



The Communication Trust
Every child understood

Session 1.2

Identification and Assessment of Speech,
Language and Communication Needs
(SLCN)



Norwich
Opportunity Area

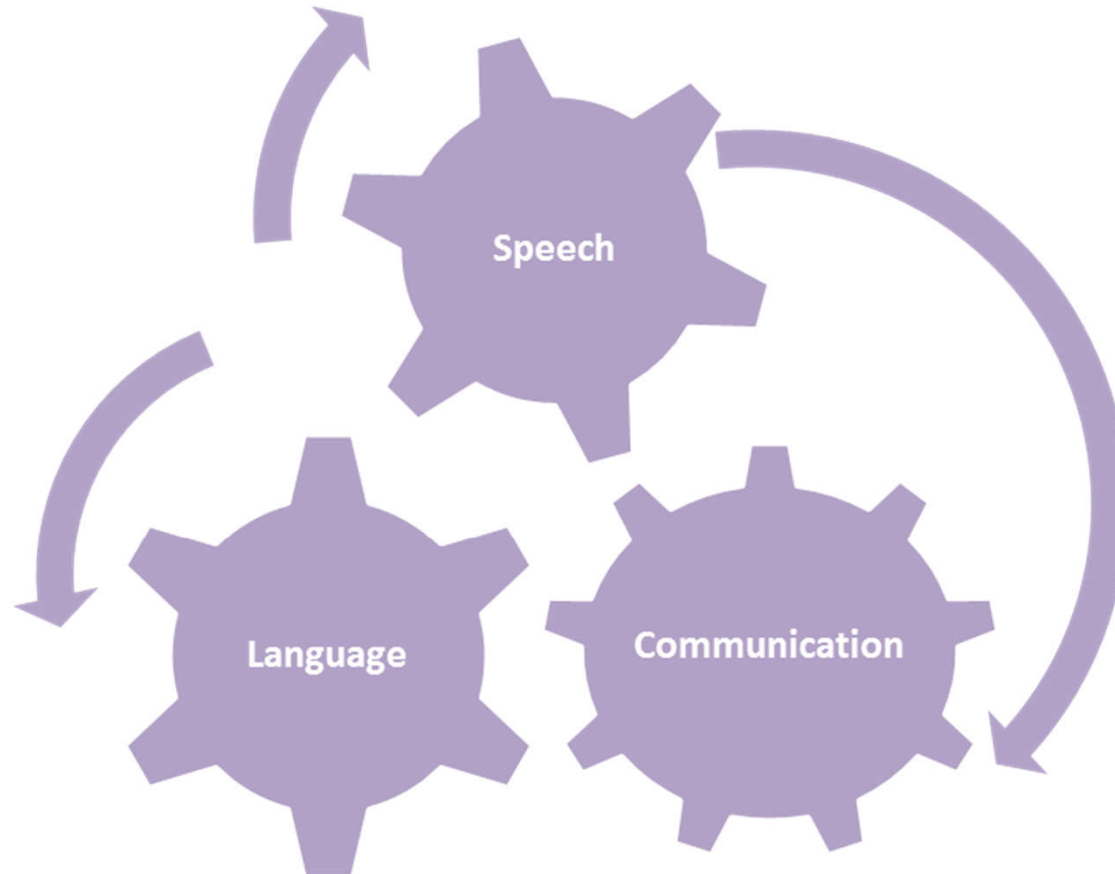
communicate

Independent Speech &
Language Therapy

Session aims

- Understand what the term 'SLCN' means
- Be aware of how to identify children with SLCN
- Understand the relationship between learning English as an Additional Language (EAL) and SLCN
- Know some strategies to support the identification of SLCN in children with EAL
- Understand our roles and responsibilities for supporting children with SLCN
- Be aware of the processes and procedures in our setting for raising concerns

Review: What do speech, language and communication mean?



Speech, language and communication needs (SLCN)



Most children follow the expected pattern of development for their speech, language and communication at the expected times.

Some, however, do not.

These children are described as having speech, language and communication needs (SLCN).



Speech, language and communication needs (SLCN)

Watch this video, which looks at children with different types of SLCN.

Consider:

- What aspect of their speech, language and/or communication are they struggling with?
- What strengths can you see?
- How does this resonate with what you see in your day to day practice?



The Way We Talk

Every child or young person's SLCN will be different and individual

May be in one, more or all areas of SLC

Will vary in terms of the **level** of need and the **impact**

SLC may be the **only** or primary need OR part of another condition or need

Skills may be delayed or disordered/atypical

May be short-term OR persistent

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Problems learning new words

Problems using language to negotiate in discussions

Poor linking of sentences with connectives; 'and', 'but', 'so', 'then'

Poor turn taking

Speech which is difficult to understand; difficulty in making and using speech sounds appropriately

Limited vocabulary for emotions, thoughts or feelings

Difficulties sequencing sentences into meaningful narratives

Immature sentence structures

Limited eye contact

Difficulty understanding idioms such as 'don't hit the roof'

Problems finding the right words at the right times

Stammering or stuttering

Difficulty understanding complex sentences

Difficulty understanding or responding to feedback from the listener

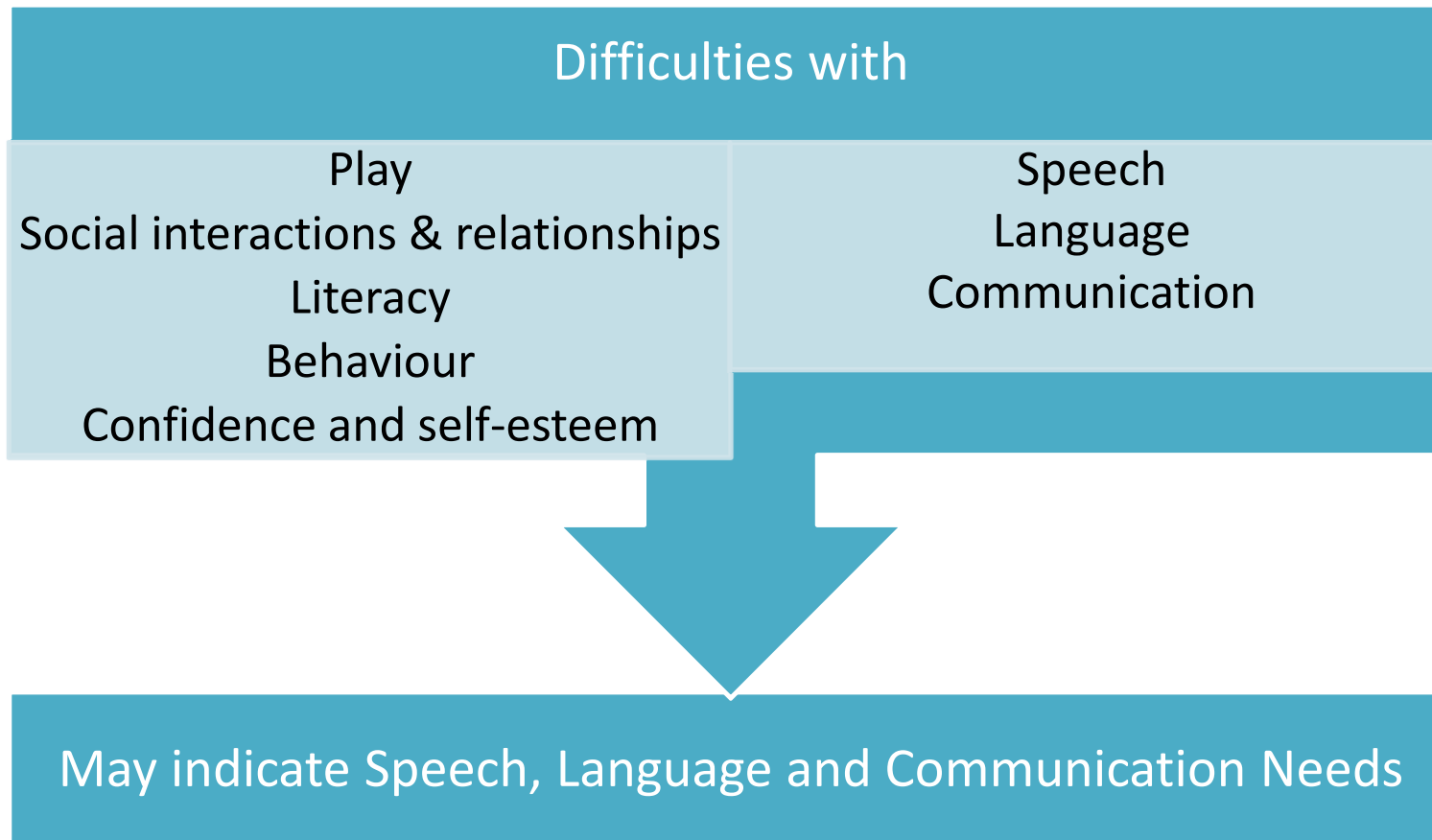
Difficulty staying on topic in conversation

Problems discriminating between speech sounds, so 'catch' and 'cat' might sound the same

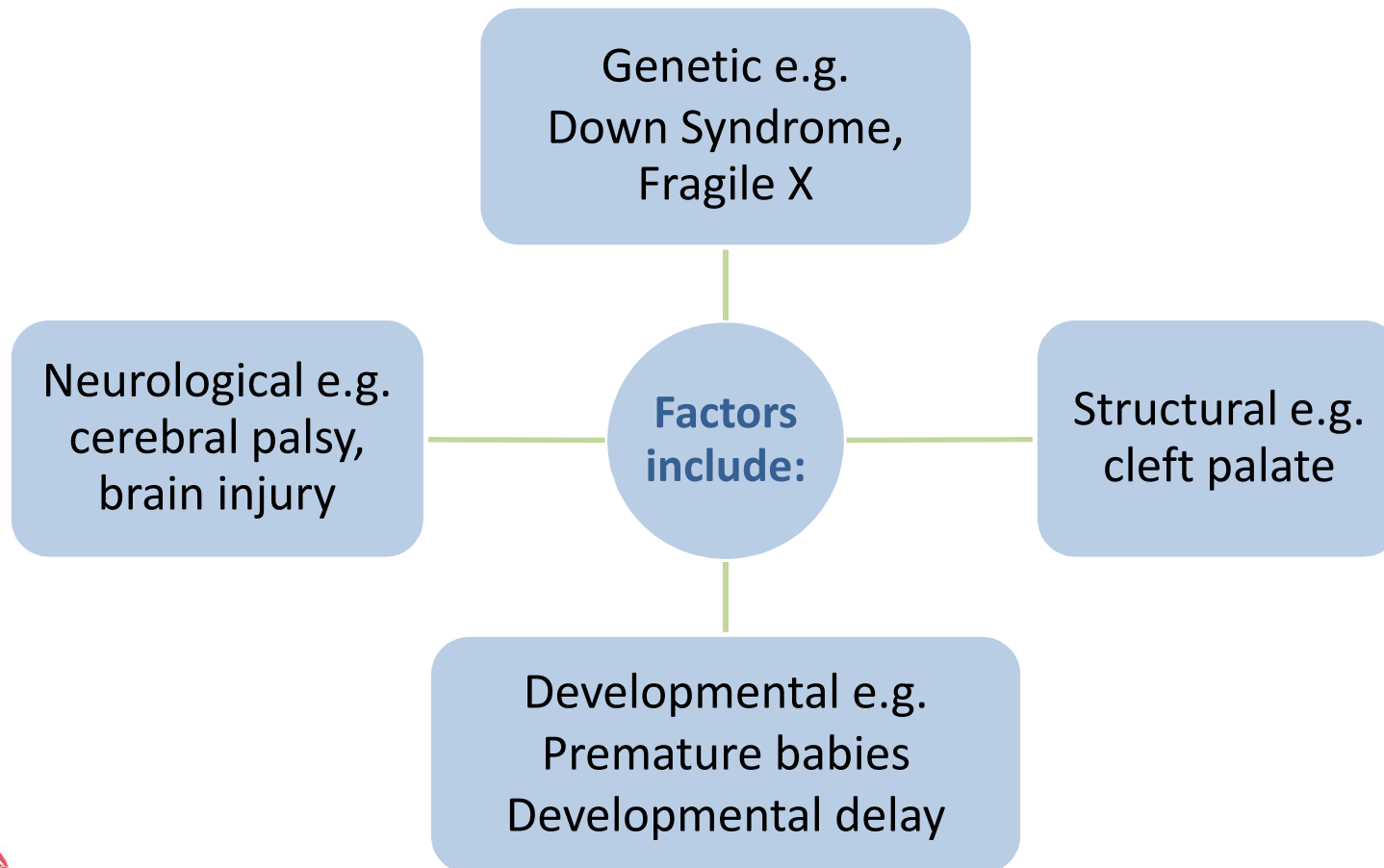
Problems repairing conversations

Difficulty with starting and ending conversations

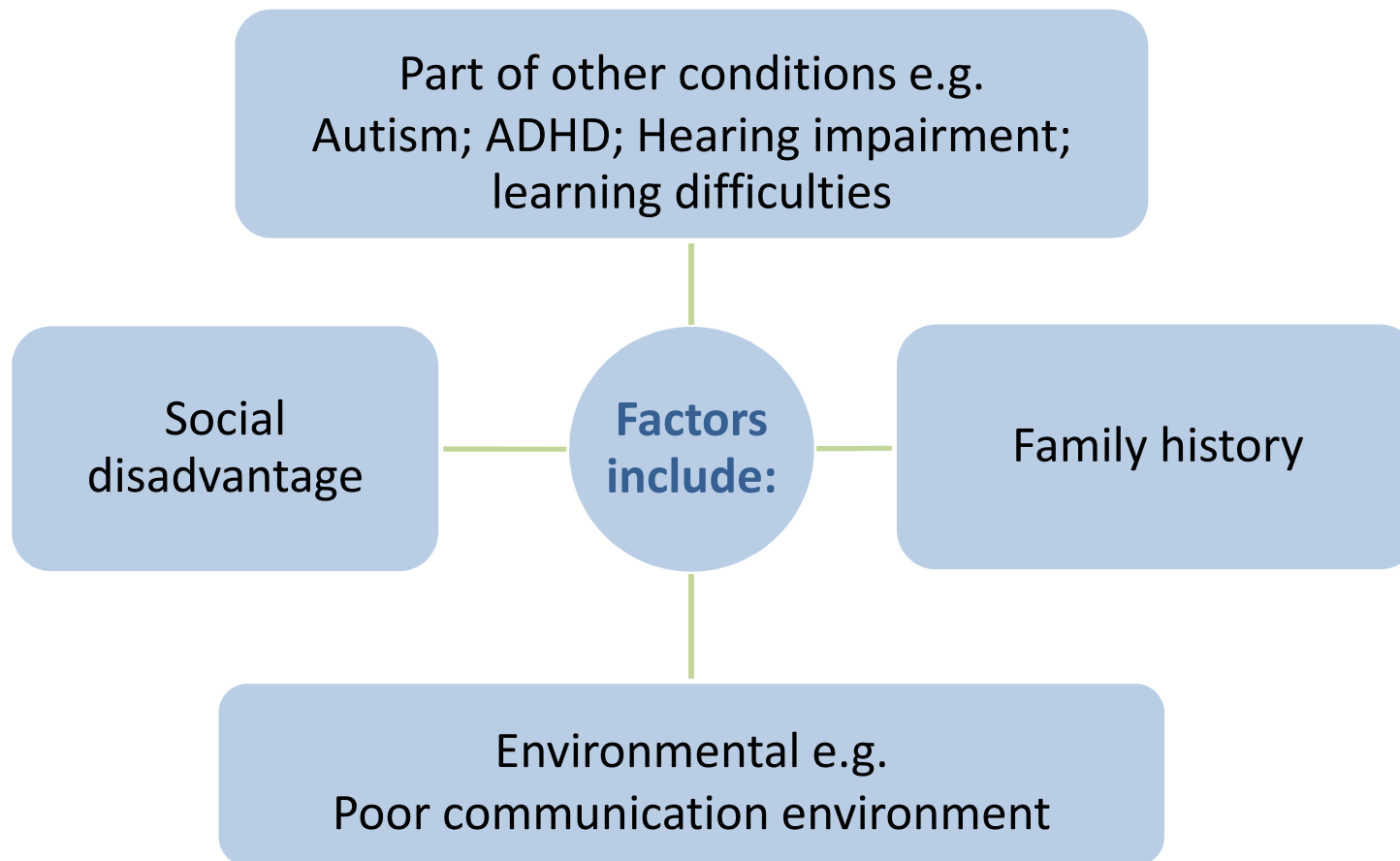
Indicators of SLCN



Factors relating to SLCN: 1

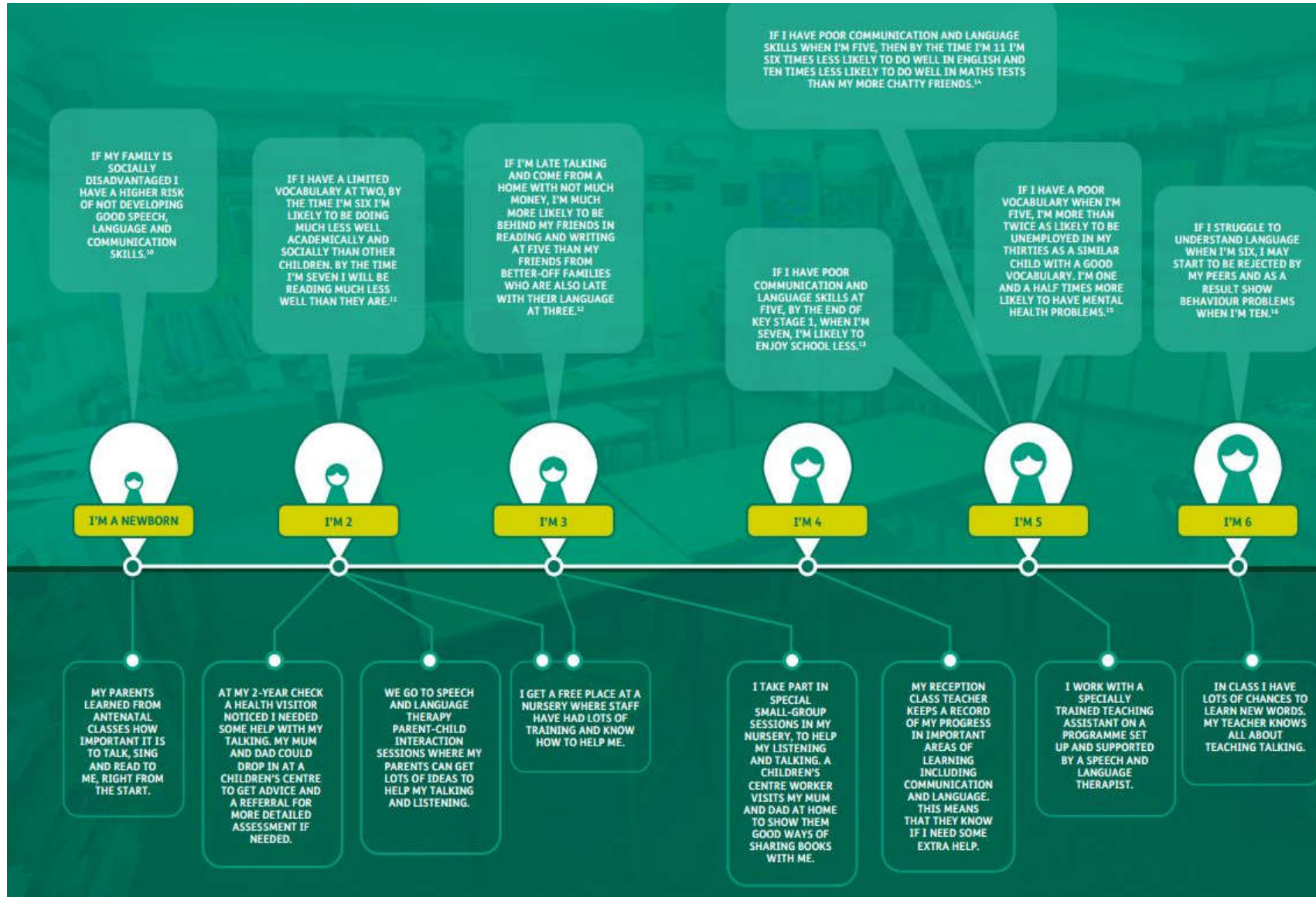


Factors relating to SLCN: 2



The impact of under-identification of SLCN

- The long-term impact of under-identification and lack of support for SLCN is significant.
- Research shows that high numbers of young people with mental health needs or behaviour difficulties have SLCN that have been missed earlier on in their lives.
- Under identification is an issue for the justice system also. A study found that two thirds of young offenders have speech, language and communication difficulties, but only in 5% of cases were they identified before the offending began (Bryan et al, 2015).



(Gascoigne and Gross, 2017)

Recognising SLCN: Two possible approaches

Ages and stages resources

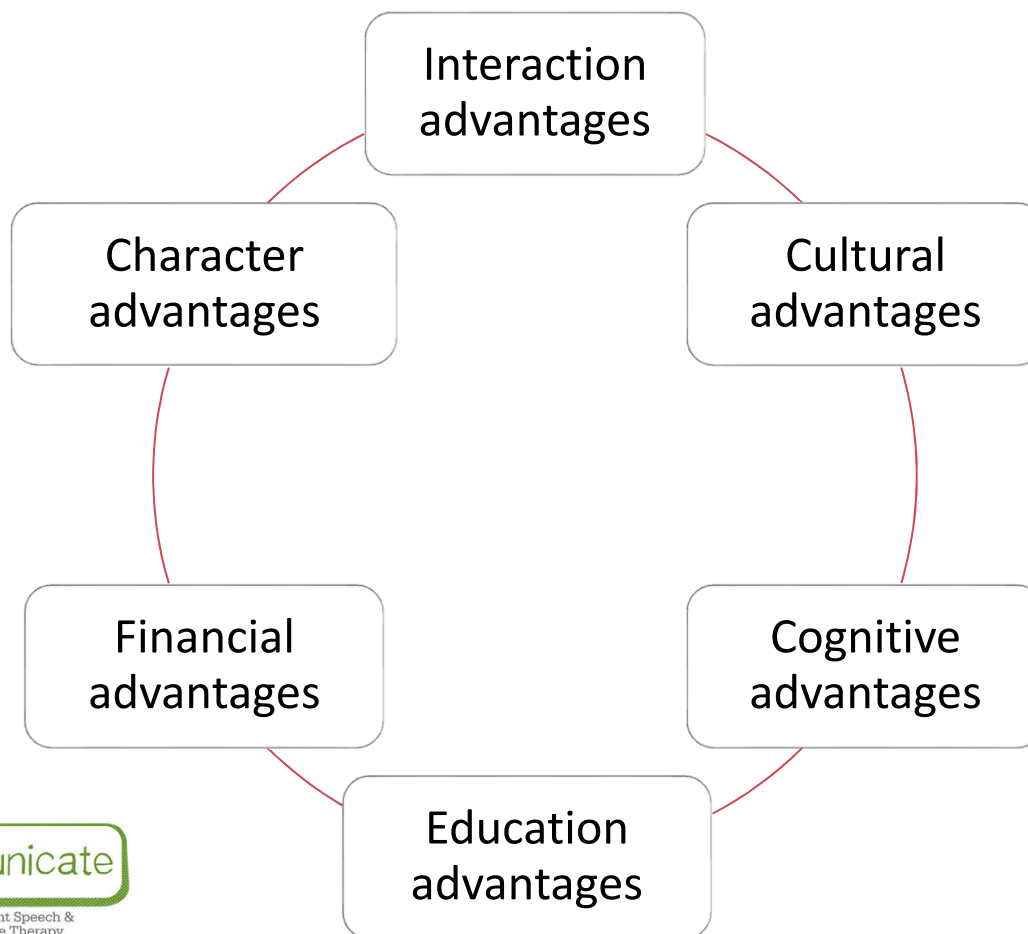
- *Universally Speaking 0-5 and 5-11 years*
- Talking Point Progress Checker
- *Stages of Speech and Language Development* poster
- *What's Typical Talk at Primary* poster

Indicators checklists/ screening tools

- Wellcomm
- Progression Tools
- ECAT

Learning English as an additional language (EAL)

Advantages of being bilingual



EAL and SLCN: True or false?

Children and young people who have more than one language:

- All have speech, language and communication needs (SLCN)
- And are slow to develop English language skills, should be referred to speech therapy straightaway
- Can't have SLCN
- Are more likely to have SLCN than children who aren't

EAL and SLCN

- It is important to identify if a bilingual child has a SLCN.
- Early identification and assessment are essential to support the child in their setting and at home.
- There are some key things to look out for, both in terms of their language skills and in other areas too.

EAL and SLCN – what to look out for

Language

- Slower progress than you would expect
- Difficulties with particular speech, language and communication skills – e.g. speech sounds, vocabulary, understanding, sentence structure

Other areas of development

- Specific difficulties in English literacy skills
- Social, emotional or behaviour difficulties
- Attainment

Parents

- Raising concerns

EAL: How can we find out about languages in our setting?

People

- Ask the parent/carer
- Ask the child
- Gain information from siblings
- Ask colleagues in setting
- Remember to find out if there is a dialect present

Paperwork

- Check admissions papers or previous records the child brings
- Record the information in the child's record
- Update this as necessary
- Keeping a central record helps settings get an overall picture

EAL: What information do we need?

- What is the child or young person's main language?
- When were they exposed to English?
- What is the main language spoken at home?
- Is English used at home?
- Do any siblings use English?
- What languages does the child or young person understand?
- What languages do they speak?
- What languages do the parents speak?
- What dialect is used?

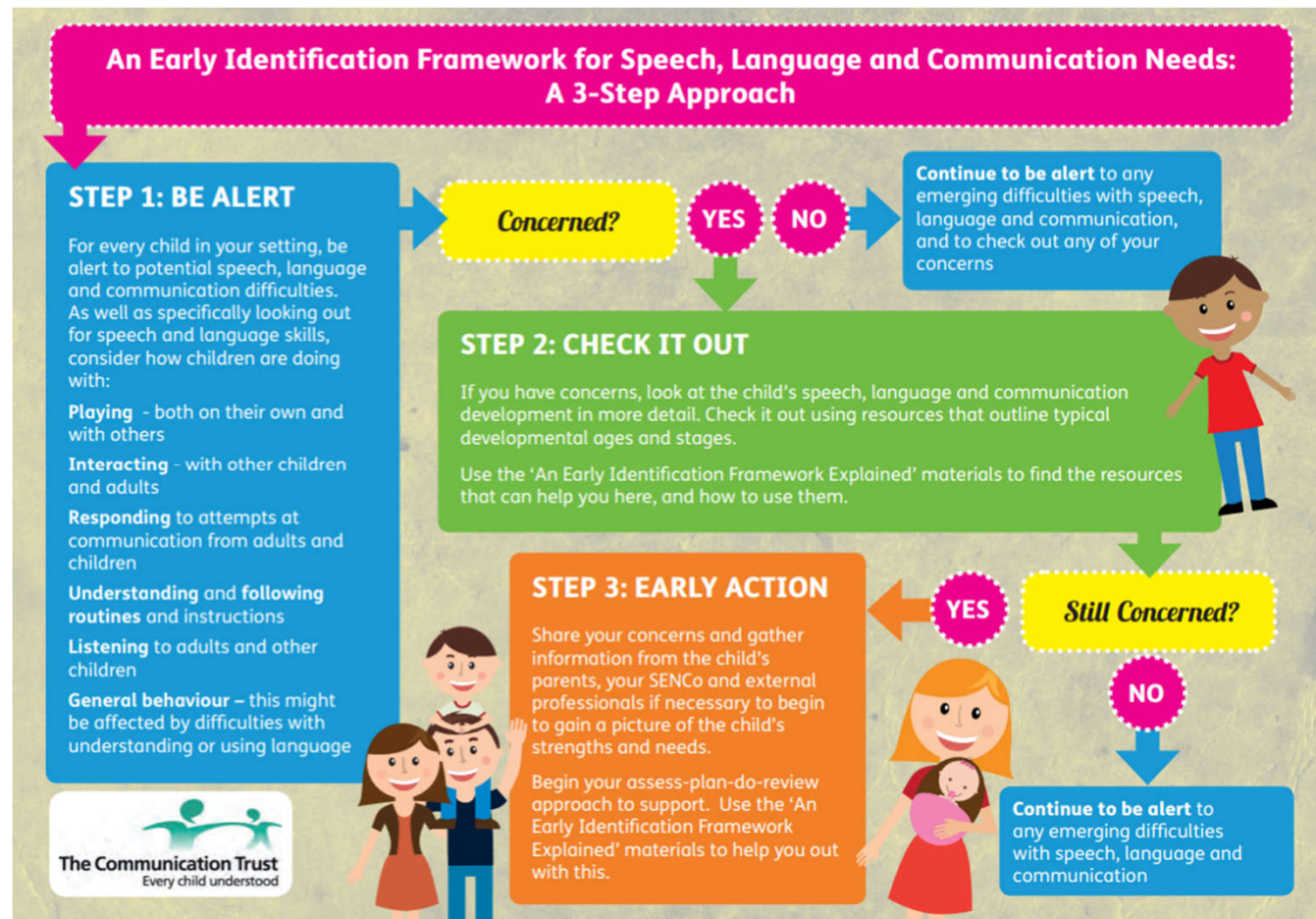
EAL: Different ways to find out about the languages a child is using

- Observe the child or young person in different situations and contexts
- Discuss with parents
- Information from other professionals
- Carry out a specific activity with the child or young person
- Ask the child or young person what language they prefer to use

Raising concerns re: SLCN

- If you work with young children, you may be the first professional to have concerns. Raising these effectively will support early identification and intervention, which are crucial to support children's development and minimise the potential impacts.
- However, this may also be the case if you work with an older child or young person.
- Many children and young people have had their speech, language and communication needs MISSED completely.

Early identification



Roles and Responsibilities



Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years

Statutory guidance for organisations who
work with and support children and young
people with special educational needs and
disabilities

- 4 broad areas of need within SEND – Communication and Interaction is one of them.
- There is a chapter with a specific early years focus
- Outlines roles and responsibilities for supporting children with SEND – for children with EHCPs, and those on SEN support.

Roles and Responsibilities

- When a child is identified as having SEN, settings should take action to remove barriers to learning, using a graduated approach – assess, plan, do, review.
- All those who work with young children should be alert to emerging difficulties and respond early. In particular, parents know their children best and it is important that all practitioners listen and understand when parents express concerns about their child's development.
- We know that early identification and ensuring effective provision has an impact on children's long term outcomes.
- It is therefore essential that EVERYONE working with children and young people is able to identify need and help to ensure that a child's needs are being met within the provision.

Additional support for children's SLCN

Who might offer additional support?

In your setting
(e.g. you, language lead, senior colleague, SENCO)

Outside your setting
(e.g. Speech and Language Therapist, SLT or teaching assistant, advisor)

What might that additional support be?

Changes to the environment
Using interventions, approaches or strategies
Further assessment
Speech and Language Therapy
Programmes designed by a specialist
Working with other adults & support staff
Training or information for staff
Work with parents

Reflections and actions

- What are the processes / procedures for raising concerns in our setting?
- How might we make the processes and procedures more clear in our setting? Posters / visual reminders on display?
- Familiarise yourself with a new screening tool or ages and stages resource – and use this to check the speech, language and communication skills of a child you work with.