

Halton Specialist Speech and Language Therapy Service

Referral Criteria and Guideline

Child aged 2 ½ to 3 years (30-36 months)

	Attention and listening	Understanding Language	Expressive language	Speech sounds	Interaction & play
Refer if...	<p><i>NB: Must also have difficulties in at least two other areas of speech and language development, e.g., Understanding Language and social skills.</i></p> <p>Child does not turn to their name / other sounds in house.</p> <p>Unable to concentrate on a task of their own choosing.</p> <p>It is very difficult for an adult to direct the child.</p>	<p>Unable to follow any two-word level instructions e.g. where mummy’s shoes, find <u>teddy’s nose</u>.</p> <p>Not understanding action words e.g. running, jumping</p>	<p>Unable to use simple word combinations e.g. “my ball”/ “me want that” / “daddy wash”.</p> <p>Using single words only</p> <p><u>Dysfluency</u> (stammering)</p> <p>High level of parental anxiety and child showing awareness and struggle/tension e.g. by blinking, facial tension or foot tapping</p>	<p>Not able to use p, b, m, n, t, d, w sounds (even when copying an adult)</p> <p>Unintelligible most of the time, to familiar adults</p>	<p>Does not imitate actions of adults/peers e.g. action rhymes</p> <p>Not interested in others’ play, always plays alone and doesn’t tolerate peers playing alongside.</p> <p>Doesn’t show affection and concern for people who are special to them.</p>

<u>Action needed if between 'R' and 'G'</u>	Access <u>2-3 years - Speech and Language UK: Changing young lives</u>		Access <u>Speech sounds - Speech and Language UK: Changing young lives</u>		
Good (no concerns)	<p>Able to attend to activity for a few minutes (4-6 minutes) and turn when their name is called.</p> <p>Can sit for a familiar story and/or songs.</p> <p>Can find it difficult staying involved in group activities</p>	<p>Consistently following a range of two-word instructions e.g., make <u>teddy jump</u>, give <u>mummy the book</u>, find the <u>big spoon</u>.</p> <p>Beginning to show understanding of three-word instructions e.g., give <u>teddy the big ball</u>.</p> <p>Developing concepts such as 'big/little'</p>	<p>Using 2–4-word utterances Misses out little words e.g. is, on, the.</p> <p>May have some repetitions of initial sounds e.g. b, b, b, ball, or whole words</p>	<p>Will still use a limited range of sounds and may not use sounds such as k, g, f, s, sh, ch, l, and r.</p> <p>Likely to shorten longer or difficult words e.g., poon for spoon, nana for banana.</p> <p>Familiar adults will usually know what they are saying but not always clear.</p>	<p>Shares and cooperates with others with some adult support.</p> <p>Starting to use pretend play e.g. using a pan for a hat.</p> <p>Initiates interaction with familiar adults and beginning to start interaction with peers.</p>

Child aged 3 to 3.5 years

	Attention and listening	Understanding Language	Expressive language	Speech sounds	Interaction & play
Refer if...	Unable to listen or pay attention even in 1:1 or small group settings with adult support.	Unable to follow 2 key word instructions e.g. 'give the <u>spoon</u> to <u>teddy</u> ' / 'make the <u>dinosaur</u> <u>sleep</u> '.	Only using single words (not joining words together) Not using the right words, e.g., saying "dog" instead of "teddy". Dysfluency Frequently repeating initial sounds of words or whole words throughout a sentence, e.g., m-m-m-m-mummy, can, can we g-g-g-go to the park.	Not able to use p, b, m, n, t, d, w sounds. Unintelligible most of the time to familiar adults.	Struggles to play co-operatively or take turns with adults or other children. Repetitive features in play. Overuse of learnt phrases or repeating lines from favourite films.
Action needed if between 'R' and 'G'		Access 3-4 years - Speech and Language UK: Changing young lives	Access Talk Halton: Information on spotting child concerns		
Good (no concerns)	Able to listen to others. Can shift attention to a different task and back to previous task	Beginning to follow 3 key word instructions e.g. 'put the <u>cup</u> <u>under</u> the <u>table</u> '. Beginning to understand concepts such as size e.g.	Using two, three four-word phrases e.g. my ball, me want that, daddy wash face May be beginning to use more complex sentences.	Some errors with 'k', 'g', 'f', 'v', 's', 'z'. Many longer or more difficult words will be shortened e.g. 'pider' for	They show sensitivity to others' needs and feelings. Can form positive relationships with adults and other children.

	<p>although they may need help.</p> <p>Can focus on an activity of their own choice for approximately 5 minutes.</p>	<p>big/little and position e.g. in/on/under.</p> <p>Understands some simple questions using who? where? what?</p>	<p>May not be clear.</p> <p>May have some repetitions of initial sounds e.g. b-b-ball or single words at the start of a sentence</p>	<p>'spider', 'nana' for 'banana'</p> <p>Familiar adults can generally understand child.</p>	<p>Keeps play going by responding to what others are saying or doing.</p> <p>Sequencing play and moving to small world toys.</p>

Child aged 3.5 to 4 years

	Attention and listening	Understanding Language	Expressive language	Speech sounds	Interaction & play
Refer if...	Unable to listen or pay attention even in 1:1 or small group settings with adult support.	Unable to follow any 3 key word instructions e.g., 'put the <u>cup</u> <u>under</u> the <u>table</u> '. Does not show understanding of concepts such as size e.g., big/little and position e.g. in/on/under.	Only using single words (not joining words together) Not using the right words, e.g. saying "dog" instead of "teddy". <u>Dysfluency</u> Frequently repeating initial sounds of words or whole words throughout a sentence e.g. m-m-m-m-mummy, can, can we g-g-g-go to the park.	Not able to use p, b, m, n, t, d, w sounds. Unintelligible most of the time to familiar adults.	Struggles to play cooperatively or take turns with adults or other children. Repetitive features in play. Overuse of learnt phrases or repeating lines from favourite films.
Action needed if between 'R' and 'G'	Access <u>Talk Halton: Information on spotting child concerns</u>	Access <u>3-4 years - Speech and Language UK: Changing young lives</u> <u>Talk Halton: Information on spotting child concerns</u>	Access <u>Talk Halton: Information on spotting child concerns</u>	Access <u>Speech sounds - Speech and Language UK: Changing young lives</u> <u>Talk Halton: Information on spotting child concerns</u>	Access <u>Talk Halton: Information on spotting child concerns</u>

<p>Good (no concerns)</p>	<p>Able to listen to others.</p> <p>Can shift attention to a different task and back to previous task.</p> <p>Can focus on an activity of their own choice for 5-10 minutes.</p>	<p>Starting to follow longer instructions e.g. 'Put the <u>cup</u> and <u>fork</u> <u>under</u> the <u>table</u>.'</p> <p>Can understand concepts such as size and position.</p> <p>Understand simple questions using who? where? what?</p>	<p>Using three, four, five-word phrases e.g. 'where daddy gone' / 'I want big ball'.</p> <p>May be beginning to use more complex sentences.</p> <p>May have some repetitions of initial sounds e.g. b-b-ball or single words at the start of a sentence.</p>	<p>Some errors with 'k', 'g', 'f', 'v', 's', 'z'.</p> <p>Many longer or more difficult words will be shortened e.g. 'pider' for 'spider', 'nana' for 'banana'.</p> <p>Familiar adults can generally understand child.</p>	<p>Shows sensitivity to others' needs and feelings. Can form positive relationships with adults and other children.</p> <p>Showing more imagination in play and enjoying pretend play.</p>
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Child aged 4 to 5 years

	Attention and listening	Understanding Language	Expressive language	Speech sounds	Interaction & play
Refer if...	<p>Unable to listen and do something at the same time e.g. colouring in and responding to an adult's question.</p> <p>May flit from one activity to another in rapid succession.</p>	<p>Difficulties understanding instructions containing three key words or understanding question words, e.g., who/where/ what?</p>	<p>Unable to explain what happened e.g. what happened at playtime.</p> <p>Unable to link thoughts and ideas using 'and' or 'then'.</p> <p align="center"><u>Dysfluency</u></p> <p>Stammering in connected speech</p>	<p>Using 'b' for 'f' e.g. 'fish' = 'bish'</p> <p>Using 'd' for 's' e.g. 'sun' = 'dun'</p> <p>Using 't' for 'k' and 'd' for 'g'. e.g. girl = 'dirl'</p> <p>Adults generally can't understand.</p>	<p>Unable to play with others i.e. lacks interest in playing with other children / consistently chooses to play alone.</p> <p>Struggles to take turns in groups and only talks about topics of interest to them.</p>
Action needed if between 'R' and 'G'	<p align="center">Access</p> <p align="center"><u>Talk Halton: Information on spotting child concerns</u></p>	<p align="center">Access</p> <p align="center"><u>4-5 years - Speech and Language UK: Changing young lives</u></p> <p align="center"><u>Talk Halton: Information on spotting child concerns</u></p>	<p align="center">Access</p> <p align="center"><u>Talk Halton: Information on spotting child concerns</u></p>	<p align="center">Access</p> <p align="center"><u>Speech sounds - Speech and Language UK: Changing young lives</u></p> <p align="center"><u>Talk Halton: Information on spotting child concerns</u></p>	<p align="center">Access</p> <p align="center"><u>Talk Halton: Information on spotting child concerns</u></p>
Good (no concerns)	<p>Beginning to be able to listen and do a</p>	<p>Can follow instructions involving several ideas or</p>	<p>Able to describe an event from the recent past e.g. holiday, football game.</p>	<p>Most people can understand the child, but there are still some errors with sounds e.g.,</p>	<p>Confident to talk to other children when playing.</p>

	<p>chosen activity at the same time.</p> <p>Can concentrate for up to 15 minutes on a chosen activity.</p>	<p>actions e.g. put teddy in the box and give me the plate.'</p> <p>and e.g. 'Who fell over?'</p>	<p>Can develop their own narratives and ideas by connecting ideas and events. May make some errors e.g. verb tenses.</p>	<p>'snake' becomes 'nake', 'spoon' becomes 'poon' and 'red' becomes 'wed'</p>	<p>Showing development of joke telling.</p> <p>Using language in different ways.</p>
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Child aged 5 to 7 years (Key Stage 1)

	Attention and listening	Understanding Language	Expressive language	Speech sounds	Interaction & play
Refer if...	<p>Struggles to sit and listen at carpet time and needs lots of reminders from adults to listen and attend to an activity.</p> <p>Easily distracted.</p> <p>Often needs instructions repeated.</p> <p>These difficulties should not be due to behaviour and compliance issues.</p>	<p>Not following classroom instructions (even when listening).</p> <p>Appears confused or 'lost' in the classroom.</p> <p>Appears not to know the meanings of common words.</p> <p>Often needs instructions to be simplified or broken down into chunks.</p> <p>Cannot understand "how" / "why" questions or cannot use their reasoning skills to justify and problem solve (Blank level 4 questions)</p> <p>gives answers to questions that are not expected.</p>	<p>Adult has to work hard to understand what the child means and follow the sequence of thoughts.</p> <p>Unable to learn/retain new vocabulary. Sentences often contain empty language e.g. "that" / "there"</p> <p>Unable to re-tell a sequence of events e.g. missing key facts or presenting them in the wrong order 'what happened at the weekend?'</p> <p>Immature grammar e.g. using he for she.</p> <p>Short sentences consistently used expressively.</p> <p>Unable to answer basic why questions with a "because" answer.</p>	<p>Speech is unintelligible.</p> <p>Struggling to interact verbally with peers.</p>	<p>Does not use language to make friends.</p> <p>Struggles with turn taking and or only talks about topics of interest to them.</p> <p>Unable to interpret emotions. Unable to understand and follow social rules e.g. queueing, joining in with games, interrupting, standing too close to people etc.</p> <p>Often misinterprets social situations e.g. think they are being bullied when someone has said "get out of my way"</p> <p>CAMHS might be more appropriate for children with significant social/emotional difficulties</p>

			<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Stammering</u></p> <p>If you have any concerns about a stammer / stutter please refer and see Halton's family hub page here <u>Stammering - Speech and Language UK: Changing young lives</u> for advice.</p>		
Action needed if between 'R' and 'G'	<u>Talk Halton: Information on spotting child concerns</u>	<u>5-7 years - Speech and Language UK: Changing young lives</u> <u>Talk Halton: Information on spotting child concerns</u>	<u>Talk Halton: Information on spotting child concerns</u>	<u>Speech sounds - Speech and Language UK: Changing young lives</u> <u>Talk Halton: Information on spotting child concerns</u>	<u>Talk Halton: Information on spotting child concerns</u>
Good (no concerns)		<p>Able to follow classroom instructions independently.</p> <p>Is able to respond to a sequence of instructions of 3 or more items e.g. put the pencil in the box, go to the desk and bring me your book.</p>	<p>Able to fully engage in conversation, occasional errors e.g. "mouses" / "runned"</p> <p>Can talk about a range of past/future events.</p> <p>Able to sequence ideas, retell a story, use language to reason and justify.</p>	<p>Speech is generally easy to understand.</p> <p>Occasional errors with clusters e.g. sp/ sk/ tr, 'th' / 'l' and 'r'.</p> <p>At times speech may be unclear due to volume or rate however can modify this when prompted.</p>	<p>Is using language to make friends and initiating interactions, staying on topic and showing interest with others e.g. arguing, bantering and telling jokes.</p>

				Local dialectal variations are acceptable e.g. 'fing' for thing 'dis' for this providing this does not impact spelling.	
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Child aged 7 to 11 years (Key Stage 2)

	Attention and listening	Understanding Language	Expressive language	Speech sounds	Interaction & play
Refer if...	<p>Struggles to sit and listen in whole class activities and needs lots of reminders from adults to listen and attend to an activity.</p> <p>Needs constant support and supervision to complete individual activities.</p> <p>Easily distracted.</p> <p>Often needs instructions repeated.</p> <p>These difficulties are not due to behaviour and compliance.</p>	<p>Not following classroom instructions (even when listening).</p> <p>Appears 'lost' in the classroom and relies on copying peers to understand the instructions.</p> <p>Appears not to know the meanings of common words.</p> <p>Often needs instructions to be repeated, simplified or broken down into chunks on a one-to-one level.</p> <p>Difficulty understanding WH questions including why questions.</p>	<p>Child struggles to tell you what has happened or describe a past event e.g., missing key facts or presenting them in the wrong order.</p> <p>Child struggles to sequence ideas and sentences appear jumbled. Adult has to work hard to figure out what the child means and follow the sequence of thoughts.</p> <p>Unable to learn/retain new vocabulary or takes a long time to think of words or they may use the wrong words e.g., name a cow as a dog.</p> <p>Sentences often containing empty language e.g., "that", "there" or they use a lot of language to get their point across.</p>	<p>Speech is effortful.</p> <p>People who know the child well find it difficult to understand the child most of the time.</p>	<p>Does not use language to make friends.</p> <p>Struggles with turn taking and or only talks about topics of interest to them. Unable interpret emotions.</p> <p>Unable to understand and follow social rules e.g., queueing, joining in with games, interrupting, standing too close to people etc.</p> <p>Often misinterprets social situations e.g., think they are being bullied when someone has said "get out of my way".</p>

			<p>Immature grammar e.g. using he for she.</p> <p>Short sentences consistently used expressively.</p> <p>Unable to answer basic why questions with a “because” answer.</p> <p>Not able to use language to reason / justify/reason / predict e.g. answer ‘why not?’, ‘what if?’ etc.</p> <p><u>Stammering</u> If you have any concerns about a stammer / stutter please refer and see Halton’s family hub page here <u>Stammering - Speech and Language UK: Changing young lives</u> for advice.</p>		
<u>Action needed if between ‘R’ and ‘G’</u>	<p>Access</p> <p><u>Talk Halton: Information on spotting child concerns</u></p>	<p>Access</p> <p><u>7-11 years - Speech and Language UK: Changing young lives</u></p> <p><u>Talk Halton: Information on spotting child concerns</u></p>	<p>Access</p> <p><u>Talk Halton: Information on spotting child concerns</u></p>	<p>Access</p> <p><u>Speech sounds - Speech and Language UK: Changing young lives</u></p>	<p>Access</p> <p><u>Talk Halton: Information on spotting child concerns</u></p>

				<u>Talk Halton: Information on spotting child concerns</u>	
<u>Good (no concerns)</u>	<p>Able to assimilate spoken instruction whilst engaged in appropriate classroom task.</p> <p>Able to focus on classroom-based tasks as needed.</p> <p>Beginning to be able to focus on more than one activity e.g. listening and writing at the same time.</p> <p>Beginning to be able to process new instructions while already engaged in a task.</p> <p>May not be able to sit still but are still listening and taking in information.</p>	<p>Able to follow classroom instructions independently.</p> <p>Is able to respond to a sequence of instructions of 3 or more items e.g. put the pencil in the Box and go to the desk and bring me your book.</p>	<p>Able to fully engage in conversation.</p> <p>Can talk about a range of past/future events using a clear narrative structure with key events in the right order.</p> <p>Able to describe and retell everyday events e.g. what they did at the weekend.</p> <p>Able to answer a range of questions including, 'why/how'.</p> <p>Able to learn, retain and use new vocabulary.</p>	<p>Speech is mostly intelligible.</p> <p>At times speech may be unclear due to volume or rate however can change this when prompted.</p> <p>Local dialectal variations are acceptable e.g. 'fing' for thing or 'dis' for this.</p>	<p>Is using language to make friends and extend social skills including the use of eye contact, turn taking, starting interactions, staying on topic and showing interest with others etc. e.g. arguing, bantering and telling jokes.</p> <p>Beginning to understand some non-literal language or make inferences e.g. when a teacher says "the door is open" knowing to close the door.</p> <p>May have rigid ideas about friendships and social rules e.g. my best friend is only allowed to play with me.</p>

Child aged 11 years plus

	Attention and listening	Understanding Language	Expressive language	Speech sounds	Interaction
Refer if...	<p>Cannot follow whole class instructions.</p> <p>Distracted by background noises.</p> <p>Often needs instructions repeated.</p> <p>These difficulties should not be due to behaviour and compliance issues.</p>	<p>Often needs instructions to be simplified or broken down into chunks.</p> <p>Often doesn't understand key words within a sentence.</p> <p>Unable to understand/remember topic vocabulary.</p> <p>Unable to follow the thread of a social conversation.</p>	<p>Unable to name everyday items including words relating to school life. e.g. vending machine.</p> <p>Unable to re-tell a sequence of events e.g missing key facts or presenting them in the wrong order.</p> <p>Immature grammar e.g. using he for she.</p> <p>Short sentences consistently used expressively.</p> <p>Unable to answer why / how questions</p> <p><u>Stammering</u> If you have any concerns about a stammer / stutter please refer and see Halton's family hub page here <u>Stammering - Speech and Language UK: Changing young lives</u> for advice.</p>	<p>Speech is laborious. Speech is unintelligible.</p>	<p>Unable to understand non-literal language or make inferences e.g. when a teacher says "the door is open" not knowing to close the door.</p> <p>Unable to maintain a topic of conversation which is not of their choosing.</p> <p>Unable to understand how others are feeling and unable to read/use facial expressions.</p> <p>Unable to start conversations and make and maintain friendships.</p> <p>Unable to understand and follow social rules e.g. queueing, joining in with games, interrupting, standing too close to people etc.</p> <p>Often misinterprets social situations e.g. think they are</p>

					being bullied when someone has said "get out of my way."
Action: If Red concerns, implement advice from CSLT Toolkit, access practitioner training and gather information for referral.	Access <u>Talk Halton: Information on spotting child concerns</u>	Access <u>11-14 years - Speech and Language UK: Changing young lives</u> <u>14-17 years - Speech and Language UK: Changing young lives</u> <u>Talk Halton: Information on spotting child concerns</u>	Access <u>Talk Halton: Information on spotting child concerns</u>	Access <u>Speech sounds - Speech and Language UK: Changing young lives</u> <u>Talk Halton: Information on spotting child concerns</u> Refer to audiology.	Access <u>Talk Halton: Information on spotting child concerns</u>

		<p>General Strategies to Support Children with SLCN</p> <p>Expressive Language > Activities to Develop Vocabulary, Word Finding Difficulties.</p>		<p>Discuss with student and parents.</p> <p>Is the child motivated to work on their speech?</p> <p>Who will support them? School/Home</p>	
Good (no concerns)	<p>Able to listen for long periods of time.</p> <p>Can tune out background noise and focus on the tasks.</p> <p>Can focus on more than one activity e.g. listening and writing at the same time.</p> <p>Can process new instructions while already engaged in a task.</p>	<p>Able to follow complex directions with several parts to it e.g. "take this message to the office and while you are there ask them when the fire drill is, then go straight to your next lesson"</p> <p>Understands instructions which do not follow the order of the sentence (year 9 +)</p> <p>Able to follow the thread of a social conversation between a group of people.</p>	<p>Able to use complex or technical vocabulary.</p> <p>Able to use long and complex sentences using more complex joining words e.g. 'meanwhile'.</p> <p>Can formulate questions in everyday situations. All language should be grammatically correct. e.g. using irregular past tense</p> <p>Local dialectal variations are acceptable</p>	<p>Speech is mostly intelligible.</p> <p>At times speech may be unclear due to volume or rate however can change this when prompted.</p> <p>Local dialectal variations are acceptable e.g. 'fing' for thing or 'dis' for this.</p>	<p>Able to interact appropriately with a range of people.</p> <p>Able to change interaction style to their communication partner.</p> <p>Can interpret and understand social situations appropriately.</p> <p>Able to make and keep friendships.</p>

			<p>Able to describe and retell everyday events and plots of books/films.</p> <p>Able to answer a range of questions involving complex reasoning e.g. what if, how do you know, why not etc.</p>		
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