

Phonics advice for teachers – Supporting literacy development for children with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN)

- As SLCN is **the most common SEN as identified by primary schools** and is a feature of many other areas of SEN, it's useful for primary school teachers to have a broad understanding of issues around literacy development for children with SLCN.
- There is a **very strong link between SLCN and difficulties with literacy**. This can be in terms of difficulties with speech sounds and phonology as well as broader language difficulties, such as with understanding or expression of grammar and vocabulary. It's universally acknowledged that successful development of literacy depends upon competent language skills.
- The phonics test **may help identify children who are struggling** to use phonic skills as part of learning to read. The way in which their test responses are interpreted will be key in helping identify their particular needs.
- These children, and particularly those with SLCN, **may need different and / or supplementary approaches** to support their ongoing literacy development. As well as supporting teachers for the screening test, the **Communicating Phonics** guide provides lots of information on how to support the overall literacy development of children with SLCN.
- Almost all **children with SLCN have difficulty with some aspect of learning to read and write**. This will depend very much on the child but they might have problems with decoding print, reading comprehension, spelling or expressive writing.
- There are a number of different approaches to support the development of reading for children with SLCN, including:
 - ✓ **A hybrid approach** – utilising whole word and phonics learning within a language rich environment
 - ✓ **A systematic and robust approach** to supporting speaking and listening skills in the classroom
 - ✓ **Developing foundation speech, language and communication skills**
 - ✓ **Developing vocabulary knowledge**
 - ✓ **Developing phonological awareness skills**

Download **Communicating Phonics** at www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/phonics

This guide highlights the ways schools can support the speech, language and communication and literacy skills of children who have SLCN.