Sharing Best Practice in Schools

Supporting Speech, Language and communication in the Early Years

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THE HEATHER VAN DER LELY FOUNDATION
RESEARCHING LANGUAGE
DISORDERS IN CHILDREN

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Contents

This booklet contains links to information and resources. The best way to acess these is through the digital version. A PDF of this booklet is available on the resources page of the LIVELY website.

https://research.ncl.ac.uk/lively/resources

⭕ Introduction

Speech, language and communication skills are important throughout a child's time in school and beyond. It is vital that children are supported to develop their language and communication skills during their early years in school. Language skills underpin a child's ability to build and maintain social relationships, to develop narratives, to read and later write (Dobinson and Dockrell, 2021). Early intervention has the potential to prevent many of the later difficulties with learning, socialisation, and wellbeing in children with language difficulties.

There are many ways to support children's speech, language, and communication skills. These can be split into 3 different tiers (Dockrell, Ricketts and Lindsay, 2012):

1. **Universal:** supporting all children within the classroom to have appropriate speech, language, and communication skills through developing a robust language environment

2. **Targeted:** giving additional support to children who have been identified as at risk of difficulties with speech, language, and communication

3. **Specialist:** services that support children with specific speech, language, and communication needs. These children will be supported by external professionals such as Speech and Language Therapists

This booklet of best practice focuses on universal and targeted interventions. Law et al (2017) states the right environmental support (universal interventions) has the potential to make a real difference to children's language learning and their later academic success.

This booklet of best practice has been co-produced with North East Early Years Teachers, SENCOs, Teaching Assistants and Speech and Language Therapists as part of the Language Intervention in the Early Years (LIVELY) Project. The LIVELY project, funded by the Heather van der Lely Foundation, aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of two language interventions: The Building Early Sentences Therapy (BEST) and an adapted version of the Derbyshire Language Scheme (DLS). The language interventions were delivered across two waves, to 20 schools, each randomly allocated to the BEST or DLS arm.

Many schools will already be doing some of the things mentioned in this booklet, however, you may find some new ideas that will help to support and develop children's communication within your Early Years settings. You may have other ideas you would like to share. Please visit our website and Padlet to find out more and add your own ideas.

Other ideas to support SLCN within the classroom

Visit our website

Visit our Padlet

● Robust Language Development

> Language is the medium through which all other learning occurs. Language rich early years education settings are vital for the development of speech, language and communication skills. Many of your classrooms will already have a language rich environment.

A language rich early years classroom has 5 elements (Justice, 2004):

1. **Exposure:** Children are exposed to high quality language input throughout the day, through diverse contexts and interactions. These interactions can be a mix of active and passive participation. They can be adult to child or peer to peer interactions. Some examples include:

   - Book sharing
   - Junk box modelling
   - Self-care routines
   - Out-door play

2. **Deliberateness:** Adults are intentional in the language they choose to use with a child. The adults in the classroom think ahead about the activities in the early years setting and think about the type of language they could use in that activity.

Language wheels can be a great way to think about vocabulary development and the language adults choose to use. They can give adults ideas about the type of words they need to be encouraging and using during interactions. For example, during snack time:

It is also important to think of the type of language to use when interacting with a child. During an activity, adults can vary the type of language they are using. The language must be tailored to the level of the child.
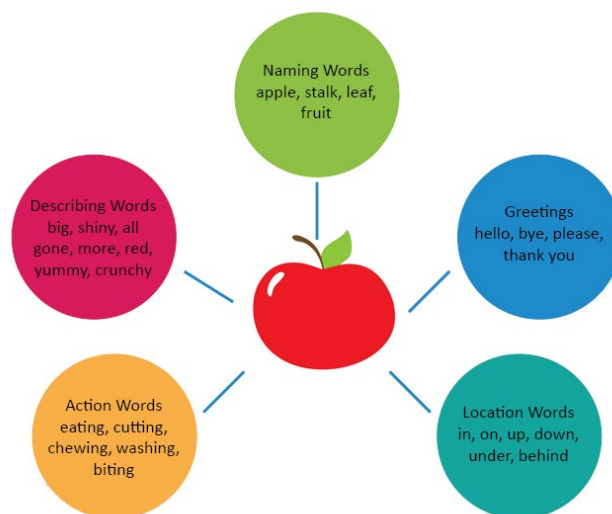
Concrete:

- Labelling '*apple*' '*stalk*' '*leaf*'

- Imitating 'copy '*splish splash splosh*''

- Describing: Talking about wet and dry objects, heavy, light, big, little

Abstract:

- **Predicting** '*I think this one is going to sink/float*'

- **Modelling** '*I need the big cup this time, not the little cup*'

- **Reasoning:** Getting children to wonder and to think why particular things happened. '*Why did this one sink/float?*'

3. **Recurrence:** Children need repetition of language within and across contexts. Repetition across contexts increases learning and retention and is particularly helpful for children with difficulties learning language.

4. **High Quality Input:** Adults should expose children to diverse language:

- **Vocabulary:** deepen and extend the child's vocabulary by modelling nouns, action words, words about feelings, descriptive words and abstract concepts.

- **Sentence Structures:** Increase the range of sentence structures the child hears: questions, simple sentences, commands, requests, complex sentences, past, present and future.

- **Purposes:** Increase the range of purposes of the language the child hears: requesting, describing, imitating and choices but also abstract purposes like predicting, wondering, reasoning. '*I wonder*' is a really powerful phrase to use with children.

5. **Adult Responsiveness:** Adults responses to a child's attempt to communicate should be:

- **Reliable and frequent:** Ensuring when a child is communicating with an adult, the adult reliably notices these attempts and responds to them.

- **Contingent – responds to the child's intent.** Talk about the thing the child's interested in/focused on, follow the child's lead. Even if they're unclear with what they're trying to convey, adults have to respond to what they think is the underlying intention of the action.

- **Sensitive to the child's language abilities:** Use language in the child's zone of proximal development. Copy and slightly extend the language the child is using. For example, if the child says 'car', the adult can copy and extend the language: '*yes, a red car*' '*a fast car*' '*a big car*'.

This links into the 'Language Learning Interactions' section (Page 15-17).

Activity

- Choose an everyday routine in your setting (e.g., snack time, small group time, home time)

- Which words would you use in this routine?

- Use the language wheel (Appendix A) to think about which words to include from each area e.g., nouns/verbs/description words

- What visual supports do you use?

- Which Makaton signs do you use?

See **pages 15 and 16** for more information on signing

o

CPD

Follow this link to acces the CPD for 'Promoting robust languge development for children in the the Early Years'

Language Learning Environment

A language learning environment is the setting or environment where language learning occurs. For children in the early years, the language learning environments are the classroom and the home setting.

There are audit tools which exist to help educators to consider their classroom environment and to check whether it is offering the appropriate physical environment to support children's language and communication needs. One example is the **Communication Supporting Classroom Observation Tool (CSCOT)** (Dockrell et al, 2012). It can be used to identify potential areas of development and areas of strength.

Here are some ideas to enhance language learning within the classroom environment.

Visuals

- Visuals can be used alongside language to aid communication. Visuals can support children, with and without language difficulties, to be independent. Using a visual cue can support transitions as the child can see what has just happened and what is coming next. It is important that visual cues are within the child's line of vision.

- Visual Timetables
    - o Can support children's understanding of routines.

First Then Board
Image shared by one of the LIVELY schools

Equipment Labels
Image shared by one of the LIVELY schools

- o Develop their skills for anticipating what will happen next, as well as develop their understanding of time, e.g. 'now, next, finished'
- Now and Next board/ First Then board
- Weather Charts
- Labels for equipment and spaces for activities
- Emotional check in – children move their photograph onto an emotion flower to see how people are feeling and if anyone wants to share, describe how they're feeling and why

Visual Timetable
Image shared by one of
the LIVELY schools

Learning Areas

- Tuff trays
  - o There are lots of ways to use Tuff trays to focus on vocabulary for the topic of the term, e.g., creating a sea-creature tuff tray, autumnal tuff tray
- Role play areas
  - o Encourage children to dress up, play imaginatively and cooperate with others to develop social skills
  - o Supports development of more complex language skills
  - o Could include a themed role play e.g., a home corner, doctors surgery, a shop, a dentist, a building site/yard outside with helmets, high-vis vests, children's hammers etc.

Tuff Tray
Image shared by one of
the LIVELY schools

Home Corner
Image shared by one of the LIVELY schools

● Story telling corner/reading corner

    o   An exciting book corner will encourage children to use it frequently

    o   The area should be comfortable and welcoming e.g., carpets, drapes, cushions

    o   Books should be accessible to the children – on low shelves or a book box

    o   Books can be selected which relate to the topic of the week/term

● Dedicated play areas outside

    o   Sand/water/messy play space

    o   Climbing equipment

- o   Role and small world play

- o   Mark making and writing

- o   Mud Kitchen

- o   These areas can focus on a range of vocabulary: *'mixing' 'stirring' 'emptying' 'filling' 'shaking' 'pouring' 'baking' 'folding'*

● Problem solving area

● Construction

● Jigsaws

● Problem solving areas may focus on abstract language such as predicting, *'I think this piece is going to fit in here'*

Construction Role Play
Image shared by one of the LIVELY schools

⬤ Language Learning Opportunities

> Language learning opportunities are the structured opportunities that are present in the classroom to support language development. Here are some examples of how to create those opportunities:

Small group work

Groups bring advantages to language learning. They are an excellent context for developing children's language through peer-to-peer modelling, and by taking the pressure off a more reticent child or a child with less strong language abilities. During interviews with practitioners at the LIVELY schools, the staff shared some ideas of the small group work they are doing to support children's communication:

- Confidence groups – the aim of this group is to support and encourage the children who may be less confident when talking to an adult or participating in a group setting. In this group, you may have a small number of children who are sitting, having a snack and the adult will initiate a chat within the small group. This could be incorporated in different ways, for example:

    o Snack time – making a choice of what snack they would like, talking about the snack, what it tastes like, what it looks like. You can link this back to the language wheel to consider the type of language and the variation you are using during snack time

- Using technology during circle time - encouraging children to take a photo or a video of what they have been doing. They can then chat about this during circle time. Parents may also share photographs or videos on platforms such as 'Tapestry' or 'Seesaw'. Children can then talk about what they have been doing at home.

SSCAN (Weitzman, E., & Greenberg, J., 2002). Learning Language and Loving It – A Guide to Promoting Children's Social, Language and Literacy Development. Toronto: Hanen Centre Publication)

Small groups are best:

- Keeping group sizes for any given activity between 3-4 children is optimal. A maximum of 6 children per group if you can ensure you can give the children enough space for their language needs to be met
- A mixed language ability group is helpful for peer modelling and mixed conversational style

Set up an appropriate activity

- An activity that interests and motivates the children in the group
- An activity that is the right level so all children can access the activity
- Ensure the children can be face-to-face with one another and the adult e.g., sitting around a table compared to sitting in a row

Carefully observe each child's level of participation and interaction

- Sit and watch to see how the children settle into the play/activity

Adapt your responses to each child's needs

- The goal is to try and move the child to the next step of interaction until all the children in the group are interacting with you and each other

Now keep it going

- Go back a step and watch and observe again. Once you have facilitated things and attempted to move the children on, carefully observe again to see where the children are at before stepping in and facilitating
- Scan the whole room to see if anyone is not engaged and needs help to get involved

Story time

Using books, stories and nursery rhymes will help children learn new words. Books and nursery rhymes use the same repetitive language. This makes learning new words and ideas easier for children. You don't just have to read the words of the books, you can talk about the pictures, use different voices, facial expressions and stress the key words.

Here are some other ways schools are using books and stories to support language development:

- Pie Corbett's core texts

- o   A group of core books that help children engage at a deeper level with the story

- Helicopter stories

  - o   Teacher tells a story

  - o   Encourage children to tell us their story and act it out

- Wild word of the week

  - o   Use a word in writing, in play – taken from stories

- Interactive book reading

  - o   Children are asked questions, join in with repetitions, etc.

- Story Sacks

  - o   A cotton bag including a story and props to use alongside the story

Reading Area
Image shared by one of the LIVELY schools

⭕ Language Learning Interactions

Language Learning Interactions are the ways in which adults in the setting talk with the children. Here are some examples of how to make the most of every interaction you have with a child in your setting.

Supporting children with their spoken language (expression)

- **Face-to-face**
  - Get face-to-face where possible and use the child's name to gain their attention before you talk or give an instruction. When an adult and child are face to face, there will be lots of clues about what is being said from lip movements, eyes and facial expressions

- **Keep background noise to a minimum**
  - This will help the child listen to what you are saying and focus. It will help the adult and the child hear each other clearly

- **Language Modelling:** The adult provides examples of language structures, vocabulary and purposes
  - **Labelling:** the adult provides labels for unfamiliar actions, objects or abstract concepts (feelings). Try using a variation of types of words, e.g. words that are used to name things (nouns), doing words (verbs), describing words (adjectives)
  - **Scripting:** The adult provides a routine to the child for representing an activity. The adult may be describing the play/everyday routine
  - **Repeating:** The adult repeats what the child has said. Repetition of words is really important. Children need to hear new words lots of times before they understand the word and begin to use it
  - **Recasting:** The adult repeats what the child has said with extra detail or more correct language. For example, if the child says '*he ranned*', the adult can say '*yes he **ran***'
  - **Extending:** The adult repeats what the child has said and adds a small amount of information. This is adding to the complexity of the sentence. For example, if a child says a word/short phrase, model the phrase back and add an additional word, e.g. if the child says '*car*', the adult can reply with '*big car*' or '*fast car*' '*red car*'
  - **Choices:** The adult offers choices to the child. This can be done throughout daily routines. It will help the child practice using language and links a word with an

object. If the child cannot say the word, the adult should say it for them and model. For example, during snack time, the adult can offer the child a choice, '*do you want a **banana** or an **apple**?*'

You can use the above techniques during a daily 'check in' – have a chat with each child in the class 1:1. Conversations should provide time for adults to model language to the children by extending, repeating, and recasting (Justice, 2022).

- **Waiting**
  o The adult uses a slow pace during conversation. The adult actively listens to the child when talking and the adult does not dominate the conversation. If the adult is joining a game, watch and wait to see how the child is engaging with the materials.

- **Follow the child's lead**
  o The adult waits to see where the child's focus of attention is. They join in with the child's game rather than trying to shift the child's focus. A shared focus helps the child map the meaning of language.

- **Makaton**
  o Using Makaton signs and signing key words as you say them can help support a child's communication as it:
    - Slows your rate of speech
    - Makes language more visual
    - Helps emphasise key words
    - Encourages language learning – understanding and use
   - Does not stop children talking

Some helpful Makaton links are included below:

  o **Makaton Charity**: Useful Makaton resources. Including sign of the week

  o **Something Special** (Mr Tumble)

Makaton sign for 'cow'

- **Break down instructions**

    o   Keep instructions short and break them down into 'manageable' chunks of information. Keep language short and simple.

- **Demonstrate**

    o   This can help by providing children with a visual sequence of actions that they have to copy in order to complete the task

Basic Makaton Signs

Hello   Finished

More   Please

Makaton signs downloaded from https://makaton.org/
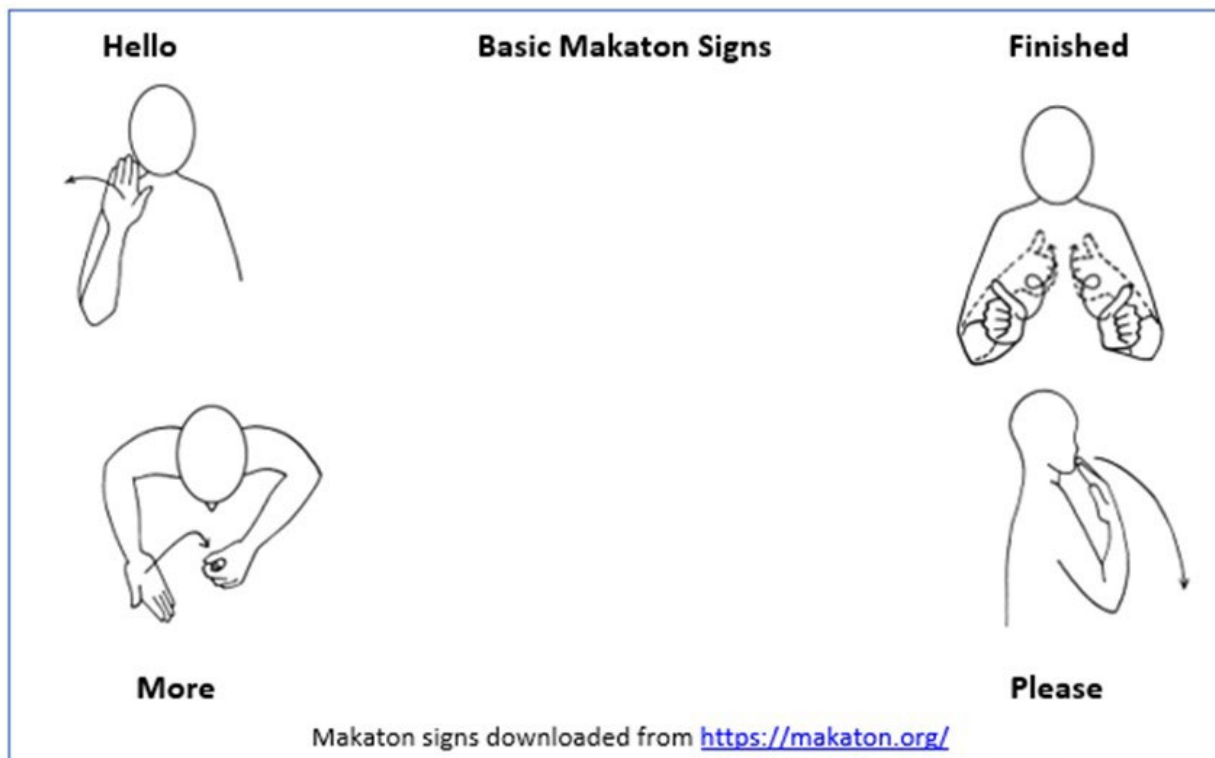
⭕ Technology

> Educational technology can help to support language and communication if it is used effectively. It is important for practitioners to consider what they are wanting to achieve with the technology first and then look at what technology is available.

When thinking about technology and resources, you should consider the following points, although not all have to be true:

- Is it child-centred?
- Does it promote independence?
- Is it creative?
- Is it a purposeful activity?
- Does it challenge the children?
- Does it support assessment?
- Does it encourage reflection and discussions about how the children learn?
- Does it give the children a voice?

Here are some examples of devices and applications that you may like to try in your classroom to support communication development.

Resources

- **Cameras - photos or video**
  - o Many settings teach children to take pictures and/or videos of their learning. These can be shared on the interactive whiteboard during circle time to allow children to share what they have been doing and reflect on their learning. Some settings may do this in small groups with a key worker.
  - o Recording evidence for assessment
  - o Capturing key moments
  - o Sharing with parents
  - o Can be used to create resources and activities for the children – photos of them or their family or things they have done.
  - o Improve story telling – record puppet shows or story telling with small world toys,

create books, act out your own story.

- o Capturing visits outside of the setting

- o Can use photos to create sequences e.g., recipes, acting out, designing, building scenes from a nursery rhyme

- o Making animations e.g., with small world objects or drawings

- o **Making animations – example** (YouTube)

- **Audio recorders**

  - o **Talking buttons**

    - – Record a short snippet. When the child presses the button, they will hear whatever you have recorded

    - – Can be used next to displays so a child can press the button and hear about the work they can see

  - o **Talking Books**

    - – Put pictures in and create a recording for each page

    - – Photos about the subject the children are currently studying

  - o **Microphones**

    - – Children can record their voices and play it back. It can take the pressure off some children who do not like talking in public

    - – Can be used at circle time to talk about what the child has been doing

Other recordable devices

- **Recordable pegs**

  - o Could be used in art areas. Children press them at the easel and it gives them instructions on what to paint

  - o Could have music and the children can respond to what they hear

- **Talking Tins**

  - o What's inside? The child hears a short description and has to guess what is inside the tin

  - o You can record a letter sound, the child then has to go around the classroom to find objects beginning with this sound

- **Talking Postcard**

- o Can be used by a child who is drawing a picture. They can record themselves saying what it is about

- **Headphones or audio players**
  - o Children listen to them in small groups or individually without disturbing other people
  - o They can listen to a book being read or music
  - o The book could be read by the teacher, a child or a parent

- **Green Screen**
  - o Children can act out experiences with a picture behind them
  - o **Green Screen Movies with Nursery (eatsleepictrepeat.blogspot.com)**
  - o **EYFS Fireworks and Counting - Swinemoor Primary School**

- **Remote controlled cars**
  - o These could be used on a big mat. The children have to follow instructions to go to different pictures on the mat e.g. can they get the car to go to the right letter or a letter a word begins with

- **Walkie-Talkies**
  - o Children can use these to communicate with each other around the setting

- **Metal detectors**
  - o These are great for finding things in the sand. Activities can link to phonological awareness – can they find something that begins with/ends with a certain sound?

- **Recordable Binoculars**
  - o These can be used outside to look at what is in the sky or in the trees
  - o Teachers can set up a board far away with different pictures. The child uses the binoculars to see what they can find on the board

- **Recordable Clipboards**
  - o Can be used to encourage independent writing. Children can grab a clipboard and find a space that is comfortable to write or draw. The clipboards could be used outside. They can record themseselves talking about what they have done

- **Toys that speak or respond to sound**
  - o Can be great for enhancing role-play

- **Programmable toys**

- Can be used on a floor mat, such as a road. Encourage the children to explore an area with the programmable toy. It can be linked to different themes
- Examples of programable toys are 'Bee-bots' or 'Roamers'

● **Torches**

- Use a torch to create a shadow of a well-known object on a board, screen or a clear bit of wall. Can the children guess what the object is from the shadow image and name it?
- Create a dark den in your classroom. Make a label for the outside for a 'secret spy reading den'. Provide torches and let children in with their book – no sounds should be heard!

● **Interactive whiteboards/smart boards**

- Can be used for group activities
- Can be used to practice writing
- Can play music/dance through the smart board for all the class to see
- Can be used for digital stories

Apps – with links to YouTube clips and more information

Think about what the child will be doing when you are choosing apps to work with. Some important things to consider (although not all have to be true):

● Will the children be engaged and actively involved?

● Is the content relevant and meaningful to the children?

● Is the language appropriate or is it more relevant to the American context?

● Does the app allow interaction and for the learning to be social?

A good website is '**Common Sense Education**' this allows you to see what other people think of resources, to get ratings of the apps and ideas about how other people may have used them.

● **Chatterpix Kids**

- Make your pictures talk

● **My Playhome**

- A virtual doll's house

● **Khan Academy Kids**

- Specifically designed for young children

- o   A range of activities
- o   Free to access

- **Draw and Tell**
  - o   Can start with a blank piece of paper and draw an image
  - o   Colour-in a drawing that already exists
  - o   Add stickers to an image
  - o   Can record audio on top of it to talk about the picture or tell a story

- **Superhero HD Comic Book Maker**
  - o   Similar to Draw and Tell
  - o   Ready-made scenes to colour in
  - o   Add stickers
  - o   Add own audio to tell the story

- **Our Story**
  - o   Make a book about a child. This can spark conversation with the child

- **Puppet Pals**
  - o   Has backgrounds and characters that the children can manipulate
  - o   Tell stories to share with others

- **Monster Mingle**
  - o   Create monsters that explore a virtual world and move around
  - o   Provides lots of opportunities to support descriptive language

- **Dinosaur mix**
  - o   An environment children can explore, moving through the forest or the desert
  - o   Provides lots of opportunities to support descriptive language

- **Hairy Maclary from Donaldson's Dairy**
  - o   Read by David Tennant
  - o   Children can follow along with the story
  - o   There are some pages the children can interact with

- **Land of Me**
  - o   Only available for older versions of iPad
  - o   Tell stories to the children
  - o   Designed specifically to encourage language and communication

o   Children can choose the characters, the content of the story and the ending

Songs and dances for the children to join in with

- o   **Pete the Cat**

- o   **Banana Banana Meatball Song | Songs For Kids | Dance Along | GoNoodle** (YouTube)

- o   **Just Dance Kids 2014 A Pirate You Shall Be** (YouTube)

- o   **Penguin Song 🎵 Penguin Dance Song 🎵 Brain Breaks 🎵 Kids Action Songs by The Learning Station** (YouTube)

Other Links

- ● **LIVELY Resources Page**

- ● **Literacy Apps reviews**

- ● **TTS blog about ICT in early years**

CPD

Follow this link to acces the CPD for 'Using technology to support language and communication in the Early Years'

O Targeted Resources

These resources are aimed at targeting specific areas to support children's speech, language, and communication needs. Dockrell, Ricketts and Lindsay (2012) define targeted services as giving additional support to children who have been identified as at risk of difficulties with their speech, language and/or communication. Most resources mentioned below are those that schools mentioned during interviews/ discussion with the LIVELY team. Some of these resources have been suggested by a Speech and Language Therapist and may require more specific, specialist training.

Language Resources

- Building Early Sentences Therapy (BEST) (McKean, Pert, & Stow, 2013)

  o **https://research.ncl.ac.uk/lively/internventions/best/**

  o **https://research.ncl.ac.uk/best**

  o Intervention involved in the LIVELY project

  o Suitable for children between 3;0 and 6;0 years of age

  o Designed to be delivered in groups of between 2 and 6 children

  o For children who find it difficult to understand and/or produce sentences with 2, 3 and 4 clause elements e.g. 'the boy is giving a banana to the baby'

  o Aims to support/improve a child's expressive language by changing children's underlying linguistic representations of the elements of a sentence so they can use sentences more flexibly

  o Focus of this intervention is that the child receives good input – this means that the focus is on **learning through listening**

- Derbyshire Language Scheme (DLS) (Knowles, and Masidlover, 1982)

  o **https://research.ncl.ac.uk/lively/internventions/dls/**

  o **https://www.derbyshire-language-scheme.co.uk/**

  o Intervention involved in the LIVELY project

  o Structured language teaching approach, looking at understanding and use of sentences with 1, 2, 3 and 4 key words in the same activity, using games and toys to motivate children

  o Children move through stages, increasing their understanding and use of sentences with 1, 2, 3 and 4 key words

- **Colourful Semantics** (Bryan, 1997)
  - Approach created by Alison Bryan
  - Aimed to support spoken language, specifically sentence structure and developing a narrative
  - The different parts of the sentences are colour coded

    WHO – orange

    WHAT DOING – yellow

    WHAT – green

    WHERE – blue

- **Language for Thinking** (Parsons, & Branagan, 2017)
  - A structured approach to develop a child's abstract thinking, verbal reasoning, and inferencing skills

- **Narrative Therapy**
  - An approach to support children to verbally tell a story or series of events
  - Different approaches to narrative therapy. Most will use colour and visual support to aid learning of the key elements and teach children how to move from individual story elements (who, where, when, what happened, emotions and dialogue, the end) to creating their own narratives
  - Schools can incorporate narrative therapy across a range of classroom activities

- **Word Aware** (Parsons, & Branagan, 2014)
  - A structured whole school approach to promote the vocabulary development of all children
  - 3 books in the Word Aware series:
  - Word Aware 1 (2021) – whole school vocabulary development for ages 5 to 11
  - Word Aware 2 (2017) – teaching Early Years children ages 3 to 5
  - Word Aware 3 (2021) – teaching vocabulary in small groups for children 6 to 11

- **Pictoys**
  - Velcro pictures. A series of interactive resources that explore following instructions and sentence building at different word levels

- **Language Steps** (Armstrong, 2000)
  - Targets language comprehension and expression
  - Developed to mirror Derbyshire Language Scheme targets

- o   Includes activities targeting one-to-four-word level

- **Black Sheep Press resources**

  - o   A wide range of resources to support a child's speech, language and communication skills

Group Resources

- **Early Talk Boost** (Reeves et al, 2018).

  - o   A targeted intervention aimed at 3-4 year old children with delayed language development

  - o   9 week intervention: 3 sessions per week during circle/story time, each lasting 15-20 mins

  - o   Targets attention and listening, vocabulary and building sentences

- **Talk Boost** (Reeveset al, 2019).

  - o   A targeted intervention aimed at 4-7 year olds with delayed language development

  - o   10 week intervention: 3 sessions per week in small groups, each lasting 30-40 mins

  - o   Targets attention and listening, vocabulary, building sentences, telling stories and conversations

- **Nuffield Early Language Intervention** (NELI) (Sibieta et al, 2016)

  - o   A programme for children in Reception (4-5 years) which has been found to improve children's language and early literacy skills

  - o   20 week intervention: 3 small group sessions and 2 individuals sessions to a targeted group of around 3-6 pupils

- **Boosting Language Auditory Skills and Talking (BLAST)**

  - o   BLAST 1 is designed for all children in Nursery aged 3-5

  - o   BLAST 2 is designed for all children in Reception aged 4-5

  - o   30 consecutive sessions fully planed and resourced to deliver to a group of 4-8 children

Phonological Awareness Resources

- Newcastle Intervention for Phonological Awareness (NIPA) (Stringer, 2019).

    o Based on the intervention used in the Newcastle SLT service for over 30 years.

    o Now developed for students to use at Newcastle University clinic.

    o Can be used with groups or individuals.

    o Widely used around the UK.

    o You can get a copy of the NIPA from the **Phonological Awareness website**

- Gillon Phonological Awareness (2004)

    o Good for children with literacy difficulties

- Earobics (Diehl, 1999)

    o Video programme/DVD to listen and learn

- **Sound Linkage** (suitable for children Year 1 and above) (Hatcher et al, 2014)

    o Very focused on literacy, moving into the written word

CPD

Follow this link to access the CPD for 'Phonological awareness. What comes before letters and sounds: getting children ready for phonics'

More Newcastle University Phonological Awareness Resources are available here

https://research.ncl.ac.uk/phonologicalawareness

Social Communication Resources

- Lego Therapy (LeGoff, 2004).

    o A social development programme for children and young people with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and other social communication difficulties

    o Adults run a structured group where children work in teams of 3 to build a Lego model and each child has a particular role

        – The engineer

        – The supplier

        – The builder

    o Lego therapy can be adapted to work on language targets

> If you are worried about a child's speech, language and/or communication skills,
>
> it is important to contact your local Speech and Language Therapy service
>
> to seek advice and support.

◯ Engaging Parents

During the pandemic, thinking of creative ways to communicate and engaging parents was key when schools were closed.

Parents are also central to being enablers to support a child's language development. It is important to support parents and build their confidence in supporting their child's language development. It is beneficial for the parents to have the opportunity to see language rich environments being modelled in the early years environment.

Here are some of the resources schools have used to communicate with parents. There are also some general resources which may be helpful for parents asking for advice or resources to support their children with speech, language, and communication development.

- **Tapestry**
  - An online e-learning journal for Nursery and Reception children. Using photos, videos and diary entries, teachers or parents/carers can detail the child's learning journey. Parents can view their child's progress, the activities they are doing at school whilst also uploading their own photos and comments. Tapestry can be used as a talking tool as parents can add what they have been doing with the children

- **Seesaw**
  - Another online e-learning journal, similar to Tapestry but can be used all the way through the school. It allows students, teachers and parents to complete and share classroom work. You can share photos, videos, drawings, text, links and PDFs
  - Seesaw has the ability to translate text. You can put messages in Seesaw that parents can translate into some languages (about 44 languages at the moment)

- **Evidence Me**
  - Another online e-learning journal, similar to Tapestry
  - Has a dedicated parent app where teachers and parents can share information instantly
  - Access to a wide range of frameworks to measure the children's progress and provide evidence and observations of their achievements, as well as the areas where they may benefit from further support

- **Class Dojo**
  - An app for teachers, parents and students to share photos, videos and comments about school, homework and general learning
  - Parents and Teachers can private message each other
  - Can be translated into 30+ languages
- **Google Classroom**
  - An online area which allows you to share videos and worksheets with parents and children at home
- **BBC Tiny Happy People**
  - Short videos and articles with helpful tips and advice to support a child's communication. A great way of sharing information and setting up a way of communicating with parents, e.g. sending parents a clip a week as a homework activity to do with their child
- **Feeding Your Little One Words** by Kirsty Murrell - SLT
- **Hungry Little Minds**
  - A general resource with different activities and games to play with children. The website also gives details of some Apps that you may want to try
- **CBeebies**
  - Link with lots of great points and with user friendly language for parents
- Speech and Language Therapy UK are a children's communication charity with a range of resources and information to share with parents and school professionals to help support children with speech, language and communication difficulties
  - **Speech and Language UK: Changing young lives**
- General resources on the Communication Trust Website for Parents. The Communication Trust is a coalition of not-for-profit organisations to support parents and people who work with children and young people in England to support their speech, language and communication
  - **https://speechandlanguage.org.uk/information-and-support**
  - **https://speechandlanguage.org.uk/talking-point/for-professionals/ the-communication-trust**
- **Speech and Language Therapy Assessments**
  - Some answers to questions parents may have
- **Free Parent resources from Afasic**.
  - Afasic is a parent-led organisation to help children and young people with speech

and language impairments and their families

- Invite parents in for a lunch and a story time in small batches. Encourage parents to have cosy time with their children and share a book together. The parents can observe how staff share books with children. The parents can be encouraged, praised and supported to do this with their children.

- Invite parents for 'stay and play' sessions. Similar to above, encourage parents to have play time with their children. The parents can observe how staff support language development through play by modelling, repeating, recasting and extending.

- Running parent meetings at the start of the academic year is a chance to build a relationship with the families and engage parents with the activities happening at school

- Intoducing email

  o Parents can share what is happening at home

  o Find out what children are doing

  o Need to be clear about boundaries and expectations

○ Bilingualism

Children are bilingual if they hear or speak two or more languages. Most bilingual children speak another language at home and are exposed to English at school (sequential bilingualism). Bilingualism is an advantage, regardless of the presence of a speech, language, or communication disorder (RCSLT, 2019).

Below are some points about bilingualism and best practice to share taken from the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT 2019):

- Bilingualism does not cause or contribute to a speech and language or communication disorder

- Assessment and intervention must always be carried out in both/all languages. Delivering assessment and intervention in the child's home language means you can get an accurate diagnosis and it is a good foundation for acquiring other languages

- Collaborating with professional interpreters should not be viewed as optional and must not be restricted by budgetary constraints

- Professionals should never recommend abandoning the home language in favour of additional language learning. Encourage all children and parents to continue to use their home language in all environments (home/shops/park/playground etc.)

  o Best model for language acquisition:

    – If parents use just English, their English is not always a good model to build language acquisition on

  o Maintains culture and develops identity

- Language is the transmission of culture and builds links to extended family. It is protective against mental health difficulties as people build their identify on language and culture

    – It is important not to isolate children from any member of the family by closing access to the home language

  o It supports the acquisition of English as an additional language

- It is recommended that services should allocate at least double the time for bilingual clients and their families in order to achieve the same positive outcomes as monolingual clients and therefore deliver an equitable service (RCSLT, 2019)

- Have DVDS, books, downloads in home language in the home. Some languages don't have written form, e.g. Mirpuri, so maybe have wordless books (picture books)

- Celebrate other cultures and languages spoken by children in school

- Ask parents to come in and talk about religious festival, religious food – explore what can we learn from each other

- Support home language intervention for children with language disorder

- Work alongside interpreters for informed consent and effective practice

- Avoid asking older children to translate – this can mean they miss out on their own educational time or if they're having to translate bad news to their parents it can be inappropriate if they're the first person to hear it

- If you are concerned about a bilingual child's language skills, ask parents about their home language usage. Is it the same in their home language? If so, it's a definite sign they need referring.

- Find out which home languages are spoken. Stow and Dodd (2005) found that only 45% of bilingual children had their language correctly recorded on the referral form. There's no such language as Chinese or Pakistani – these are names of countries. Find out what languages are spoken locally. Some parents may have told you a language they have already heard of – even though they speak dialects e.g., Mirpuri. They may say they speak a higher status language. Working in Urdu with a Mirpuri speaking child is impossible – the children won't understand what is being said

CPD

**Follow this link to access the
CPD for 'Language disorder
in a bilingual context'**

⭕ General Resources and Advice

These resources may be useful for more general information and advice regarding speech, language, and communication. Most of these resources can be found on our **LIVELY website**. These resources may be helpful for parents asking for advice or resources to support their children.

- **Ages and Stages**
  - o Some helpful resources if you're wondering what a child should be doing or whether to refer to Speech and Language Therapy

- **Progress Checker**
  - o You can use the progress checker to see if a child's communication is age appropriate or whether you should seek advice from an SLT

- **General resources on the Speech and Language UK website for parents.** Speech and Language UK are a children's communication charity with a range of resources and information to share with parents and school professionals to help support children with speech, language, and communication difficulties

- General resources on the Communication Trust Website for Parents. The Communication Trust is a coalition of not-for-profit organisations to support parents and people who work with children and young people in England to support their speech, language and communication
  - o **https://speechandlanguage.org.uk/information-and-support**

- **Common features of Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN)**

- **Speech and Language Therapy Assessments**
  - o A speech and language therapy assessment can help you understand a child's difficulties and find the right support. This link provides information about how an assessment can help and what to expect

- There are some general leaflets from the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists which may be useful
  - o **Supporting children in the Early Years**
  - o **Information about Developmental Language Disorder (DLD)**
  - o **What are speech, language and communication needs?**

- **More free parent resources from Afasic**
  - o Afasic is a parent-led organisation to help children and young people with speech and language impairments and their families

- Twinkl

- o **Resources Page 1**

- o **Resources Page 2**

- ● **Chatterpack**

  - o Free online speech and language resources

- ● Makaton Resources

  - o **Makaton Charity: Useful Makaton resources. Including sign of the week**

  - o **Something Special (Mr Tumble)**

- ● **Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust**

  - o Useful video demonstrations of how to support a child's speech and language development

- ● **South Tees NHS Speech Therapy**

  - o A range of videos to support children's speech, language and communication development
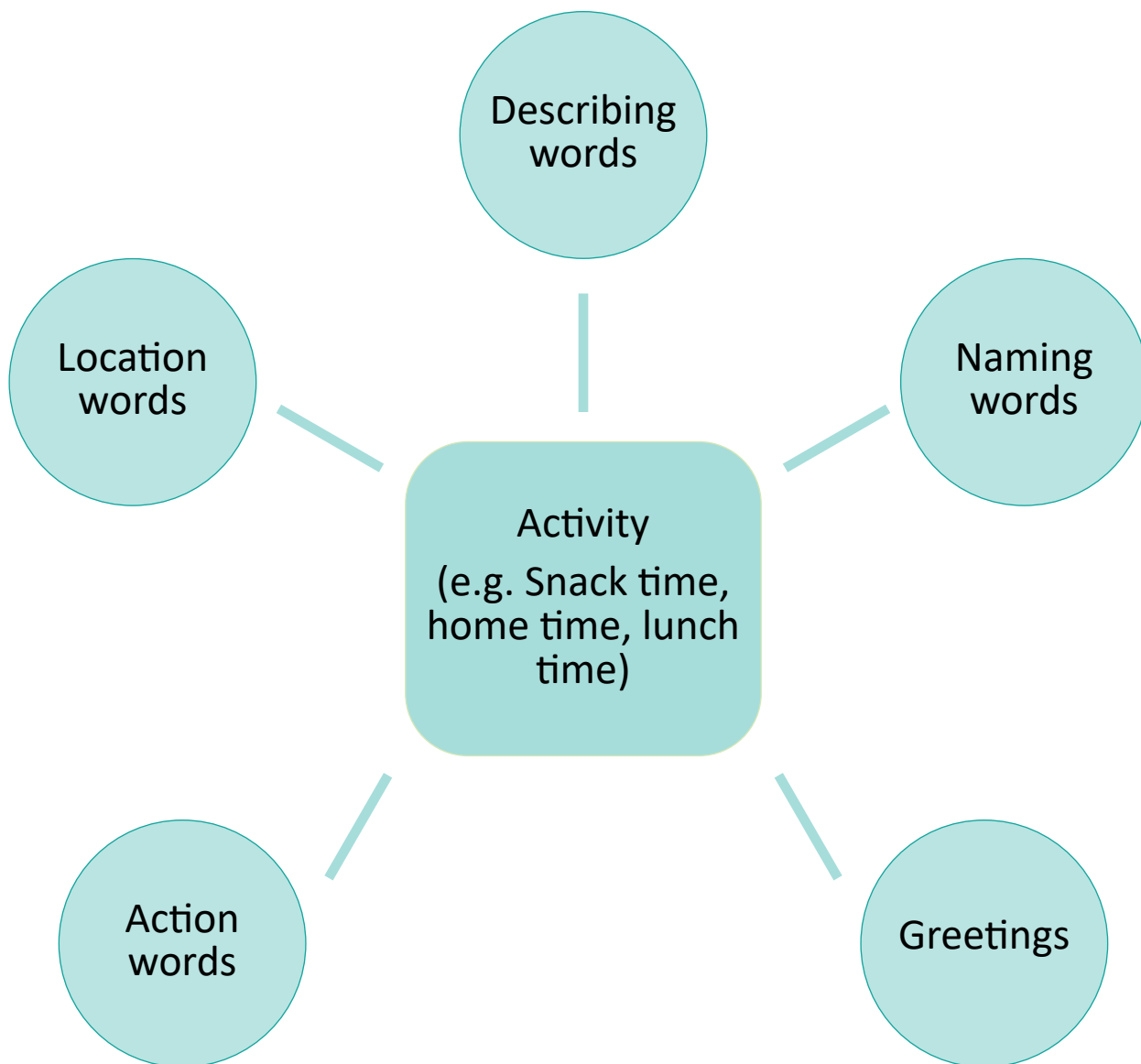
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Archibald First School	Ravenswood Primary School
Bensham Grove Community Nursery School	Simonside Primary School
Biddick Hall Infant and Nursery School	St Aloysius Primary Federation
Carr Hill Primary School	St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School
Central Walker Primary School	St Stephen's RC Primary School
Front Street Primary School	Throckley Primary School
Hedworthfield Primary School	Valley View Primary School
Kingston Park Primary School	Waverley Primary School
Knop Law Primary School	West Denton Primary School
Lemington Riverside Primary School	Westoe Crown Primary School
North Fawdon Primary School	

A special thank you to the schools below for their help with the creation of this best practice booklet

Archibald First School

Lemington Riverside Primary School

St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School

St Stephen's RC Primary School

Appendix A: Blank Language Wheel

Describing words

Naming words

Location words

Action words

Greetings

Activity
(e.g. Snack time, home time, lunch time)

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