

# Making effective referrals

## Considering the whole child or young person

When referring to speech and language services, the information provided by referrers is invaluable. Detailed and relevant information on the child or young person's background will enable professionals to provide the most appropriate support as quickly as possible.



Think about...



### Family history

A family history of speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) can be a 'red flag' for services as needs may be related to genetics or environment. With parental permission, any knowledge of siblings or other family members' needs should be included when making a referral.

### If applicable, include information on:

- sensory needs (eg visual, hearing etc)
- cognitive profile (eg memory)
- mental health
- learning difficulties

Also, consider whether the CYP requires a referral to one of these professionals as well as, or instead, of speech and language services.



Check your knowledge about speech, language and communication using the

**SLCF** 

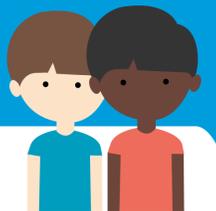


### Related needs and challenges

Diagnoses or professional recommendations / opinions may affect where a referral goes and how quickly a child or young person (CYP) receives support. For example, if a CYP has had contact with psychologists, paediatricians, occupational therapists, audiologists or advisory teachers, it may be appropriate to attach a report or include basic information.

### Find out:

- **What do parents say about their home language/s?** If the child has SLCN they will have difficulties in all languages, not just English.
- **How long have they been exposed to English and how often?** It can take up to 5 years to catch up to the levels achieved by native speakers.
- **Can they learn new vocabulary when explicitly taught?** If yes, then SLCN is less likely.



### English as an additional language (EAL)

For children who are exposed to more than one language, language development can vary. This on its own is **not** a SLCN and does not require a speech and language referral. However, children with EAL are just as likely to have SLCN as their monolingual peers.

### Parental consent

It is essential that consent is gained from parents or carers **before** a referral is made. No speech and language service will accept a referral without this. Think carefully about how to approach parents; it is not easy for any parent to hear that their child might have difficulties.



For more information, watch our video on 'Talking to parents' 

Click on the link symbols () above to view the resources and tools mentioned. For more information, visit [www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/referrals](http://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/referrals)