**Title**

Communicating “between the flags”: Communication Milestones in children from 0 to 5 year.

**Author and affiliations**

Warda Abrahams, Jessica Campbell, Kaitlin Davey, Yvette Dempsey, Rachael Di Bella, Stephanie Harris, Claire Zhang, Shaun Ziegenfusz\* & Sally Zingelman (Speech Pathology Australia – Queensland Branch)

\* indicates presenter

NB: This abstract has the support of Marion Giddy (SPA QLD Branch Chair) and Gail Mulcair (SPA CEO)

**Background**

Longitudinal studies show children with communication disorders have poor outcomes in academic achievement, mental health and employment without early identification and support (Johnson, 2010). However many parents and medical professionals have limited understanding of typical communication development.

**Aims**

This project aimed to develop a resource with:

- up to date and research informed communication milestones for children 0-5 years;

- strategies to support communication;

- information regarding the role of speech pathologists; and

- how to find a speech pathologist.

**Method**

The Queensland Branch of Speech Pathology Australia established a working party to develop a communication milestones resource. A needs analysis reviewed existing community resources, as well as current research. The resource content addressed typical milestones, the role of speech pathologists, strategies to support communication, and the impact of cultural and linguistic differences. The resource was published as an electronic toolkit on the Speech Pathology Australia website ([www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au/milestones](http://www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au/milestones)) and circulated on social media, as well as delivered to every early childhood setting in Queensland as an A1 poster.

**Results**

Feedback from early childhood settings has found 78% displayed the resource and 74% used it for information. Most indicated it was easy to understand (89%) and relevant to their work (89%). Finally, 70% had a better understanding of the role of speech pathologists. It has been recommended for distribution to GPs.

**Conclusion**

There is a need for workforce development, as children can and do fall through the gaps (Bishop, 2017). Due to their key involvement in family and early years support, GPs play a critical role in the identification of children with communication disorders (Deuster et al., 2012). They are also best placed to refer families to speech pathologists as part of the care team. It is critical that GPs are well informed of communication milestones and appropriate supports to give Australian children the best chance of success.