Informal Speech and Language Screener: 6 years

A structured set of things to listen for at each age, drawn from this site's own word lists, worksheets and awareness tasks. Use it to decide whether a full evaluation is warranted.



READ THIS FIRST

Informal screening tool only. Not standardized, not normed, not diagnostic. This screener has no norms, no standard scores and no cut-offs, and it has not been validated against any standardized measure. It cannot diagnose a speech or language disorder and it cannot rule one out. It is a prompt for clinical judgment: a structured way to listen to a child for ten minutes and decide whether a full evaluation is warranted. A child who sails through it can still have a disorder, and a child who struggles with it may simply be tired, shy, or unfamiliar with the examiner. Nothing here substitutes for a comprehensive assessment by a certified speech-language pathologist.

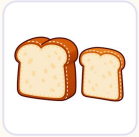
6 years

INFORMAL SCREENING ONLY

Child: _____ Date: _____ Age: _____

What to expect: Every sound but voiceless /th/. /r/ is expected by now; if it is still in error, target it rather than wait. Grammar largely adult-like in everyday speech, and phonological awareness strong enough to support early reading.

Speech sounds 18 WORDS

Voiceless TH Sound /th/	 thumb	 thin	 thick	☐ ☐ —
R Sound /r/	 red	 run	 rain	☐ ☐ —
Vocalic R /er/ /ar/ /awr/ /er/ /ir/ /air/	 earth	 arch	 arm	☐ ☐ —

BL Blend /bl/


blue


black


block

ST Blend /st/


stop


star


stick

TR Blend /tr/


tree


train


truck

Language 12 ITEMS

Reflexive Pronouns


My brother got dressed all by ____. (himself)


My sister tied her shoes by ____. (herself)


I poured the milk by ____. (myself)

Subject-Verb Agreement


The dog ____ at the mailman. (bark) (barks)


The dogs ____ at the mailman. (bark) (bark)


My sister ____ to school. (walk) (walks)

Temporal Concepts


eating the cake / lighting the candles / singing happy birthday (light the candles, sing, eat the cake)


putting on socks / putting on shoes / tying laces (socks, shoes, laces)



turning on the water / washing hands / drying hands (water, wash, dry)

Understanding WH-Questions



Who ate the cookie? (a person)



Where did you put the ball? (a place)



When is your birthday? (a time)

Language from a picture: On the farm

Put this picture in front of the child. Every question below is about it, and the same picture gives you the speech sample for fluency.



UNDERSTANDING - the child points or answers briefly

- How do you know it is not winter in this picture? (the apples, the sunflowers, the green leaves - any one clue is enough)
- Point to an animal that is being fed, and then one that is feeding itself. (the chickens, then the cow eating hay)
- Which animals here would you find in the water? (the duck and the frog)

TALKING - the child produces the language

- What will the farmer do after he finishes feeding the chickens? (a prediction in a full sentence)
- How is the lamb different from the cow? (a comparison, not just two descriptions)
- Tell me the story of this picture, from the beginning. (a narrative with a sequence)

Following directions

Three or four ordinary things on the table. Three steps with two concepts in them, read once.

- [ ] Before you put the ball in the cup, turn the cup upside down. (order reversed correctly)
- [ ] Give me everything on the table except the cup. (everything but the cup)
- [ ] Put the ball behind you, clap twice, then tell me what you did. (all three, and can report back)

Phonological awareness: Sound segmenting

Say a word and ask the child to break it into its separate sounds. Three-sound words first, then clusters. Segmenting is harder than blending and is the better probe at this age.



thigh (th - eye)



row (r - oh)



earth (er - th)



thumb (th - uh - m)

Also listen for

- [ ] Are consonant clusters produced fully, or reduced ("top" for "stop")?
- [ ] Can the child segment a three-sound word into its phonemes?
- [ ] Is /r/ still in error? At 6 this is worth targeting rather than waiting.
- [ ] Do they use "before" and "after" correctly when the order of mention is reversed?



CONSIDER REFERRING FOR FULL EVALUATION IF

Any sound other than voiceless /th/ still in error, cluster reduction, inability to segment simple words into sounds, or grammatical errors that persist in connected speech. This is a prompt for clinical judgement, not a cut-off score - there are no norms behind it.

NOTES