



# Speech and language advice for parents

**This leaflet gives advice for parents and carers visiting Children's Audiology with concerns about their child's speech development or awaiting a speech therapy assessment.**

## General advice

- Normal speech and language development covers a large range of abilities, compared to other areas of development.
- Consider your child's language skills in its wider context. For example:
  - It is normal for speech clarity to develop over time; be reassured by an increase in vocabulary and communication.
  - Understanding words is the root of language; children often understand much more than they are able to say.
- Learn about speech development milestones using the 'Steps to talking' section in CYPF website as well as the other helpful resources listed below.
- Seek advice from your health visitor at the 9 month and 2 year developmental reviews.
- Make sure your child attends environments with rich speech and language input such as nursery, childminder settings or play groups.
- Seek support if, by two and a half years old, your child has limited words without joining them, struggles to follow simple instructions, is difficult to understand, or shows little interest in communication.

## How to access speech and language therapy for your child

Speech and Language Therapy Support is offered locally as part of Berkshire Healthcare's Children, Young People and Families Service (CYPF). Families of preschool-aged children with a Berkshire GP can contact a Speech and Language Therapist directly via telephone to discuss any concerns.

Before contacting, it is recommended to try the following:

1. **Check the advice and strategy page on CYPF's website** (or scan the QR code). This provides practical tips and guidance you can use at home <https://cypf.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/health-and-development/communication-and-hearing/>
2. **Attend an Early Language Development workshop** led by a Speech and Language Therapists. These cover different aspects of language development, and allow questions and answers. See link or scan QR code <https://cypf.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/our-services/children-and-young-peoples-integrated-therapies/early-language-development-workshops/>



If, after trying these, you still feel your child would benefit from direct support, please contact the Speech And Language Therapy Service using the phone number **0118 904 3700**.

Lines are open from 9am to 3.30pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays. If further support in making a telephone call is required, please email [cyptriage2@berkshire.nhs.uk](mailto:cyptriage2@berkshire.nhs.uk).

Following the call, an advice plan will be agreed with you to follow within a set timeframe. Other possible outcomes may include:

- A child being listed for an assessment (with a plan to follow while waiting).
- Care may be signposted to another healthcare provider if appropriate.

Parents are encouraged to call back if they see limited progress or are generally unsure.

Equally, call back if targets are met sooner than expected as new targets or resources might be needed.

If your child attends a mainstream or special school in Berkshire, please raise any concerns with their teacher or the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) for further advice.

Families with an Oxford GP can contact Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust [Speech & Language Therapy - Children's Integrated Therapies](#)

### **Tips to think about prior to contacting a speech and language therapist:**

- Make sure to have your child's name, date of birth and NHS number ready when calling.
- Write down the number of words your child has, or some examples of the patterns of errors.
- Consider your child's current level of understanding. What can they take in? How do they express their wants and needs?

### **Other helpful speech and language therapy resources**

#### **Communication and hearing page on CYPF website**

Read about speech development milestones in the "steps to talking section:

<https://cypf.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/health-and-development/communication-and-hearing/> (or scan the QR code). Other sections you may find useful:

*Babbling and baby talk • Basic communication strategies • English as an additional language • Expressive language • Listening and attention at school • Social communications • Stammering • Toddler talk • Typical speech sound development • Unclear speech*



#### **The NHS 'Help your baby learn to talk' video:**

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/babys-development/play-and-learning/help-your-baby-learn-to-talk/>



#### **CBeebies Parenting**

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people>

#### **Better health Start for life – learning to talk**

<https://www.nhs.uk/best-start-in-life/early-learning-development/>

### **Contacting us**

Audiology Department, Tel: 0118 322 7238

Email: [audiology.royalberkshire@nhs.net](mailto:audiology.royalberkshire@nhs.net)

Visit: [www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk/wards-and-services/audiology.htm](http://www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk/wards-and-services/audiology.htm)

**Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.**