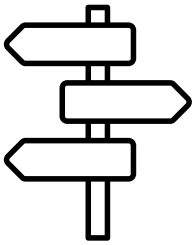
Aiming Higher, Achieving More, Together!



United in *SEND*

News, guidance, & signposting for USF families

In each issue, we will share helpful advice, school updates, and trusted resources to support children with SEND.

Whether you're looking for guidance, local services, or simply some reassurance, United in SEND is here to help you feel informed, connected, and supported.

Together, we are united in supporting every child to thrive.

SPEECH, LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION - LANGUAGE NEEDS

The Communication Pyramid

FACT

In the UK, over 1 million children and young people – that's 2 – 3 in every UK classroom – have some form of long term and persistent speech, language and communication difficulty.

The Communication Trust

Understanding the Communication Pyramid

Children develop communication skills in stages, much like building a house:

- Early interaction - eye contact, gestures, turn-taking
- Attention & Listening - focusing on people and sounds
- Play - learning through interaction and exploration
- Understanding - following instructions and making sense of language
- Talking - using words and sentences
- Speech Sounds - clarity of spoken words

Strong foundations are essential. If earlier skills (like attention or interaction) are still developing, this can affect later language skills.

Advice Corner

Top Tips to Encourage Language Development

- Reduce distractions
- Turn off TVs, phones, and background noise to help your child focus.
- Gain attention first
- Say your child's name and get to their level before speaking.
- Keep language simple
- Use short, clear sentences matched to their level.
- Expand what they say
- Child: "dog" → Adult: "Yes, big dog!"
- Give thinking time
- Pause and allow your child time to respond.
- Don't ask too many questions
- Comment more than question to reduce pressure.
- Read together
- Talk about pictures and stories to build vocabulary
- Model correct language
- Gently repeat phrases correctly rather than pointing out mistakes.

Jargon Buster

Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN):
Difficulties with speaking, understanding, or interacting with others.

Early Communication Skills:
The foundational skills (like attention and interaction) that support later language development.

Signposting & Services

Speech and Language Progress Checker:
https://progress-checker.speechandlanguage.org.uk/

Children & Family Health Devon (advice, resources, training):
www.childrenandfamilyhealth-devon.nhs.uk

NHS Speech & Language Therapy referral:
https://childrenandfamilyhealthdevon.nhs.uk/referral-forms

Key Reminders

If you are concerned about your child's communication development, speak to your child's teacher or the SEND team.

Early support can make a big difference.

Contact the SEND Team

For support or queries, please contact: Admin@topsham.devon.sch.uk (Your message will be forwarded to the SEND Team)

Together, we are united in supporting every child to communicate, connect and thrive.

NHS Speech, Language and Communication Pathway and The Balanced System ® Transformation

The Balanced System
https://childrenandfamilyhealthdevon.nhs.uk/news-and-events/the-balanced-system-transformation/#jump-collapse10020
i Children and Family Health Devon
The Balanced System ® Transformation - Children and Family Health Devon

https://childrenandfamilyhealthdevon.nhs.uk/

Speech, Language and Communication Pathway and The Balanced System ® Transformation To help meet the needs of the children and young people of Devon, we are using a framework called The Balanced System®. This system is designed to make sure that everyone, including children and young people along with their support networks, including parents and [...]

Est. reading time

1 minute