



Speech and Language Assessment When Your Child is Eighteen Months Old

North West England, the Isle of Man and North Wales
Cleft Lip and Palate Network

You have been invited to bring your child for speech and language assessment as part of their multi-disciplinary eighteen month review. At the review, you may also see other professionals including nurses, audiologists, psychologists and dental health professionals. This leaflet is aimed at providing you with information about this appointment.

Why has my child been offered an appointment?

Now that your child is eighteen months of age, we would like to check how your child's speech and language is developing.

By this age many, **but not all**, children will be beginning to babble or say a few of the following consonants:

'p' as in 'pop'

'g' as in 'gone'

'b' as in 'bye'

'k' as in 'car'

't' as in 'ta'

'm' as in 'mama'

'd' as in 'dada'

'n' as in 'nana'

Also, many, **but not all children**, will be trying to say a few single words, for example, 'go', 'up', 'more', 'gone', 'bye'.

There are many reasons why a child at eighteen months may not be saying much. Some learn to speak quickly whereas others may take a little longer. There is quite a lot of variation in children's speech and language development at this age.

My child already sees a Speech and Language Therapist closer to our home – do I need to attend this appointment?

This appointment is **in addition** to any care provided by a local Therapist. The assessment is carried out by a Therapist who is a member of the Central Cleft Lip and Palate Team. The team has highly specialised skills for assessing children born with cleft palate.

Following the assessment, the Therapist will advise you and other professionals involved in your child's care on their appropriate speech management. If your child already has a local Speech Therapist, the team will liaise closely with them.

What will happen at the appointment?

There will be an opportunity for you to ask questions, or to discuss anything relating to your child's development and cleft management. Your child will usually be offered appointments to see other members of our cleft team.

You and your child will be invited into the Speech Therapy room. Your child will be introduced to a small number of toys and encouraged to play with them. At eighteen months of age, children can be shy or find it difficult to keep still and concentrate on play. Your child may want to sit on your knee until they get used to the setting and the Therapist. The Speech and Language Therapist is trained to work with small children and will do their best to put them at ease. Toys and books are used to assess your child's concentration, play skills and speech and language.

The Speech and Language Therapist will ask you general questions about your child's development and specific questions about their speech and language. For example, you may be asked about any sounds they are trying to say or babble at home or any words they are beginning to say. Children often do not display their best skills at this appointment, so your answers and descriptions will be very helpful.

Even if your child is not saying very much at this age, the Therapist can gain useful information by watching them play and by talking to you. You may want to bring along a favourite toy or book so your child has something familiar to look at, make sounds or noises about, or point to pictures.

If your child is particularly quiet or shy in the session, the Speech and Language Therapist will discuss and identify other ways of gathering the required information.

How long will the appointment take?

The appointment with the Speech and Language Therapist will last between 45 minutes and one hour. You are likely to be at the Cleft Centre for longer if it is planned for your child to be seen by other members of the specialist team. It is helpful to arrive a little earlier than your appointment time so your child can play in the waiting area and settle in before the appointment.

Is there anything I need to do to prepare for this appointment?

The assessment is informal and often fun, so please do not feel anxious about it. Young children are often more relaxed if their parent or carer is relaxed too. It is advisable to bring a drink and snack for your child.

What happens after the appointment?

This will depend on the findings from the assessment, including information you have provided, and our discussion with you.

Possible outcomes are:

- Comprehensive assessment again for your child at three years of age.
- Referral to local speech and language therapy (which may already have been done).
- Review at the Cleft Centre again before your child reaches three years of age.
- Short course of therapy for your child at the hospital.

We look forward to seeing you and your child.

Suggestions/Comments

The staff are here to help and it is important for them to know if you have any comments or suggestions about the services you have received. If you wish to speak to a member of the cleft team please telephone us:

Liverpool: 0151 252 5209

Manchester: 0161 701 9091
Monday to Friday, 9.00 am to 5.00 pm

Alternatively you can contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on:

Manchester 0161 701 8700, Monday to Friday 9.00 am to 4.00 pm. e-mail childrens.pals@cmft.nhs.uk

Liverpool 0151 252 5374/5161, Monday to Friday 9.00 am to 4.30 pm. e-mail PALS@alderhey.nhs.uk

Information leaflets about our service are available to download from both Alder Hey Children's Hospital and Royal Manchester Children's Hospital websites:
www.alderhey.com/services/cleftpalate.asp
www.cmft.nhs.uk/childrens-hospitals/our-services/cleft-lipand-palate.aspx

External contacts and information

Cleft Lip and Palate Association (CLAPA)

First Floor, Green Man Tower,
332b Goswell Rd, London EC1V 7LQ

Tel: 0207 833 4883 • Fax: 0207 833 5999
E-mail: info@clapa.com • Web: www.clapa.com

Changing Faces

The Squire Centre, 33-37 University Street,
London, WC1E 6JN

Tel: 0845 4500 275 • Fax: 0845 4500 276
E-mail: info@changingfaces.org.uk
Web: www.changingfaces.org.uk

This information is available in Welsh, if preferred.
Mae'r wybodaeth hon ar gael yn Gymraeg, pe baech yn dymuno hynny.

© Copyright to Central Manchester University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust