Siarad Gyda Fi
Talk With Me

Supporting the Development of Speech, Language and Communication in the Early Years

Section 2:
Guidance for 0 - 18 months

OGL © Crown copyright 2023 WG48480 Digital ISBN 978-1-83504-699-9

Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg hefyd / This document is also available in Welsh

Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth a galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg / We welcome correspondence and telephone calls in Welsh

Supporting the Development of Speech, Language and Communication in the Early Years

Section 2: Guidance for 0 - 18 months

Overview Pages:

Attention & Listening.....17
Play & Interaction.....18
Understanding Spoken Language.....19
Using Spoken Language.....20
Speech.....21

Talk with Me Poster.....23

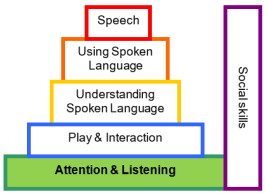
Developmental Sequences and Suggested Activities:

Attention & Listening.....24
Play & Interaction.....28
Understanding Spoken Language.....32
Using Spoken Language.....36
Speech.....40

Throughout this guidance, references have been made to the typical development of SLC. It is important to support the child at their *developmental stage* rather than their age.

Attention and Listening

0 – 18 months



Attention and listening skills are the foundation of speech, language and communication. Children need to develop these essential skills to be able to understand the world around them, develop social skills, understand routines, learn new words and develop speech sounds.

Between 0 - 6 months you may notice baby…

- is startled by loud noises
- recognises and turns their head to your voice
- likes listening to different sounds
- is quickly distracted by anything that is new or changes around them

Between 6 - 12 months you may notice baby…

- is easily distracted (fleeting attention)
- looks at you when you speak or when they hear their name called
- plays on their own for 5 minutes with the same activity
- focuses on different sounds (telephone, doorbell, clock).

Between 12 - 18 months you may notice the child…

- attends to an adult led activity for up to 2 minutes
- attends to music and singing
- enjoys sound-making toys and objects
- chooses an activity and may concentrate on it intensely for a short time
- concentrates so hard that they seem not to hear other things (rigid attention)
- continues to be easily distracted, usually by something noisy or more exciting.

Creating an enabling environment:

- ☑ Plan for some quiet time.
- ☑ Reduce background noise and distractions.

Strategies to develop attention and listening:

- Get face to face with the child.
- Use the strategy ideas on the *Talk with Me* Poster.

PLAY WITH ME… have a look at the suggested activities on pages 25 - 27

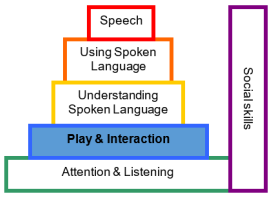
Listen for noises

Explore different sounds in the environment

Sing songs and rhymes

Play and Interaction

0 – 18 months



Play is how children make sense of the world and it is crucial to support brain development in the early years. Through play, children develop and learn to use their speech, language and communication skills. Play is the essential context for learning about social skills for children under the age of five.

Interaction includes the ability to play cooperatively with peers and take turns. Through play and interaction, children learn to understand and regulate their emotions and develop their social skills.

Between 0 - 6 months you may notice baby…

- watches people's faces when they talk to them
- cries in different ways to express needs
- looks at people's faces and copies facial movements e.g. sticking tongue out.

Between 6 - 12 months you may notice baby…

- explores everything and begins to play with things appropriately e.g. bangs a drum
- looks for an object if it falls or rolls away (object permanence)
- enjoys action rhymes and songs
- takes turns in conversations - babbling back to an adult
- shows distress on separation from their main carer.

Between 12 - 18 months you may notice the child…

- enjoys 'over-and-over-again' play e.g. frequently putting things in and out of boxes
- starts to enjoy simple pretend play e.g. pretending to talk on the phone
- plays alone but likes to be near a familiar adult
- waves 'bye bye' and joins in with 'peek-a-boo'
- uses eye contact to start an interaction.

Creating an enabling environment:

- ☑ Provide a range of everyday objects and toys.
- ☑ Provide objects with sensory qualities for babies to explore e.g. in treasure baskets.
- ☑ Make sure the children can choose freely from a suitable range of books, toys and resources.

STRATEGIES to develop play and interaction:

- Model the next stage of play.
- Use the strategy ideas from the *Talk with Me* Poster.

PLAY WITH ME…look at some suggested activities on pages 29 - 31

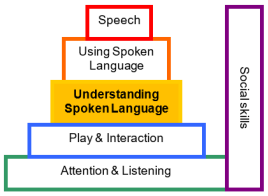
Take turns

Build a tower

Play with objects

Understanding Spoken Language

0 – 18 months



Understanding spoken language (receptive language) is essential for children to make sense of the world around them. It includes the ability to understand the words, sentences and the non-verbal communication of others. Children learn to develop an understanding of words and sentences in stages, first one word, then a number of individual words, then short sentences and longer more complex sentences.

Between 0 – 6 months you may notice baby…

- gets excited when they hear voices e.g. kicking their legs, waving their arms or making noises
- is often calmed by familiar friendly voices
- holds and inspects objects
- mouths, shakes and bangs objects.

Between 6 – 12 months, you may notice baby…

- understands frequently used words such as *'all gone', 'no', 'bye-bye', 'up'* when gestures are used at the same time
- recognises the names of familiar objects e.g. *cup, bowl, teddy, mummy*
- demonstrates recognition of familiar rhymes and songs by joining in verbally or through whole body movement.

Between 12 - 18 months you may notice the child…

- understands a wide range of single words and some two-word phrases they hear a lot during the day, e.g. *'coat on', 'drink', 'in your buggy', 'shoes'*
- recognises and points to familiar objects and pictures in books when asked
- points to body parts.

Creating an enabling environment:

- ☑ Make sure children can find resources they want e.g. place resources at eye level.
- ☑ Use photos, pictures and words to label boxes/baskets.
- ☑ Support stories and routines with props and visuals.

STRATEGIES to develop understanding of spoken language:

- Talk with me about what we can see.
- Use the strategy ideas on the *Talk with Me* Poster.

PLAY WITH ME…have a look at the suggested activities on pages 33 - 35

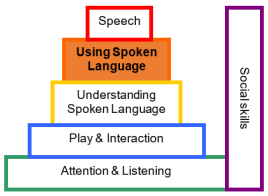
Share books

Explore everyday objects

Make a story

Using Spoken Language

0 – 18 months



Using spoken language (expressive language) is the ability to recall words and information and use language, body language and gestures appropriately in given situations e.g. to name objects, describe actions and events, ask and answer questions and retell a story.

A wide vocabulary is essential for children so that they can make the best of learning opportunities and express their thoughts, needs and wants.

Between 0 – 6 months you may notice baby…

- makes vocal noises to get attention
- makes sounds like cooing, gurgling and babbling to themselves and with other people
- makes sounds back when talked to
- smiles and laughs when other people smile and laugh.

Between 6 – 12 months, you may notice baby…

- makes talking noises – babbles strings of sounds like *'mamama', 'dadada', 'bababa'*
- uses gestures such as waving and pointing to help communicate
- attempts to copy sounds made by another person.

Between 12 - 18 months you may notice the child…

- babbles and uses around 20 single words (which may not be clear)
- copies gestures and words from adults
- uses intonation, pitch and change of volume when talking.

Creating an enabling environment:

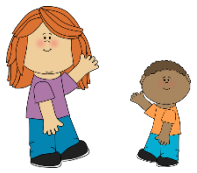
- ☑ Provide a range of everyday objects, toys and resources to capture the child's interests.
- ☑ Make sure there are some comfy, quiet areas for children to relax and share a book.

STRATEGIES to develop using spoken language:

- Talk about what the child is doing/looking at.
- Use care routines to introduce new words.
- Use the strategy ideas on the *Talk with Me* Poster.

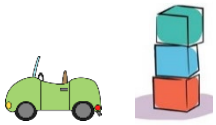
PLAY WITH ME… have a look at the suggested activities on pages 37 - 39

Play copy cats



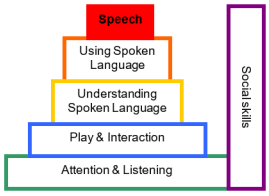
Make marks

Play 'Ready…steady, GO!'



Speech

0 – 18 months



Speech (phonology) refers to being able to say speech sounds to make yourself understood. When we are listening to a child talk, we can think about how clear their words are. *Speech* is not the same as *talking*.

Use the **English Speech Sound Development Poster** on page 41 and Speech acquisition - Multilingual Children's Speech (csu.edu.au) to support your observations.

Between 0 – 6 months you may notice baby…

- makes vocal noises e.g. coo, gurgle and blow bubbles
- babbles using intonation e.g. using a *sing-song* voice
- makes sounds back when talked to
- laughs during play.

Between 6 – 12 months, you may notice baby…

- babbles using specific consonant sounds e.g. b, d, m, n
- uses speech sounds (babbling) to communicate with adults e.g. *'ba-ba'; 'no-no'; 'go-go'*
- attempts to copy sounds made by another person.

Between 12 - 18 months you may notice the child…

- babbles constantly and uses single words during play
- copies sounds and words used by adults
- uses intonation, pitch and change of volume when 'talking'.

Creating an enabling environment:

- ☑ Reduce distractions and background noise.
- ☑ Sing lots of rhymes.

Strategies to use to develop clear speech:

- Get face to face with the child.
- Copy any sounds the child makes.
- Repeat attempts at words, using correct sounds.
- Use the strategy ideas on the *Talk with Me* poster.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES to support the development of speech:

Say and sing songs and rhymes every day!

Twinkle, twinkle, little star…

Row, row, row your boat…

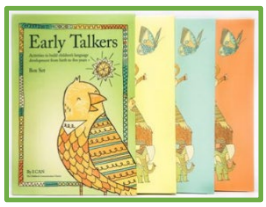
Round and round the garden…

Activities suggested in all other areas of communication will support the development of speech at this age.

Strategy Posters and Suggested Activities: 0 – 18 months

In this section, you will find the WG *Talk with Me* strategy poster and some suggested activities to guide you when planning to develop the child's speech, language and communication.

The suggested activities are given as examples; please use your own experiences and ideas to enhance them. The grids are not intended to be a prescriptive programme; however, the ideas can be used to support personalised targets, as appropriate. You can also use the '*Early Talkers*' boxset for more ideas (available from speechandlanguage.org.uk).



Strategies to develop attention and listening:

- Get face to face with the child.
- Use the strategy ideas from the *Talk with Me* Poster.

IMPORTANT:
Use the suggested strategies with the activities, and in your interactions throughout the day.

Activity	Attention and Listening - Suggested Activities (0 – 6 months)	Too difficult?	Too easy?
Listen for noises	***Making loud/quiet and fast/slow sounds.*** Encouraging the baby to make the noise. **How to play:** Fill tubs and bottles with dried pasta, peas, rice or beans. Make sure lids are on tight and shake them for the baby. Let the baby have a go too.	Make a sound and give the baby time to process it. Start with quiet sounds and build up to louder sounds.	Try fast and slow sounds too.
Sing songs and rhymes	***Attending to your voice.*** Encouraging the baby to watch you and 'copy' your actions. They may join in with some sounds. **How to play:** Support baby with cushions or sit them on your lap facing you. Sing and do the actions for simple rhymes and songs.	Face baby and talk to them, see if they can respond to your voice with eye contact.	Sing more rhymes and songs with them.
Explore different sounds in the environment	***Noticing sounds in the environment.*** Encouraging the baby to recognise sounds in its environment. **How to play:** As you hold baby and explore the home or the setting, label the sound they can hear. 'I can hear the phone ringing.' 'I can hear a dog barking.' …	Begin with one sound at a time.	Introduce noisy and quiet sounds.

The activity grids show how similar activities can be adapted for 0 – 6m; 6 – 12m; 12 – 18m.

Each aspect of SLC has a page outlining the broad stages of development.

Attention follows a developmental sequence:

0 – 11 months	8 – 20 months	22 – 36 months
Fleeting Attention Easily distracted and attention flits from one thing to another.	**Rigid Attention** Can concentrate on one task of own choice, cannot tolerate interruption from an adult.	**Single channelled attention** Will attend to an adult direction. Cannot cope doing one thing and listening to an instruction about something else.
30 – 50 months	**40 – 60 months**	**60+ months**
Focusing attention Beginning to control own focus. Can only concentrate on one thing at a time (the task or the unrelated instruction). Can shift focus of attention independently.	**Two channelled attention** Can do a task and understand an instruction at the same time. Concentration span may be short but can now be taught in a group.	**Integrated attention** Attention is controlled, sustained and well established across different situations, with different people.

- **Some children may be functioning at a level below their chronological age**
- **Children cannot develop their speech, language and communication skills if they are unable to attend or listen**

Talk with me

10 tips to help me learn to talk

Siarad Gyda Fi
Talk With Me

1. Start talking to me before I am born
2. I can learn our language and culture from you
3. Our best place is face to face
4. Sing me a rhyme at any time
5. Let's talk and play every day
6. Let's look at books together
7. Talk with me about what we can see
8. Let's turn 'screen time' into 'you and me time'!
9. Add a word to what you have heard me say (big!)
10. I love to talk with everyone!

The Welsh version of this poster is available at: llyw.cymru/siarad-gyda-fi

gov.wales/talkwithme

Attention follows a developmental sequence:

0 – 11 months	8 – 20 months	22 – 36 months
Fleeting Attention Easily distracted and attention flits from one thing to another.	**Rigid Attention** Can concentrate on one task of own choice, cannot tolerate interruption from an adult.	**Single channelled attention** Will attend to an adult direction. Cannot cope doing one thing and listening to an instruction about something else.
30 – 50 months	**40 – 60 months**	**60+ months**
Focusing attention Beginning to control own focus. Can only concentrate on one thing at a time (the task or the unrelated instruction). Can shift focus of attention independently.	**Two channelled attention** Can do a task and understand an instruction at the same time. Concentration span may be short but can now be taught in a group.	**Integrated attention** Attention is controlled, sustained and well established across different situations, with different people.

- **Some children may be functioning at a level below their chronological age**
- **Children cannot develop their speech, language and communication skills if they are unable to attend or listen**

Activity	Attention and Listening - Suggested Activities (0 – 6 months)	Too difficult?	Too easy?
Listen for noises	***Making loud/quiet and fast/slow sounds.*** Encouraging baby to make noises. **How to play:** Fill tubs and bottles with dried pasta, peas, rice or beans. Make sure lids are on tight and shake them for baby. Let baby have a go too.	Make a sound and give baby time to process it. Start with quiet sounds and build up to louder sounds.	Try fast and slow sounds too.
Sing songs and rhymes	***Attending to your voice.*** Encouraging baby to watch you and 'copy' your actions. They may join in with some sounds. **How to play:** Support baby with cushions or sit them on your lap facing you. Sing and do the actions for simple rhymes and songs.	Face baby and talk to them, see if they can respond to your voice with eye contact.	Sing more rhymes and songs with them.
Explore different sounds in the environment	***Noticing sounds in the environment.*** Encouraging baby to recognise sounds in its environment. **How to play:** As you hold baby and explore the home or the setting, label the sound they can hear. *'I can hear the phone ringing.' 'I can hear a dog barking.' …*	Begin with one sound at a time.	Introduce noisy and quiet sounds.

Activity	Attention and Listening - Suggested Activities (6 months - 12 months)	Too difficult?	Too easy?
Listen for noises	***Encouraging baby to make and recognise different sounds.*** Baby is recognising and exploring different sounds. **How to play:** Make instrument using tubs and bottles filled with dried pasta, rice, peas or beans. Shake them and let baby shake them too. You could also bang saucepans with kitchen utensils to make a noise. Talk about the sounds you can hear from your instruments.	Begin with one sound at a time.	Introduce noisy and quiet sounds
Sing songs and rhymes	***Learning about noise, sounds and words.*** Encouraging baby to watch you and 'copy' your actions. They may join in with some sounds. **How to play:** Sit face to face with baby, sing action songs and support baby using actions and gestures e.g. rocking baby gently back and forth for 'Row, row, row your boat'. Pause during the song and wait for a response from baby.	Face baby and sing action songs to them with you making the gestures.	Sing more rhymes and songs with them and pause more for a response.
Explore different sounds in the environment	***Noticing and listening to specific sounds in the environment.*** Recognising and exploring different sounds. **How to play:** When out and about, listen for different noises and say, '*I can hear a …*' (e.g. dog, siren, horn, bird).	Begin with one sound at a time.	Explore a variety of sounds and comment when they have stopped.

Activity	Attention and Listening - Suggested Activities (12 months - 18 months)	Too difficult?	Too easy?
Listen for noises	***Encouraging the child to make different sounds.*** The child is recognising and making different sounds. **How to play:** Make instruments using tubs and bottles filled with dried pasta, rice, peas or beans. Shake them and let the child shake them too. You could also bang saucepans with kitchen utensils to make a noise. Talk about the sounds you can hear from your instruments e.g. *'Bang, bang', 'That's loud'.* Encourage the child to make different noises e.g. *'Let's make a long sound'.*	Begin with one sound at a time.	Introduce different concepts such as 'noisy/quiet', 'long/short'.
Sing songs and rhymes	***Learning about noise, sounds and words.*** Joining in with some sounds, actions or words. **How to play:** Sit face to face with the child. Sing action songs that the child is interested in e.g. 'Old MacDonald'. Pause during the song and wait for a response from the child – this could be an action or a word. The child may ask for a favourite song using actions or words.	Face the child and support them in using simple actions for the songs.	Sing more rhymes and songs with them and pause more for a response. Allow them to choose which song they want to sing.
Explore different sounds in the environment	***Encouraging the child to recognise different sounds.*** The child is recognising and identifying different sounds. **How to play:** Go on a listening walk and point out environmental noises to the child, e.g. *'I can hear a …'* (e.g. dog, siren, horn, bird). Make gestures such as cupping your hand to your ear when talking about listening. If the noise stops, say *'It's stopped'*.	Begin with one sound at a time.	Explore a variety of sounds and comment when they have stopped.

Play skills follow a developmental sequence:

Exploratory play (birth to around 5 months): Shakes, mouths, bangs and turns over toys and other objects to try to work out what they are. At around 9 months will look for an object that has been hidden away (understands object permanence).

Recognising objects (around 12 months): Shows an understanding of the appropriate use of an object without pretending e.g. uses a brush on their hair.

Object play (between 8-20 months): Pretends to use an object on themselves e.g. using a toy cup to pretend to drink.

Character play (between 16-26 months): Involves character toys in their play e.g. gives toy dinosaur a drink.

Acts out routines (around 22 - 36 months): Acts out simple routines through play e.g. baths and dresses dolly ready for bed. Small world play becomes more complex as the child acts out scenarios and stories. Uses objects imaginatively e.g. a box could be a car or a bed.

Role-play (around 3 to 4 years): Simple dressing up to begin with, gradually taking on more imaginative role of the whole character.

Complex and co-operative imaginative play (4 years+): Acts out sequences observed in their environment, books and TV e.g. household routines.

Interaction skills build from play and include the ability to play cooperatively with peers and take turns:

0 – 9 months	9 – 18 months	18 months – 3 years
Interactions begin and end with baby's eye contact, e.g. games such as peekaboo.	Interactions initiated by child both verbally and non-verbally e.g. pointing, giving and showing. Interaction may end by child moving away. Interactions limited to 1 or 2 turns per partner.	Interactions may be initiated using a name e.g. *'Mummy'*. Child begins to respond to questions verbally. Repeats or changes their utterance if not understood. Interaction may be restricted to comfortable, familiar situations.
3 – 4 years	**4 – 7 years**	**7 years+**
Has a variety of strategies to initiate conversation e.g. *'Guess what?'* Number of turns in conversation increases. More able to communicate with strangers. Can participate in pretend conversations. Uses language for a wide variety of functions e.g. asking questions, making suggestions, directing others.	More able to initiate and end conversations and take turns. Learns to choose most appropriate timing to join in other people's conversation. Child still assumes the listener shares his/her background knowledge. Learns to adapt styles of conversation for a variety of listeners e.g. family, friends, and teachers.	Becomes more aware of the listener and his/her background knowledge. Conveys subtleties with intonation and stress. Uses language to persuade, convey disapproval and for politeness. Develops social appropriateness.

Activity	Play and Interaction - Suggested Activities (0 – 6 months)	Too difficult?	Too easy?
Take Turns	***Introducing the idea of turn taking.*** Starting to take turns in 'conversations'. **What do to:** When baby begins to smile (around 6 weeks) smile back at them. If baby begins to make a noise, repeat back to them the sounds they are making. Keep going until they lose interest.	Begin with a smile at first.	See if you can hold a 'conversation' with baby 'chatting' with you.
Build a tower	***Listening for cue words such as 'crash' and enjoying seeing it all come tumbling down.*** Using the words more/again. Seeing if baby responds with smiles. **What to do:** Build a tower with soft blocks or cups, then knock it down and start again. Comment as you place more cups/blocks on the tower e.g. 'more', 'up'.	Use two blocks or cups.	Build bigger towers.
Playing with objects	***Following your hands and responding to your voice and facial expressions.*** Seeing if baby follows you with their eyes. **What to do:** Put teddy behind your back. Show baby your hands and say, *'Oh no, teddy's gone'.* Then show baby teddy and say, *'Here's teddy'.*	Show teddy and let baby explore it themselves through touch.	Hide teddy in different places.

Activity	Play and Interaction - Suggested Activities (6 months – 12 months)	Too difficult?	Too easy?
Take Turns	***Taking turns and keeping it going.*** Taking turns ready for play and conversation. **What do to:** Wait for baby to smile, make a noise or babble – copy and keep the turns going for as long as baby wants.	Reduce the number of turns e.g. start with one turn each.	Take turns in different situations e.g. with sounds or other gestures.
Build a tower	***Listening for cue words such as 'crash'.*** Enjoying seeing it all come tumbling down and then wanting to repeat the game (see if baby indicates enjoyment). **What to do:** Build a tower with soft blocks or cups, then knock it down and start again. Talk about what you're doing and build anticipation, e.g. *'up, up…crash'.*	Use two blocks or cups.	Encourage the child to build the tower.
Playing with objects	***Knowing that an object is still there when it is hidden.*** Developing object permanence. **What to do:** Hide teddy or another toy behind your back. Show your empty hands and say, '*Where's teddy gone?*' Then bring teddy back and say, '*Here's teddy*'.		Hide objects in different places.

Activity	Play and Interaction - Suggested Activities (12 months – 18 months)	Too difficult?	Too easy?
Take Turns	***Taking turns for play and conversation.*** Keeping the turns going. **What do to:** Imitate smiles, noises, gestures and words. Keep the turns going for as long as the child wants and copy their laughter and babble. Comment using language such as '*My turn, your turn*'. Move on to taking turns with rolling a ball and building a tower. Talk about what you're doing e.g. *'We're rolling the ball'.*	Reduce the amount of turns to maybe one each.	Take turns in different situations and games.
Build a tower	***Listening for cue words such as 'crash'.*** Showing enjoyment and communicating that they want to repeat the game***.*** **What to do:** Sit face to face with the child. Build a tower with blocks or stacking cups, then knock it down and start again. Talk about what you are doing, e.g. *'Up, up, crash', and 'Ready steady go'*. Encourage the child to build their own tower. Move on to use more complex words to describe the tower.	Use two blocks/cups.	Encourage the child to build bigger towers.
Playing with objects	***Modelling how to use everyday objects.*** Developing object play. **What to do:** explore everyday objects e.g. a cup, a brush, keys. Show the child how to use them on themselves e.g. a toy cup to pretend to drink.	Reduce the number of objects and model how to use them correctly.	Encourage this play on large dolls or teddies.

Understanding Spoken Language (receptive language) follows a recognised progression:

Birth	6 months	12 months
Responds to sound (spoken or non-spoken). Responds to intonation and emotion in voices.	Understands whole phrases when used in familiar routines.	Understands key words in familiar situations (often called situational understanding).
18 months	**2 years**	**2 ½ years**
Understands names of absent objects whenever used in familiar sentences at any time.	Can relate two named objects. Can identify objects from a description of their use.	Understands simple actions and properties not related to themselves. Understands simple prepositions, e.g. *in, on, under* and basic size concepts, e.g. *big, little*, when used in simple sentences. Begins to understand 'time' as a reference to the immediate past and future.
3 years	**4 years**	**5 years +**
Relates up to three key words in a sentence when there are no other clues to help. Begins to understand tense, e.g. *We <u>went</u> to the shop; We <u>will go</u> to the shop*. Understands simple concepts of shape and colour when used in simple sentences.	Follows a simple story sequence. Understands most straightforward sentences. Continues to benefit from situational clues.	Gradually understands more complex sentences out of context. Receptive vocabulary continues to develop.

Activity	Understanding Spoken Language - Suggested Activities (0 – 6 months)	Too difficult?	Too easy?
Share books together	***Looking at a book together.*** Helping baby to hear new words, as they see the pictures. **What to do:** Sit baby on your lap with a simple picture or board book. Slowly turn the page and say what is on each page.	Use very simple picture books and board books.	Introduce a 'feely' book for increased participation.
Explore everyday objects	***Exploring and hearing the words for everyday objects e.g. using a tap-tap box, surprise bag, treasure basket.*** Using all their senses and hearing the name of the object. **What to do:** Put 3 or 4 objects that feel and look different into a bag or a box. Take one out, show baby, talk about how it feels/looks/smells and allow them to explore it. Encourage baby to hold it if they can.	Use one object.	Introduce more objects each time.
Make a book	***Looking at familiar people and hearing their names.*** **What to do:** Put 5 or 6 pictures of family and friends in a book. Say the person's name as you show their picture.	Slow the pace and show one picture at a time.	Add more pictures to the book.

Activity	Understanding Spoken Language - Suggested Activities (6 months – 12 months)	Too difficult?	Too easy?
Share books together	***Looking at a book together.*** Helping baby to learn new words, as they link your words to the pictures they see. **What to do:** Sit face to face with baby somewhere quiet. Look at a simple book together - encourage baby to hold the book and turn the pages. Talk about what baby is interested in. Follow baby's lead – you don't have to start at the beginning of the book.	Use very simple picture books and board books.	Introduce a 'feely' and 'noisy' book to increase participation.
Explore everyday objects	***Exploring and learning the words for everyday objects e.g. using a tap-tap box, surprise bag, treasure basket.*** Exploring the object and how to use it appropriately. Learning the name of the object. **What to do:** Put 3 or 4 everyday objects that feel and look different in a bag or box. Take one out to show baby. Name the object and show baby how to use it e.g. brushing teeth with a toothbrush. Encourage baby to explore the object and copy using it appropriately.	Use one or two objects.	Introduce a different object each time.
Make a book	***Looking at familiar people and objects, hearing and learning their names.*** Learning the names of familiar people and objects in their lives. **What to do:** Put 5 or 6 pictures of family, friends and objects in a picture book. Use names as you show baby the picture.	Limit the number of pictures.	Add more pictures to the book.

Activity	Understanding Spoken Language - Suggested Activities (12 months – 18 months)	Too difficult?	Too easy?
Sharing books together	***Looking at a book together.*** Helping the child to learn new words and phrases, as they link words to pictures. **What do to:** Sit face to face with the child somewhere quiet. Look at a book with short stories and simple sentences. Let the child choose the book and hold it, turning the pages themselves if they want to. Talk about what they're interested in using short, simple sentences. The book can be read their way – you don't have to start at the beginning of the book.	Use books with simple pictures and few words.	Introduce more words when sharing the book.
Explore everyday objects	***Learning the words for objects e.g. using a tap- tap box, surprise bag, treasure basket.*** Learning the names of familiar and new objects and how to use them appropriately. **What to do:** Put 3 or 4 familiar/new objects in a bag or box. Take one out, talk about what it is and show them how to use it e.g. a jug. Encourage the child to explore the object. Ask the child to show you particular objects e.g. *'Where's the spoon?'* Try not to test the child about the name of the object – the idea is for the child to hear the word.	Use one object at a time.	Introduce fewer familiar objects each time.
Making a book	***Making a book of things the child has done during the day.*** Learning the words for everyday activities and objects. **What to do:** Take photos of things the child has done during the day and stick them into a book to make a little story e.g. '*I went to the park. I saw a bird. I went on the slide.'*	Talk about one picture at a time.	Add more pictures to the book.

Using Spoken Language (expressive language) follows a recognised progression:

9 months	18 months	2 years
Babble, early attempts at words e.g. '*Dada*'.	Uses approximately 50 - 100 words with more recognisable words. Sometimes uses 2-word learnt phrases e.g. '*all gone*'	Uses approx. 200 – 300 words. Puts 2 and 3 words together in short sentences e.g. '*Me go home*'.
2 ½ years	**3 years**	**3 ½ years**
Puts 3- and 4-word sentences together using different sorts of words. Starts to use 'question words' e.g. '*Me go there*?'	Links more than 4 words together. Starts to use *'and'* to link ideas. Starts to use pronouns *'I', 'he', 'she'* and plurals e.g. '*I want juice and sweets*.'	Links ideas together using *'cos'* (because) e.g. '*I put wellies on 'cos it's raining*.' Asks more complicated questions using *'why'* and *'how'*.
4 years		**4 ½ years**
Uses language for a variety of reasons e.g. to retell favourite stories, play make-believe games and retell events. Uses talk to problem-solve and form friendships. Asks many questions to find out information.		Children have a vocabulary of about 5000+ words.

Activity	Using Spoken Language Suggested Activities (0 – 6 months)	Too difficult?	Too easy?
Copy Cats	***Copying sounds and facial expressions.*** Seeing if baby begins to copy you. **What to do:** Sit baby facing you and make funny faces and sounds (e.g. blowing raspberries). See if they try to make the same back to you.	Follow baby's lead - repeat what they do.	Use different facial expressions and sounds.
Bubbles	***Blowing bubbles for baby.*** Showing enjoyment and using sounds and body movements to communicate 'more'. **What to do:** Blow bubbles with baby and pop them gently. Watch to see if they respond with sounds/body movement to show they are enjoying the activity.	Blow one bubble gently at a time.	Blow lots of bubbles and see how baby responds.
Ready steady 'go'	***Waiting for 'go' in games.*** Showing enjoyment and using sounds and body movements to communicate *'go'*. **What to do:** Using a toy, wait for baby to communicate 'go' (through sounds/body movement) whilst playing together. Say *'Ready, steady …….'* Wait for baby to make a sound/body movement before you do the action e.g. push the car down the ramp or release the wind-up toy to make a sound.	Communicate 'go' yourself.	Use a variety of toys.

Activity	Using Spoken Language Suggested Activities (6 months – 12 months)	Too difficult?	Too easy?
Copy Cats	***Copying actions and gestures.*** Seeing if baby copies your actions, gestures and facial expressions. **What to do:** Sit with baby in front of a mirror and talk about what you can see. Make different facial expressions and simple actions to see if baby copies you e.g. waving, clapping. Comment on the action you're doing e.g. 'I'm waving'. Copy the actions baby makes too.	Follow baby's lead - repeat what they do.	Introduce different actions.
Making Marks	***Making marks and listening to the words associated.*** Exploring different materials to make marks and hearing the words for what they are doing. **What to do:** Use blackboards, sand, paint, steamed up windows or mirrors to make marks. Talk about what baby is doing and how it looks and feels. Use simple words, sounds and gestures during the activity e.g. *'ooh', 'squishy', 'pretty'* etc.	Make the marks and comment on what you're doing for baby to see and hear.	Use different words when mark making.
Ready steady 'go'	***Waiting for 'go' in games.*** Communicating 'go' by using sounds/gestures. **What to do:** Play games such as blowing bubbles, building a tower or using a wind-up toy. Before blowing the bubble or knocking down the tower, say '*Ready, steady* ……' and wait for baby to make a sound or gestures to indicate 'go'. You then say '*Go'* before blowing the bubbles or knocking the tower down. Repeat this over and over again.	Communicate 'go' yourself.	Use a variety of toys.

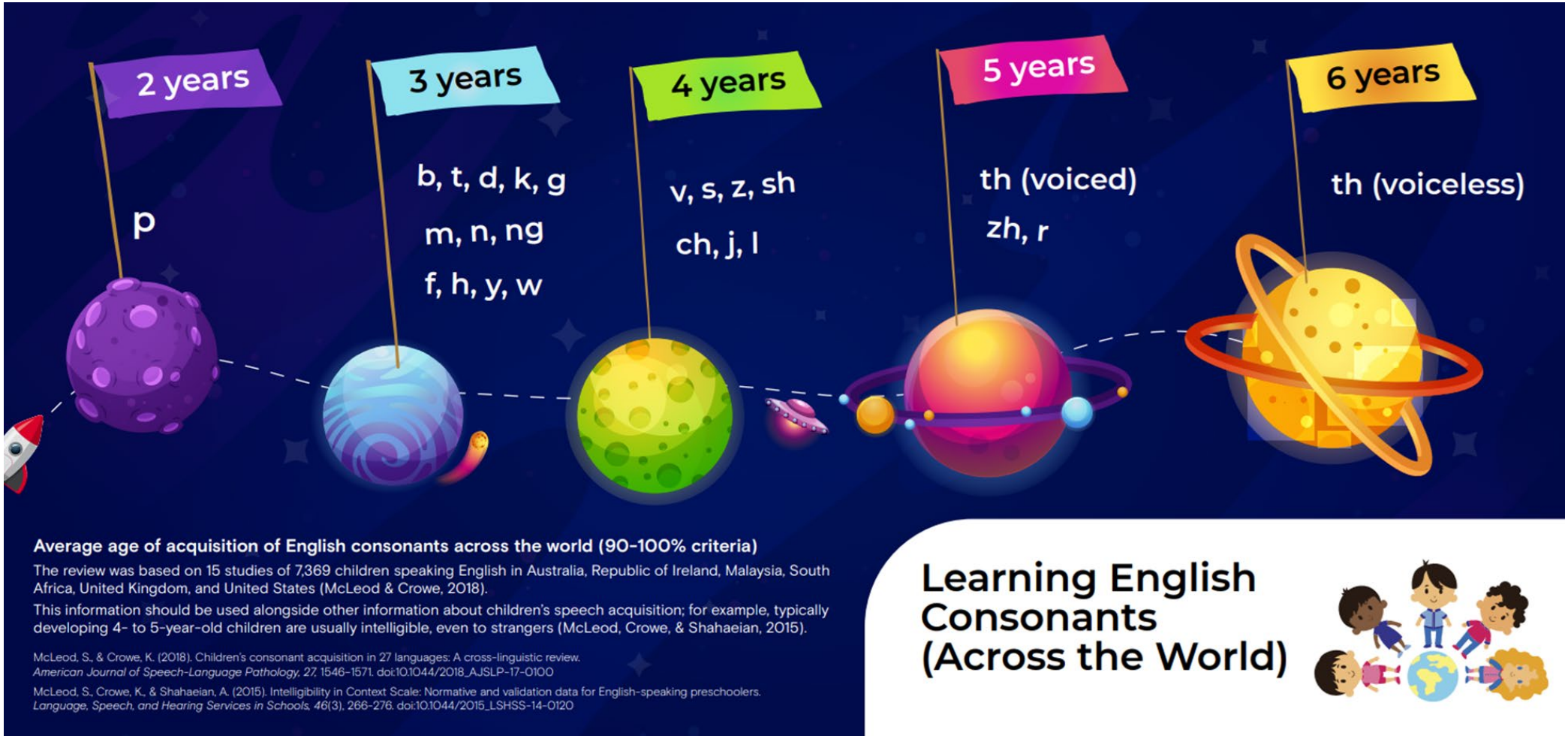
Activity	Using Spoken Language Suggested Activities (12 months – 18 months)	Too difficult?	Too easy?
Copy Cats	***Copying actions/sounds/words.*** Seeing if the child copies your actions/sounds/words. **What to do:** Sit face to face with the child and see if they copy your facial expressions/actions e.g. clapping hands. Comment on the action you're doing e.g. 'I'm waving'. Copy the actions/sounds/words the child makes.	Follow the child's lead - repeat what they say and do.	Introduce different actions, sounds, or words.
Making Marks	***Making marks and listening to the words associated.*** Exploring different materials to make marks and hearing the words for what they are doing. **What to do:** Use blackboards, sand, paint, flour or rice to make marks with their hands, fingers and feet. Talk about what the child is doing and how it looks/feels. Use words during this activity e.g. '*painting', 'dab', 'brush', 'drawing'* etc.	Make the marks and comment on what you're doing for the child to see and hear.	Use a wider variety of words, including descriptive words.
Ready steady 'go'	***Communicating 'go' in games.*** Using sounds/gestures/words. **What to do:** Play games such as blowing bubbles, building a tower, skittles or using a wind-up toy. Before blowing the bubbles or knocking down the tower, say *'Ready, steady ……'* and wait for the child to make a sound, gesture or word to indicate 'go'. You then say '*go*' before blowing the bubbles or knocking the tower down. Repeat this over and over again. Talk about what you're doing e.g. 'W*e're blowing the bubbles.'*	Say 'go' yourself and overemphasise the build up to the word 'go'.	Use a variety of toys.

Typical Development of Speech

2 years 10 months – 3 years 10 months	3 years 10 months – 5 years 1 month	5 years 2 months – 7 years 3 months
50% of a child's speech is understood by unfamiliar adults	75% of a child's speech is understood by unfamiliar adults	90% of a child's speech is understood by unfamiliar adults

Hustad, Mahr, Natke and Rathouz (2021)

- **Speech sounds follow a developmental progression**
- **Speech sounds vary across languages.**
- **Children learning more than one language may develop speech sounds in a different order.**
- **For further information, please refer to** Speech acquisition - Multilingual Children's Speech (csu.edu.au)

English Speech Sound Development

(There is no information on the norms for speech sound development in Welsh)