

**TOTAL TIME – 1.5 HOURS**

Resources required:

- Wellcomm Big Book of Ideas – 1 copy to refer to during session and show participants
- Examples of resources that you currently use to involve children with SLCN to show participants. This might include:
  - Communication passports
  - Visual schedules
  - All About Me poster
  - Sorting tasks
- Videos – YouTube links are given on relevant slides.

# Session aims



- Be aware of the typical way in which children's speech sound systems develop
- Know when to be concerned about a child's speech sound development
- Learn some strategies and ideas to support the development of children's speech sounds
- Understand the importance of involving children and young people with SLCN
- Be aware of some strategies to help you to involve children and their families in their support



**1 min (0:01)**

*By the end of this session you will...*

# Speech sound development



## What does it mean?

- Speech is how children use sounds to form words – it's the sounds we use for talking
- There are 'rules' for speech sounds – for example, in English, a word will never start with 'sb' – but 'sp' 'st' 'sm' 'sn' and 'sk' are ok
- There is a developmental order in which children typically learn how to say different speech sounds
- Children's speech development and understanding of sounds is really important for literacy development
- It also includes things like fluency, volume control, intonation, voice and resonance



## 3 mins (0:04)

Discuss these points.

*As children start to develop their language skills, it's very typical that only familiar adults can understand their meaning, but as children grow older and they "practise" talking more, their speech becomes clearer.*

*Developmental order of learning to say different speech sounds – for example, children learn how to say sounds such as "b" and "t" before sounds like "l" and "r".*

*Fluency (stammering) comes under the general area of "speech", as does the ability to put stress on certain words to emphasise meaning, or subtly change meaning through e.g. a sarcastic or 'jokey' tone*

# Speech sound development



Luke is 4 years old. As you listen to his speech, and watch him, think about:

- What is he struggling with?
- Are there any particular sounds that you notice are difficult for him?
- What does he use to help him get his message across?
- What sort of impact might his speech difficulties have on Luke's development?

## 10 mins (0:14)

Watch the video of Luke – a child with a severe speech sound impairment.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Onqn\\_7xzp2Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Onqn_7xzp2Q) – timings are 0.00 - 0.48 and 5.46 – 6.19

(roughly 1 min 20 seconds of video all together)

Go through the discussion points after the video.

# Speech sound development



## Typical speech sound development

- Children follow a typical pattern of speech sound development
- We expect them to make particular errors in their speech, affecting particular sounds, at particular ages
- For example, it's very typical for a 2 year old to say 'nana' instead of 'banana', or 'tat' instead of 'cat'

## Delayed speech sound development

- Children with delayed speech sound development are following the typical pattern of development, but are not reaching the milestones expected
- For example, a 5 year old saying 'tat' instead of 'cat' would have delayed speech sound development

## Disordered speech sound development

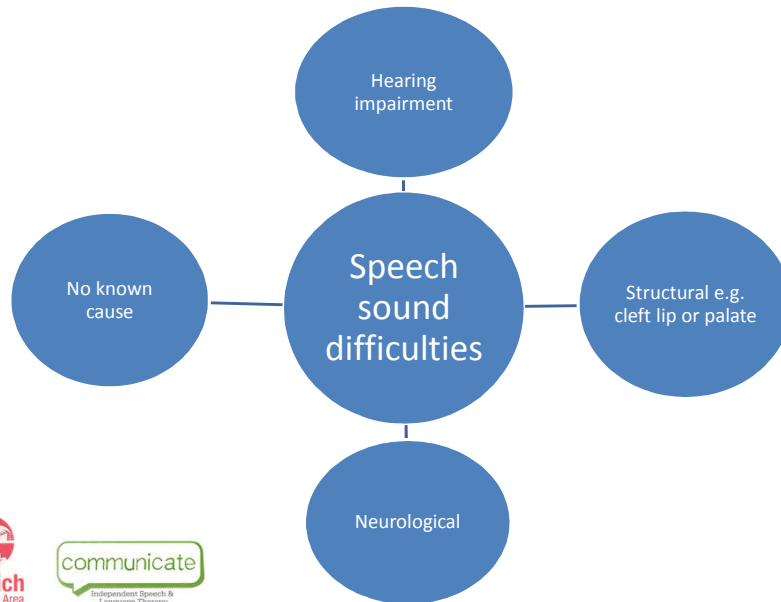
- Children with disordered speech sound development are not following the typical pattern of speech sound development
- They will make unusual mistakes in their speech, which aren't expected at any age. For example, saying 'kog' instead of 'dog', or missing off the first or middle sound in a word are unusual error patterns in speech



## 3 mins (0:17)

Discuss these points. Luke in the previous video has “disordered” speech sound development – he is making some unusual errors in his speech.

## What causes speech sound difficulties?



### 5 mins (0:22)

*Speech sound difficulties can be caused by any of a number of different factors, including:*

- *Hearing impairment – if children don't hear different speech sounds properly, this can result in them having difficulty producing them. Some children suffer from "glue ear" or middle ear infections when young as well, which is when fluid becomes blocked in the middle ear temporarily. This can result in sounds being "muffled". If children suffer from recurrent "glue ear" or middle ear infections, or this goes undiagnosed, then their speech development can be affected.*
- *Structural – structural issues may include cleft lip or palate, or other facial abnormalities. This can mean that because the structures of the face and mouth are not in place and able to function properly, children may have difficulty articulating sounds.*
- *Neurological – there are some neurological disorders that affect motor speech planning/execution – such as Cerebral Palsy, or Dyspraxia (also known as Childhood Apraxia of Speech). In conditions such as these, there can be a problem with the signal from the brain to the speech muscles, meaning that sounds are not articulated correctly.*
- *No known cause – in a lot of cases there may be no obvious reason as to why a child is struggling with their phonology/articulation. For some children they may be able to hear but their brain does not process the sound correctly, for others they may be able to hear the sound correctly, but not be able to articulate it.*

*Part of an assessment by a Speech and Language Therapist is working out where the 'breakdown' has occurred in terms of a child's processing/use of speech sounds.*

## Development of speech sounds

Age	What to expect
12 months	- Using early sounds in babble – ‘b’, ‘m’, ‘d’
18 months	- Words will be unclear, but will be consistent
2 years	- Speech will still be unclear, and this may be a cause of frustration!
3 years	- Expect most sounds to be used at this age, with some immaturities still present such as cluster reduction, and difficulties with more complex sounds such as ‘sh’ ‘ch’ ‘j’ ‘th’ ‘r’ and ‘l’
4 years	- Some sounds may still be produced in a slightly immature way; ‘r’ ‘l’ ‘th’ ‘sh’ and ‘j’ might still be difficult sounds for the child to say
5 years	- By this age children should be able to use most speech sounds – though some longer, multi syllabic words might be difficult. There may also still be some cluster reduction present where there are 3 consonants in the cluster e.g. ‘scr’ - ‘r’ and ‘th’ may also still be produced in a slightly immature way

### 5 mins (0:27)

These stages are taken from TCTs Universally Speaking

Ask for any thoughts from participants on this – is this what they’d expect?

## Activity

- In pairs, have a conversation about your day/your evening/your weekend... each of you has different speech sound errors:
  - Person 1 – You are ‘fronting’ the sound ‘k’. You need to replace all these back sounds with a front ‘t’ sound
  - Person 2 – You are ‘stopping’ the sound ‘f’. Rather than the air flowing through, you are ‘stopping’ it to a ‘b’

### 6 mins (0:33)

- 4 mins for activity in pairs
- 2 mins to briefly go through the 2 points below

This activity has 2 main aims:

- To help participants realise how difficult it is to change habitual speech errors! So when children are going through the process of learning to use the correct sound in their speech, it can take some time.
- To help understand the impact that even a relatively small speech sound difficulty might have on self esteem/confidence/choosing different words to say because you know some are difficult etc



## Some typical errors...

Name of process	Example	Error usually resolved by age...
Voicing	Pig → <b>big</b> Car → <b>gar</b>	3 years
Final consonant deletion	Bus → bu Hat - ha	3 years
Fronting	Car → <b>tar</b> Girl → <b>dirl</b>	3.5 years
Stopping	Sock → <b>dock</b> Funny → <b>bunny</b>	3 years
Weak syllable deletion	Banana → nana Telephone → tephone	4 years
Cluster reduction	Spider → pider Flower → fower	4 years
Gliding	Ring → <b>wing</b> Long → <b>yong</b>	5 years

### 2 mins (0:35)

*This table is just to give a rough idea of some common speech sound errors and the age they are typically resolved by. If we had concerns about a child's speech sound errors, we could consider a referral to a speech and language therapist for a full assessment.*

## How do you support children's speech sound development?



**What are some of the ways that we already support children's speech sound development in our setting?  
Think about:**

- Targeted groups?
- Everyday strategies?
- Specific activities?



**5 mins (0:40)**

Do this activity as a whole group, asking participants to share their practice around how they support children to develop and support children's speech sound development

## Strategies to support children's speech sound development



- **Repeat sounds back in the correct way** – don't correct the child, but say the word back to them, so they have an opportunity to hear the sound – say the word a few times if you can
- **Emphasise sounds** – when you are modelling the correct sound in a word, put a slight emphasis on the sound that you want the child to listen to
- **Specific praise** – Let the child know when they have said a sound well – 'that was brilliant! You said 'cat' with a 'c' sound!
- **Don't pretend to understand** – make it out to be your fault if you can't understand a child, and encourage the child to use gestures, or to show you if you can't understand them
- **Try some sound awareness activities** – syllable counting, listening out for rhymes, listening out for sounds in words are all helpful



### 5 mins (0:45)

These are based on some of the strategies from the WellComm Big Book of Ideas – more information is in the book

Talk through the points and make sure they are all understood:

- **Repeat sounds back in the correct way** – *we briefly discussed a similar strategy last session when we talked about children with expressive language errors. This follows a similar principle – we don't want to correct the child because we want to encourage them to listen to us, and we don't want to break the flow of the interaction. Children learn from listening – so if a child calls a sock a "tock" for example, you can just repeat it back to them a few times in a positive way, but keep the flow of the interaction going (e.g. "Oh, you are showing me your sock! It's a white sock. You've got two socks – where's your other sock?").*
- **Don't pretend to understand** – *children often know when you're just pretending to understand them. Make out as if it's your fault and encourage them to show you in another way.*

Discuss with participants which of these strategies they are using already, and which they could introduce.

## Involving Children with SLCN



- The Code of Practice is clear that children must be involved in deciding what support they need and the goals they want to achieve.
- Children and their parents must be enabled to participate as fully as possible in decisions.



**1 min (0:46)**

*We've spent a bit of time talking about the more detailed elements of speech, language and communication.*

*Now, we're going to take a wider look at the importance of involving children with SLCN, and consider some ways for how to do this.*

## Involving Children with SLCN



Each child has different strengths and needs, therefore there is no blanket approach for involving children in decision making. Some key approaches are:

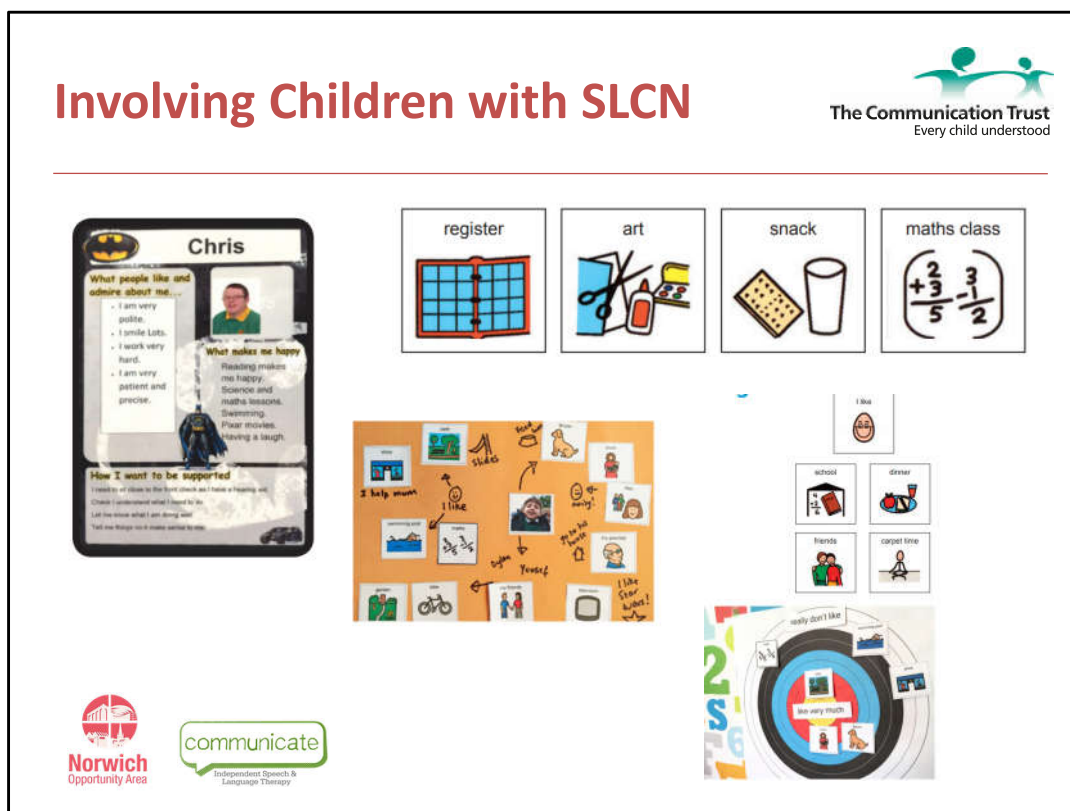
- Find out as much as you can about the child's speech, language and communication. Use observations, screening tools or information from speech and language therapists if available.
- Use a child's strengths to support the process – use materials and activities that interest them.
- Support spoken language with additional supports like pictures, photos or meaningful objects.
- Build a picture of what is motivating for the child – you can do this through interaction and also discussion with parents.



**5 mins (0:51)**

*What do we do already? (group discussion)*

# Involving Children with SLCN



4 mins (0:55)

Some examples of ways to involve children with SLCN (refer to specific examples of these that you use in setting already while talking through these):

**Communication passports** - There is lots of advice out there about making these. It can be one page, or a booklet. It is written in the young person's voice, contains key information and should be developed in partnership with the child or young person and their families

**Visual schedules** - These can be useful in showing pupils what is going to happen and there should ideally be consistency across a setting as to how these are set up. They can depict a whole day, or one activity, or be as simple as 'now' and 'next'. Once timetables have been set up, it's important to use them and refer to them within your setting to support the child or young person in preparing for a specific activity or understanding what will happen next.

**All About Me poster** - Put a photo of the child in the centre and encourage them to draw pictures about important people in their life, their interests, their likes and dislikes.

**Sorting tasks** - Use pictures and symbols for sorting tasks to help understand a child or young person's preferences. Choose a topic (e.g. where I live, what I like to do, how I feel about playtime) and prepare symbols and photos in advance. Have sticky notes ready too to add any last minute pictures that you haven't planned for. You might have headings to sort the symbols under, for example 'What I like' and 'what I don't like' and place the pre prepared symbols under the different headings. You could also sort different written statements if this is accessible to the child or young person, sorting statements relating to different aspects of their life, such as 'I learn best when my teacher...' Visual scales can also be used to help the child to visually see the scale, use of a bullseye or a ladder with 'I like very much' and 'I don't like', for example. Then provide pictures, symbols or written statements for the child or young person to place on the scale.

# Involving Children with SLCN

## Some general strategies for involving children and young people with speech, language and communication needs

Here are some important considerations to help all children and young people with SLCN be involved. Use these tips in your daily practice and focus on ongoing conversations rather than one-off consultations:

- **Really know me...**The person talking to the child or young person should be familiar and trusted. He or she should know how the pupil communicates and how to support this effectively.
- **Record how I communicate...** And keep adding to this over time. Make sure all staff know where to find this information.
- **Talk to me in a way I understand...** Some children and young people with good spoken language can still have difficulties understanding language, try to gather information about any gaps in a child or young person's understanding.
- **Make sure all information is accessible...** Use symbols, photos or sign if required to support understanding and accessibility.
- **Let me use what I need to communicate...** Make sure there is access to any method the child or young person needs to communicate to the best of their ability.
- **Pitch your language at the right level...** Think about the child or young person's learning level and then pitch your language at this level. It is always good to:
  - Use simple language and avoid jargon
  - Use short and simple sentences
  - Build in pauses, to give time for processing and responding - don't speak too quickly
  - Make sure the child or young person has a way to let you know if they have not understood
- **Think about where you talk to me...** Make sure it's somewhere familiar that feels safe and comfortable and has few distractions
- **Keep it flexible...**Use methods that are accessible and fun. There are lots of ways for children and young people to express themselves besides speech, such as art, drama, photography, music or role-play.



3 mins (0:58)

Taken from TCTs Brief guide to involving children and young people with SLCN

# Involving Children with SLCN

- **Give me practice...** Many children and young people with SLCN lack experience in making decisions, so bear this in mind. Give time for them to prepare for meetings beforehand and always check you have understood correctly.
- **Make time...** to think about the best approach, to prepare materials, to meet with the child or young person and then to turn what comes from that into meaningful outcomes.
- **Often it is hard to say what I dislike...** Pupils may need lots of practice at expressing what they don't like. This could be because they don't understand the language, or because they are afraid of saying the wrong thing.
- **Ask me how I want you to support me...** It may be that the child or young person might want to look at the information first before they go through it. Maybe they want to do a bit at a time or do it with a friend.
- **Talk about now rather than the future...** Thinking and talking about the future relies on experience, language skills and the ability for abstract thought. Finding out from children and young people what is important to them in the future can be best achieved by: asking them about *now* - what is going well and what could be **better**?
- **Check I understand the concepts you are asking about...** Abstract concepts (ie 'when you're an adult') and vocabulary around feelings can be hard to understand. Check that these, plus any key vocabulary you use (ie 'annual review') are understood.
- **Think about the questions you ask...**
  - "How?" and "why?" questions can be hard to understand for pupils with SLCN; "what?", "where?" and "who?" are easier. Try not to go through a list of questions - it doesn't make for an equal relationship.
  - Pause after asking a question for at least 10 seconds (and longer if a child or young person is using a communication aid) to give them enough time to answer. Try not to ask questions you already know the answer to.
  - Using open questions or statements is a good way to open up discussions. However narrower questions can be easier to answer, e.g.: "What food do you like for breakfast?" can be easier than "What food do you like?"
  - Sometimes pupils get used to answering "yes" to everything. So, for important information always check back with them.

3 mins (1:01)

Taken from TCTs Brief guide to involving children and young people with SLCN



# Involving Children with SLCN

- **Use visual supports (objects, photos, symbols)...** Many children with SLCN have stronger visual skills and use visual supports. Using pictures can help us to remember what we have said and to record the conversation. It's also a good idea to keep paper with you, so that you can draw pictures as you talk together.
- **Follow my lead...** This shows that you are interested and enables children and young people to share what is most important to them.
- **Show me what we are going to do and how we'll do it...** Demonstrating tasks and methods of involvement will help children and young people to contribute as fully as possible.
- **Start with the concrete...** Children find it easier to talk about what they have just been doing, rather than what they did last week or at the weekend.
- **Don't judge me...** Whilst we may disagree with what children and young people have to say, or find views challenging, it's important to respond in the same way to negative as well as positive comments.



2 mins (1:03)

Taken from TCTs Brief guide to involving children and young people with SLCN

# Discussion

- What strategies are in place in our setting already?
- How are we involving children with SLCN?
- How could we do better?

## 15 mins (1:18)

- 5 mins discussion in small groups/pairs
- 10 mins to share ideas as a larger group

## Involving parents/ families

- Meaningful engagement with parents and families takes time, and this needs to be factored into a setting's approach.
- Parents may be at different stages in their understanding of their child's SLCN, which requires sensitive and responsive support from staff.
- Staff need to be skilful in identifying and where parents are in terms of their understating and acceptance of their child's SLCN.

**2 mins (1:20)**

Revision from previous session

## What does good parental engagement look like?



- The people who support my child know him/her well. I feel they are knowledgeable, tolerant and supportive of my child, understand what interests him/her and what is important to my child.
- I contribute to decisions about my child – through reviews and also the partnership I have with the setting my child is in.
- I am informed of choices for my child, and am supported in understanding the choices.
- My child has targets around increasing his/her independence and communication skills that we can also focus on at home.
- My child's education and experience reflects what matters to them – it is personalised.



**2 mins (1:22)**

Review from previous session. This is what success looks like in terms of positive parental engagement.

## Reflections and actions

- How do you already support children to develop their speech sounds/sound awareness?
- Is there anything you could do more of?
- How do you make sure that you include parents and children's views?
- Is there anything you could do more of, or change in order to help parents and children feel more involved in decisions about the support they receive?

**8 mins (1:30)** – or any additional remaining time

*Any more reflections/actions from this part of the session today?*