

### Speechlink: Children's progress

Initial speech assessments were carried out in September/ October 2006 with follow-up assessments being completed from March to May 2007, approximately 6 months later. Children completed the Speechlink assessment, which was administered by the Teaching Assistant, before and after the support. Children were also assessed by the Speech and language therapist using a traditional phonology assessment to check on the validity of the Speechlink screen and the accuracy of administering by the Teaching Assistant. This confirmed the results of the Speechlink screen showing a similar pattern of errors. Results showed that all children made progress. The following chart details the specific areas of improvement.

<b>Child</b>	<b>Changes in speech</b>	<b>Comments</b>
1	Now using the sounds 'f', 'v', 's' and 'z'. Using more 's' and 'l' consonant blends, e.g. 'plate' and 'snake'.	Letter recognition improved. Her speech has improved. I know how to work with my child at home and give them more support.
2	Using consonant blends, e.g. 'flag' and 'star'.	He has improved in both reading and writing. He hears and can write initial sounds in words and is trying now to use final and medial sounds. His speech is clearer. He has gained more confidence.
3	Using 'f' and 'r' at the beginning of words. Using 'ch' and 'j' in all word positions.	Improvement in letter and word recognition and reading level. His speech and listening skills have improved. All adults and peers can now understand him.
4	Using 'v' and 'r' in all word positions and in some blends, e.g. 'drum' . Using 'l' at the beginning and end of words.	Moved up 3 reading levels. His speech has improved so much since starting the programme. He is very confident and all of his speech is now understandable. The support has been really helpful and good for him.
5	Using 's', 'z', 'f' and 'v'. Using final consonants, e.g. 'cup' instead of 'cu_'. Using quieter sounds at the beginning of words, e.g. 'pig' instead of 'big'. Using some blends, e.g. 'blue'.	Feedback forms not returned.
6	Using 'h' at the beginning of words.	He has enjoyed the activities. He appears to have tried to focus on the sounds we have been learning, he knows which sounds they are.
7	Able to use the sounds 's' and 'f'	Recognises all letters and is now very

	at the beginning of words when copying another speaker.	eager to read. His speech is much better now. His listening skills are much improved and he joins in with stories.
8	Using quieter sounds at the beginning of words, e.g. 'pig' instead of 'big'. Able to use the sounds 's' and 'f' at the beginning of words when copying another speaker.	He recognises more letters. His attention skills are improving. He combines more words when talking. His speech is clearer but he still needs help. I am able to do this at home.
9	Using 'l' and 'sh' in all word positions. Using 'r' at the beginning of some words and in blends, e.g. 'green'.	Improvements made in speech. It was good because there were good pictures in it and the activities were good. Before I couldn't say different words.
10	Using 'r' at the beginning of words and in some blends, e.g. 'green'. Using 'l' more consistently in all word positions.	He now self corrects. Parents have noticed more clarity in his speech with improvements made throughout the programme. Improvements in confidence and speech. I really love speech link. It was a good lesson. It makes me say my words better.
11	Using 'l', 'r', 'sh', 'ch' and 'j' in all word positions. Using 'h' at the beginning of words.	Knows all of the alphabet. Beginning to segment and blend. His speech is greatly improved. He is thinking about sounds before saying them and correcting himself at home. Increased confidence in speaking out in whole class groups. Volunteers information.
12	Using 'sh' in all word positions. Using 'l' more consistently in all word positions and blends, e.g. 'flag'.	Feedback forms not returned.
13	Using 'f' in all word positions. Using 's' in the middle and at the end of words.	No info
14	Using 'k/c' and 'g' at the beginning of words. Using 'sh', 'ch' and 'j' in all word positions.	No info
15	Using 's', 'z', 'sh' and 'j' in all word positions.	No info
16	Using 'f' and 'v' in all word positions. Now using 'y' at the beginning of words.	Speech is clear

17	Using 'ch' at the beginning of words. Using 'j' at the beginning and end of words.	No info
18	Using 'ch' and 'j' at the beginning and end of words. Using 'sh' in the middle and at the end of words. Can use at the beginning of words when prompted.	During the sessions he can say the sounds but isn't transferring them. Concentrating better in class now.
19	Using 't', 'd' in all word positions. Using 'f', 's' and 'sh' at the beginning and in the middle of words.	Recognises a wider range of letter sounds. I understand him most of the time. He is confident to speak to me in the playground now as well as in school.
20	Using 'k/c' and 'g' in all word positions.	Now knows all letter sounds. Hears sounds in CVC words. Speech is much clearer. More confident than before. Will speak more and in sentences.

- The feedback from children was positive – that they enjoyed the Speechlink assessment and activities.
- Children with speech delay made greater progress than those with disordered speech or unusual articulation difficulties, for example a lateral 's' (where the air flows down the sides rather than the middle of the tongue).
- Children made progress with a range of sounds rather than the initial sound/s difficulty that was identified.
- The child's age did not make any difference to their rate of progress.
- A number of children made progress in other areas of development such as:
  - Literacy skills
  - Listening and attention
  - Confidence.