

What happens in a Cheeky Monkeys Speech Pathology short assessment session?

- All sessions start with a warm welcome.
- Parents/Carers assist their child to wash their hands in the clinic bathroom prior to the session starting to control infection and keep toys clean.
- The family is shown to the clinic room and the child is given age-appropriate toys to play with while Rachel speaks with the Parents/Carers. This allows the child to settle into the clinic room without any pressure to engage immediately. Rachel has a discussion with Parents/Carers about the story of their child: their birth history, their developmental history, their health, their hearing skills, their communication skills, their education, any concerns that exist and why their child was referred for an assessment.
- The assessment then begins. The exact content and format of the assessment depends on the age of the child and their communication skills.
- Articulation assessments focus on identifying the range of sounds the child uses, sound errors and error patterns, oral-muscular ability, and readiness for therapy. The assessment usually involves looking through a book together so that sound productions in each position (eg. start of a word, middle of a word, end of a word) can be mapped, and also includes getting the child to copy mouth movements to check mouth structures (eg. tongue, lips, soft palate) and their ability to imitate and produce sounds.
- Between assessment tasks, games are played with the child to build rapport, encourage compliance and bring an element of fun.
- At the completion of the assessment the child will be directed back to free play with toys while Rachel speaks with the Parents/Carers. Feedback on assessment results is provided. Skills are quantified in terms of the categories: age-appropriate, mildly delayed/disordered, moderately delayed/disordered, severe delay/disorder.
- Rachel may make recommendations that the child be assessed by other health professionals if indicated (eg. Occupational Therapist, Audiology, Paediatrician).
- Based upon the child's assessment results, a recommendation is made as to whether therapy is required. It is difficult to know exactly how many intervention sessions are required for a particular child as each child has a unique profile including: the severity of their difficulty, family history of the communication difficulty, child's attention, child's motivation, the busy-ness of family life, homework completion, and the child's readiness for therapy. If therapy is indicated, Rachel will endeavor to estimate how many sessions are required and will provide guidance regarding the frequency of appointments. This advice will be based upon research evidence where possible.
- There is no pressure for Parents/Carers to make further appointments, but follow up appointments can be organised if the family wish.
- Sometimes a little homework is given at the end of the assessment.
- Parents then pay for the session using cash, card or direct deposit. Parents are given their invoice.
- The session usually takes 1 hour, but may be a little longer or shorter depending on the child's age and their difficulties or the complexity of the situation.
- The family then leave the clinic room.
- If the family have requested a report this is completed and emailed to the family within 2 weeks. Please see information under Reports for more details.

- If the family have not requested a report, a summary paragraph of results will be emailed to the parent so that they have a record of assessment results/recommendations and can forward this to preschool/school staff as they wish.