Informal Speech and Language Screener: 7 years and older

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.

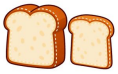
7 years and older

INFORMAL SCREENING ONLY

Child: _____ Date: _____ Age: _____

What to expect: All sounds mastered, including /r/ and both /th/ sounds. Complex sentences, inferencing, and phoneme-level awareness solid enough for spelling and decoding.

Speech sounds 12 WORDS

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

Voiced TH Sound /th/


mother


father


brother

Language 9 ITEMS

Making Nouns from Other Words


Someone who teaches is a ____. (teacher)


Someone who paints is a ____. (painter)


Someone who bakes is a ____. (baker)

Descriptive Concepts


What color is a banana? (yellow)


What color is grass? (green)


What color is the sky on a clear day? (blue)

Following Directions


Touch your nose. (touches nose)


Clap your hands. (claps)


Stand up. (stands)

Language from a picture: At the supermarket

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

- Who has nearly finished shopping, and how can you tell? (the mom with the baby - she is at the register, paying)
- Point to the person buying the most, then the person buying the least. (a comparison across the picture)
- Why is the man putting his bag on the scale? (to weigh it, to find out the price)

TALKING - the child produces the language

- Tell me what will happen when the boy with the cart gets to the register. (a sequence, in complex sentences)
- If you had to buy dinner from this store, what would you choose, and why? (a choice with a reason)
- Explain how you get from picking up food to taking it home. (a procedure, in order)

Following directions

Four ordinary things on the table. Directions with a clause buried inside them, read once, with no repetition.

- [ ] Put the ball in the cup, but only after you have moved the cup to the floor. (cup moved first)
- [ ] Give me the thing that is not the cup and not the ball. (the third object)
- [ ] Listen to all three, then do them: touch your head, turn around, sit down. (all three, in order, after the whole list)

Phonological awareness: Phoneme manipulation

Segmenting, then manipulation: ask the child to say a word without its first sound, or to swap one sound for another. Manipulation is the level that matters for spelling.



earth (er - th)



row (r - oh)



red (r - e - d)



run (r - uh - n)

Also listen for

- [ ] Any residual sound errors at all? At 7 there is no developmental grace period left.
- [ ] Are multisyllabic words produced with all syllables and the right stress?
- [ ] Can the child answer inferential questions about a short passage, not just factual ones?
- [ ] Do they repair a breakdown when a listener says they did not understand?
- [ ] Is there any word-finding difficulty, or reliance on "thing" and "stuff" in place of specific words?



CONSIDER REFERRING FOR FULL EVALUATION IF

Any sound error, any difficulty segmenting or manipulating phonemes, trouble with inferencing or narrative organization, or word-finding difficulty. Residual errors at this age are unlikely to resolve on their own. This is a prompt for clinical judgement, not a cut-off score - there are no norms behind it.

NOTES