

## **Community Therapies Service – North Lincolnshire SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPY EARLY YEARS REFERRAL TOOL**

The checklists have been adapted from the Bristol Surveillance of Children's Communication (BRISC) package which was devised by Speech and Language Therapists as a screening tool to help enable other professionals/early years practitioners to identify children in need of referral. The checklists have been informed by information from the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) document, the Every Child A Talker (ECAT) programme and the Healthy Child Programme.

The **Early Years Referral Tool** aims to:

- Be easy to administer
- Give a reasonable amount of detail
- Allow room for flexibility
- Be appropriate to use at different ages to allow monitoring of a child's skills if necessary, not just a one off screen.

**IT is NOT a universal development check** – for general developmental information please refer to the EYFS Early Communication and Language Guidance (Appendix 1).

### **Using the Checklists**

There are checklists to cover the following ages:

- 18 months
- 2 years
- 2½ years
- 3 years
- 3½ - 4 years

Use the checklist that is closest in age to the child you are seeing.

## **Referral**

If you have concerns about a child's speech and language development you will need to share these concerns with the parent/carer and complete a referral tool checklist with them.

Once the checklist is completed, refer to the **Action Guidelines** (at the end of each checklist) to highlight areas of concern. This section contains a list of **Possible Causes for Concern** to act as a guide/to support discussions with parents.

Referral is indicated when there is a **pattern** of 'Causes for Concern':

- Eg. If, at 2 years, the child's understanding, play and attention skills are good but s/he is only using about 15 single words (but making progress), then the overall pattern of development is encouraging and a follow-up check would be advised rather than an immediate referral to Speech and Language Therapy.
  
- If a child's completed checklist shows all or almost all 'YES' responses then referral is unlikely to be indicated.
  
- If the checklist shows a pattern of 'NO' responses or 'NO' and 'UNSURE' responses then consider the 'Action Guidelines'.

It is recommended that a referral is made if the parents are very anxious, even if this is not supported by the checklist evidence. Also referral should be made if the parent expresses any concern or doubt about a child's ability to understand what is said to them.

The checklist can be copied for the child's notes. If referral is made then a copy of the checklist **MUST** be attached to the referral form.