

# Case study of local good practice in identifying children with SLCN

Little Waves Community Nursery  
North Somerset

## Introduction

Little Waves Community Nursery is part of South Weston Children's Centre in Weston-Super-Mare, North Somerset. The nursery has capacity for 47 children aged 0-4 years. Nearly a third of the nursery's children have their communication and language monitored as a result of raised concerns.

## Starting early

Little Waves begin the process of identifying speech, language and communication concerns before the child starts nursery, with a home visit and two settling in sessions. These initial activities provide the nursery staff with valuable information about the child's communication skills and give parents and carers opportunities to discuss their expectations and any questions they may have about their child's progress.

The team at Little Waves place a lot of emphasis on building trust and maintaining close relationships with families and carers. This helps staff to raise concerns sensitively should they need to.

## Gathering information

After 10 sessions, the child's allocated key person collates data from formative

observations, meetings and reflections (including a learning diary), to produce a celebratory profile of the child's achievements and skills. The key person then works with the Inclusion Co-ordinator to assess the child's development against early learning goals set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework and the two-year progress check. They also use the 'Every Child a Talker' guidance to gather information about potential SLCN.

Staff employ a variety of universal strategies that focus on communication, including group book readings with props and circle time. These activities provide structured opportunities to observe the children using their speech, language and communication skills.

The staffing ratio at Little Waves is always 1:4, with the Inclusion Co-ordinator acting as a supernumerary. This gives plenty of opportunity for staff to get to know the children and to identify those who might be falling behind age-related expectations.

## A knowledgeable team

In 2016, the nursery received I CAN's *Early Talk* accreditation in recognition of the staff's dedication to identifying and supporting children with SLCN. The accreditation process required a comprehensive review of the staff's awareness and skills and a portfolio of evidence. Staff continue to develop their knowledge by attending training courses provided by North Somerset Council's speech and language therapy service. For more specific guidance on identifying and supporting children, the team attend drop-in sessions with the speech and language therapist based at the children's centre.

***"Building up that close relationship with families is really important. No one wants to hear 'we are concerned about your child'. It needs a sensitive approach."*** Donna Haines, Inclusion Co-ordinator



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