

The North Lincolnshire Speech and Language Toolkit Introduction

- **This resource is provided for staff working in North Lincolnshire Schools.**
- **School staff should complete the free toolkit training session before using the toolkit**
- **Please contact the children's therapy department to arrange your free training session**
01724 203755
nlg-tr.NLChildrensTherapyTeam@nhs.net

Please note that this is an abridged version of the original toolkit and may contain some curriculum and other references that are now out of use.

Speech and Language Toolkit

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1. Introduction

1.1 Communication for learning and life

“The ability to communicate is an essential life skill for all children and young people in the 21st century. It is at the core of all social interaction. With strong communication skills, children can engage and thrive. Without them children will struggle to learn, achieve, make friends and interact with the world around them.” John Bercow MP 2008

Communication and Interaction is one of the most important skills a child needs for learning. Their oral language skills in particular have a very significant role within the learning environment of the classroom. Successful communication is central to a child’s learning; however the Bercow review of speech language and communication services to children and young people found that:

- Approximately 7 per cent of 5 year-olds or nearly 40,000 children going into school in 2007 in England had significant difficulties with speech and/or language.
- Approximately 1 per cent of 5 year-olds or more than 5,500 children going into school in 2007 in England had the most severe and complex speech, language and communication needs.

“Our review has found that these essential life skills are too low a priority in education and the health service. This is severely hampering children’s ability to learn, achieve, participate in and contribute to society. Furthermore, speech and language impairments were not always distinguished from the far more prevalent speech and language delays which resulted in either no intervention taking place or the wrong help being provided. This affects not only the individual child, but also his or her family, peers, teachers, communities & society as a whole.”

In North Lincolnshire, Speech and Language Therapy and Education Services have been working together to help improve the services that the children and young people receive. In order to better meet the needs of this growing population of children with delayed communication skills, this toolkit has been developed by local Speech and Language Therapists alongside colleagues in Education Services. It aims to help support schools to recognise communication difficulties and have practical strategies to use within the classroom, in small groups and to support some individual children.

The toolkit is user friendly and has 8 main sections which are laid out in a similar format. It is designed so that a busy teacher/teaching assistant can access the relevant section quickly and will be signposted to the areas or skills that need to be worked on. Training is available upon request to facilitate schools in implementing the toolkit.

This toolkit aims to improve access to the curriculum for all children and significantly improve standards for children within our schools in North Lincolnshire. It will help to ensure that children receive support with any communication difficulty quickly and that strategies used will help them overcome their communication difficulties.

Speech and Language Therapy
North Lincolnshire

1.2 The Aim of the Toolkit

The Toolkit aims to provide valuable information to help schools provide strategies and activities for children with impoverished language and speech sound skills.

Up to 10% of all children have a long term 'persistent' communication disability whereas upwards of 50% of children on school entry have more 'transient' difficulties. These transient difficulties may include some of the following:

- unclear speech
- small range of vocabulary
- sentence length shorter than would be expected for age
- able to understand only simple instructions

This 'transient' group of children given the right conditions and support will go on to catch up with their peer group and have the appropriate skills to support their learning in the classroom. The toolkit aims to support this 'transient' group of children to help develop their language and/or speech skills within the child's own familiar environment.

All schools are receiving this toolkit and will have equal access to the training and Speech and Language Therapy support, this ensures equal access for **all** children in North Lincolnshire.

It will allow teachers/TAs to have quick and easy access to strategies and activities to help them support the communication needs of children in school and then refer the children who have more persistent problems to Speech and Language Therapy.

The toolkit is **not** in any way a replacement for
Speech and Language Therapy.

1.3 The North Lincolnshire Children's Therapy Team

Speech and Language Therapy is one of four services that make up the Children's Therapy Team in North Lincolnshire, alongside Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, and Nutrition and Dietetics. All 4 services can be contacted at the address below.

Our team of Speech and Language Therapists and Assistant Practitioners work across three main areas:

- early years
- mainstream schools
- special education needs and disability (early years and special schools)

We work in a range of locations, including:

- Mainstream and special schools
- Community Clinics
- Other Provisions e.g. Child Development Centre (CDC), Hospital Inpatient Wards
- Pre-school Settings
- Children's homes

Therapists work in schools with children who have a speech and/or language difficulty. Providing a school based service has many advantages including:

- Less time out of school for children who have been travelling to clinics
- Children seen in their own familiar environment
- More convenient for parents/schools
- Easier access to children/parents who are unable to travel to clinics
- Following national guidance on taking services to patients
- More opportunity to work collaboratively with teachers and teaching assistants

Contact details

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Scunthorpe
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Email: nlg-tr.NLChildrensTherapyTeam@nhs.net

2 Mainstream schools service

2.1 Using the toolkit

Any child that a school has a concern about should be screened via the toolkit. Areas of difficulty can be identified and targets and strategies set. Documentation is included in your toolkit to help record any work carried out with individual or groups of children.

We provide training on how to use the toolkit free of charge and strongly recommend that all staff who are involved access this training. Please ask your school's speech and language therapist for further details of this and other training available.

Diagram 2 shows how the toolkit can be used to support schools prior to referral to speech and language therapy.

The toolkit is not attempting to take the place of therapy but is a selection of activities that can help promote speech and language development. It is known that in developing these underlying skills it can help some children overcome their speech and language difficulties.

It is important to review the targets set for a child and to monitor their progress over at least a term. As the child makes progress, you can use the toolkit to set further targets.

Sometimes, children may not progress at the rate expected by staff and factors such as checking the activities are at the right level or are delivery on a regular basis.

Children who are not making expected progress or have significant needs should be discussed with the SENCO and raised at the school's communication team meetings. Evidence of work already carried out in school with the child will be used to help make this decision.

Mainstream schools service
Using the toolkit to identify and support
speech and language needs in school

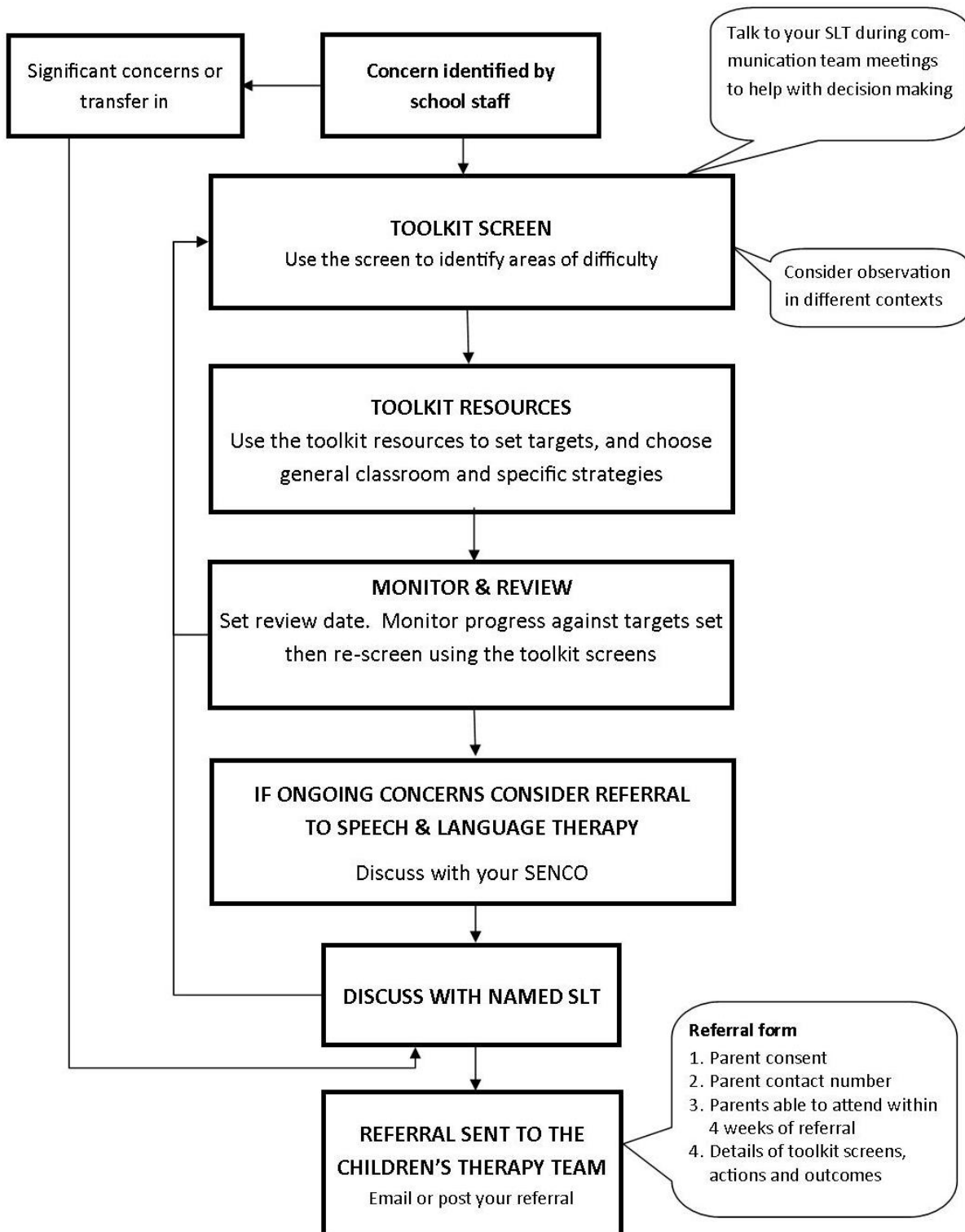


DIAGRAM 2

2.2 Setting Targets

It is important to use the toolkit to assess the child's difficulties and find a baseline for the skills that need boosting. Each section of the toolkit has a diagram to show you which underlying skills are needed and these should also be checked to ensure they are in place before working on higher level tasks.

It is best to have only one or two specific strategies or targets for SLT for any child at any given time. It is easier to focus on one or two strategies or targets and achieve these rather attempt to do too much and confuse the child and not show any measureable improvements.

Strategies or targets set should be written and a record kept of the work/sessions undertaken. This evidence will then be used to support any referral that needs to be made at a later time.

If you are unsure of what strategies or targets to set following your screening of a child then discuss with the SENCo, member of staff who has had additional training on the toolkit or the SLT at a communication team meeting.

2.3 Involving parents

Parents have an important role to play in supporting targets and programmes when the child is not in school and it is important that links with parents are supported and maintained.

Once a child is referred to the service, therapists will invite parents to attend sessions in school when they are seeing individual children. For children who are working on the toolkit in school prior to referral it is important to make parents aware of school's concerns about their child's speech and language skills. It is a good idea, when possible, to get parents to help support the strategies or activities being carried out in school.

This can be done by:

- Inviting parents into school to discuss both your and their concerns about any speech and language difficulties and have ongoing meetings to discuss progress.
- A School/Home liaison book can be used to share information on what to do and share feedback on how the child has managed with the targets within different environments
- Sending some Tasks/Activities home over the weekend as 'homework' to help with continuity when the child is not in school

It is important that school and parents/carers work together to develop speech and language skills as the child needs to learn to use the skills in different situations, environments and with different people

2.4 Making a referral

If, after working with the toolkit, you feel that the child needs a referral to the Speech and Language Therapy Service, complete the referral form and send them to us.

3.0 Communication skills

When working with a child it is important to look beyond the presenting difficulty in order to get to the root cause. This diagram shows that communication is like balancing many balls with each dependent on the other. This model is used throughout the following sections. An alternative model is provided on the following page.

