

Contact

If you have any questions, please call a member of the team or you can email us at whh-tr.IslingtonEarlyYearsSLT@nhs.net

We are based at:

The Northern Health Centre

580 Holloway Road
N7 6LB
Tel: 020 3316 1897

River Place Health Centre

Essex Road
N1 2DE
Tel: 020 3316 8475

Patient advice and liaison service (PALS)

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

If you need a large print, audio or translated copy of this leaflet please email whh-tr.patient-information@nhs.net.

We will try our best to meet your needs.



Early Years Speech and Language Therapy

Information for parents/carers

[Twitter.com/WhitHealth](https://twitter.com/WhitHealth)
[Facebook.com/WhittingtonHealth](https://facebook.com/WhittingtonHealth)

Whittington Health NHS Trust
Magdala Avenue
London
N19 5NF
Phone: 020 7272 3070
www.whittington.nhs.uk

Date published: 31/05/2023
Review date: 31/05/2025
Ref: CYP/EYSLTIANDS/EYSLT/02

© Whittington Health
Please recycle



When would my child 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 always easy. Speech and language difficulties are very common.

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

By 2 years: understanding a wide range of words; using at least 50 different words and starting to put 2 words together. Speech is clear around 50% of the time.

By 2½ years: understanding simple instructions without you pointing or showing what you mean; putting 3 or 4 words together; showing simple pretend play

By 3 years: concentrating for longer; playing imaginatively and with others; understanding longer instructions, questions and some describing words, e.g. big/little, hot or colours; putting 5 or 6 words together. Speech is clear around 75% of the time

By 4 years: speech is widely understood (although there may still be some sounds your child finds difficult); able to join in back and forth conversations using lengthy sentences.

You can find more information about communication milestones here:

[Speech and Language UK](#)

Your child may benefit from Speech and Language Therapy if they are finding it difficult to:

- follow instructions or questions
- use words or sentences
- say words clearly
- communicate confidently with others

How does my child get referred?

You can call us directly. Or you can talk to your health visitor or your child's nursery, and they can make the referral with you. Once a referral is accepted, we will write to you to offer an initial telephone consultation and ask you to call us to book a time. We aim to offer this first telephone appointment within 6 weeks.

During the telephone consultation, the therapist will ask you questions about your child – their health, general development, experience of nursery or other groups and also what you feel they are good at and what they find more difficult.

After the telephone consultation, if an assessment is required, another appointment will be booked for you and your child to attend together. We will offer you an appointment at the health centre closest to where you live.

What happens during the assessment?

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

Then, the therapist will carry out a play-based assessment using a variety of toys and pictures, to look in more detail at your child's:

- Attention/listening skills
- Play and interaction skills
- Understanding
- Speaking
- Speech sounds

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. After the session the therapist will send you a report and also send a copy to the Health Visitor, GP and nursery, if your child attends one. Having the right support at home and throughout the day at nursery is really important.

For some children this may be all they need. Others may need further support from Speech and Language Therapy in order to help them make progress. The support offered will depend on your child's age and their needs.

For more information and ideas of how you can support your child's speech and language development:

- [Early Years SLT website](#)
- [Start4Life](#)
- [Tiny Happy People](#)