

Bolton Start Well Service - Early Years Communication & Language Development Team

Frequently Asked Questions:

How do I know if a child is in line with their age related expectations, below or at risk of communication and language delay when using the communication and language monitoring tool?

You need to be aware of the child's age in months to ensure you are able to use the monitoring tool effectively.

- The bands do not overlap and so professional judgement would be used as children approach the border of an age band to ensure their needs are met.
- Previous progress made and knowledge of the whole child should influence whether you deem them to be below age related expectations as they pass age wise into the next band.
- They should make progress in a timely way to meet the next band and so maintain typical development and continue to make progress.

If the professional considers the child to not be making steady progress as indicated by the statements on the tool then further support and action should be taken to support the child appropriately.

Some examples would be:

- A child just accessing 2 year old funding and so 25 months would be considered to be inline as the Developing Communicator (by 36 months). If they are working at the Innovative Communicator (by 2 years) stage then they would be considered to be below age related expectations (so scoring at one band below). If they are working at the Attentive Communicator (by 18 months) stage then they would be considered to be at risk of communication and language delay (so scoring at two bands below) and appropriate support would need to be put into place. However, you may use your professional judgement and consider the child to be inline as they are only just 2 years old and support them to move quickly into the Developing Communicator stage.
- If a child is 39 months and just accessing 3 year old funding then they should be working within the Questioning Communicator by 48 months band as in line with age related expectations. If they are working at the Developing Communicator (by 36 months) stage then they would be considered to be below age related expectations (so scoring at one band below). If they are working at the Innovative Communicator (by 2 years) stage then they would be considered to be at risk of communication and language delay (so scoring at two bands below) and appropriate support would need to be put into place.
- A reception aged child (48 months plus) should be working within the Skilled Communicator by 60 months to be considered in line with age related expectations. If they are working at the Questioning Communicator (by 48 months) for any aspect they would be considered as below

age related expectations (so scoring at one band below). If they are working at the Developing Communicator (by 36 months) they would be considered to be at risk of delay for this aspect of communication and language (so scoring at two bands below) and action would need to be taken to support the child.

- Don't forget to use the comments sections on the monitoring tool to record any extra help a child is given as this will be invaluable in informing future support. It's important to add what interventions are used to support the child, date started and review date so impact and progress made can be seen easily.

Why should I use the WellComm Toolkit?

WellComm is a speech and language toolkit for screening and intervention in the early years.

It helps to identify the specific difficulties a child has with their communication skills within the areas identified by the communication and language monitoring tool above.

It also gives ideas of targeted interventions and activities that will support the development of those specific skills (The Big Book of Ideas). These activities can be used in settings and shared with parents for use in the home learning environment.

It assesses understanding and expression and will give extra information about attention and listening skills.

When should I use the WellComm Assessment?

WellComm should be used when the communication and language monitoring tool indicates that a child is below age related expectations or at risk of communication and language delay.

For example, during universal assessment of a cohort, a child may be identified as below age expectation in their understanding using the communication and language monitoring tool. The WellComm assessment would then be used to identify which specific elements they have difficulties with e.g. understanding 2 part instructions or understanding who questions. The Big Book of Ideas would then give ideas for setting and parents to use to help the child develop those skills.

The WellComm toolkit can also be used to monitor children's progress after targeted interventions.

Using the two tools together as described will provide that extra layer of security to your assessment systems which should mean any communication and language development needs are identified early.

Want to know more?

If you have any questions about using the Communication and Language Monitoring Tool please don't hesitate to contact the Start Well Service: Early Years Communication and Language Development Team on EYCLDS@bolton.gov.uk or ring 01203 338349.