

## Visiting us

When visiting a new place or person, it is not unreasonable for a child (or even their parents) to want to know a bit about where they are going and what they are going to be doing. Preparing a child for an unfamiliar experience can not only help make it a more emotionally comfortable visit for all but can make the visit more productive as well as set the family up for more successful visits in the future.

Whilst there is no right or wrong way to prepare a child for a visit to a developmental specialist, there are things that you might like to try with your child.

- Visit [our team](#) to see what the treating therapist looks like and to learn a bit about them.
- Visit the [Frequently Asked Questions](#).
- See the “what to expect” explanation suggestions below.

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## Occupational Therapy

When attending an unfamiliar appointment, many children and their parents find it helpful to be prepared with some information about what is going to happen. Of course the information you give them and the expectations of them will vary according to their age, their level of understanding, their anxiety level, their personality and the reasons bringing them to therapy.

Here are some ideas to get you started:

### **For a young child (12 - 30 months):**

“We are going somewhere special today to have a play with some toys. There will be a friendly lady who will talk with mummy/daddy and who will then play with you. She will have lots of fun toys and activities to do, and she will be excited to see all the things you are good at playing. Let’s take your favourite toy/book/game to show the lady”.

### **For the child who understands a little more you could then say (30 months - 4.5 years):**

“We are going somewhere special today to see a friendly lady who will talk with mummy/daddy and who will then play with you. They will have lots of fun toys and activities to do. She might give you lots of thing to do like: puzzles, drawing, writing, cutting, maybe some running and jumping and maybe playing with your whole body. She will be excited to see how well you can use your body and your fingers”.

### **For an older child, it is often helpful to have a little more information, such as (4.5 years or older):**

“Today we are going to see the Occupational Therapist. She is someone who helps children with using their fingers (for using pencils and scissors), using their body (for running and jumping), being organized (for kindy/school) and concentrating. We are going to see her because....eg “You are very good at lots of things, but I wonder if writing/drawing/concentrating is harder for you than it needs to be. Do you think we could make it easier for you?”

We will see the lady together. She will have a chat with me and then with you. Then she may have some activities to do together and/or some games. After we have finished playing, she will talk with us about what things you do well and if there are any things that are a bit tricky. Then we will work out together the best way to help you with things you find a bit tricky”.

## **For a mature child, it is often helpful to be quite specific to their own interests:**

“You have told me that ..... (e.g. handwriting) is hard for you and you would like to make it easier.

To help we are going to see the Occupational Therapist today. She is someone who helps children to make ..... (e.g handwriting) easier for them. She will talk to use about what is making handwriting tricky for you now and what we can do together to make it easier. Is there anything that you would particularly like her to know or to help make easier?”

As a rule, we try to treat mature children as young adults who may well be driving the request for help themselves. Feel free to help the therapist navigate the sometimes unclear line of how much to address to your child as opposed to yourself with a child of this age.

## **For children with sensory issues you may chose to tell them:**

“Sometimes our bodies don’t feel comfortable with things that are around us (e.g. tags in shirts, the feel of fruit in our mouth). This makes it hard to concentrate, play nicely with others and behave the way the teacher/or mum and dad wants you to.

Today we are going to see a lady who can help your body make it easier to do the things you want it to do so life is easier and more fun”.[mk\_padding\_divider]

# **Speech Therapy**

## **Initial Assessment Session**

Once you have a made an appointment for your Speech Therapy session a form will be sent out to you which will ask you to describe your concerns and to provide information regarding your child’s early development. This information

helps the clinician you will be seeing to plan the initial session in the best way for you and your child.

If your child attends a child care or educational setting, where appropriate and with your permission, we will contact the child care worker or teacher to discuss your child's Speech and Language skills or ask them to fill out a questionnaire. This information is very important in order to develop a holistic and detailed picture of your child's Speech and Language Skills.

Within the first session there will always be time allocated to sharing information, including discussing your concerns and what you are hoping to achieve from Speech Therapy. You will also be provided with information about what we will be doing in the session and why, and we will discuss your child's current Speech and Language skills.

For the younger child (under 3.5 years), an assessment of your child's Speech and Language Skills will be done through fun play-based activities and the Therapist will often use floor-based and /or table-top activities. For many young children, the parent/carer will be encouraged to join in with the play activities.

For the older child, the first session may be more structured and your child may be encouraged to participate in some table top activities which may involve looking at pictures, answering questions, describing pictures etc.

The first session is tailored to the individual needs of the child and will vary dependent on the nature of the child's difficulties (e.g. speech sound difficulties vs. difficulties understanding what is said), the age of the child, their interests (e.g. likes trains and cars vs. dolls and books) and the ability to engage in more structured table top activities (e.g. for those children who find it hard to sit at a table and look at pictures, the session will be more play based).

At the end of the session, there will be time allocated to provide you with information about your child's Speech and Language Skills and discuss "where to go from here". Where there is a lot of information to share and discuss, it may be appropriate to organise another time in which to do this in.

A written report will be provided summarising the findings within the session and recommendations. A short summary report is provided for those children who have attended a short screening assessment session (45 minutes) and a longer,

more detailed report is provided for those who have attending a full assessment (90 minutes).

## Therapy Sessions

Following an assessment appointment it will be decided together whether therapy is needed.

Therapy sessions are usually once a week or once a fortnight, although some children will attend less regularly.

Sessions are tailored to meet the individual needs of the child and the family and will target the areas identified within the assessment. The sessions are intended to be fun and engaging and the child is encouraged to learn through motivating play activities and games. Building confidence is important and the sessions are planned so that the child will achieve success within the session.

Specific Speech and Language goals will be discussed together and after a few therapy sessions a written copy of the goals will be provided to you. Together we will review these goals and monitor your child's progress.

Your child will make the maximum progress if work can be revised and completed between speech sessions. We recommend five minutes practice a day.

Contact us today to make an initial enquiry or book an assessment for your child on 1800 KID SENSE (1800 543 736)



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