

Paediatric Auditory Implant Programme

Supporting early language and speech development

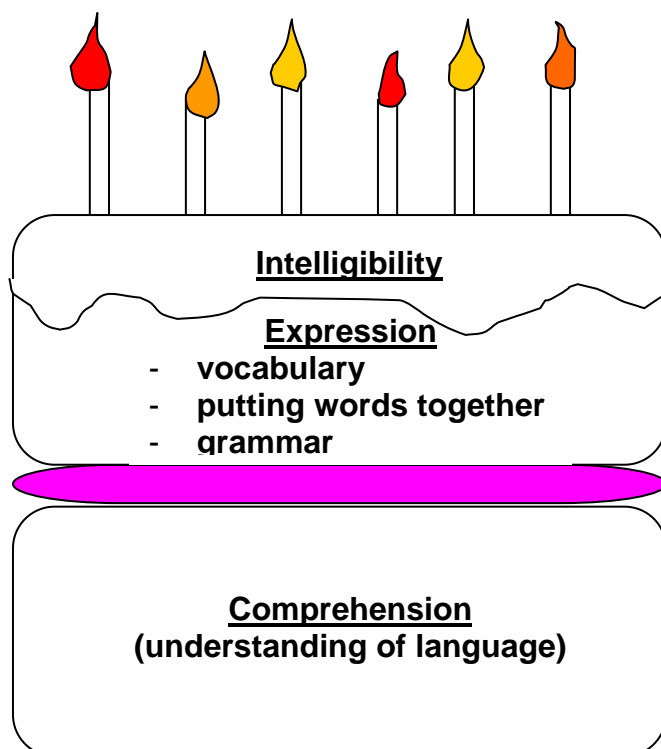
This leaflet explains more about early language development and suggests ways in which you can help your child's language skills to develop. It will be supported by explanations from your speech and language therapist and teacher of the deaf who will indicate which areas you should focus on at certain times.

Early language development

Your child has now developed the foundation skills for language development including play skills and attention skills, and for children with adequate aided hearing, early listening skills as well. Now these skills are in place, your child is ready to begin learning language.

Recipe for language

Language development is a continuous process that occurs in stages, starting first with the comprehension/understanding of language (the bottom layer of the cake), progressing on to the expression or use of language (the top layer of the cake), and finally the development of intelligible/understandable speech (the icing).



The ingredients needed to achieve this are:

- 1) Play development
- 2) Attention
- 3) Listening skills
- 4) Need/desire to communicate

This leaflet explains some of the ways you can support your child's language development at different stages.

How can I help my child's language to develop further?

The following ideas are tailored to support your child's language development at specific stages. Please consult with your speech and language therapist for guidance as to what stage your child's language development is at.

Understanding one key word/sign

- **Action rhymes and songs** for example, the names for body parts are consistently repeated in "Heads and shoulders, knees and toes", or 'Here we go round the mulberry bush' with verses like 'this is the way we brush our teeth or clap our hands, or drink our milk etc' Perform the actions as you sing.
- **What's in the bag?** Put lots of everyday objects in a bag. Shake the bag to make it exciting or sing a song about "what's in the bag?" Pull one object out at a time and name it for your child then play with it together.
- **Dressing up game.** Dress yourself or dolls, naming items of clothing as you go. Talk about their clothes as they get dressed, let them help you with the washing – name things as you put them in the machine or fold up the clean clothes; ask them to pass you a t-shirt or sock.
- **Picture books.** Select picture books that include a variety of early words including animals, transport, colours and familiar household objects. As you look through the books together, name the pictures for your child. Make sure you are in a position where your child can see and hear you. Talk about what is happening in the pictures. Even young children love the rhythm of simple rhyme books like The Gruffalo
- **Farm animals.** Try naming them, making the animal noises, and saying what they do such as 'running', 'eating', and 'sleeping'.
- **Dolls house or making pretend tea.** Learning this kind of play helps the child's brain to develop to help them learn language. You can talk about what your child is doing, so he learns to link the action and the word.
- Can they help you in the kitchen? you can say to them 'stir, stir, stir' or 'pour', 'roll it up', 'toss' as they help you prepare food.

Using one key word/sign

- Provide clear models of the language you want your child to use – for example single words or short phrases and use these over and over.

- You can, of course, continue to use some longer and more complex language with your child, but remember to keep it simple.
- Give choices such as "Do you want juice or milk?" Encourage your child to use their signs or speech to respond rather than pointing.

Understanding two key words/signs

Once your child is using some single words, they are ready to move to the next stage. You can make understanding two words/signs easier for your child by using words they already know. New words are still best introduced as single words at this stage.

Give lots of good models by talking about what you are doing. Then probe your child's understanding of two word/signs by asking them to do things.

- Sorting the washing ("There's the red sock. Where's the blue sock?" or 'where's mummy's sock?')
- At meal times ("Wash the carrots", "Cook the meat", "Potatoes are hot", "Don't touch", "Mummy's hungry", "Put the bread on the table", "Get the plate")
- Unpacking the shopping ("There's four apples", "Put the milk in the fridge")
- Look at books ("He's a sad dog", "Where's the big boy?").

Using two key words/signs

Once your child is using about 50 words, they are ready to start combining words together. Remember to keep providing your child with lots of two word/sign utterances as models. Try repeating back your child's utterance and adding a word ("Juice. More juice?"). Also, encourage your child to copy two word utterances you have used. Once they have begun using two words together, you need to raise your expectations about their response. Expect and wait for them to use two words/signs rather than one.

- Posting games ("Bye bye ball" or "Ball gone")
- Hiding games ("Where's the car?", "Here's the red ball")
- Tidy up ("Book away")
- Car play ("Push the tractor")
- Shopping game ("Want bread", "Apples please")
- Dressing ("Where's the sock?", "Sock on")
- Washing ("Wash your nose", "Dry your feet")

More two word combinations...

Remember to use different types of two word/sign combinations. Try some of the following:

- Noun (naming word) + Noun ("daddy car", "Michael biscuit", 'nappy in bag')
- Describing word + Noun ("big car", "red apple", "mummy tired")
- Noun + Verb (doing word) ("daddy run", "baby cry", "teddy gone")
- Noun+ Location Word ("teddy up", "Michael on")

Understanding and Using three+ words/signs

To extend your child's understanding and use of longer utterances continue to provide clear language models just above your child's language level. Remember to repeat back their utterance and add a word ("Daddy's gone. That's right. Daddy's gone to work."). You can check your child's understanding of these longer utterances by giving them longer instructions to follow.

However, you must remember that even though your child is starting to put more words/signs together, they still need to extend their vocabulary of single words/signs.

For deaf children it can be difficult to learn new words through 'incidental learning' or by overhearing them. We often need to highlight and explain new words that we have used or that we want the children to use.

Speech development in hearing children

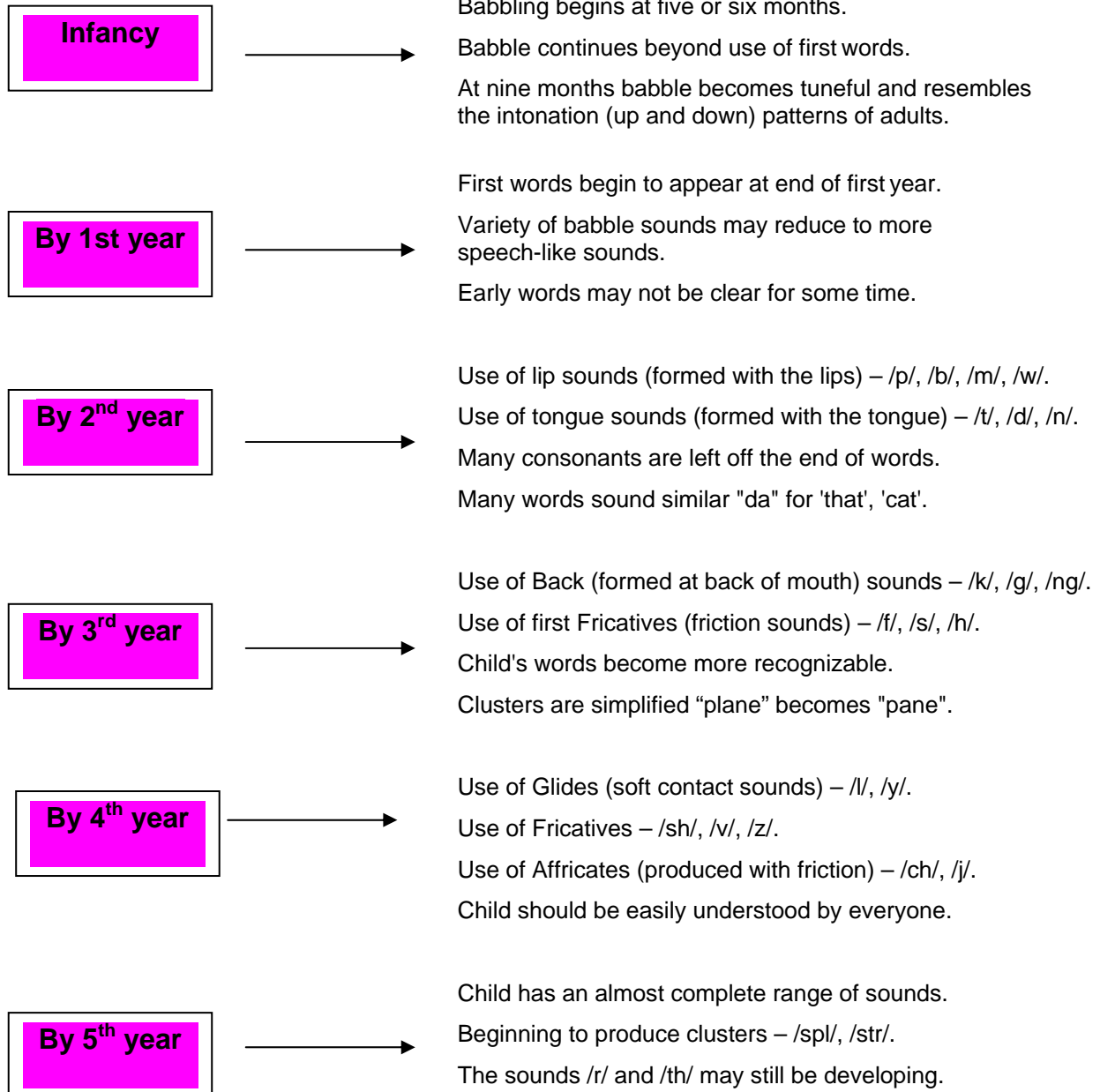
Speech development occurs alongside language development in children who hear normally. It is a developmental process that begins at around five or six months with babbling and continues through to seven years of age at which point children should have developed adult speech. Speech production skills develop in stages and follow a developmental pattern, with some sounds being produced earlier than others. It is easy to track a hearing child's progress through these stages and identify when problems are occurring.

Speech development in deaf children

Speech is much later to develop in children with hearing impairments and some children may never develop intelligible speech. However, for children with cochlear implants, some level of intelligible speech can usually be expected, unless additional difficulties exist. The best way to predict if children with cochlear implants will develop intelligible speech can be obtained from their earlier ability to hear the different sounds in speech.

However, as the development of speech is heavily reliant on listening skills, children with implants often do not begin to develop speech until their implants are switched on. At this point, young children with implants, such as those implanted before two years of age, begin to develop speech following normal developmental patterns. For older children with implants the likelihood of developing intelligible speech becomes significantly less. These children may also develop speech along different patterns of development. These children may be more likely to use speech and sign to communicate.

Normal Speech Development



Speech development and language

The development of speech in children is also dependent on their language development (the number of words they use). For many children the intelligibility of their speech fluctuates as they develop increasingly more complex language skills. For example, a child's intelligibility may be good when they are using two word utterances and then become worse when they begin using sentences. This is because your child's speech and language systems are both still developing and an increased load on one system can have a negative effect on the other, albeit temporarily. Typically, for each stage of language development, understanding develops first, then the ability to express or use that language, and finally the ability to speak clearly at that level of language.

How can I improve my child's speech?

There are many activities that can be used to help your child develop better speech production. However, it is best to follow the advice of your speech and language therapist. As a general guide, try using the following strategies:

Early vocalisation and babble

- Use exciting games or toys that encourage spontaneous noises or simple words such as “peek-a-boo”, tickling games, chasing games, pop-up or wind-up toys.
- Sit with your child facing you on your lap to sing nursery rhymes and play finger games.
- Sing to your child using babble sounds instead of real words and encourage them to copy (for example, "la-la-la", "ba-ba-ba" and “m-m-m”).
- Copy any sounds your child makes including coughs, cries, sneezes, and babble.
- Sit with your child in front of a mirror and make silly faces and noises together such as raspberries and running fingers over lips.
- Make appropriate sounds associated with feelings or situations such as "ah" when you see something nice, "oh" when surprised, "mmm" when something tastes nice.
- Make appropriate noises when playing with toys, animals (for example “moo”) and cars (for example “beep beep”).

Single words and connected speech

- If your child pronounces a word incorrectly, repeat back that word correctly. Do not repeat the whole sentence, just the word on its own.
- If your child chooses to say the word again – great. If they do not, don't force them. Remember, their stage of development may mean that they are unable to do so!
- Your speech and language therapist will give you more guidance to help develop your child's speech at this later stage.

Appointments at King's

We have teamed up with King's College Hospital in a partnership known as King's Health Partners Academic Health Sciences Centre. We are working together to give our patients the best possible care, so you might find we invite you for appointments at King's. To make sure everyone you meet always has the most up-to-date information about your health, we may share information about you between the hospitals.

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about early listening development, please contact the Paediatric Auditory Implant Programme on **020 7188 6245**.

Pharmacy medicines helpline

For information about any medicines that you have been prescribed at Guy's and St Thomas' hospitals, you can speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline.

t: 020 7188 8748 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

To make comments or raise concerns about the Trust's services, please contact PALS. Ask a member of staff to direct you to the PALS office or:

t: 020 7188 8801 at St Thomas' **t:** 020 7188 8803 at Guy's **e:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk

Knowledge & Information Centre (KIC)

For more information about health conditions, support groups and local services, or to search the internet and send emails, please visit the KIC on the Ground Floor, North Wing, St Thomas' Hospital.

t: 020 7188 3416

Language support services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch using the following contact details.

t: 020 7188 8815 **fax:** 020 7188 5953

NHS Direct

Offers health information and advice from specially trained nurses over the phone 24 hours a day.

t: 0845 4647 **w:** www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

NHS Choices

Provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make choices about your health.

w: www.nhs.uk

Become a member of your local hospitals, and help shape our future

Membership is free and it is completely up to you how much you get involved. To become a member of our Foundation Trust, you need to be 18 years of age or over, live in Lambeth, Southwark, Lewisham, Wandsworth or Westminster or have been a patient at either hospital in the last five years. To join:

t: 0848 143 4017 **e:** members@gstt.nhs.uk **w:** www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk

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