



**First Words Preschool Speech and Language screenings will now be electronic. As of December 6, 2016, families can begin using the online *Communication Checkup* tool to screen their child's speech and language development.**

**About the *Communication Checkup*** <http://firstwords.ca/communication-checkup/>

- Provides French and English questionnaires
- Supports Ottawa parents and legal guardians as well as professionals in the early identification of developmental concerns
- Screens children aged 6 months to 5 years
- Screens for speech, language, social communication, fine and gross motor skills as well as red flags
- Provides instant results and next steps
- Triage families to the most suitable agency to support their child's developmental needs
- Allows families to start the referral process online or by phone
- Operates 24hrs a day; no appointment needed
- Functions on any device such as desktop, laptop, tablet and mobile phone with internet access

#### **How was the *Communication Checkup* developed?**

- Through consultation between Speech-Language Pathologists, OCTC staff and the First Words Health Promotion team
- In partnership with the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, other preschool speech and language programs in the province as well as our partners at OCTC and CHEO
- By using the eligibility guidelines for OCTC and CHEO
- By using English and French developmental milestones. This screening tool may not be 100% reflective of a child's communication development in other languages or cultures.

- ✓ **Completion of the *Communication Checkup* is recommended but not required for families to receive services.**
- ✓ **Direct referrals from health professionals, parents and guardians can be made at any time by calling the First Words Intake Office at 613-737-7600, ext. 2500.**
- ✓ **The *Communication Checkup* is intended to be used as a screening tool, not a diagnostic test.**

#### **What can parents expect by completing the *Communication Checkup*?**

- Questions about communication, fine motor and gross motor skills as well as developmental red flags.
- Detailed results page which includes highlighted missed milestones. Parents will have a choice to print, save or receive results by email.
- Recommendations. These may include:
  - ✓ No follow-up required as the child may be developing typically.
  - ✓ Recommendation to come back at the child's next milestone.
  - ✓ Referral to the First Words program for a speech and language assessment.

- ✓ Referral to the Ottawa Children’s Treatment Centre for a developmental or psychological assessment.
- ✓ Recommendation to visit the child’s physician to look at other areas of development highlighted on their results page.
- ✓ Recommendation to speak to their child’s school principal -for children eligible for Senior Kindergarten.

### How can parents access First Words services?

- [www.firstwords.ca](http://www.firstwords.ca): for services, milestones, strategies, webinar and the **Communication Checkup**.
- **Ottawa Public Health Information Line at 613-580-6744 or 613-PARENTS**: to speak to a Public Health Nurse for questions or concerns.
- **First Words Technical Support Line at 613-688-3979 ext. 3434**: to address technical difficulties with the **Communication Checkup**.
- **First Words Intake Office at 613-737-7600, ext. 2500**: for self referrals and families who face barriers (literacy, limited computer access, etc.).

### KNOW THE SIGNS, ACT EARLY AND HELP FAMILIES ACCESS THE **COMMUNICATION CHECKUP!**

For more information or to share feedback, please contact:

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- **Kathy Torunski, Community Educator** at [k.torunski@pqchc.com](mailto:k.torunski@pqchc.com) or at 613-688-3979 x3502
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Keep checking the ‘What’s New?’ page of the First Words Website for the most current information.  
<http://firstwords.ca/firstwords/first-words-services/whats-new/>

### First Words Preschool Speech and Language Program of Ottawa

*an integrated partnership*

