



*...helping your child to communicate with confidence*

# LITTLE LEARNERS SPEECH & LANGUAGE THERAPY

## PRACTICE FOR CHILDREN

### Guide to Individual Speech & Language Therapy Support

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## Table of Contents

Introduction .....	2
Are you concerned about your child’s ability to communicate? .....	4
Programmes of support.....	5
Where will my child be seen?.....	6
Assessment/Initial Consultation .....	6
Therapy Process.....	7
Review/monitoring sessions .....	7
Reports/written programmes and distribution of these.....	8
Discharge.....	8
Fees.....	9
Private Medical Insurance .....	10
Cancellation Policy.....	10
Consent Declaration Form.....	12
How to get the most from your child’s speech and language therapy sessions .....	13

# Welcome to Little Learners Speech & Language Therapy Practice ..... a guide to individual speech & language therapy support

## Introduction

Little learners is an independent Speech and Language Therapy Practice providing services for pre-school and primary school aged children. The Practice is run by Jessica Guerin, a highly skilled Specialist Speech & Language Therapist with many years experience of working for the NHS providing speech and language assessment and therapy to young children as well as training to a wide range of health and educational professionals.

Little Learners aims to support the development of young children's communication skills so that they grow into confident, communicators who achieve well academically and develop good social skills. By building a strong foundation in these skills, children are helped to reach their potential and become happy, successful individuals.

"There is no greater gift that you can give your child at the beginning of life than the ability to communicate."

**Dr Sally Ward (2000)**

"The development and use of communication and language is at the heart of young children's learning."

**Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum Guidance, Dept. for Children Schools and Families**

Little Learners provides:

- private individual speech and language therapy services (assessment, advice and therapy) for pre-school and primary school-aged children who are presenting with delayed communication skills.
- groups aimed at building children's confidence, talking, listening and pre-literacy skills. These groups are for children with whom there are no concerns but where parents wish to give them a head-start with learning and reading for when they start school by optimising their confidence, communication and social skills. A series of groups are offered covering the 0-5 year age range. (if you would like to

find out more about these Little Learners programmes please visit the website at [www.helpingchildrentalk.com](http://www.helpingchildrentalk.com)

- training to Health and Educational professionals including Children's Centres, nurseries (both private and state sector), schools, playgroups, childminders and Health Visitors on identifying children with delayed development, promoting early communication skills as well as baby and toddler signing. Workshops for parents are also available including post-natal and ante-natal groups. (If you would like to find out more about the training packages on offer please visit the website at [www.helpingchildrentalk.com](http://www.helpingchildrentalk.com))

## **Are you concerned about your child's ability to communicate?**

Our children are the most important things in our lives, and as parents we naturally worry when they are not developing in the way we expect them to. Sometimes children present with delayed communication skills development and if the delay is not significant just a little advice can help them back on track. Some children may need a little more support and with the right help at the right time they go on to become confident, happy children who are able to communicate without difficulty.

As a parent you may be worried about your child's development for a number of reasons. Maybe your child has difficulty talking, listening or understanding. Maybe they haven't got many words or they are not talking yet? Perhaps your child is not joining words together or is unable to produce grammatically correct sentences. It could be that their speech is unclear and they are finding it difficult to make themselves understood. Or possibly their attention; listening and concentration skills are delayed or they are just not able to focus on or understand what you are saying to them.

## **Maybe your child is struggling to keep up at school or is not progressing as well as they could due to a communication skills difficulty?**

Having a communication skills difficulty can affect children's educational attainment. They are at risk of losing motivation and becoming frustrated if they are finding it difficult to express themselves or understand what is going on around them. Children who are struggling often lose self-esteem and confidence. Most children find themselves in schools with large class sizes and many children with delayed communication skills struggle to cope with whole group instruction and need individual or small group support.

Good communication skills are central to a child's ability to learn. Research has shown that children's development of language is a crucial first step in their ability to think and learn, and has a significant impact on their educational attainment and experience. Getting the right support early is paramount, as the most brain development occurs in their early years and early intervention can also prevent secondary difficulties arising such as behavioural and emotional problems.

## Maybe your child is finding it difficult to make friends and socialise?

Children who have difficulty communicating often find it hard to interact with others if they don't understand what others say, if their speech is unclear or they haven't got the words to express themselves. Often they withdraw from social situations and seldom initiate interaction with others unless they are well known to them such as a sibling or parent for instance.

If your child is showing signs of delayed development and you are concerned, they may benefit from a programme of support. As a parent you want the best for your child and you may not be prepared to wait lengthy periods on NHS waiting lists for speech and language therapy assessment and support. Private speech and language therapy can deliver tailor-made support for your child on a regular basis without the need to wait.

## Programmes of support

Depending on where your child's difficulties lie a therapeutic programme may be put in place focusing on developing any one or a number of the following areas

- early communication skills, such as attention, listening, imitation and turn-taking
- expressive and receptive language : understanding and expressing verbally, vocabulary, grammar etc
- speech sounds
- social skills and use of language

For children with delayed attention and listening skills support must first be given in this area before any work can be carried out on speech and language skills. Your child's skills will be developed through fun activities which are appropriate to their age and stage of development.

Parent-child interaction programmes of support are also offered which are tailored to each parent-child dyad and focus on developing improved interaction skills. Although time is spent working directly with the child, a significant proportion of the time is spent with the parent. These packages of care are designed to empower parents to make changes to their own interaction with their child in order to effect change on their child's communicative ability. Jessica is trained in the following parent-child interaction

programmes: ‘You Make the Difference’ preventative programme, ‘It takes two to talk’ for language delayed children and ‘Target Word’ for children who are late talkers. The Therapist will be able to recommend the best package of care for you and your child.

Before any work can be carried out with your child a detailed assessment will need to take place to identify your child’s strengths and areas requiring development. This initial assessment usually takes place over two sessions (sometimes three depending on the child or complexity of the case) in order to get a detailed profile on your child.

### **Where will my child be seen?**

Assessment and therapy sessions are generally carried out in the child’s own home. To get a more holistic picture of your child an observational visit may also be carried out in your child’s educational establishment, with your permission. This opportunity will also be used to discuss your child’s needs and therapy ideas with key professionals there so they know how best to communicate with your child and how to help their skills develop. It is also possible for your child to have their therapy appointments at the Therapist’s base in Kinver, South Staffordshire.

### **Assessment/Initial Consultation**

This is usually carried out in your own home (although there is the option of being seen at the Therapist’s base) and is an opportunity for the Therapist to discuss your concerns with you, assess your child’s communication skills, identify their skills and the areas needing development. Following a discussion with you, aims will be set and further therapy if indicated will be planned.

### **What happens during the Assessment/Initial Consultation?**

The initial consultation usually lasts between 1 and 1½ hours. During this time a case history will be taken which will discuss your concerns, your child’s general development and any other relevant background information. An informal observation will be made of your child as well as a formal assessment of their communication skills. With some children, particularly very young children it is not appropriate to assess their skills using

formal measures and an informal approach is used instead. At the end of the session a verbal report will be provided of the findings and a discussion will take place as to whether further intervention is required. Often it is not possible to get a complete picture of your child's skills and areas of need in the first session and further appointments may need to be arranged to complete this process. It is often very useful to see your child interact with their peers or copes in an educational setting and often an observation session can be arranged with your child's educational establishment. This also gives the opportunity for the Therapist to discuss your child's aims with key people who your child spends a significant amount of time with. This will give others a better understanding of your child and will help generalise skills that are being worked on. No visits will be undertaken without parental/legal guardian consent. It is best if this initial consultation happens in your own home so a holistic picture of the child can be gained in a setting that is familiar and comfortable to them.

## **Therapy Process**

Therapy is carried out on a one-to-one basis, and the number of sessions is dependent on your child's needs. Frequently children are seen for 6 to 10 sessions, but your child may require less/more, and this will be reviewed as intervention progresses. Sometimes children may not be ready for therapy and instead they will be monitored until a later stage.

A standard therapy session lasts 1 hour. 45 minutes of this is spent working directly with your child and the remaining 15 minutes is spent in discussion with you the parent/carer reviewing the progress and setting targets/homework for the following week. Therapy sessions usually happen in your own home, but can also take place in your child's educational setting e.g. nursery or school or onsite here at the Practice base. If your child is seen in an educational establishment time will be taken to discuss progress and aims with your child's keyworker/teacher.

## **Review & monitoring sessions**

When a child has reached the aims set, a rest-period may be indicated in order for them to consolidate the skills learned before new aims are set. Their skills will be reviewed before further therapy is offered.

If it is felt that your child is not ready for therapy following the initial consultation a further appointment will be arranged with you for a later date. Your child's skills will be reviewed at this stage before any therapy commences.

## **Reports/written programmes and distribution of these**

Following assessment a written report and/or therapy programme can be compiled outlining your child's skills, areas needing development and therapeutic aims. It is often in your child's best interest that these reports are shared with other relevant professionals, for example your child's keyworker/teacher. In some cases the therapist may want to refer your child to another professional. This will be discussed with you at the time and no verbal or written contact will be made without your written consent.

## **Discharge**

Your child will be discharged from therapy at the end of an episode of care, following joint discussions with you, the parent. This is when the treatment is complete and when your child's potential is reached in the area targeted by therapy.

Parents/carers may also withdraw from therapy at any time should they wish to do so.

# Terms and Conditions/Fees for Individual Speech and Language Therapy Support

Effective January 2009

## Fees

Charges are based upon national guidelines for the Profession. They include time spent out of the consultation in travel to your home/your child's educational establishment, planning sessions and the preparation of materials to use with your child, the writing up of your child's case-notes following sessions and telephone calls less than 15 minutes in length.

Initial consultation Includes formal and informal assessment, case history taking and a verbal report to the parent/guardian	£88
Standard Therapy Session – 1 hour Review Session – up to 1 hour Further assessment session – up to 1 hour Further observational assessment sessions in playgroup/nursery or school – up to 1 hour	£66 each
Missed appointments or cancellations received at less than 24 hours notice	£66 plus travel costs if applicable
School Consultations	£66 per hour
Written reports, letters and therapy programmes are charged in respect to the total time taken to prepare them.	£66 per hour, pro-rata

## **Travelling Expenses**

Travel is charged at the rate of 50p per mile.

Travel is undertaken to Staffordshire, Shropshire, The Black Country and Worcestershire.

## **Payment of Fees**

Fees are to be paid at the end of each session. Payment can be by cash or cheque.

Receipts are issued on request for each payment received.

## **Private Medical Insurance**

The Therapist has no contracts with private sector medical insurance companies.

Any claims from medical companies are the sole responsibility of the client.

The Therapist does not claim directly from the Insurer. Clients must make their own claims.

Invoices can be provided for claims by the client.

## **Cancellation Policy**

Notice of cancellation is normally required at least 48 hours prior to the visit.

Appointments cancelled less than 24 hours before the visit is due to commence will be charged the full rate for that session. If the child is due to be seen at playgroup, nursery or school and the child will not be attending that provision on the day and time of that appointment it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian and not the educational establishment, to inform the Therapist in advance.

Failed appointments, where no cancellation is received will be charged at the full sessional rate and include travel costs.

## **Service Limitations**

The service is unable to provide back-up support if the Speech & Language Therapist is unable to attend due to sickness or other unavoidable event.

Clients will be required to sign a copy of the terms and conditions/fees to confirm acceptance.

## **Professional Affiliations**

The Therapist is a member of the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT), Health Professions Council (HPC) and the Association of Speech & Language Therapists in Independent Practice (ASLTIP).

The Therapist has enhanced disclosure from the Criminals Records Bureau and is registered with the Office of the Data Protection Registrar.

## Consent Declaration Form

I have read and understand the above terms and conditions, the fee rates and charges for speech and language therapy support offered by Jessica Guerin

Name (Print): ..... Signature: .....

Therapist's signature: ..... Date: .....

I agree to give consent for my child to have speech and language assessment and if indicated therapy.

I agree to give consent for the Therapist to visit my child in their educational placement and discuss progress/aims with relevant professionals there. I will be notified in advance of when this will be happening.

I agree to give consent for the Therapist to refer my child to other Professionals if necessary and to provide them with written reports/programmes as required.

Name of Child (print): ..... Child's date of birth:  
.....

Name of parent/guardian (print): .....

Address:.....

..... Post code: .....

Phone: ..... Signature: .....

Therapist's signature: ..... Date: .....

## **How to get the most out of your child's speech and language therapy sessions**

The more people involved in your child's intervention the better. Making your child's teachers/keyworkers aware of your child's aims, skills and difficulties means they will have a greater understanding of their needs and also gives your child more opportunities to generalise the skills being taught and learned.

During assessment and subsequent therapy sessions having a comfortable room free from distractions such as tv, phone, other siblings etc will provide a better environment for your child to show their skills and abilities and to progress.

Parents are encouraged to be involved in their child's therapy. Being present during sessions means you will have a better idea of how to develop the skills yourself.

Short bursts of practice carried out at home by you on a regular basis (preferably daily) means your child will make progress quicker.

Keep practice fun and don't do it when your child is unwell or tired.

Praise your child for their attempts and the progress they are making, even if the steps seem small to begin with.

