



# How to use the Parent Portal: A Guide for Schools

Welcome to Speech and Language Link's Parent Portal! This site has been specifically designed to help parents who are supporting their children's speech and language development at home. The Parent Portal is packed with information and resources to help parents/carers understand their child's speech and language difficulties as well as fun activities for families to improve key speech and language skills at home. We have created this guide to help schools make the most of our Parent Portal. Read on to find out how you can use the information and resources to engage with parents and work together more effectively to help children reach their potential.

## Getting Started

This guide will walk you through the information and resources which can be found on the website. We've made all of this available for schools to share with parents and carers for free. You can share the website with parents to explore for themselves, but this guide will share our advice on how to maximise parent engagement using the Parent Portal.

Find us here: <https://speechandlanguage.info/parents>



## Step 1: Home Page

**SUPPORT FOR PARENTS**

Welcome to the Parent Portal, our new parent support site for children with speech and language difficulties.

We are a team of speech and language therapists and software engineers who develop packages of assessments and interventions for schools, called Speech Link and Language Link. We have put together some of our activities and games from our award-winning packages for you to use freely at home. Use our developmental charts to help you decide which activities are for your child. Our information section explains the difference between speech and language and why they are so important and don't forget to watch our new top tip video series where our speech and language therapists will show you how to support your child at home.

**WHAT'S NEW?**

We are always adding new and exciting games, blogs and top tips to our Speech Link Parent Portal. Find the newest resources here.

We hope you and your child enjoy using this website.

Start here when you first land on the website to check out **'What's New?'**. This will be regularly updated with any new content that has been added to the site so you don't miss anything. Coming soon: we are excited to be producing two new video series! Look out for 'Can I have your attention?' (a video series of listening lessons for families to watch at home), 'Survival guides' (advice for tackling common problems when working on speech and language), and new activities!



## Step 2: Information



- PARENTS
- INFORMATION**
- DEVELOPMENT
- ACTIVITIES
- BLOG
- TOP TIPS VIDEOS
- ABOUT US

### WHY ARE SPEECH AND LANGUAGE SO IMPORTANT?



Speech and language skills are absolutely fundamental to our wellbeing and success in life. We use these skills constantly to communicate our wants and needs to others, to collaborate and negotiate, and to build strong bonds with other people. Language skills are also important for our learning. In schools and at home, we learn new skills and acquire new knowledge by listening to others talking and reading written language. The demands on language skills only increase as children get older and progress through their education.

It's often easy to identify children who have difficulties with unclear speech, as you will find it difficult to understand their talking, and your child may be frustrated when their speech is not understood. Language, on the other hand, can be a hidden difficulty which is harder to identify as we often can't observe whether someone has or hasn't understood.

### SHOULD I BE CONCERNED?

If you have any concerns about your child's speech or language skills we strongly encourage you to discuss your concerns with your child's school (their class teacher and/or SENCo), as they know your child well and will be able to talk to you about the resources and services which are available to you locally.

Parents do not cause speech and language difficulties, but you can help children to resolve difficulties and build good speech and language skills by adapting the way you communicate and by practising key skills with your children at home. We've put together the information, resources and activities on this website to help you work with your children at home to boost their speech and language skills, and we'll be adding to it as we produce new content and resources for you to use at home, so keep checking back to make sure you don't miss out!



Parents can learn more about why speech and language skills are important and why they can impact on a child's learning in the Information tab. This is a good place for parents to start, especially if they have concerns about their child's development or progress with their speech and language.

We have broken down different areas of speech and language skills into plain English - without the jargon - to help teachers and families communicate about a child's needs more clearly. Here is where you can find specific advice about how to unpick children's speech and language needs and what parents can do next if they are concerned.

- Are you concerned about your child's speech? >
- Are you concerned about language? >

## Step 3: Development



PARENTS INFORMATION **DEVELOPMENT** ACTIVITIES BLOG TOP TIPS VIDEOS ABOUT US

### DEVELOPMENT

We have put together lots of information about what parents can expect from their child's development at different ages. This can sometimes be overwhelming, so to make this information accessible, we've broken it down according to different communication skills: Listening and Attention, Understanding, Talking, and Speech. Clear statements and examples will help parents to recognise what level their child is currently working at. It's useful for staff at school too! This is a really important step for determining what types of activities are appropriate for the child to be working on home.

Talking - Using words and sentences

- > Up to 14
- > Up to 11
- > Up to 9
- > Up to 7
- > Up to 5
- > **Up to 4**
- > Up to 3
- > Up to 2½
- > Up to 2
- > Up to 1½

- > I am using sentences of 4-6 words in length
- > I can talk about things that have happened in the past, although I make a few mistakes (e.g. 'I goed to the zoo')
- > I am trying to use plurals and past tense verbs, although I sometimes get them wrong (e.g. 'I seed two sheeps')
- > I can ask 'why' and 'how' questions
- > I am beginning to use 'and' and 'because' to link words and sentence
- > I can use lots of describing words like 'big', 'sticky', 'round' and 'wet'
- > I can use pronouns, like 'he', 'she' and 'they'
- > I can use a range of negative words like 'don't', 'can't' and 'haven't'

## Step 4: Activities



PARENTS INFORMATION DEVELOPMENT **ACTIVITIES** BLOG TOP TIPS VIDEOS ABOUT US

This is where you will find our treasure trove of speech and language resources which you can share with parents. There's lots to find here, so it can be a good idea to highlight key activities which are relevant for a child to their parents – this extra step will help parents know that they're on the right track with their interventions at home. You will find a selection of speech activities, online interactive listening games, and language activities which are appropriate for children from EYFS up to KS3. To help you direct parents to the right activities for their child, we've colour-coded our language activities to match the ages and stages in our developmental tables.

### LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES

We have put together lots of games and activities for you to use with your child at home to encourage their understanding and talking. We have divided this section into colour bands to show you the stage of development the activity is encouraging. Use our developmental tables to see what the next steps are for your child and then use the language activities to encourage the development of those skills. For example, if your child's next language steps were in the green band on the development chart then choose from the green language activities.

Red - Up to 1½	>
Orange - Up to 2	>
Yellow - Up to 2½	>
Green - Up to 3	>
Light Blue - Up to 4	>

  

<p><b>Hide and seek</b> This game is for understanding and using pronouns, 'he', 'she' and 'they'.</p>	<p><b>I like don't like</b> This game is for learning negative 'don't' and answering 'why' questions.</p>	<p><b>Ready steady go</b> This game encourages understanding and use of simple past tense verbs.</p>	<p><b>Traffic jam</b> This game develops understanding of concepts, 'behind' and 'in front of'.</p>
<p><b>Who wants what</b> This game is for understanding and using pronouns, 'he', 'she' and 'they'.</p>	<p><b>Why because</b> This game is for answering 'why' questions.</p>		

### INTERACTIVE GAMES

These games are to help develop your child's ability to tell the difference between sounds and work out where sounds are in words. Both these skills are important for speaking as well as reading.

There are five different levels:

- Pinata Island** - Helps listen for single sounds
- Circus** - Helps identify sounds in single words
- Haunted House** - Helps discriminate between socially unfamiliar words
- Racing** - Helps identify sounds at the beginning
- Submarine** - Helps identify sounds at beginning and ends of words

[Play Games](#)

Because it can be more difficult to engage children when they are at home, we've also got some suggestions for how to adapt everyday activities so that working on speech and language can be slotted in throughout the day.

### EVERYDAY ACTIVITIES

The best way to encourage your child's speech and language development is to do lots of talking and listening together. There is no need to have special tasks or extra time in the day to do this, it is always good to talk. This is why everyday activities like mealtimes, having a bath and even household chores, such as organising the washing, are perfect for developing your child's speech and language skills. By using everyday activities, you can talk about events and situations that are very familiar to your child and enables them to practice the language skills that they have already learned and to build on these skills.

Almost any daily event can be used, there are some ideas below to get you started.

<p><b>Bath Time Fun</b></p>	<p><b>Watching TV Together</b></p>	<p><b>Sharing Books</b></p>	<p><b>Playing Computer Games</b></p>
<p><b>Mealtimes</b></p>	<p><b>Doing Housework</b></p>		

## Step 5: Blog



PARENTS INFORMATION DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES **BLOG** TOP TIPS VIDEOS ABOUT US

Our speech and language therapists share ideas for activities and advice on our blog to help to motivate and inspire families who are affected by SLCN. These quick reads can come in handy for school staff too!

### PARENTS' BLOG

#### Sound Flakes

by Juliet Leonard

18 Jan 2021

There is always time to promote fun with phonics. Try this Sound Flakes activity with children who are starting their literacy journey.



#### Let the holidays begin!

by Juliet Leonard

19 Dec 2020

We'll done for making it to the end of term! Thank you to all of our hard working teachers and education staff who have given their everything this year - you are our heroes! Now its time to reflect and embrace some holiday time.



## Step 6: Top Tips Videos



PARENTS INFORMATION DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES BLOG **TOP TIPS VIDEOS** ABOUT US

Our speech and language therapists star in a series of short videos which explain our top tips – simple strategies which support children’s understanding and help them to develop good communication skills in every interaction. It’s good to talk, and we want to help get families talking.





Share these with parents to build their skills and confidence for supporting their child's communication every day.

## Finally: About Us



PARENTS INFORMATION DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES BLOG TOP TIPS VIDEOS **ABOUT US**

Here's where you can find out more about our team of speech and language therapists who are there to help schools support children at home. There's plenty more that our company can offer, so why not visit [www.speechandlanguage.info](http://www.speechandlanguage.info) to learn more about us.

Any questions? We're happy to help. You can contact our **Help Desk** 8.30-5pm, Monday to Friday.

Telephone: 0333 577 0784

Email: [office2@speechlink.co.uk](mailto:office2@speechlink.co.uk)



## Our tips for success with supporting parents:

- Use the development tables to help parents understand more about their child's skills and reasonable expectations. You can use your knowledge of the child and their parents' feedback to locate the level that the child is currently working at on the development tables. Then, direct parents towards the appropriate colour band for the child's language level.
- Lots of parents can feel that they do not have the knowledge and skills to work on production of speech sounds at home. The guidance for parents in our 'Information' tab will help parents to feel more confident in this area. Our structured speech activities and online, interactive games focus on listening to speech sounds, which is a fundamental skill for speech development and an easy way for parents to support speech development at home with little experience.
- Because our speech activities focus on listening, these activities will also be useful for children who are learning to read and write. Developing a child's listening and sound processing (also called phonological awareness) skills provides a crucial foundation for developing their literacy skills.
- Many parents will find it difficult to allocate time for dedicated speech and language activities or may have difficulty finding and/or printing the resources they need. We have created advice sheets and videos to support parents with developing speech and language skills through everyday activities at home without the need for anything extra.
- Our blog has lots of quick-read articles which can build parents' confidence and offer inspiration for things to do with their children at home.
- More coming soon! We're working on lots of new content for to support families at home and we will be adding these to the website in the coming weeks.





## Which Parent Portal resources are appropriate for our Language Link groups?

We know that many children will not be attending their usual Infant Language Link and Junior Language Link interventions at this time. The Parent Portal resources, designed specifically with parents in mind, are perfect for continuing with your speech and language interventions at home. Here's how our Parent Portal resources can be used to support remote delivery of the Language Link packages:

Infant Language Link group	Parent Portal resources
Listening Groups	Hands and Feet Rhyme Detectives Farmyard Sounds Syllable Steps Socks Box Bin it! Grand National
Year R General Language Groups: Playground Classroom Beach	Who is the thief? Shoes and Socks Shopping List Gymnastics Beach Bingo
Concepts and Instructions	Traffic jam Autumn Treasure Hunt Big Ted Little Ted Draw it Mini Olympics
Language Structure	Hide and Seek Like, don't like Ready, steady, go Who wants what? Bounce the ball
Questioning and Reasoning	Why because What's in the bag? What's the time Mr Wolf?
Vocabulary Skills	Dice Odd one out Yes/No game

Junior Language Link group	Parent Portal resources
Listening Groups	Rhyme Detectives Syllable Steps Socks Box Bin it! Grand National Classroom Chaos



Year 3 General Language Groups: Swimming Pool Shopping Centre Park	Like, don't like What's in the bag? Mini Olympics On Holiday When I grow up
Concepts and Instructions	Strictly Robots Before and after Position the parents The case of the missing tablet
Language Structure	Colour Me Conditional Cubes Sports bag
Questioning and Reasoning	Donkey What will happen next? Detectives What's in the box?
Vocabulary Skills	Yes/No Game
Language for Assessment	For pupils who have been recommended a Language for Assessment group, we recommend that it will be most beneficial to consolidate their learning with all of the resources appropriate to the Junior Language Link programme. Our subscribers can contact our help desk for advice if you need help selecting appropriate resources for any pupil.

**Remember:** subscribers can find lots more advice sheets and homework resources for parents in the 'Involve Parents' tab of each of our main packages. Go to your school's login to discover more!