**What are Speech, Language and Communication Needs**

**Information for Parents/Carers**

Firstly, speech is the expression of or the ability to express thoughts and feelings by articulate sounds. Language is a method of communication consisting of the use of words in a structured format, either written or spoken. Lastly, Communication is the exchange of information by speaking, writing or other format that enables interaction. A child may have Speech, Language and Communication Needs. This is when an individual has a difficulty with either one or more of the above.

A child with SLCN may present with the following:

* They may have weak attention and listening skills. Young children learning to talk need to concentrate much harder than adults in order to understand what other people are saying.
* They may not understand words that are being used, or the instructions they hear, so often use or respond to it inappropriately
* They might struggle to express words or sentences
* Might have speech that is difficult to understand, e.g. find it hard to make the mouth and tongue movements that are necessary to produce clear sounds: b, k, t etc…
* They may have difficulties knowing how to talk and listen to others in a conversation. They may not be aware of the rules in conversation e.g. turn taking, how to start and end a conversation
* They may have difficulties communicating non-verbally e.g. facial expression to show emotion, body language to show whether they are engaged, etc…
* Additional indicators may be changes in behaviour e.g. appearing withdrawn, isolated, frustrated, upset, angry, and may appear that they are ignoring you when you speak to them or say they may say something completely unrelated.

Speech, Language and Communication skills are the building blocks for learning, without them children may find it difficult to attend and listen, learn, socialise, read, write, speak and understand and control emotions.

For further Information about Speech Language and Communication Needs, you can access the following links:

<http://www.talkingpoint.org.uk/>. This is a very useful site that focuses on developmental milestones and resources available to professionals and parents.

<http://www.afasic.org.uk/recognising-a-problem/glossary-sheets/>. Here you can access ‘Glossary Sheets’, which provide information about different aspects of SLCN.

<https://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/>. This provides resources and up to date information about SLCN. It also provides information about national and local events.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/grownups/speech-and-language-difficulties>. You can also access information, help, resources and activities on the Cbeebies website.

<http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/resources/external_resources/2267_speech_language_and_communication_needs>. Access to additional information, resources and signposting to other website