

## Identifying children and young people with speech, language and communication needs

You may already be aware of how many children have identified SLCN in your setting or school, but we know that there are lots of children who slip through the net.

This information sheet gives you three simple steps<sup>1</sup> to help identify children who might have SLCN in your class, tutor group or setting. It also signposts you to lots more helpful resources and information.

### Step 1

Look at all the pupils in your class. Use these top tips for spotting SLCN:

Talking	Listening and understanding	Interaction
<p>Are difficult to understand</p> <p>Are very quiet</p> <p>Use single words and/or short sentences. Older children who struggle to put their thoughts into words.</p> <p>Find it difficult to retell a story</p>	<p>Struggle to listen</p> <p>Are slow or last to respond</p> <p>Don't respond at all, or respond incorrectly/ unexpectedly</p>	<p>Are isolated</p> <p>Do not play or interact well with adults and peers</p> <p>Have poor listening, eye contact, turn-taking etc.</p> <p>Get frustrated easily</p>

SLCN is often known as a 'hidden difficulty' as it can be tricky to spot. Children and young people with SLCN may also not be making expected progress, and may display challenging behaviour.

Think which children/young people you are concerned about.

### Step 2

Look at these children in a bit more detail - talk to other staff who know these children well.

Think what you would expect for the age of the child/young person. You can use:

- Posters showing the stages of language development in [primary](#) and [secondary](#) school.
- [Universally speaking](#): booklets which describe what to expect at different ages.
- Use the progress checker on [www.talkingpoint.org](http://www.talkingpoint.org) for up to age 11

Try out some classroom approaches. There are lots of good ideas here

<https://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/resources/resources/resources-for-practitioners/consortium-catalogue.aspx> .

<sup>1</sup> These steps were developed and used by The Communication Trust in the *Talk of the Town* Project  
<https://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/projects/talk-of-the-town/>

## Step 3

Look at pupils who are still causing concern.

Use The Communication Trust [progression tools](#), or one of the tools on our factsheet at [www.bercow10.com/resources](http://www.bercow10.com/resources) to find out more. Your local speech and language therapy team may have a good checklist.

This should tell you what level of support children need.

## Next step

If you are still concerned, talk to your SENCo about making a referral to specialist services e.g. speech and language therapy. Talk to parents who may be able to tell you more about how the child's speech, language and communication.

The Communication Trust have produced a useful free resource about identifying children with SLCN [www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/projects/identifyingslcn](http://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/projects/identifyingslcn) and about [making effective referrals](#).