

Contact

If you have any questions, please call a member of the team:

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We are based at:

The Northern Health Centre
580 Holloway Road
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Tel: 020 3316 1897

River Place Health Centre
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Tel: 020 3316 8475

Patient advice and liaison service (PALS)

If you have a question, compliment, comment or concern please contact our PALS team on 020 7288 5551 or whh-tr.whitthealthPALS@nhs.net

If you need a large print, audio or translated copy of this leaflet please contact us on 020 7288 3081. We will try our best to meet your needs.

Early Years Speech and Language Therapy

Information for parents

Whittington Health
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When would I see a Speech and Language Therapist (SLT)?

Children learn to communicate from the moment they are born but there is a lot to learn and it's not easy for everyone. Speech and language difficulties are very common.

Although children learn to communicate at slightly different speeds, there are milestones that outline what children typically do at different ages.

By 2 years: using 50 plus words and starting to put two words together. Speech is clear around 50 per cent of the time.

By 2½ years: understanding simple instructions without you pointing or showing what you mean; starting to put three to four words together.

By 3 years: concentrating for longer; playing imaginatively and with others; understanding questions and describing words such as big/little, hot/cold, colours, up/in/under; putting four to seven words together. Speech is clear around 75 per cent of the time.

By 4 years: speech can be understood (although there will still be a few sounds your child finds difficult); able to join in conversations using lengthy sentences.

You may wish to see a therapist if your child finds it difficult to do any of the following:

- listen or concentrate
- follow instructions or questions
- use words or sentences
- say words clearly
- talk smoothly (without stammering)

How do I make an appointment?

You can call us directly. Or you can talk to your health visitor, GP or your child's nursery or school and they can make a referral for you. When we receive the referral we will write to you to offer an appointment and ask you to call us to choose a convenient time slot. We aim to offer this first appointment within six weeks. The appointment will be at a health centre (sometimes in a Children's Centre) near to where you live.

What happens during the assessment?

The therapist will ask you questions about your child's development – what you feel they are good at and what they find more difficult.

It's important that your child feels as comfortable as possible so the therapist will ask you to play together first to see how your child plays and interacts with you. The therapist may then use pictures and toys

to look in a bit more detail at what your child understands and how they express themselves.

What happens next?

The therapist will spend some time talking with you about your child's communication strengths and needs and share ideas and strategies which you can use at home. The therapist will then write a report and send you a copy. The support offered will depend on your child's needs and may include:

Parent-child interaction therapy

Play is a great opportunity for children to practice communicating as they learn best when they are having fun. You will work closely with the therapist to think about things you can do while playing to develop your child's communication skills.

Language groups

Your child will be part of a group and will participate in fun activities to develop communication skills (e.g. taking turns, following instructions, using words or sentences).

Speech sound sessions

Your child will play games which help them to think about different speech sounds. They will practise using the sounds they find more difficult.