

# Social and Communication Skills in Children Born Prematurely

In February 2019, we conducted a survey of parents or carers of children who were born prematurely to understand how they feel about their child's social and communication development. We wanted to know what parents or carers worried about, what support they received, and whether healthcare staff spoke to them about potential difficulties with their child's development. We had **681 responses** from parents and carers of children born between **22-38 weeks**. Some of the main results are summarised below. Thank you to everyone who completed our survey, we really value your opinion. We're confident that we can use this information to shape interventions for development of social and communication skills in children born prematurely.

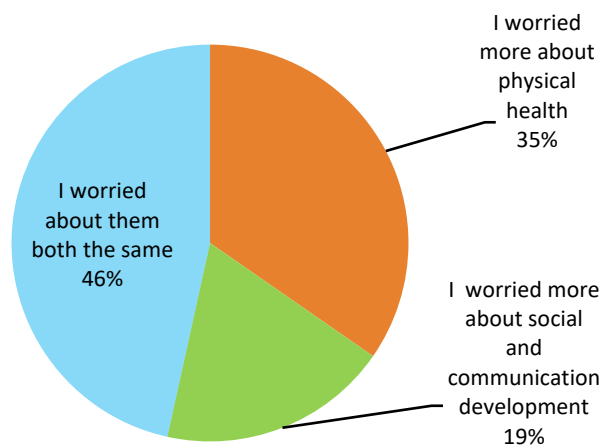
## Parent worries

**83%** of parents or carers said that they **worried** about their child's **social skills**, with **37%** of them worrying **"a lot"**.

**83%** of parents or carers said that they **worried** about their child's **communication skills**, with **44%** of them worrying **"a lot"**.

**46%** of parents or carers worried about their child's social and communication skills and physical health **"about the same"**.

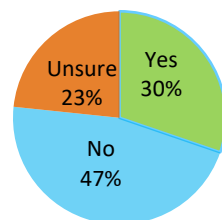
*How did worries about social and communication difficulties compare to worries about your child's physical health?*



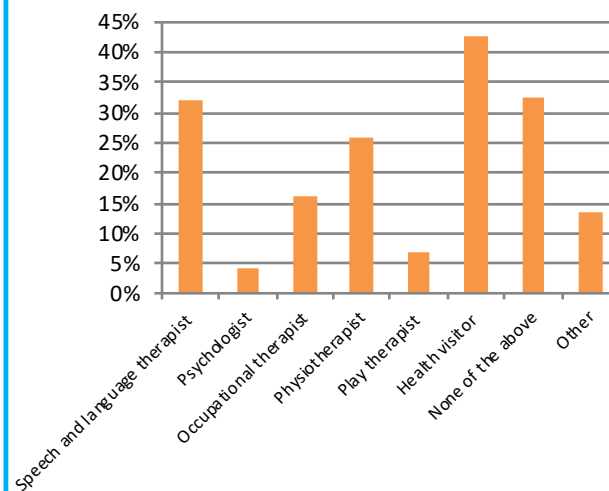
## Support

**47%** of parents or carers felt that they **didn't get enough help** developing their child's social and communication skills.

*Did you feel that you got enough support with helping your child to develop their communication and social skills?*



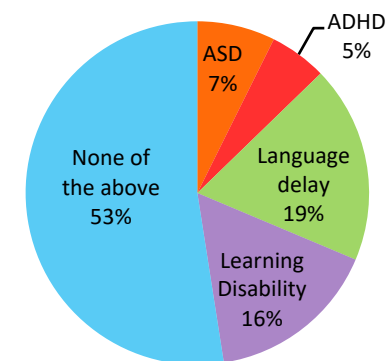
*Which of the following did you get support from?*



## Possible Risks

**53%** of parents or carers said that **no one spoke to them about the potential risk** of their child developing or having Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), language delays, or learning disabilities.

*Did anyone talk to you about the possible risk of your child developing/having?*



This survey was undertaken by Jessica Mingins and Dr Andrew Surtees from the School of Psychology, University of Birmingham, and distributed by Bliss, the leading UK charity for babies born premature or sick. If you have any further questions, please do contact Andrew. We are committed to open scientific practices and will share the full data set on appropriate request.