

Communicative,  
articulate, and  
empowered children



We are achieving this by collaborating with partners across the council, overcoming system barriers, and focusing on solutions to drive continuous improvement. By strengthening links between health, education, the third sector, Family Hubs, and social care, we will establish a well-embedded Early Years Speech, Language, and Communication Pathway across St Helens Borough Council.

**Vision Statement:**

Our vision is to ensure that every child in an educational setting receives high-quality, appropriate speech and language support without the need for specialist referrals. Additionally, every child outside an educational setting should have immediate access to community-based language interventions. We also aim for all practitioners working with children under 5 to possess basic knowledge of supporting speech, language, and communication development

**Collaboration:** Established processes between council partners.

EY Speech and Language Operational Group

EY Speech and Language Strategic Group

-Task and Finish Group: NSPCC Talk Pants Campaign

Family HUB Strategic Group

**Strengthened Links:** Built strong connections between health, education, the third sector, family hubs, and social care.

By aligning our priorities, all engaged parties collaborate to identify their service’s training needs (e.g. specific skills for Early Help and Social Care), streamline processes (pathway organised by SEND Graduated Approach), and enhance communication between services (agreed priorities and shared vision).

**System Improvement:** Overcame barriers and focused on solutions to enhance current systems.

Implementing new interventions like Tots Talking (18 months+), aligning them by children’s age, and integrating with the Healthy Child Programme (0-19 Team). Utilising consistent assessments (Ages and Stages Questionnaire, QSQ and Early Language Identification Measure, ELIM) across health services and Family Hub interventions, such as Chatterbox. Empowering early years group-based provision to conduct high-quality assessments for all children aged 0-5 and plan appropriate actions and interventions (WellComm).

**Pathway Development:** Progressed towards a well-embedded Early Years Speech, Language, and Communication Pathway across St Helens Borough Council

- Early Years Speech and Language Pathway follows the St Helens SEND Graduated Approach
- Most referrals for Speech and Language therapy are appropriate

80% of children attending the Chatterbox language intervention do not need to be referred to the specialist service (Speech and Language therapy), 99 % of group-based settings have attended WellComm training and have the assessment available in the nursery, 45 early years professionals from across St Helens have started the ELKLAN Speech and Language training, 40 early years providers took part in the Helicopter Stories training (2022/23 and 2023/24), 20 - Tales Toolkit, (2023.24); all schools and settings had an opportunity to participate in the Greg Bottrill training- Drawing Club (2022.23) 15 early years professionals (including childminders) are to complete the Early Years Professionals Development Programme in January 2024, to date about 45 practitioners completed it (2019-24).

# The Early Years Speech & Language Pathway

The St Helens Early Years Speech and Language Pathway follows a graduated approach to support your child's speech and language development. Here's how it works:

**Universal Support:** All children receive support at this level. This includes general strategies and activities to help with speech and language development.

**Early Support:** Some children may need additional short-term intervention. If your child needs more help, they will move to this level where they receive targeted support for a short period.

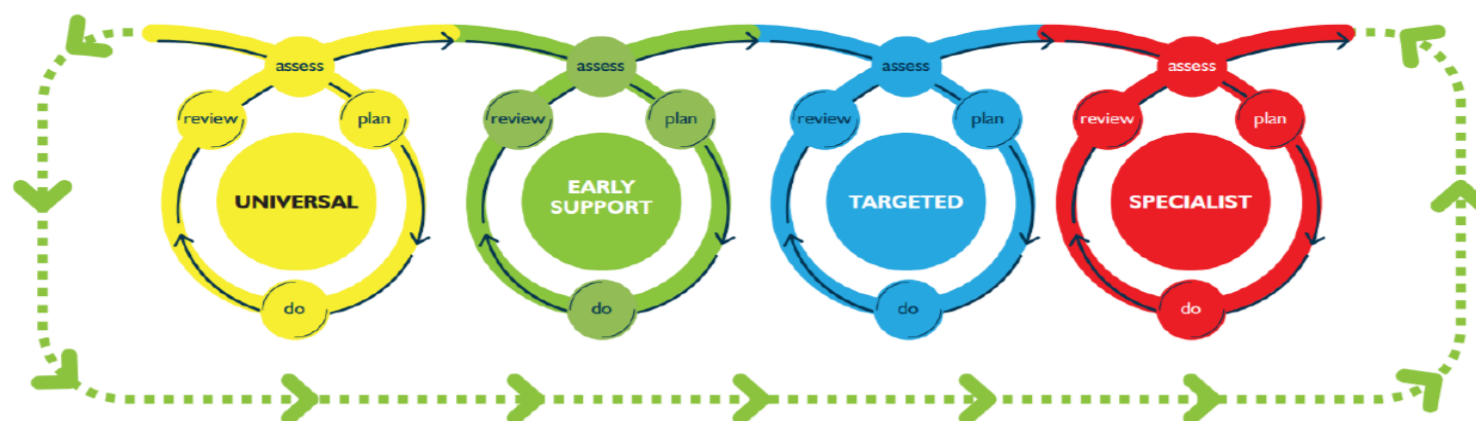
**Targeted Support:** If the short-term support at the Early Support level isn't enough, your child will move to Targeted Support. Here, interventions are longer and often include guidance from the Speech and Language Therapy team.

**Specialist Support:** A very small number of children may need even more help. At this level, children work directly with professionals from the Speech and Language Therapy team for specialized support.

This pathway ensures that every child gets the right level of support they need at the right time. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to us – [EYHUB@sthelens.gov.uk](mailto:EYHUB@sthelens.gov.uk) [↗](#)



# A Graduated Approach to Speech, Language and Communication Needs in the Early Years



Children				
	Universal	Early Support	Targeted	Specialist
For all age ranges- an overview	<p>Calm atmosphere Unique child Positive relationships Enabling environment Parents as partners Role of the key person Healthy Child Healthy diet 2 year old check</p>	<p>Individual timetable Meetings with parents Use visual support (objects of reference, photographs, symbols) Differentiate the curriculum Create an individual action plan (Individual Education Plan; Plan, Do, Review Plan)/SEND Support plan</p> <p>Follow the assessment cycle: Assess, Plan, Do a Review</p>	<p>Sending referrals to external agencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children Centre/Family Hubs interventions <b>Speech and Language: How Babies Learn to Talk (coming soon), Tots Talking (from 18 months – 3 year olds), Chatterbox (from 2 to 3 year olds)</b></li> <li>0-19 Team (Health Visitor)</li> <li>Community Nursery nurse)</li> <li>Speech and Language Therapy</li> </ul> <p>Follow the assessment cycle: Assess, Plan, Do Review.</p>	<p>Ensure that any individual action plan (IEP, SEND Support, Plan, Do Review) has personalised targets suggested by all professionals involved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Bridge Centre Outreach</li> <li>Speech and Language Therapy</li> </ul> <p>Follow the assessment cycle: Assess, Plan, Do Review.</p>

Training (Greg Botrill Drawing Club, Tales Toolkit, Helicopter Stories; ELKLAN, EYPDP) Next step: Early Talk Boost

- Assessment (ECAT, WellComm)
- Resources: Makaton Core vocabulary (to be delivered to all educational settings); NSPCC Talk Pants distributed to all group-based providers.

## Education Phase: Embedding

## Health Phase: Embedding

- Training (ELKLAN, the use of ELIM, NSPCC Talk Pants)
- Assessment: ELIM and A& SQ
- Resources: NSPCC Talk Pants to be delivered, NSPCC Look, Say, Sing Play for under 2s used for vulnerable families

•Training: Specialist training for Social Care designed with Speech and Language UK -, first delivery 26.3.25

- Assessment: in discussion
- Resources: in discussion

## Social Care Phase: building relationship, developing

## Third Sector and parents Phase: Developing

- Training for the third sector: PEEP, ELKLAN
- Assessment: ECAT- to be further developed
- Resources: NSPCC Talk Pants delivered to some partners
- Website for parents is in the process of being published (consulted with Parent Carers Forum and Family HUB parents)
- Getting to know community-based parent and child groups

## EYFS Profile Official data: Key Trends (28.11.24)

- **Improvement Over Time:** There is a consistent decrease in the percentage of children at the emerging level and an increase in the percentage at the expected level across all areas from 2021/22 to 2023/24.
- **Communication and Language:** The percentage of children at the expected level increased from 76.2% to 78.0%.
- **Literacy:** Significant improvement with the percentage of children at the expected level rising from 63.3% to 68.0%.
- **Writing:** Noticeable progress with the percentage of children at the expected level increasing from 64.7% to 69.1%.

This data indicates positive trends in early years education, with more children reaching the expected levels in communication, language, and literacy over the three academic years.