

West Essex School age Speech and Language Therapy Service

Information for parents and schools for children with speech, language or communication needs starting school ver 15.03.23

Starting school is a big step for children and brings new opportunities for speech, language and communication development.

Preparing children for the move can help them cope better with the change. The following tips can be helpful:

- Talk to children about starting school
- Show them pictures of the school/teacher/classroom/playground/new classmates
- Show them the uniform, practise putting it on and checking it is comfortable
- Practise the walk/drive to school so that it is familiar
- Visit these sites for additional information:

[Going to school - TLC \(tlc-essex.info\)](http://tlc-essex.info)

[starting or switching school \(autism.org.uk\)](http://autism.org.uk)

Preparing school staff for your child's transition is very important. Helping your child's new teachers to understand your child's needs and make appropriate preparations will give your child the best chance to settle quickly:

- Share with the school SENCO any information about your child's difficulties/diagnoses
 - Share any guidance given to you by Speech and Language Therapy and from any other professionals
 - It is helpful to do this before children start school, for example at an information event at the school or a visit from the class teacher in the Summer term, prior to school entry
 - It is helpful to have a visual timetable of your child's day, that can be used to prepare your child and help them understand the activities across the day. Parents and teachers should liaise together about setting this up
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- **Children who have difficulties with listening/understanding** will need adult instructions to be simplified. They may require visuals (e.g. pictures, objects) to be used to support their understanding.

There are many targeted interventions that support development of understanding and expression. Please have a look at our service website for strategies to put in place.

Please also have a look at our document 'Supporting Children with SLCN in school' attached below for targeted interventions to embed before referring:



Children who have difficulties with social communication may require additional differentiation across the curriculum. The progression framework from the Autism Education Trust is used by many schools to appropriately differentiate the curriculum. www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/parents

Children who have difficulties with using speech sounds, particularly those with speech sound delay (phonological delay) often make good progress with their speech sound development and intelligibility during the first term in school, as a result of the opportunities provided in school e.g. phonics groups, early reading activities.

After your child has settled in school if you continue to have concerns:

- Parents and school should discuss their concerns together. There may be additional support that can be offered in school. Teachers may also be able to give parents ideas of how to help your child at home.
- If your child is not already on our Speech and Language Therapy caseload we will require a referral. In most cases we require information about what the school has already put in place, so the class teacher or the school SENCo is often the best person to make this referral. Details and the referral form are on our website:
[Speech and Language Therapy – Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service \(essexfamilywellbeing.co.uk\)](http://essexfamilywellbeing.co.uk)
- If your child is already registered with our Speech and Language Therapy Service and parents or teachers continue to have queries, then please contact the service. If parents contact us, you will be able to update us on your child's progress and share any concerns. We can then explore next steps with you. If school contact us, please send us a copy of the latest Assess, Plan, Do, Review (APDR) or One Plan cycle.

When submitting a new referral or requesting a review for a child already known to our service, **please ensure you submit an APDR or One Plan cycle**. These must clearly show the interventions/strategies already put into place to support the child's speech and language needs, the progress made towards these and the next steps. **Without this information, we are unable to offer a review.**

- **Please do not contact your child's previous pre-school therapist** once the child has started school as this will lead to delays in accessing the appropriate team. Please use the contact details below to access our school age service.
- **Our contact details:**
vcl.essexwest-slt@nhs.net



03002 470122 option 3 option 1

Please provide the child's name and date of birth in the email or voicemail so we can link the enquiry to the child's health record.

If there are other concerns about the child's development, please contact our Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service Health Family Team on 0300 247 0122 option 1.