

Communication Development Screen for under 2s

Observation schedule at 12 months

Developed by the MPFT Paediatric Speech and Language Therapy and 0-19 Teams in partnership with the Early Years teams from Staffordshire County Council and Stoke-on-Trent City Council.

Introduction

This screening tool is intended for use by nursery settings working with children around the 12 month milestone. It has been devised jointly by representatives from MPFT 0-19 Service, MPFT Speech and Language Therapy Service, Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire Local Authority Early Years teams.

The tool includes a range of observable developmental stages for early communication, based on neurotypical development. It is intended to add value to, and be used alongside, any wider knowledge of the child, observations and discussions with parents or carers.

For a fuller overview of the child you may also wish to complete the full child development tool stokespeaks.org/resources-and-downloads

Each milestone has a suggestion for how it can be observed. You can do this over a day or number of days. Make sure that your observations represent a typical day i.e. do not complete it if the child is distressed that day, has had a significant change of routine or is unwell.

Once you have completed the profile use the results to identify any areas that may need support. Suggestions for activities are attached to the document. You may also find additional activity ideas at stokespeaks.org and bbc.co.uk/tinyhappyypeople

It is essential to share any development concerns or differences with parents and carers and encourage them to implement strategies and activity ideas at home. It is also helpful to liaise with the 0-19 health team to share concerns and what actions you are taking to ensure families receive joined up support.

By 12 months		
How to check...		
Complete the screen by observing the child for a day. Make opportunities to check the skills listed using the ideas below.		
1	Watches a toy being hidden and looks for it (object permanence)	Show a toy of interest. Put it under a cloth in front of the child. Prompt 'where's it gone?' and see if the child will explore under the cloth to find the toy. Try putting the toy behind you or the child to see if they will look to find it.
2	Sustains interest for up to a minute in looking at pictures named by an adult	Sit together with the child and show them a picture book of high interest (colourful, easy to handle, bright pictures, flaps to explore). Explore the book together, turn the pages and talk about the pictures. Do they look towards the pictures you are showing for up to 1 minute? Alternatively, try looking at a photo book of familiar people or experiences the child has had and name what you see.
3	Knows how familiar objects should be used and acts this out in play e.g. tries to brush own hair with a brush	Introduce some everyday objects e.g. a cup, brush, hat, phone. Do they bring the cup to their/your mouth? Do they brush their/your hair? Do they put the hat on their/your head? Do they put the phone to their ear?
4	Shows and offers toys or objects to other people	Sit face to face with the child as they play. Show an interest in their toys. Do they hold objects out towards you to show or offer to you? Try setting up a tea party. Does the child offer you a cup, plate or food (even if they don't let you take it)? If you hold out your hand, does the child offer you a toy?
5	Joins in with give and take games e.g. rolling a ball back and forth with a familiar adult	Try sitting on the floor facing each other. Get the child's interest by showing a ball or car and saying 'ready...steady'. Roll the toy to them on 'Go'. Encourage them to roll it back as you say 'ready, steady, go'. Repeat this a few times.
6	Looks to where another person points	Point to things of interest in your surroundings. Does the child look towards where you are pointing? Try blowing some bubbles. Point to a bubble up high or behind the child. Do they turn to look? Point to the window and see if the child looks outside.

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7	Points to objects of interest then looks back to an adult for a reaction	<p>Play alongside the child following their lead and interests. Do they point out things they are interested in and look towards you to see you respond?</p> <p>Does the child point to show you new or exciting objects or people in the room?</p> <p>Try putting an exciting or noisy toy in sight but out of reach. Does the child point to show you?</p> <p>Try observing outdoors as well as indoors. Do they point out an aeroplane / bin lorry / bird etc?</p>
8	Understands everyday familiar phrases such as 'clap hands', 'no' and 'bye bye'	<p>Observe how the child responds to repeated phrases as part of your daily routine.</p> <p>If you say 'clap hands', does the child clap their hands?</p> <p>If you say 'bye bye' do they look at you, go to leave or wave a hand?</p> <p>If you say 'no' do they momentarily stop what they are doing?</p> <p>Consider how the child responds to other phrases that are part of your routine.</p>
9	Seeks to gain the attention of others to indicate their wants non-verbally e.g. reaching, puts arms up when wanting to be picked up	<p>Observe the child when they are with their parents, other children and practitioners. Do they try to get other people's attention to ask for things?</p> <p>Can the child show you what they want through their actions or gestures?</p> <p>Try holding a toy or item of high interest in sight of the child but while looking away. Do they gain your attention and indicate they want the item?</p> <p>Do they put both arms up to you or parents to request being lifted?</p> <p>Do they put their hands up to say stop?</p> <p>Do they reach or open and close their hand to ask for something you are holding?</p>
10	Takes turns in 'conversations', babbling back to an adult or copying playful sounds e.g. 'uh oh!'	<p>Follow the child's lead and join in with their play.</p> <p>Make playful sounds related to the play and leave pauses. Does the child respond by making sounds back to you?</p> <p>Copy any sounds the child makes. Do they notice and respond back to you by babbling in a 'conversation'?</p>

By 12 months		
How to help...		
Use the suggested strategies and activity ideas below to work on identified areas of communication with the child, or a group of children.		
1	Watches a toy being hidden and looks for it (object permanence)	<p>Play peek-a-boo or 'ready steady boo!' using a thin scarf or cloth. Hide your face for a few seconds then remove the scarf saying 'peek-a-boo!' Allow the child to remove the cloth to reveal your face as you say 'boo!' Extend this activity by taking turns to hide your face with the child or peeking out behind different objects.</p> <p>Play hide and seek with the child's favourite toys. Hide the toy in front of the child e.g. under a box or blanket, then look for it together. Use simple language e.g. 'where's the ball' 'there's the ball'. Extend the hide and seek game to include a number of toys hiding in boxes, under cups, inside pillow cases and under blankets.</p> <p>Share books with pop-ups or flaps with the child. Open the flaps to reveal the hidden pictures. Name what you find. Be animated and excited. Close the flaps to hide the object again. Allow the child to explore the flaps, revealing the hidden pictures themselves. Use simple language 'hello Spot!' 'Bye Spot!'</p> <p>(A 'peek-a-boo' activity and 'hiding and finding a toy' activity can be found at stokespeaks.org/activities. A 'scarves' activity can be found in the Time to Listen intervention).</p>
2	Sustains interest for up to a minute in looking at pictures named by an adult	<p>Make a photo book including pictures of the child's family, friends, pets or children at nursery. Cuddle up with the child and talk about who you can see.</p> <p>Make your own simple topic books using pictures of the child's favourite things e.g. tractors or animals. Make these available in the book corner, or put them out alongside related toys. Sit alongside the child and talk about the pictures.</p> <p>Take photographs during experiences with the child e.g. during a walk, or encourage parents to share photos of the child's experiences with you. Make a display of the photos, putting them at the child's height. Talk about the pictures together.</p> <p>Choose books which will capture the child's attention (colourful, easy to handle, bright pictures, flaps to explore). Explore the books together, turn the pages and talk about the pictures. Make this a regular part of your daily routine.</p>

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3	<p>Knows how familiar objects should be used and acts this out in play e.g. try to brush own hair with a brush</p>	<p>Collect some everyday objects e.g. a hat, spoon, hairbrush, toothbrush, key, cup, towel, phone and blanket. Allow the child to explore the real objects. Pretend to use the objects yourself e.g. put the empty cup up to your mouth. Give the child chance to copy you. Extend this activity by introducing the child's favourite teddy. Use the objects on the teddy and act out familiar routines e.g. covering teddy with a blanket. Give the child chance to copy you.</p> <p>Allow the child to join in and copy your actions as part of the routine throughout the day e.g. give them a brush to help you sweep the floor or a cloth to help wipe the table.</p> <p>Set up activities where the child, or a small group, can pretend to carry out everyday actions e.g. use sponges and buckets of water to clean the toy cars outside or fill a basket with towels then put them in the washing machine.</p> <p>Ensure the child has access to everyday real objects and pretend play opportunities throughout the day e.g. have pans, wooden spoons, bowls, brushes etc. available in the mud kitchen or home corner. Model how to use the items.</p> <p>(A 'pretend play' activity can be found at stokespeaks.org/activities).</p>
4	<p>Shows and offers toys or objects to other people</p>	<p>Introduce a highly engaging toy e.g. that moves or flashes. Activate the toy and hold it up to show the child. Offer the toy to the child and allow them to explore. Pause to allow them to share their interest with you by showing you the toy. Hold your hand out after a short time to encourage the child to offer the toy back to you.</p> <p>Get down on the floor and sit opposite the child. Follow their lead and join in with their play. Hold up toys and objects of interest. Offer a toy to the child and pause to allow them to take it. Wait to see if they will show or offer a toy back to you. Hold out an open hand at times to encourage them to pass the object back.</p> <p>Put a few objects or toys in a feely bag. Sit with a small group of children. Take an object from the bag and show it to the children. Name what you found. Offer the object to the first child and help them to pass it round the group. Encourage each child in turn to take something from the bag, show it to their friends and offer it round the circle.</p> <p>(A 'giving and taking' activity can be found at stokespeaks.org/activities).</p>

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5	Joins in with give and take games e.g. rolling a ball back and forth with a familiar adult	<p>Play give and take with a teddy or doll. You hold/cuddle the teddy and say whose turn it is 'Jane's teddy'. Pause then hand the teddy to the child 'Poppy's teddy'. Take turns passing the teddy back and forth.</p> <p>Use a ball or toy car to roll along. Say 'ready steady...go' and roll the toy to the child. Help the child to roll the toy back to you as you say 'ready steady...go'. If they need a bit of help at first, show them what to do by placing your hands over theirs. Repeat this with different toys, sending them back and forth e.g. a ball of playdough or a toy train.</p> <p>Use a shaker or musical instrument. Shake/play the instrument briefly then hand it to the child to copy. Pass the shaker/instrument back and forth. Use simple language 'Jane's turn...shake shake' 'Poppy's turn...shake shake'.</p> <p>Tap a balloon back and forth with the child.</p> <p>A 'giving and taking' activity can be found at stokespeaks.org/activities. A 'ball call' activity can be found in the Time to Listen intervention).</p>
6	Looks to where another person points	<p>Sit face to face with the child. Point to yours and the child's body parts and name them. Pause for the child to look where you point.</p> <p>Sing nursery rhymes that encourage pointing e.g. wind the bobbin up or heads, shoulders, knees and toes.</p> <p>Share a bright picture book with the child. Point to pictures on the page naming what you see. Leave pauses after you point to allow the child to follow your point and look back at you to hear the word.</p> <p>Put an exciting toy on a shelf when the child is not looking. Direct the child's attention to the toy by pointing to it. Use simple words e.g. 'Poppy look' as your point. When you are both looking at the same item, bring the toy down and play together.</p> <p>Blow bubbles around the room. Direct the child's attention to bubbles they haven't seen by pointing to them.</p> <p>Spend time outside, pointing out and naming things in the environment e.g. aeroplanes, birds, flowers, trucks, shadows. Stay close to the child to help encourage their joint attention.</p> <p>Pay attention to the things the child enjoys looking at in the environment. Get close and point out the things they like, naming them.</p>

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7	Points to objects of interest then looks back to an adult for a reaction	<p>Put an exciting toy out of reach but in sight of the child. Stay close and wait for the child to show you the toy and look back at you. Model pointing if they don't do this themselves.</p> <p>Have another practitioner do an engaging activity in sight of the child but at a distance e.g. blowing bubbles, pouring water or squirting foam on the other side of a window. Stay close to the child and pause for them to show you what's happening and look back for your reaction. Respond positively and model pointing before joining the activity.</p> <p>Turn off the lights and use torches or sensory lights to make patterns on the walls and ceiling. Point to the shapes and pause for the child to point and look back to you.</p> <p>Share a favourite book with the child. Allow them to take the lead and show you what they are interested in. Name what they point to. You can point to what they are looking at if they don't do this themselves. Leave lots of pauses for the child to look back at you, showing joint attention.</p> <p>Use a hand puppet to get the child's attention. Be animated and fun with the puppet. Make the puppet disappear and reappear or do silly actions. Leave pauses for the child to point and look back at you to show they are interested in what's happening. Model pointing to the puppet if they do not point themselves.</p>
8	Understands everyday familiar phrases such as 'clap hands', 'no' and 'bye bye'	<p>Use actions and gestures alongside the words you use regularly as part of your day e.g. wave when you say 'hello/goodbye', hold your hand up when you say 'stop', raise both open hands when you say 'all gone' and shake your head when you say 'no' etc.</p> <p>Repeat the same words over and over as part of your routine e.g. when tidying up the toys say 'bye bye ball' 'bye bye car' while waving. When greeting the children say 'hello Poppy. 'hello Ali' etc. When snack is finished say 'apple gone' 'grapes gone' etc.</p> <p>Help the child to understand by demonstrating (showing them) if they are not sure what to do e.g. when you say 'clap hands' do the action yourself or gently hold hands and do it together.</p> <p>Sing songs and nursery rhymes which have actions as part of your daily routine e.g. if you're happy and you know it.</p> <p>(A number of activities in the Time to Listen intervention include action rhymes and simple repetitive phrases e.g. 'hello' 'bye bye' 'shake and stop' 'ready steady go').</p>

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9	<p>Seeks to gain the attention of others to indicate their wants non-verbally e.g. reaching, puts arms up when wanting to be picked up</p>	<p>Avoid anticipating the child's wants and needs too quickly throughout the day i.e. don't immediately pick them up, hand them their favourite toy or top up their drink before they have chance to communicate.</p> <p>Play a social game e.g. tickles or bounces on your knee. Pause during the game and wait for the child to indicate they want more.</p> <p>'Forget' an item that the child needs as part of the familiar routine, e.g. give them a cup but forget their drink.</p> <p>Introduce a toy to the child that they need your help to operate e.g. a wind up toy or a pot of bubbles with a tight lid. Wait for the child to gain your attention and indicate they want your help to access the toy. You can do something similar by putting a motivating toy in a clear box they can't open.</p> <p>Play 'ready steady go' games e.g. bubbles, releasing balloons round the room, pop-up toys, dropping balls down a tube etc. Say 'ready steady...' and pause to allow the child to indicate they want you to start the activity in some way. Interpret reaching, pointing, an action or sound positively and say 'Go!'</p> <p>(A 'ready steady go' activity can be found at stokespeaks.org/activities. A range of ready steady go activities can be found in the Time to Listen intervention).</p>
10	<p>Takes turns in 'conversations', babbling back to an adult or copying playful sounds e.g. 'uh oh!'</p>	<p>Sit face to face with the child as you play and talk. Copy their babble or any sounds they make. Pause for them to notice and respond back to you with more sounds. After a few back and forth exchanges, vary the sounds you make and see if this child can copy you.</p> <p>Sit or lie with the child in front of a mirror. Make funny faces and sounds and see if the child watches and copies you.</p> <p>Make 'mistakes' when you are playing or interacting with the child e.g. knock over a tower of bricks, make teddy fall off the chair or drop something. Say 'uh-oh!', pausing for the child to copy.</p> <p>Make lots of 'symbolic sounds' or sound effects while playing with the child e.g. animal sounds (moo, baa, quack), transport sounds (choo-choo, beep, nee-nah) and environmental sounds (whee, bang, crash, pop) etc.</p> <p>Use sounds related to yours and the child's feelings e.g. 'mmm' when eating, 'aah' when having a cuddle, 'oww' when in pain.</p>

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		<p>Introduce a familiar toy or picture which has a related symbolic sound. Use an animated voice to introduce the item e.g. 'It's a snake. He says' Pause for the child to attempt to say the sound at the end of the phrase. If they don't, you say it for them, leaving a pause to give chance for them to copy. Repeat this a few times so they learn the expected sound to make.</p> <p>Sing nursery rhymes that include lots of sounds e.g. old Macdonald, wheels on the bus. When the child is familiar with a song, leave pauses as you sing to give them chance to take a turn and fill in the word or sound.</p> <p>Share out some playdoh between you and the child. Make sounds and funny noises as you both play with the dough e.g. 'splat' 'roll' 'poke' 'squash' 'squeeze' 'yuk' 'wow'. Pause for the child to make their own sounds or to copy you.</p>
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Other useful resources:

stokespeaks.org

bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people/activities