Referral criteria for understanding, talking, and communication and interaction for children aged 2;6 to 2;11

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| Age  2;6 -2;11 | Communication and Interaction | Understanding | Talking |
| **No cause for concern** | Joins in with an adult’s choice of activity for a short time  Acts out common routines in play e.g. cuddle teddy, put teddy to bed, cooking  Enjoys listening to nursery rhymes, songs and short stories 1:1 or in small groups  Needs adult help to stop and listen to an instruction | Consistently follows 2 key word instructions  Understands action words e.g. ‘who’s eating?’  Beginning to understand 3 key word instructions e.g. make dolly jump on the bed | Starting to use 3-word sentences (often misses little words e.g. dog eat dinner)  Uses a range of verbs/action words such as jump or eat  Pronunciation errors common |
| **Monitor and follow up in 3 months if the child:** | Shows some early pretend play e.g. feeding a teddy  Is able to attend for a short time | Can consistently follow simple instructions, but may find longer instructions difficult e.g. they may be able to ‘find the apple’ (one key word) but not ‘give the apple to teddy’ or ‘give the banana to dolly’ (two key words) | Uses 50 words, even if unclear, and is beginning to combine words  Learns new single words regularly |
| **Refer to SLT if the child:** | Has little/no pretend play  Doesn’t share interest with an adult  Uses little/no eye-contact  Displays unusual or overly repetitive play/behaviours | Shows inconsistent understanding of a range of single words e.g. unable to point to a range of objects/pictures on request  Does not follow simple instructions | Uses fewer than 50 words and no 2-word phrases  Uses some 2-word phrases but they are only used as part of set routines  Is learning 1 new word a week or less  Uses lots of single words but not action words (verbs) or describing words (concepts)  stammers and I am concerned |