

Commissioning speech and language therapy services for your early years setting

THE 'ONE STOP' GUIDE

STEP 01 UNDERSTAND
The aims and context of your early years setting

STEP 02 UNDERSTAND
Who you are helping

STEP 03 UNDERSTAND
What your options are

STEP 04 UNDERSTAND
The practicalities

STEP 05 UNDERSTAND
How to review and improve



Isn't it complicated?

No, it's easy if you take it step by step





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Are speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) in the early years common?

YES!

DID YOU KNOW?

Early language is the single most important factor in influencing literacy levels at age 11. More important than behaviour, peer relationships, emotional wellbeing, positive interaction and attention.

SAVE THE CHILDREN (2016) THE LOST BOYS: HOW BOYS ARE FALLING BEHIND IN THEIR EARLY YEARS

DID YOU KNOW?

Language disorders are seven times more prevalent than other developmental conditions such as autism.

NORBURY C (2016)

DID YOU KNOW?

In some areas 50% of children enter school with lower than expected levels of speech and language.

LAW ET AL (2011)

INTRODUCTION



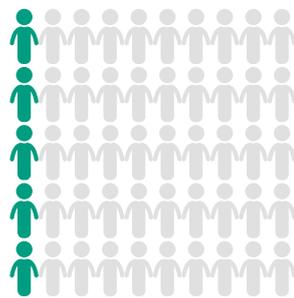
What is the issue?

Early language is the foundation of early learning and attainment and is embedded within the EYFS and the OFSTED framework. A key measure for school readiness and good outcomes is having strong early communication and language skills. Most early years (EY) providers know and understand the importance of early language but sometimes additional support and services from an external provider can enhance and improve the support already being offered and improve outcomes.

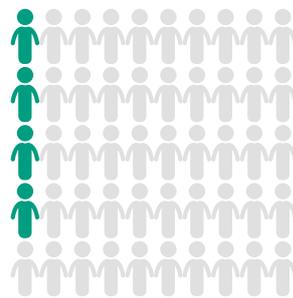
Did you know?



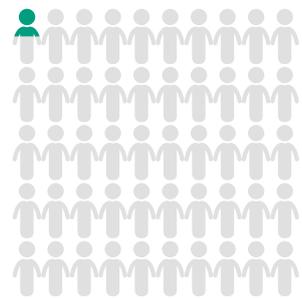
In some areas of deprivation, more than 50% of children start school with SLCN.



10% of all children have long-term SLCN.



7.56% of all children have a developmental language disorder.



1% of all children have severe and complex SLCN.

Many EY providers feel they would benefit from extra support from a specialist. Some EY settings join with other providers to commission this as a group, some may commission support on a 'one off' occasion whilst others want individual ongoing support. If you are considering commissioning specialist support for your EY setting this guide will give you some simple steps to consider in the decision making process.

The good news is that the right support can make a huge difference!



“The prioritisation of speech, language and communication was the cornerstone of leaders’ work with disadvantaged children, especially funded two year olds.”

TEACHING AND PLAY IN THE EARLY YEARS. A BALANCING ACT? OFSTED (2015)

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE ISSUE:

- Talking About a Generation
- OFSTED early years inspection

STEP 1

Understand the aims and context of your EY setting



What do you want to achieve with your commissioned support?

Identify the issue you want to address and the outcomes you want on an 'outcomes chain'.

1. What is the overall aim for your setting?
2. What are the specific aims of getting extra speech and language support?
3. What will the short term outcomes be?
4. What will the intermediate/medium term outcomes be?
5. What will the long term outcomes be?

Example 1.

1. To improve attainment for all young children.
2. To improve attainment around early speech and language goals and support young children with SLCN.
3. Short Term Outcome:
An improved understanding by staff of how to identify and support young children with SLCN.
4. Medium Term Outcome:
Effective support and early learning strategies provided for young children with SLCN.
5. Long Term Outcome:
Improved early learning and school readiness for all young children including those with SLCN.

But speech, language and communication are already embedded within our practice in early years?

Good! It's really important that you understand what you're currently doing well before you decide what else is needed.

Understand your current context and what you already have in place to support speech, language and communication

- Review what specialist knowledge and skills you and other staff already have
- Review any external services you already use – NHS, specialist play workers etc
- Review the assessment tools/strategies you use to assess/monitor children
- Think about the range of skills and specific needs of the children within your setting
- Review your documents and policies regarding early language support

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT:

- Reviewing current skills and needs of children: EYFS Framework
- Auditing current staff knowledge: Speech, Language and Communication Framework (SLCF) – an online CPD framework

STEP 2

Understand who you are helping

So have you really thought about WHO will benefit from your commissioned support?



The children! And staff.. and parents/carers too?



When you commission additional support for EY practitioners for example, it will support children and parents/carers too. It's important to understand this before you commission so that you fully understand what this additional support will actually achieve.

Your service may:

DIRECTLY HELP

EY PRACTITIONER

who will be trained in typical early development of speech, language and communication and will be able to spot young children with delayed or non-typical development.

YOUNG CHILD WITH SLCN

who will receive specialist group intervention from a Speech and Language Therapy Assistant.

EY TEACHER

who will be trained in how to deliver group intervention to young children with non-typical speech and language development.



WILL ALSO HELP

YOUNG CHILD

who will have their delayed or non-typical development identified at an early stage as a result of trained staff.

PARENT/CARER

who will receive information on their child's specific needs and how to best support them at home.

YOUNG CHILD

who will attend the group intervention and have improved early language development.

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT:

- Staff knowledge: SLCF
- Children's skills: Universally Speaking, Birth to 5 & EY Progression Tools

Communication Champions

In Blackpool, every early years setting identifies at least one practitioner to take on the role of Communication Champion. They support colleagues in developing skills, ensure that their setting helps parents understand how best to help their child's language development, and ensure that children with SLCN are identified early.

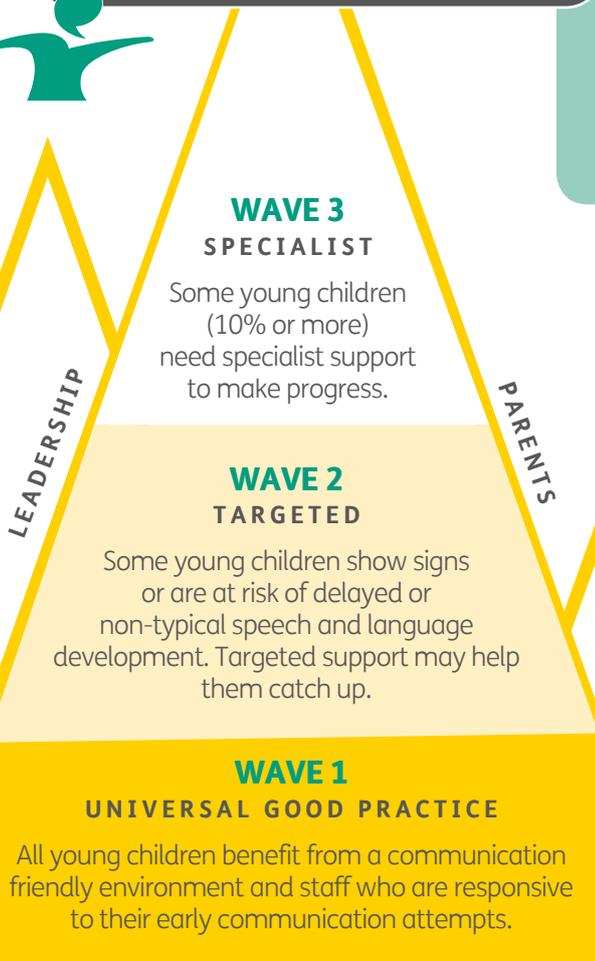
TALKING ABOUT A GENERATION - TCT 2017

STEP 3

Understand what your options are

Isn't it just about getting some specialist support for the children really struggling?

No. You need to think about how your speech and language support fits into your overall provision and helps ALL children to achieve the early language learning goals set out in the EYFS. You could concentrate your additional support at Wave 1 and/or Wave 2 and/or Wave 3.



Options:

To support children at WAVE 3	• INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT
To support children at WAVE 2/3	• INDIVIDUAL ASSESSMENTS
To support children at WAVE 2	• TARGETED INTERVENTION GROUPS
To support children at WAVE 1/2	• TARGETED TRAINING
WAVE 1 Universal good practice	• WHOLE STAFF TRAINING

EXAMPLE FROM A NURSERY:

“We received training on the development of speech, language and communication as a cluster of nurseries. We also access support from our Local Authority SLT. I provide support to teachers to implement her recommendations into practice. We (teachers and TAs) also try to share our observations and concerns on pupil progress frequently so we can collectively decide on a course of support.”

NURSERY TEACHER

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT:

- Graduated Approach: 4 children, SEN and disability in the early years: A toolkit

STEP 4

Understand the practicalities

Should I just give our local speech therapist a call now?

Well there could be a better way to deliver the support your early years setting needs.



What are the options for commissioning the activities you want?

NHS commissioned services

Independent/3rd party commissioned services

Sharing commissioned support within your network or with another setting

Developing 'in house' specialism

Local services and charities

If you are commissioning an external professional, you need to consider if they are:

Qualified

Ask the commissioned provider to show you evidence of any legally required registration and qualifications.

Supervised

Check that the commissioned provider has a supervisor to support their work.

Insured

Check the provider's policies eg public liability insurance, data protection and safeguarding etc.

Each of these will depend on the requirements of your particular activities and the kind of professional you commission.

Also consider the practical challenges in your setting:

- How to communicate the support being given to parents/carers and families
- Space/physical resources
- Staff time restraints
- Number of staff being trained. If only one, can they cascade training?

IF YOUR COMMISSIONED PROVIDER IS A SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPIST, THEY NEED TO BE HCPC REGISTERED. YOU CAN CHECK THIS ON THE HCPC WEBSITE.

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT:

- **Speech Therapy Professionals:**
 - RCSLT
 - ASLTIP
 - HCPC
- **Services that your local authority provides:**
 - Local Offer

STEP 5

Understand how to review and improve

Our commissioned support sounds great!

Yes but how will you know it has actually made a difference?



Planning the evaluation of your speech, language and communication commissioned support. You need to agree how you are going to evaluate your commissioned support with any external provider before it begins.

Why?

- So you will understand how well you achieved the aims in your outcomes chain (step 1)
- So you understand the resources used to achieve these outcomes and can demonstrate good value for money
- To gather evidence and data to share with parents, OFSTED etc

To help you understand how you might improve your speech and language support in the future and have even greater impact!

Examples of how you may evaluate against your original aims:

Aims	How to evaluate
Better practitioner awareness of ages and stages of language development and identification of SLCN	Have a quiz for practitioners or use the SLCF before and after to measure this
A more communication friendly EY environment	Do an audit of your EY setting before and after to measure change
Improvement in young children's early language development and behaviour	Monitor progress before and after. Use assessments and screening tools. Also capture evidence in learning diaries, use photos, recordings etc
Improvement in joint working between the EY setting and parents/carers	Capture evidence in home/school communication books, ask parents/carers for feedback and compare before/after comments

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT:

- Testing practitioner knowledge: SLCF
- Auditing Environment: Communication Friendly Environments
- Screening Tools: EY Progression tools
- Planning Evaluation: Building an approach to self evaluation
- Supporting parents: A communicative supportive environment



References

- Save The Children (2016), The Lost Boys: How boys are falling behind in their early years
- Law J., McBean K. and Rush R. (2011) Communication skills in a population of primary school-aged children raised in an area of pronounced social disadvantage. *International Journal of Language and Communication Disorders*, 46 (6)
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- Ofsted (2015) Teaching And Playing In The Early Years, A Balancing Act
- DfE (2017), Early years (under 5s) foundation stage framework (EYFS)
- The Communication Trust (2017), Talking About a Generation
- The Communication Trust: Universally Speaking- Ages and stages of children’s communication development
- The Communication Trust: Progression Tools
- The Communication Trust: Speech Language and Communication Framework (SLCF)
- CDC and 4children (2015), SEN and Disability in the Early Years Toolkit
- RCSLT www.rcslt.org/
- Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) www.hcpc-uk.co.uk/
- ASLTIP www.helpwithtalking.com/
- Local Offer www.thelocaloffer.co.uk/
- The Communication Trust (2016), Building an Approach to Self Evaluation
- Better Communication Research Programme (2012), Communication Supporting Classroom Observation (CSC)
- I CAN (2016), A communicative supportive environment: helping your child communicate

Other helpful commissioning resources

- Gascoigne M.T. (2015), Commissioning for Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN): Using the evidence from the Better Communication Research Programme
- I CAN: Guidance for schools commissioning services for SLCN
- RCSLT: Resource Manual for Commissioning and Planning Services for SLCN (2009)
- The Communication Trust: Communicating the Code, Ch7 Joint Commissioning





The Communication Trust
Every child understood

www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk