

How to Complete an Intelligibility Rating at Home: A Guide for Parents

Tracking your child's speech intelligibility (how well others can understand them) can provide helpful insights into their communication development. Here's a simple guide to help you complete an intelligibility rating at home.

What Is Speech Intelligibility?

Speech intelligibility refers to how easily your child's speech can be understood by others, including you, family members, or unfamiliar listeners. A higher intelligibility rating means others can understand most of what your child says.

Step-by-Step Guide to Rating Intelligibility

1. Choose a Familiar Context

Pick a time when your child is relaxed and engaged in talking, such as during playtime, mealtime, or while reading a book together. Use natural, everyday situations to observe their speech.

2. Record a Sample

If possible, record your child speaking naturally for 2-5 minutes. This allows you to review the sample multiple times and ensures accuracy.

Examples of activities:

- Asking your child to describe their favorite toy or activity.
 - Having them retell a story from a book.
 - Encouraging them to talk while playing with dolls, blocks, or cars.
-

3. Listen to Understandability

As you listen, ask yourself:

- How much of their speech can you understand?
- Do you understand them better in short phrases versus longer sentences?
- Are they easier to understand when they use familiar words or repeat themselves?

4. Count Words You Understand

As you listen, track how many words you clearly understand using tallies. Here's how:

- Every time your child says a word you understand, place a tally in the “understood” column.
- If a word is unclear or unintelligible, place a tally in the “not understood” column.

**Understood
Words**

Unintelligible Words

\\

\

Tips for Using Tallies Effectively

- **Stay Consistent:** Listen to your child in similar settings to make comparisons easier.
- **Focus on Words, Not Sentences:** If you only understand part of a sentence, tally the individual words you understand.
- **Involve Others:** Ask a family member or friend to track tallies as well. Familiar listeners often understand more, so getting input from others can be helpful.

5. Calculate the Percentage of Understood Words

To get an idea of your child's intelligibility:

1. Add up the total tallies for both columns.
2. Divide the number of understood words by the total words spoken.
3. Multiply by 100 to get a percentage.

For example:

- **Understood words:** 20
- **Unintelligible words:** 10
- **Total words spoken:** 30
- **Percentage of understood words:** $(20/30) \times 100 = 67\%$

6. Keep a Log Over Time

Track your observations over days or weeks to notice patterns or improvements. Use a notebook or chart to record:

- The date of each observation.
- Context (e.g., during play, at the dinner table).
- Number of understood and unintelligible words.
- Any words or sounds your child is working on.

Example Log:

Date	Activity	Understood Words	Unintelligible Words	Notes
Jan 21	Playing with blocks	15	5	Improved clarity for "block"

7. Consider the Listener

- **Familiar Listeners (You):** Rate how much *you* understand your child.
 - **Unfamiliar Listeners:** If possible, have another adult (who doesn't interact with your child as often) listen and rate their speech.
This comparison is important because familiar listeners often understand more due to context and experience.
-

8. Note Patterns

Write down specific observations:

- **Which sounds or words are easiest to understand?**
- **Are certain sounds or words unclear or omitted?**
- **Does their speech improve with prompting (e.g., "Say it again")?**

Helpful Tips for Parents

1. **Use Positive Reinforcement:** Encourage your child to keep talking, even if their speech is hard to understand.
 2. **Focus on Communication:** Pay attention to what your child is trying to say, not just how clearly they say it.
 3. **Create a Supportive Environment:** Reduce distractions and background noise during speech activities.
 4. **Be Patient:** Give your child time to express themselves. Avoid rushing or correcting them too often.
-

When to Seek Professional Support

If your child's intelligibility is consistently low for their age, consider consulting a speech-language pathologist (SLP). Here are general intelligibility expectations:

- **By Age 2:** 50% of speech is understandable to familiar listeners.
 - **By Age 3:** 75% of speech is understandable to familiar and some unfamiliar listeners.
 - **By Age 4:** 90-100% of speech is understandable to most listeners.
-

Next Steps

Share your observations and logs with your child's SLP or pediatrician. This information will help them better understand your child's needs and create a plan to support their speech development.

By using this guide, you're taking an important step in supporting your child's communication journey!