

What do we mean by speech, language and communication?

Speech refers to:

- Speaking with a clear voice, in a way that makes speech interesting and meaningful
- Speaking without hesitating too much or without repeating words or sounds
- Being able to make sounds like 'k' and 't' clearly so people can understand what you say

Language refers to:

- Knowing and choosing the right words to explain what you mean
- Joining words together into sentences, stories and conversations
- Making sense of what people say

Communication refers to:

- Using language or gestures in different ways, for example to have a conversation or to give someone directions
- Being able to consider other people's point of view
- Using and understanding body language and facial expressions, such as:
- Knowing when someone is bored
- Being able to listen to and look at people when having a conversation
- Knowing how to take turns and to listen as well as talk
- Knowing how close to stand next to someone

What are speech, language and communication needs?

- Difficulty in communicating with others
- Difficulties saying what they want to
- Difficulty in understanding what is being said to them
- Difficulties understanding and using social rules

Speech, language and communication needs can occur on their own without any other developmental needs, or be part of another condition such as general learning difficulties, autism spectrum disorders or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

For many children, difficulties will resolve naturally when they experience good communication-rich environments. Others will need a little extra support from you. However, some may need longer term speech and language therapy support.