeat, repeat, repeat!

S **Say it back to them** If your child says something incorrectly, say it back to them the right way (e.g. "Yes, it's a CARR").

FAST CARS

You'll find FAST CARS at the back of our TALK to me at home packs but it's also available as a standalone handout or poster. Fast cars is our best general top tips for a parent to help their child's communication and language. If you were only going to give a parent one TALK Halton resource then this would be it! We also have a pack of social media images on each of the FAST CARS tips and an accompanying video you can share on your social media.

Communication Ages and Stages in the Early Years

0-6 months old

Discoverers

Interaction

Makes eye contact when held.
3-6 months: seeks and enjoys physical contact.
Smiles in response to being held and bounced.
Explores toys and objects by banging, feeling, mouthing.

Talking

By 3 months: sticks out tongue and moves lips when spoken to.
Makes cooing noises, babbles using vowel sounds e.g. "oooh, aah".
3-6 months: Will join in "conversation" by making sounds and squeals and by babbling.

Listening and understanding

Turns head to unusual sounds or when hears familiar voices.
Situational understanding

Speech sounds

Uses REFLEXIVE vowel sounds e.g. 'oooh' 'aah'
Consonants b d m w

Play and social development

Reaching, grasping, copying, smiling



Ages and stages

Our Ages and Stages resource can be used as individual leaflets, printed or given as a whole booklet or displayed as posters. It covers what you would expect interaction, talking, listening and understanding, speech sounds and play and social development to look like at each of the below ages.

Age Ranges; 0-6 months, 6-12 months, 12-18 months, 18 months- 2 years, 2-3 years old, 3-4 years old, 4-5 years old, 5 years old. Also available - 5-7 years, 7-9 years, 9-11 years, 11-14 years, 14-17 years.

WellComm: At a Glance... FOR PARENTS



WellComm is a toolkit designed to help early years settings identify communication needs in the children they work with between the ages of 6 months to 6 years.

The early identification of any speech and language difficulty or delay is key to helping your child develop - this is exactly what WellComm is used for!

Have a look at the FAQs on the next page to see if we have answered your question!

If you have any further questions, please contact
TALK Halton: talk.halton@halton.gov.uk



In partnership with:



Community Healthcare



WellComm at a glance and FAQ

Our WellComm information for parents includes an overview of what WellComm is and why it and early identification are beneficial for children. It also contains a frequently asked question section. This would be perfect to send out alongside new starter packs

EAL: Advice for Parents

Supporting your child in their home language

Supporting your child's home language supports the development of English:

Talk to your child in your strongest language. If your child learns one language well from you, it will be easier for them to learn English or another language. Use your home language when out and about with your child. Encourage your child to feel proud of their home language and of knowing more than one language.

Being bilingual is an advantage and is NOT the cause of a language delay.

Children who grow up being bilingual can have wider access to jobs, friendships, travel and culture. Bilingualism does not cause communication disorders.

When a new language is introduced, for example when starting nursery, some children may not talk as much for a little while. This is normal and will pass with time.

This is sometimes called 'the silent period' and is often seen by practitioners at the child's setting. This is fine - your child will still be listening and learning. Your child's setting can monitor this and will continue to support them.



EAL for parents

A short handout for parents of children who are learning English as an additional language. The handout covers key messages about home language use and general positive communication strategies.

Parents might also like;



The BBC Tiny Happy People website is full of video facts, tips and activities for parents about supporting their child's Communication and Language. You can also follow on Facebook and Instagram.



The National Literacy Trust's 'Words for life' website provides parents, children and young people with activities and support to improve their language, literacy and communication skills from home.