

Speech sound screener

Speech sound errors often occur as part of typical speech sound development, but for many children these errors persist for longer than expected and can then impact upon their phonics and literacy skills. This screener can be used in order to identify children who may need some support with their speech sounds.

Who is it for?

The speech sound screener is primarily designed for children in EYFS and KS1 presenting with unclear speech but may also be used with children in KS2.

You may want to administer the screener if:

- The child is in EYFS, and their speech is hard to understand by familiar listeners such as close family.
- The child is in EYFS or KS1, and they are very frustrated when others do not understand them.
- The child is in EYFS or KS1 and are presenting with speech sound errors which are impacting their learning.
- The child is in EYFS or KS1 and often misses out sounds.
- The child is in KS1, and speech sound errors remain noticeable.
- If parents or members of school staff are raising concerns regarding the clarity of a child's speech.

To administer the speech sound screener:

Show the child the accompanying pictures one by one, and ask the child 'what's this?'

Listen out for their response and in particular, the target sound (the sound in bold/underlined). Write down how the child says the word using the record form. Try to write down the sounds the child uses as closely as you can, for example 'pen' may be written as 'ben' if the 'p' sounds more like a 'b.' Put a tick or cross in the final column to indicate if the child has produced the target sound correctly.

If the child finds it difficult to name the picture or says the wrong word, you can try to use a sentence starter (e.g. 'You kick a...') or ask them to copy you after you say the word. Place a note on the form if the child has copied the word after you.

Speech sound screener – record form

Early developing sounds		
Target word	How the child says the word	Target sound correct?
1. <u>p</u> en		
2. hippo		
3. <u>u</u> p		
4. <u>b</u> in		
5. bab <u>y</u>		
6. we <u>b</u>		
7. <u>m</u> oon		
8. ham <u>mm</u> er		
9. ar <u>m</u>		
10. <u>n</u> ine		
11. hon <u>e</u> y		
12. pa <u>n</u>		
13. <u>t</u> ower		
14. bu <u>tt</u> on		
15. ha <u>t</u>		
16. <u>d</u> oor		
17. pu <u>dd</u> le		
18. be <u>d</u>		

Middle developing sounds		
Target word	How the child says the word	Target sound correct?
19. <u>k</u> ey		
20. po <u>ck</u> et		
21. du <u>ck</u>		
22. <u>g</u> o		
23. bur <u>g</u> er		
24. ba <u>g</u>		
25. <u>f</u> our		
26. muf <u>ff</u> in		
27. cou <u>gh</u>		
28. <u>v</u> an		

29. se <u>v</u> en		
30. glo <u>v</u> e		
31. <u>s</u> un		
32. mess <u>ss</u> y		
33. bu <u>s</u>		
34. <u>z</u> oo		
35. wi <u>z</u> ard		
36. eye <u>s</u>		

Late developing sounds		
Target word	How the child says the word	Target sound correct?
37. <u>sh</u> oe		
38. ti <u>ss</u> ue		
39. fi <u>sh</u>		
40. <u>ch</u> air		
41. ki <u>tch</u> en		
42. bea <u>ch</u>		
43. <u>j</u> am		
44. ma <u>g</u> ic		
45. ca <u>g</u> e		
46. <u>l</u> eaf		
47. ba <u>ll</u> oon		
48. ba <u>ll</u>		

Consonant blends		
Target word	How the child says the word	Target sound correct?
49. <u>bl</u> ue		
50. <u>fl</u> ower		
51. <u>br</u> ush		
52. <u>sl</u> ide		
53. <u>sp</u> ider		
54. <u>sn</u> ake		

Individual sound production:

Ask the child to copy as you produce each of the following sounds (no pictures needed). Make sure to produce them as the speech sound and not the letter sound, for example say 'b' and not 'bee' and say 'sss' not 'ess' or 'suh.' If they can copy it correctly, give it a tick, if it is incorrect then try to write down the sound they say instead.

Early sounds		
Target sound	Child's production	Correct?
p		
b		
m		
n		
h		
w		
t		
d		

Middle sounds		
Target sound	Child's production	Correct?
c/k		
g		
f		
v		
s		
z		

Late sounds		
Target sound	Child's production	Correct?
l		
sh		
ch		
j		
r		

Analysis:

Regardless of age, the following speech errors would be considered a 'red' rating and therefore further support should be sought from a speech and language therapist.

(If considering a referral to local NHS services, then please do consult their referral guidelines and criteria as these may vary)

Red

- If a child uses the 'c/k' or 'g' sound in place of other sounds. for example if door is said as 'goor', sun as 'gun' or tea as 'key'.
- If a child does not use consonant sounds at the beginning of words, for example 'ee' for bee, 'at' for cat, 'oon' for moon.
- If a child is making errors on their production and use of any vowel sounds.

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) - Analysis:

Ages 3years 6months – 3years 11months:

Green	•Difficulties with late sounds (ch, j, l, y) or blends (st, sp, sm, br, tr, fl) •Speech can generally be understood by familiar adults
Amber	•Difficulties with early sounds (p, b, m, n, t, d) •Difficulties with middle sounds (c/k, g, f, s) •Familiar adults cannot always understand what the child says •Child is showing signs of frustration if not understood
Red	•Not using sounds at the end of words (e.g. bed is 'be') •Child is using less than 5 consonant sounds correctly •Close relatives cannot understand much of what the child says •Child is very frustrated when not understood

Ages 4years – 4years 11months:

Green	•Difficulties with late sounds (ch, j, l, y) or blends (st, sp, sm, br, tr, fl) •Speech can generally be understood by familiar adults
Amber	•Difficulties with middle sounds (k, g, f, v, s, z) •Less familiar adults cannot always understand what the child says •Child is showing signs of frustration if not understood
Red	•Not using sounds at the end of words (e.g. bed is 'be') •Difficulties with early sounds (p, b, m, n, t, d) •Unfamiliar listener cannot understand much of what the child says •Child is very frustrated when not understood

Key Stage 1 – Analysis:

Ages 5 years – 5 years 11 months:

Green

- Difficulties with r/l blends (br, tr, fl)
- Speech can be understood most of the time by most people

Amber

- Difficulties with late sounds (sh, ch, j, l, y)
- Difficulties with s-blends
- Less familiar adults cannot always understand what the child says
- Child is showing signs of frustration if not understood

Red

- Not using sounds at the end of words (e.g. bed is 'be')
- Difficulties with early sounds (p, b, m, n, t, d)
- Difficulties with middle sounds (k, g, f, v, s, z)
- Unfamiliar listeners cannot understand much of what the child says
- Child is very frustrated when not understood

Key Stage 1 – Analysis:

Ages 6years – 6years 11months:

Green

- Speech can be understood most of the time by most people

Amber

- Difficulties with late sounds (sh, ch, j, l, y)
- Difficulties with s-blends
- Difficulties with r/l blends
- Less familiar adults cannot always understand what the child says
- Child is showing signs of frustration if not understood

Red

- Not using sounds at the end of words (e.g. bed is 'be')
- Difficulties with early sounds (p, b, m, n, t, d)
- Difficulties with middle sounds (k, g, f, v, s, z)
- Difficulties with later sounds (sh, ch, j, l, y)
- Difficulties with s-blends (st, sp, sm)
- Difficulties with r/l-blends (br, tr, gl, fl)
- Unfamiliar listeners cannot understand much of what the child says
- Child is very frustrated when not understood

Key Stage 2 – Analysis:

Ages 7years+

Green

- Speech can be understood most of the time by most people

Amber

- Difficulties with r/l blends
- Occasional difficulties with 'r' or 'th'

Red

- Any speech errors on the screener aside from r/l blends

Next Steps based on rating:

Green

- Implement universal advice (see below)
- Monitor the child's progress and readminister the screener if concerns persist
- For any questions or help to interpret the results of the speech screener, then book a free 30minutes consult with Futures in Mind's Speech Therapist, Tasha. Email Tasha to arrange your consult - tasha@futuresinmind.org

Amber

- Attend our on-demand speech sound training session for advice and recommendations for how to support a child's speech development. This can be booked via the Futures in Mind website: [On Demand Training - Futures in Mind](#)
- For any questions or help to interpret the results of the speech screener, then book a free 30minutes consult with Futures in Mind's Speech Therapist, Tasha. Email Tasha to arrange your consult - tasha@futuresinmind.org

Red

- Please book a free 30minutes consult with Futures in Mind's Speech Therapist, Tasha, for specific advice. Email Tasha to arrange your consult - tasha@futuresinmind.org
- The child may require bespoke speech sound intervention led and supported by a speech and language therapist.

Supporting Speech Sounds – Universal Advice

- *Model back the correct sounds but do not expect or ask the child to repeat it, for example, if a child says “tar” you could say “that’s right, it’s a car.”*
- *Try to position yourself face to face when you talk with the child. This will help them to see how your mouth moves as you make different words/sounds.*
- *Acknowledge your child’s feeling, for example, if they are frustrated.*
- *Avoid overcorrecting the child as this may lead to frustration.*
- *If you are struggling to understand the child, then encourage them to show you or take you to what they are trying to talk about.*
- *React to what a child says instead of how they say it.*
- *It is normal for children to be able to produce a sound by itself, but to then not use this sound within words. This is all part of the process of learning to use new sounds, as a child needs to understand how and when to use the sound in their talking. Repeating words back clearly is the best way to help.*