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# WellComm Early Years Sampler



A Speech and Language Toolkit for Screening  
and Intervention in the Early Years:  
Revised Edition.

## Getting Started

- 1.** Start by reading *The Handbook*; then familiarise yourself with *The Little Book of Score Sheets and Rules* alongside *The Picture Book*; then look at *The Big Book of Ideas*.
  - a. If you have a subscription to *The WellComm Report Wizard*, then this would be a good opportunity to log on and familiarise yourself with the platform.
- 2.** *The Handbook* is a clear, easy to read guidance on how to screen with the WellComm Early Years Toolkit. It also guides you through how to interpret the results, select targeted activities (from *The Big Book of Ideas*) and provides guidance on making a referral. In addition, it gives an overview of language development which will aid your observations.
- 3.** *The Little Book of Scoresheets and Rules* and *The Picture Book* provide the framework for the screener. Note that the books are divided by age band with each band denoted by a particular colour. There are also some example score sheets in the Appendix.
- 4.** *The Big Book of Ideas* helps you support a child's understanding, grammar, vocabulary, narrative and social skills. It outlines activities for each question/area covered in *The Little Book of Score Sheets and Rules*. There are also general strategies which give guidance for children who present with a stammer, voice difficulties or a reluctance to talk.

5. Find a quiet setting to work individually with the child, use ***The Picture Book*** and ***The Little Book of Score Sheets and Rules*** (user instructions are in The Handbook).
6. At the end of the screening, add up the number of ticks and use the score guide to ascertain whether the child scores Red, Amber or Green.
  - a. If the child scores Amber or Red, move back an age band and re-screen. Keep doing this until the child scores green – this is your starting point.
7. Once you have drawn up a child's profile, you will be able to see where their individual needs lie. You may notice a trend for the child or you may see that all aspects are developing evenly but at a slower pace than expected for the age. It is important to personalise your teaching to meet these needs – the pupil's profile will direct you through the most appropriate activities in The Big Book of Ideas that correspond to the child's language level.
8. An additional element of the toolkit, the ***WellComm Early Years Report Wizard***, can also help with recording and analysing children's progress. By uploading the results of the ***WellComm Early Years Screening Tool*** to a secure website, the Report Wizard allows the progress of individuals and groups of children to be monitored and automatically generates individual, group or cluster reports.
  - a. Individual reports generate a profile of a child's current language skills. They provide a list of next steps for teaching targets (based on the items that the child did not achieve). From this list, the user is directed to the relevant activities in ***The Big Book of Ideas***.
  - b. Group and Cluster reports are for a holistic/management view of overall trends based on a number of categories such as gender, EAL, Pupil Premium etc.

## 2. Using the Screening Tool

### Getting started

This Handbook provides all the information that practitioners need to evaluate children in any early years setting (including the home environment) and to plan creative and imaginative play-based activities to meet children's language needs. It helps practitioners make decisions about children according to their WellComm profile; this is done by establishing a colour-code for each child using the traffic-light system (Red, Amber, Green). Practitioners are also signposted to a range of appropriate, fun and user-friendly ideas and activities in *The Big Book of Ideas*. We recommend that you visit *all* the sections of this Handbook to be best prepared to use the Screening Tool and *The Big Book of Ideas* effectively and with confidence.

Communication encompasses a number of different skills, depending upon the age of the child being evaluated. A baby of 6 months, for example, will not have 'speech' as we understand it; therefore the target observations and activities should focus on how the child communicates, as well as what the child understands. As children get older, their use of spoken language becomes more important.

Through the WellComm Score Sheets, the Screening Tool looks at the amount and type of language that children are both 'using' and 'understanding'. In addition, they provide a simple and accessible guide to the development of speech sounds (phonology) and attention and listening skills; as well as how to spot difficulties including stammering (dysfluency) or voice problems. The advice given supports the practitioner in deciding whether there are any communication needs. Further advice can be found in Chapter 7 in this Handbook.

### Completing a Score Sheet and drawing up a profile

Each Score Sheet contains space for details about the child to be recorded (name, date of birth, age in months, gender, ethnicity and date of the assessment). This is followed by ten items: five items for screening 'What the child understands' and five items for screening 'What the child uses'. Each item is assessed by choosing a Yes/No answer, or by marking a tick (✓) or a cross (✗).

Both the Score Sheets and the corresponding set of instructions in *The Little Book of Score Sheets and Rules* are colour-matched and banded according to age.

Select the Score Sheet and the corresponding instructions that match the chronological age of the child being assessed in completed months. You will find more information on how to calculate the child's age in completed months on page 9.

Some of the items will require direct assessment of the child. We would advise practitioners to familiarise themselves with these items and the guidelines for administration (as outlined in *The Little Book of Score Sheets and Rules*) before using the Score Sheets with children. This will help prepare you for what comes next and ensure that any direct screening of items (as opposed to screening through observation or discussion) flows smoothly.

# The Handbook

Some of the information needed to complete the Score Sheets should be obtained from observations of the child and from talking to the parent/s. This is especially true for the younger age groups. It also helps ensure that the true essence of language for communication is reflected.

On the back of the Score Sheet, there is room to make additional comments regarding any concerns you may have about attention and listening, stammering, voice problems or speech sound development. For guidance on what to look out for, please see the information in this Handbook and the relevant sections in *The Big Book of Ideas* for further advice and activities.

## Carrying out direct screening

- *The Little Book of Score Sheets and Rules* contains exact instructions on how to complete each item of each Score Sheet. It also lists all the resources needed to administer each item.
- Gather together any equipment you may require – either real objects or toys (that can be easily found in any early years setting) and the *WellComm Picture Book*.
- For each item, it is essential to use the instructions in *The Little Book of Score Sheets and Rules*, rather than just looking at the Score Sheet for what to do.
- If possible, find a quiet corner to carry out any direct screening of items. This will help with the child's concentration.
- If you are screening in the child's own home, try to minimise any background noise (i.e. ask to switch off the television or radio).
- For children younger than three years, you may need to administer items at different times of the day rather than doing them all at once. This will help children maintain attention and will give you a better idea of what they are capable of.
- When giving instructions to the child, *do not* give any visual or verbal clues. This includes looking at or pointing to any of the objects or pictures you are asking questions about, as well as nodding with your head, or stressing individual words.
- Make sure the child waits until you have finished saying what you want him/her to do before he/she picks up or points to any objects or pictures.
- If a child is finding it hard to concentrate, take a break and come back to it later.
- Try not to give any specific feedback regarding whether an item has been achieved or not. Keep praise general regardless of the child's response (e.g. 'good listening' or 'good try'). Specific praise can change subsequent responses on items requiring more than one trial. Also, it can be demoralising when it is clear the child has not achieved an item.
- The screening process should be fun and a special one-to-one time – it is not meant to be like a formal test. Therefore it is acceptable to do different bits on different days.

## Using the WellComm *Picture Book* and other resources

- Each page of the *Picture Book* relates to individual items on the Score Sheets, as listed in the 'Resources needed' column in *The Little Book of Score Sheets and Rules*.
- For Picture Set 23 (Section 8.2), a card insert is provided. The figures on this card should be cut out and kept for individual administration.

# The Handbook

Part 1: Using WellComm

- When using the *Picture Book*, you may want to draw the child's attention to the fact that sometimes there is more than one item on the page (e.g. on the first page, children are asked to point to the correct picture from 'cup', 'ball' and 'car' – there are three items on the page). Where two items are presented (e.g. the 'broken' and the 'normal' pencil), point to both pencils randomly before asking, 'Where is the broken pencil?'
- Encourage the child to scan the whole page before asking him/her to listen and respond. It may be helpful to draw your finger over all the items, asking the child to 'look' without supplying any additional information before you ask him/her to 'point to the ...'. Pointing to the different areas of the page will help the child scan all the items before making a selection.
- When using real objects or toys, allow some handling of the items first if that is appropriate. This will hopefully ensure that the item chosen is more down to processing the language rather than selecting the item the child likes the most. Take your time and remember it is more important to get an accurate picture than to go through all the items in one session.

## Carrying out observations and talking to the parent/s

- It is important to explain clearly to the parent/s what you mean when asking questions and to give examples of possible behaviours and language skills. Ask them to give you precise examples of what their child is doing at home and in other situations wherever possible. This will enable a more accurate assessment to be made.
- Your observations are very important too – as is your knowledge of the child. Ensure that you observe accurately and carefully, and that you record exactly what you see and hear.
- Work through the Score Sheet, identifying items where you have already made an observation or have direct knowledge. This will help you complete each child's individual profile.
- If you are uncertain about any items, be sure to make observations or carry out direct screening if appropriate.

## Calculating a child's age in completed months

It is important to calculate a child's age in completed months first, as this will guide you as to which Score Sheet to use. This is done in months and is best done on the day that you begin profiling.

A child born on 2 March 2005 will not turn 5 years old until 2 March 2010. Therefore, if a child is screened on 1 March 2010 then the age would be 4 years and 11 months.

A child born on 8 July 2006 will not turn 3 years and 11 months until 8 June 2010. Therefore, if the child is screened on the 7 June 2010 then the age would still be 3 years and 10 months.

Some more examples are given below:

Date of Birth	23 April 2008	8 July 2006	2 March 2005	9 November 2004
Screening Date	22 April 2010	7 June 2010	1 March 2010	9 September 2010
Age (years:months)	1:11	3:10	4:11	5:10

# The Handbook

Once a child's age has been calculated, you can choose the appropriate Score Sheet and corresponding instructions in *The Little Book of Score Sheets and Rules*. Use the matching colours to help you find the corresponding sections quickly and easily.

## Troubleshooting

WellComm encourages practitioners to use their professional judgement and expertise when screening, and to apply this to their knowledge of each individual child.

It is recommended that, where possible, a child's key worker carries out any screening and profiling. This ensures that the child is assessed by the practitioner that knows him/her best and in different contexts, and who can evaluate the quality of the profile obtained and the appropriateness of any activities selected.

For example, if you know a child well and know that his/her attention is generally poor, make a note in the relevant box on the back of the Score Sheet and follow the advice and activities provided for attention and listening. If, however, a child normally has good attention but this is not evident on the day you begin direct work, stop and try again later. Attention may be poor for a number of reasons, such as being tired, feeling unwell or being over-excited. You may decide to wait a few days before trying to screen again.

It is important when drawing any conclusions that you use your professional judgement and knowledge to decide whether the screening outcome reflects the child's true abilities. If the child is having a 'bad' day, try screening another time. You may also wish to check individual items at different times to help concentration. It is important to gain as clear a picture as possible of children's language skills and needs.

## Scoring

Each section of the Score Sheet has a total of ten items. Draw up a profile for each child by recording their responses in the right-hand column of the Score Sheet. Next, add up all the items the child has achieved (i.e. those marked 'Yes' or with a tick (✓)). This will give you a total score out of ten.

These scores are then used to give the child a colour-code of Red, Amber or Green. You should look at the 'Score Guide' located on the bottom right-hand corner of the Score Sheet to work out what colour-code the child has achieved for that section of the Screening Tool. This will help you then decide what action (if any) you need to take next. Please note that the 'Score Guides' are different for each Score Sheet so should always be consulted.

## Interpreting the results

When you have completed the Score Sheet and drawn up a profile, the overall score will give you a colour-code for each individual child. This colour-code allows you to keep a record of each child's attainment and progress. The codes indicate the following:

# The Handbook

Code	What does this mean?
Red	Language skills are significantly delayed.
Amber	Language skills are mildly delayed.
Green	Language skills are age appropriate.

The following table will help you decide what actions to take next. These actions can be recorded on the Score Sheet for reference and follow-up.

Red	Amber	Green
<p>Repeat the screening process using the Score Sheets from the age bands below <b>until the child achieves a Green score.</b></p> <p>If a child is having significant difficulties, use your judgement to decide which section to screen the child on next.</p> <p>Record the section on which the child achieves a Green code (i.e. Section 1–9) on the original Score Sheet that corresponds with the child’s age.</p>	<p>Repeat the screening process using the Score Sheets from the age bands below <b>until the child achieves a Green score.</b></p> <p>Record the section on which the child achieves a Green code (i.e. Section 1–9) on the original Score Sheet that corresponds with the child’s age.</p> <p>In cases where a child achieves two successive Amber scores be aware that the child may have a specific communication difficulty.</p>	<p>This indicates language development is at the level it should be.</p> <p>You don’t need to carry on once you have a score that falls in the Green band.</p>
<p>Follow the advice and activities in <i>The Big Book of Ideas</i> for the section <b>above</b> where the child achieved a Green code.</p> <p>* If you need to access further advice/assessment from a specialised service in your area, use your knowledge of general developmental norms to make a judgement as to where to signpost the ‘Red’ child.</p> <p>If the problems appear to be specific to communication, you could refer to speech and language therapy, in consultation with the parents.</p> <p>If the communication problems are part of global delay, refer onwards via your local multi-agency pathway.</p>	<p>Follow the advice and activities in <i>The Big Book of Ideas</i> for the section <b>above</b> where the child achieved a Green code.</p> <p>Within three months, re-screen the child using the age-appropriate section. If the child then achieves an Amber or Red code, a referral to an outside agency may be appropriate (refer to the Red column in this table for guidance*).</p>	<p>If you would like to follow advice and activities to help develop the child’s language skills further, refer to <i>The Big Book of Ideas</i>.</p> <p>Follow the activities for the section <b>above</b> where the child achieved a Green code.</p>

# Scoresheets and rules

## WellComm Score Sheet

## Section 9

Child's Name					
Date of Birth		Age (months)		Gender	M/F
Ethnicity				Date	

What the child understands		Yes/No (✓/X)
1	Does the child know which day comes after Saturday?	
2	Can the child understand the target sentence?	
3	Can the child understand the emotion word 'anxious'?	
4	Can the child understand the phrase 'get your skates on'?	
5	Does the child know what happens next?	

What the child uses		Yes/No (✓/X)
6	Can the child tell you the days of the week in sequence?	
7	Can the child repeat seven-word sentences correctly?	
8	Can the child label the categories correctly?	
9	Can the child understand and explain the phrase 'ants in your pants'?	
10	Can the child use the future tense 'will'?	

**Total Score (0–10):**

**Code (Green/Amber/Red):**  
Please refer to 'Score Guide' below.

Enter the Section (1–9) on which the child scored 'Green'. Only complete the Score Sheet that corresponds to the child's age. For data collection

Action:

N.B. Use your own knowledge of the child as well as their WellComm code to make a decision regarding what to do next.



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## Additional comments

Additional comments regarding use of speech sounds

Additional comments regarding attention and listening

Additional comments regarding dysfluency/stammering

Additional comments regarding any voice difficulties

# Scoresheets and rules

## Section 9

### What the child understands

### Resources needed

1	Ask the child <b>"What day comes after Saturday?"</b>	
2	Show the child Picture Set 9.2. Say to the child <b>"Look at all the pictures. Show me 'the girl is fed by the monkey'."</b> Score as correct if the child points to the bottom left picture.	Picture Set 9.2
3	Show the child Picture Set 9.3. Say to the child <b>"This family is late for school. Can you show me which person feels anxious?"</b> Score as correct if the child points to the Mum.	Picture Set 9.3
4	Show the child Picture Set 9.3 again. Say to the child <b>"Mummy says 'get your skates on'. Who is she talking about?"</b> Can the child point to the correct person (i.e. the boy dawdling at the back)?	Picture Set 9.3
5	Show the child Picture Set 9.5a and say <b>"It's Sam's birthday and he has a birthday cake. What will he do next?"</b> Score as correct if the child is able to say that Sam will blow candles, eat cake, make a wish, open presents or any other activity appropriate to a birthday.  Show the child Picture Set 9.5b and say <b>"Jasmine has planted some seeds and now she's watering the garden. What will happen to the seeds?"</b> Score as correct if the child is able to say that Jasmine's seeds will grow into	Picture Set 9.5 a and b

## Section 9

### What the child uses

### Resources needed

All ques

6	Ask the child to tell you the days of the week in sequence. The child must give all 7 days in sequence; it does not matter which day they start with.	
7	Say to the child <b>"Listen carefully to what I say and see if you can copy"</b> . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Practise item: <b>"I like to eat green apples"</b> (repeat if the child does not respond).</li> <li>● Test item: <b>"They are playing on their red bikes"</b>.</li> <li>● Test item: <b>"The boy swam in the cold water"</b>.</li> </ul> Score as correct if the child copies the two test sentences exactly.	
8	Say to the child <b>"We're going to think about things belonging to different groups now. Listen carefully"</b> . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>"Potatoes, peas, carrots are all types of...?"</b> Only score as correct if the child says 'vegetables'. If the child responds with 'food', ask <b>"What kind of food?"</b></li> <li>● <b>"Piano, drum, recorder are all types of...?"</b> Only score as correct if the child says 'music' or 'instruments'. Can the child answer both questions correctly?</li> </ul>	
9	Say to the child <b>"I'm going to tell you a story, listen carefully. Ben is a fidgety little boy. When he sits down to do his work in school, he wriggles around on his chair and can't sit still. His teacher often says to him, 'Ben, have you</b>	

All questions r

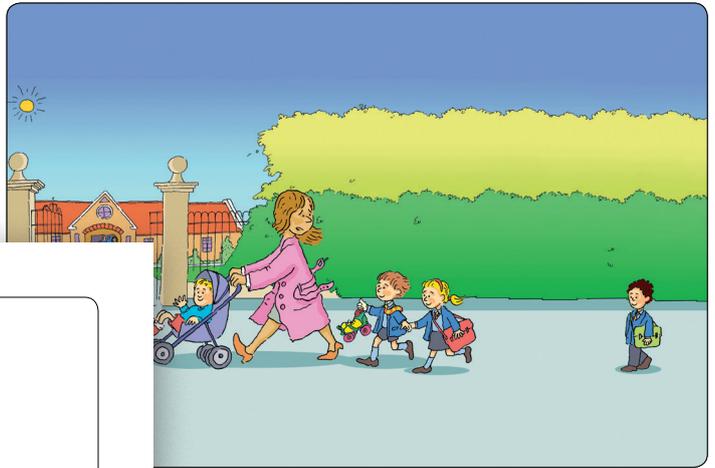
## Section 9

### What the child uses

### Resource needed

10	Can the child use the future tense 'will .....' (e.g. 'The boy will eat dinner')?  Present Picture Set 9.10. Point to the girl in the first picture and say <b>"This girl is eating"</b> . Point to the boy and say <b>"This boy will eat"</b> .  Point to the boy in the second picture and say <b>"This boy is jumping"</b> . Point to the girl and say <b>"This girl...?"</b> Score as correct if the child says 'will jump'.  N.B. The child must use the future tense 'will' and not 'going to'.	Picture Set 9.10
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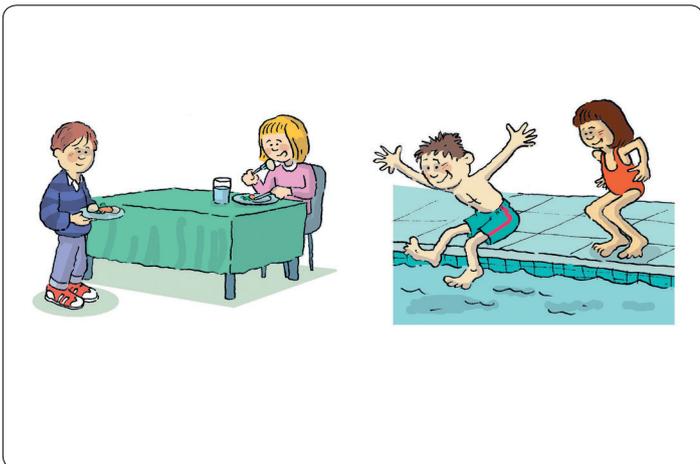
# Picture prompts



9.3



9.5b



9.10

# Sample individual report



## Individual report for Ben Smith

In case of enquiries please contact GL Assessment by emailing [info@gl-assessment.co.uk](mailto:info@gl-assessment.co.uk).  
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### WellComm Individual report

Name: Ben Smith	Setting / School: Happy Days Nursery
Date of birth: 3 Mar 2012	Date of last assessment: 1 Dec 2015
Current outcome: Requires extra support and intervention	Follow activities in Big Book of Ideas: Section 6
Re-screen: Yes	Suggested date for next assessment: March 2016

### Scores and outcomes

Date of assessment	Age	Age-Appropriate Screening				'Green' Section		Differential	
		Section	Age range	Score	Outcome	Section	Age range		
1 Dec 2015	3 years 8 months	7	3 years 6 months - 3 years 11 months	5	Amber	5	2 years 6 months - 2 years 11 months	10	2 sections below

### Assessment results

Date of assessment	Age	Section 1 5 months - 11 months	Section 2 1 year - 1 year 5 months	Section 3 1 year 6 months - 1 year 11 months	Section 4 2 years - 2 years 5 months	Section 5 2 years 6 months - 2 years 11 months	Section 6 3 years - 3 years 5 months	Section 7 3 years 6 months - 3 years 11 months	Section 8 4 years - 4 years 11 months	Section 9 5 years - 6 years
1 Dec 2015	3 years 8 months					Green 10	Amber 6	Amber 5		

Report generated on 10/12/2015

### WellComm Individual report

### Next steps

Section number	Description	This is important because...	Find on
6.2	Comprehension Understanding 'behind' and 'in front'		
6.6	Expression Developing expressive language (three word level expression)	'Behind' and 'in front' are prepositions and are used to describe the placement of objects or people.	
6.7	Expression Understanding and using verbs in the past tense	As language develops, children need to be able to use more words to make longer sentences. This happens by adding grammatical elements (i.e. plurals, past tense) or by linking two thoughts (e.g. using 'and' / 'because') thereby making sentences much longer. Children are ready for this when they have the vocabulary to be able to link three key words in a sentence.	p117
6.10	Expression Learning to remember and then say the names of three things	Developing the grammatical structures relating to past tense allows children to talk about an event that has happened in the past and contrast this with the here and now. This increases the range of language use and also allows children to talk about things outside the here and now.	p121
7.2	Comprehension Understanding 'many' and 'few'	Verbal understanding can be likened to a 'list' of things that need to be remembered in order to carry out a task. If, for example, a three word instruction is given (e.g. 'Wash doll's face!'), the child has to remember 'wash', 'doll' and 'face'. If he/she can't do this, it may be that auditory memory is not yet sufficiently developed.	p122
7.4	Comprehension Learning the meaning of 'why'	These kinds of concepts can be tricky to learn, because there is no fixed quantity associated with them (e.g. a 'few' leaves on a tree may relate to a hundred leaves, whereas a 'few' biscuits left on a plate may only be three). These concepts/words are abstract - they can't be seen or touched in the same way as a concrete object like a fork can.	p126
7.8	Expression Understanding opposites: 'wet/dry', 'up/down'	'Why' questions help to develop causal relations, that is, something happened because of something else (e.g. the boy is crying because he fell off his bike).	p135
7.9	Expression Understanding and using pronouns: 'his' and 'her'	Opposites are used to describe concepts (e.g. an oven is 'hot', a fridge is 'cold') whilst recognising that other words (e.g. 'warm', 'spicy', 'lukewarm') represent various positions on the continuum between these two poles. These linguistic concepts are important in developing cognitive skills too.	p137
7.10	Expression Linking sentences using 'because'	'His' and 'her' are used to signal that something belongs or relates to a man/lady, boy/girl (or male/female animal) previously identified in a sentence (e.g. the boy wears 'his' shoes; the girl likes 'her' new bike).	p142
		'Because' is one of a range of words used to expand sentences by adding ideas/thoughts/decisions. By using words like 'because' grammatical skills too.	

# Big Book of ideas

The Big Book of Ideas

## Introduction

### What is *The Big Book of Ideas*?

*The Big Book of Ideas* is exactly that – a comprehensive selection of activities to help develop and improve children’s speech and language skills at any age from 6 months to 6 years. The activities are designed to be implemented by any early years practitioner (including child minders, nursery workers, health visitors and teachers) using toys and items that can be readily found in all early years settings. Speech and language therapists may also find the activities helpful in their work.

*The Big Book of Ideas* is an essential part of the WellComm Toolkit. Used initially as a Screening Tool, WellComm identifies young children at risk of having difficulty in developing language skills. Once a child’s language has been assessed and benchmarked using the Screening Tool, the next step is to introduce specific strategies that can help extend and improve the child’s language skills, whatever their level. *The Big Book of Ideas* does this by providing a large number of focused intervention activities specifically designed to promote language development through play.

### Using *The Big Book of Ideas*

If a child has been screened using the WellComm Screening Tool, a profile based on a traffic-light rating system is produced: Green, Amber or Red.

- Children who attain a score in the Red band are those most likely to need intervention from a specialist service.
- Children who fall within the Amber band are those for whom extra support is needed to help them develop age-appropriate language skills.
- Children who attain a score in the Green band are not considered to need specialist input or assessment at the moment.

Once a child has been screened and a profile established, it is essential that their communication needs are identified. Children at all ages and stages of development (including those who have not been screened using WellComm) can benefit from the activities in *The Big Book of Ideas*, but it is important to personalise teaching and learning needs that have been identified and to follow activities that correspond to the child’s language level. This will not necessarily be the same as the child’s chronological age. It is possible to identify the appropriate teaching goals by looking at the child’s profile. As a rule of thumb, the practitioner should select the activities in the section just above where the child achieved on the WellComm Screening Tool. This is done by looking at the section that the child has just achieved. For example:

## Section 9.1

The Big Book of Ideas

### Understanding which day comes next



#### Why is this important?

Knowing the days of the week and the events that occur on particular days helps children learn routines. This is how children learn to understand and describe time beyond what happens every day. It also enables them to accept change when something different happens (e.g. no swimming this Wednesday).

#### What to do

- Make a chart together. Put the days of the week across the top. It may be helpful to do Monday–Friday in a different colour from Saturday–Sunday.
- Encourage the child to draw a picture of something he/she does each day (e.g. swimming, PE, assembly, music).
- Talk about the activities in relation to the days of the week, e.g.
  - ★ Adult: ‘On Monday you go swimming, and the day after Monday is ...?’
  - ★ Pause to see if the child can fill in the missing day. Prompt him/her by using his/her pictures (e.g. ‘You do PE on this day’).
  - ★ Child: ‘Tuesday’ and adult repeats: ‘So the day after Monday is ...?’



#### Step up

- Talk about the day ‘before’ and the day ‘after’.
- Introduce times of day (e.g. put the days of the week across the top and times of day (morning/afternoon/evening) down the left-hand side). Fill in the activities that are done at various times.
- Put the days of the week in order using photos/pictures/symbols/written words.
- Find the day ‘before’/‘after’ a given day.
- Talk about Saturday and Sunday being ‘the weekend’.

#### Step down

- Learn the sequence by rote.
- Offer a choice (e.g. ‘What’s the day after Monday? Is it Tuesday or Saturday?’).
- Use symbols, gestures and photos of key events to help understanding.
- When the child is involved in the activities on his/her charts, refer to the days of the week (e.g. ‘It’s Monday today so we’ll be going swimming’).
- Use the chart to introduce changes to activities (e.g. if swimming is cancelled that week, remove the activity and replace it with something else that is available).



# Big Book of ideas

Section 9

## Section 9.2

### Understanding passive sentences



#### Why is this important?

Understanding more complex sentences enables children to process more complex instructions and prepares them for using sophisticated structures that convey subtle differences in meaning. The passive voice is often quite challenging in terms of children's grammatical development because they cannot rely on word order.

#### What to do

- Gather together some toys and everyday objects, e.g.
  - ★ Two favourite dolls such as Batman, Barbie, Bob the Builder.
  - ★ Cup, play food, sponge, brush, car, ball.
- Ask the child to listen to the instruction and then do the action, e.g.
  - ★ 'Batman is fed a banana by Spiderman.'
  - ★ 'The car is washed by Bob the Builder.'
  - ★ 'Barbie's hair is brushed by Dora.'



#### Step up

- Make sure the child has a choice of toys/objects to choose the ones to follow the instructions.
- Add in additional adjectives to increase the precision (e.g. 'The blue ball is thrown by the tall girl').

#### Step down

- You use the toys to demonstrate as you give the instructions, the *same* instruction for the child.
- You choose the toys so the selection is already made (e.g. for 'Batman is fed a banana by Spiderman', give the child Batman, banana, Spiderman).
- When sharing books, or out-and-about, comment on what is in the sentences (e.g. 'Oh look, the ball is thrown by the girl', 'The ball is thrown by the girl').
- Slow down your rate of delivery when saying the sentence.

## Section 9.3

The Big Book of Ideas

### Identifying an increasing range of emotions and feelings in ourselves and others



#### Why is this important?

Facial expressions convey numerous and complex emotional states and we begin to infer another person's feelings by watching how they react/feel (from happiness, sadness, anxiety, etc.). They are an important part of emotional intelligence and link closely to being able to make inferences. (For more information, refer to the *WellComm Handbook*.)

#### What to do

- In pairs or a small group, act out scenarios by allocating roles: a scene in a shop perhaps – a long queue, an annoyed customer, etc.
- Encourage children to work out feelings from gestures, tone of voice, body language and facial expression.
- Use illustrated stories or composite pictures: look at the scene and then work out the feelings of the characters (e.g. a messy bedroom discovered by Mum! 'Look at her face, how does she feel?').



#### Step up

- Without using pictures, use more subtle words for inferencing (e.g. thoughtful, serious).
- Use more complex composite pictures, taking in the peripheral/less obvious characters and encourage inference (e.g. 'Who has to wait a long time?' for a child at the back of the queue for the swing in the park).
- Each child has a card: in a group, children take turns to act out the feelings on their picture card and the others must guess what it is.
- If the group can manage this successfully, try taking turns around the group to suggest reasons *why* Ahmed/Ben/Sonny/Jane might feel as they do.
- Read a sentence or paragraph where the child is encouraged to reflect on how the characters are feeling (e.g. 'Jack ran very quickly because the giant was chasing him. How did Jack feel? Why?').

#### Step down

- Use puppets for the role play.
- Don't use pictures.
- Use a simpler story.
- Make facial

- language very obvious.
- Add speech bubbles to the toys (e.g. 'He feels...')



# Big Book of ideas

## Attention and listening skills

### Introduction

Like other skills, children's attention develops in stages; therefore it's important to try and evaluate the level of attention skills the child has reached (for further details, see the WellComm *Handbook* page 49). The table below outlines the age you might start expecting children to achieve a specific level of attention and listening skills; however, these ages are given as guidelines only.

Normal Development of Attention and Listening	
Level (Age Equivalent)	Description
<b>Level One (up to 12 months)</b>	Characterised by extreme distractibility, when the child's attention flits from one object or person to another. Any new event, such as someone walking past, will distract him/her.
<b>Level Two (12 months to 2 years)</b>	The child will concentrate on a chosen activity of their own choosing, but will not tolerate an adult. Attention is 'single channelled' and the child must ignore all outside distractions on what he/she is doing.
<b>Level Three (2 to 3 years)</b>	Attention is still single channelled although the child cannot listen whilst playing, he/she can shift attention back and back to the task with some help.
<b>Level Four (3 to 4 years)</b>	Without help, the child is now able to switch between a task and an adult's instructions.
<b>Level Five (4 to 5 years)</b>	Without stopping to look at the speaker, the child can understand and follow verbal instructions. The child's concentration is now such that he/she can now be taught in a classroom.
<b>Level Six (5 years +)</b>	Attention is well established and the child can integrate auditory, visual and tactile information (i.e. touch and movement) to understand instructions.

Adapted from J. Cooper, M. Moodley and J. Reynell. 1978. *Helping Children with Special Needs*. London: Edward Arnold.

### General strategies

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## Strategies for developing understanding of language

### 'Good looking'

Make sure the child is looking towards the speaker when receiving an instruction. Be specific (e.g. 'Jack look at me'). Use gestures, pictures, objects to hold the child's attention; these will also support understanding of the instruction. This is a skill that all children need to develop.

### Call their name/s

Some children do not realise that an instruction given to the whole group also applies to them. You can cue them in by using names at the beginning of the instruction. This reduces the risk of the child missing the instruction, e.g.

- ✓ 'Daniel, Shanice come and sit on the carpet.'
- ✗ 'Come and sit on the carpet Daniel and Shanice.'

Give the child clear, specific instructions.

### Simplify your language

Simplify the length of your instructions. Use short sentences and emphasise key words. Use visual supports such as gesture, objects and pictures to hold up/show as you are giving the instruction.

### 'Chunk' instructions

Chunk instructions by giving one piece of information at a time. Pause, allow the child time to process the language and respond, then give the next chunk of instruction.

### Demonstrate

If the child struggles to follow instructions, *demonstrate* what you want him/her to do. Use simple language to *describe* what you are doing. Pair children with a peer who will provide a good role model to copy.