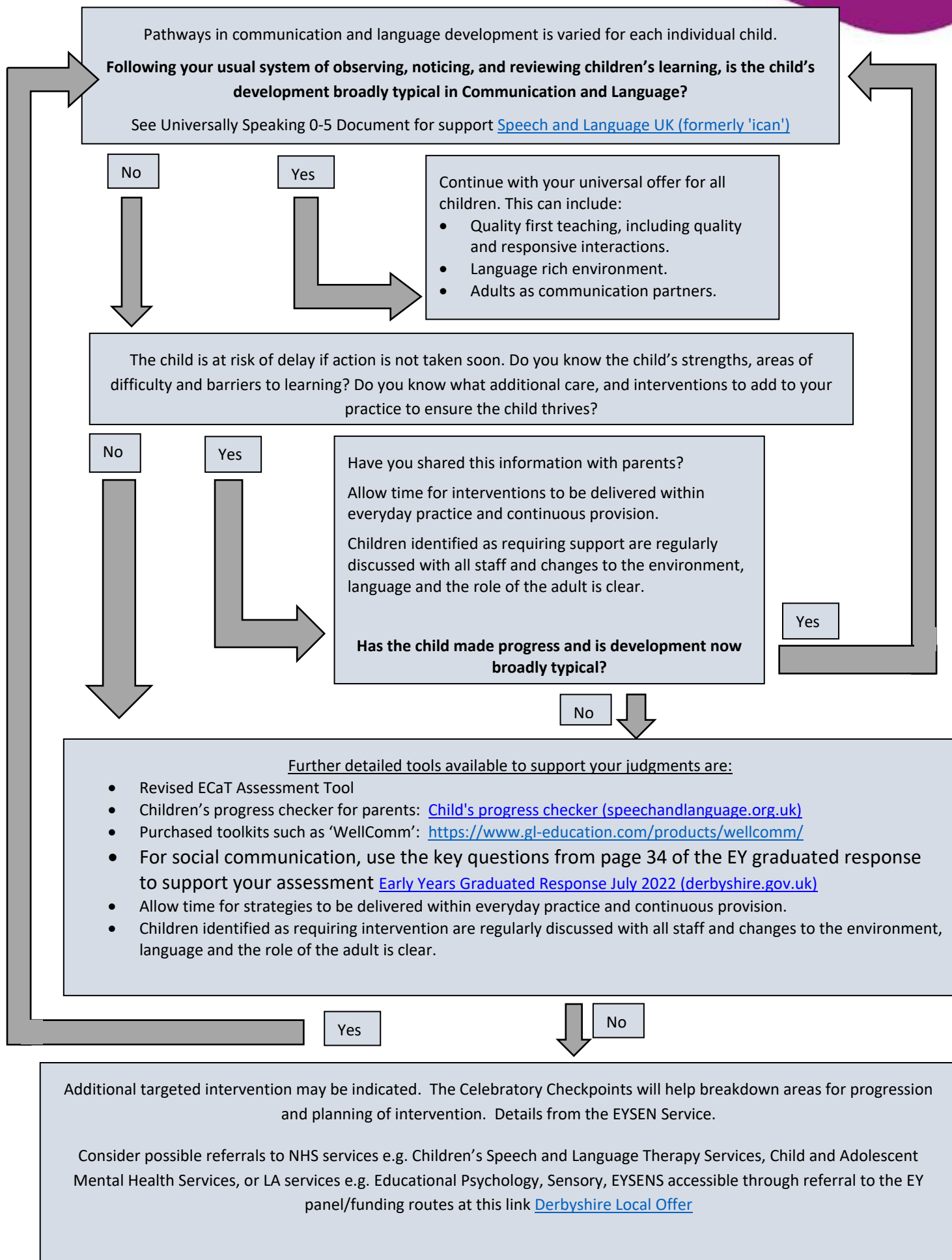


Communication and Language support flowchart



Communication and Language Support

Decision flow process

For typical development patterns in communication and language, read the 'Universally Speaking 0-5' document from [Speech and Language UK \(formerly 'ican'\)](#) or access the EY service briefing for support.

Question 1: Following your usual system of observing, noticing, and reviewing children's learning, is the child's development broadly typical in Communication and Language?

If the answer is yes, continue with your universal offer for all children. This can include:

- Quality first teaching, including quality and responsive interactions.
- Language rich environment.
- Adults as communication partners.

If the **answer is no**, the child is at risk of delay if action is not taken soon. Progress to the next question.

Question 2: Do you know the child's strengths, areas of difficulty and barriers to learning? Do you know what additional care, and interventions to add to your practice to ensure the child thrives?

If the answer is yes, put the interventions into action and share this information with parents. Allow time for interventions to be delivered within everyday practice and continuous provision. Children identified as requiring support should be regularly discussed with all staff and changes to the environment, language and the role of the adult is clear and purposeful. Return and review question 1 and continue with your universal offer.

If the answer is no, you may benefit from using other available tools to support detailed understanding and judgments of skills, such as:

- Revised Every Child a Talker Assessment Tool.
- Children's progress checker for parents: [Child's progress checker \(speechandlanguage.org.uk\)](#)
- Purchased toolkits such as 'WellComm':
<https://www.gl-education.com/products/wellcomm/>
- For social communication, use the key questions from page 34 of the EY graduated response to support your assessment [Early Years Graduated Response July 2022 \(derbyshire.gov.uk\)](#)

Once assessment details have been collected, ensure these are used to create an intervention plan. You will need to allow time for interventions to be delivered and changes to be embedded within everyday practice and continuous provision. Children identified as requiring intervention should be regularly discussed with all staff and changes to the environment, language and the role of the adult is clear and purposeful. Progress to the next question.

Question 3: Has the child made progress and is development now broadly typical?

If the answer is yes, return and review question 1 and continue with your universal offer.

If the answer is no, continue to review and adjust the intervention. Additional targeted intervention may be indicated.

- The Celebratory Checkpoints will help breakdown areas for progression and planning of intervention. Details from the EYSEN Service.
- Consider possible referrals to NHS services such as Children's Speech and Language Therapy Services or Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
- Consider possible referrals to Local Authority services such as Educational Psychology, Sensory, Early Years Special Educational Needs Service (EYSENS) accessible through application to the EY panel/funding routes via the [Derbyshire Local Offer](#)

Revised ECaT (Every Child a Talker) Assessment Tool

Guidance Notes 2022

What is different?

This guidance has been written to update the previous *Derbyshire Every Child a Talker (ECaT) Child Monitoring Tool* guidance issued in 2015. The key changes are:

- a decision-making flow chart has been added to help you understand the process you need to consider BEFORE choosing to use an assessment tool like this one.
- the old EYFS age bandings have been removed.
- some descriptors have been merged or re-arranged to reflect developmental flow,
- some descriptors have been added in the 0-3 range,
- some descriptors have additional supportive examples taken from Development Matters 2021 or Speech and Language Therapy guidelines,
- typical English speech sound development has been included in the main grid,
- the assessment record sheet has been reworded to focus on the decision and action needed e.g., 'no intervention', 'intervention' and 'intervention plus'.

When do I use the Revised ECaT Assessment Tool?

This assessment tool needs to be used as an addition to your practice rather than 'as the norm'. This meets the emphasis in the 2021 version of the EYFS on ensuring all assessments are meaningful and purposeful.

1. Gather your knowledge of the child. Use checkpoint questions (as outlined in Development Matters 2021 or Universally Speaking 0-5) to refine your knowledge and understanding of the child's speech, language, and communication (SLC).
2. If the checkpoint questions highlight gaps in your knowledge, return to your observations to check your information and understanding.
3. If the checkpoint questions raise concerns for the child's speech, language and communication skills, this assessment tool may then help you to identify key areas for support and development.

Who is the Revised ECaT Assessment Tool for?

Use for individual children when concerns arise through observations, vulnerability factors or carer/parent requests. Use when a child's communication and language development has been identified as '**vulnerable to a risk of delay**' to give you further information for planning appropriate interventions. This does not automatically but may include children who are in care or have English as an additional language. **N.B.** This assessment tool is not for whole cohort tracking.

What about children learning English as an additional language?

Only use the Revised ECaT Assessment Tool if there is concern the child's first language is not developing as expected. The assessment would be completed with the parents and should focus on the child's skills in the first language.

Further information and assessment tool for bilingual children has been developed by Plymouth University: <https://www.psy.plymouth.ac.uk/UKBTAT/FAQ>

How do I complete the Revised ECaT Assessment Tool?

Getting started

1. Complete the child's details, i.e. name and Date of Birth. Use one form per child.
2. Work in columns of skills rather than across in age bands. This will help you to identify potential skill gaps.
3. START by mapping your observations and knowledge with the descriptors in 'By 12 months' to check all foundational skills are secure.

Descriptors

4. A descriptor is achieved when your observations show that the skill is NICEly achieved.
NICE: Natural Independent Consistent Embedded
5. Warning: descriptors are developmental but will not cover every small step of skill progression.

When to stop

6. If all the descriptors in a box are achieved, continue with the box below within that column.
7. If all the descriptors in a box are not achieved, stop, do not go down to any further boxes in that column.
Exception: if the only descriptor not achieved is the 'English speech sounds' please move down the column to check language skills. See the notes on 'speech sounds' below the assessment grid.

Decisions

8. Considering the age of the child, if the achieved descriptors in each column represent skills being 'met' then "no intervention" is required. If they are 'not met' then some "intervention" is required.
9. If the child has a minor number of descriptors (less than 50%) yet to be achieved for their age, select the "intervention" box. Record what the priority focus will be.
10. If the child has most descriptors (more than 50%) yet to be achieved, select the "intervention plus" box.

Making the plan

11. For children with "intervention" focus: Plan which SLC enriching and enhancing experiences are needed and which adult strategies are most suitable for the priority focus of intervention.
12. For children with "intervention plus" indicated: Set 2-3 SLC goals or outcomes for the child, plan the intervention including the frequency, intensity, and type/variety of support.
13. Carry out the planned intervention. Review impact regularly and adapt as needed.

See the Observe – Plan – Do – Review reminder below

Observe – Plan – Do – Review

Remember: an assessment tool will help monitor progress only when intervention and strategies are used consistently.

Observe. Quality observation and understanding of the child should help you **describe** the children's SLC **strengths** as well as weaknesses.

Assess. The descriptors on the Revised ECaT Assessment Tool will help you **define** skills development.

Plan. **Decide** what the overall SLC need of the child is, in relation to your holistic understanding of their strengths and interests. **Plan intervention that uses the child's strengths** and builds on the positives to bridge the gaps in SLC skills.

- These plans should be SMART (Specific. Measurable. Achievable. Realistic. Time limited).
- START by looking at Listening and Attention and Social Communication as these are needed to build a foundation for the development of Understanding and Talking.

Do. **Carry out the plan!** Allow suitable time for skills to develop and be embedded. Check for small step changes and adapt with the children.

Review. Formally **review progress** by re-using the Revised ECaT Assessment Tool after 12-16 weeks of input, intervention, and support. Record progress on the Revised ECaT Assessment Record Sheet.