

Early Years Graduated Approach

Communication and Interaction: Speech and Language

Universal Provision – Quality First Teaching

Description of need

- There is an awareness of a speech, language and/or communication difficulty, i.e. the child seems to have some difficulty with speaking, understanding and/or interaction.
- Speech sounds may still be developing and the child may have difficulties producing certain sounds. This may affect the child's intelligibility when speaking with less familiar people but they are generally understood by people who know the child.
- The child may present with some difficulties with play and interaction with other children; however, play may be better with familiar adults.
- The pupil is able to participate in most or all setting activities. Some children may not be able to listen and continue with play at the same time.
- The child understands most instructions that relate to the 'here and now' as well as instructions relating to familiar routines or events; however, they may find it difficult to recall past events and follow longer, more complex instructions.
- The child can use verbal language for a range of communication purposes, e.g. to request objects, to seek help, to direct attention, problem-solve, to tell a simple story etc.
- Progress within the EYFS curriculum may be unaffected or mildly affected.
- In the Wellcomm screening assessment, the child achieves GREEN (secure) or AMBER (mildly delayed) in their age equivalent section.

Assess and Plan

- The key person to liaise with the Communication Champion and the setting/school SENCO who can help in identifying strategies and differentiated activities to support the child.
- Use the Wellcomm screening tool to assess the child's expressive and receptive language skills. The Wellcomm screen will also support staff in observing other areas of communication development, e.g. attention and listening, fluency and voice.
- Use the [Trafford Assessment of Speech Sounds \(TASS\)](#). This assessment will provide an overview of speech sound development and contains a flowchart for next steps and intervention.
- Record structured observations of the child around specific areas of focus over a period of time and in a variety of contexts.
- Base assessments around the belief that parent/carers know their children best and that their observations and views are key.
- For children whose home language is not English, discussion should take place with parent/carers in their home language so strengths and areas for development can be explored. Please refer to Wellcomm for screening language ability in home languages.
- Work in partnership with parents/carers to establish Assess, Plan, Do, Review (APDR) cycles of intervention with the child. Each cycle should last 6 weeks and at least 2 APDR cycles should be completed. This will ensure you can provide sufficient evidence of the strategies/interventions you have tried.
- Continue to monitor and record the child's progress using Development Matters in the EYFS and Early Years Outcomes.
- Support children and their families to access any relevant universal and targeted services in the community. Information on local services can be found online in the [Trafford Directory](#) and further advice is available from [Trafford Family Information Service](#).

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Do

- Staff members to access [early years training opportunities](#).
- It is recommended that all staff members access 'Nursery Talk' training as an introduction/refresher of typical speech language and communication development from birth to 5, along with strategies to support all children.
- Access specific speech and language training courses as part of the Giving Voice Recognition Award. This is an accredited award open to all early years providers and practitioners, please refer to the [Giving Voice Award FAQs](#) for further information.
- Refer to activities from the Wellcomm 'Big Book of Ideas'. Activities should relate to the child's areas of difficulty, which have been highlighted from the Wellcomm screening assessment. Consider setting up small group intervention for children who achieved an AMBER score.
- Listening and attention skills are supported by calling the child's name before giving them an instruction to follow. Play games that encourage the development of listening skills, e.g. stop and go games, 'what is that sound?' etc.
- Understanding is supported by breaking down instructions into smaller steps, repeating key words and frequently pausing to enable the child to process what has been said.
- Staff use visual supports e.g. signing (Sign-along), natural gesture, photographs, visual timetable, labelling of provision etc.
- Talking is encouraged and supported by staff. Staff respond to all attempts to communicate by the child, including non-verbal communication (e.g. smiling, pointing).
- A child's responses are repeated back and modelled so that the child may begin to notice their grammatical, vocabulary and speech sound errors.
- Encourage children to build sentences by repeating their response back and adding another word, e.g. child says "car", adult says, "yes, *big* car!" etc
- Follow the child's lead in play, talk about what they are doing as they are doing it.
- Staff to incorporate strategies from SLT assessment, if the child has been assessed.
- The following links contain a wealth of high quality advice and resources for practitioners to utilise. Staff should be encouraged to signpost parents to these too, as appropriate for the needs of the child:
 - I CAN charity - www.talkingpoint.org.uk
 - The National Literacy Trust - <https://literacytrust.org.uk/early-years/>
 - The Communication Trust's Early Years resources, e.g. 'Universally Speaking: 0-5' - <https://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/resources>
 - Every Child A Talker (ECAT) guidance - <https://www.foundationyears.org.uk>
 - Hanen language supporting strategies - www.hanen.org
 - Essential Parent - www.essentialparent.com/course/speech-language-and-communication
 - The BBC's Tiny Happy People campaign
 - The Trafford Speech and Language Therapy Facebook page www.facebook.com/traffordchildrensSLT
- Consider a whole setting approach to developing language and listening skills, e.g. the BLAST programme - <https://www.blastprogramme.co.uk>
- Consider using a whole setting vocabulary approach, i.e. Word Aware (Early Years) <http://thinkingtalking.co.uk/word-aware>

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Review

- Continue to monitor and record the child's progress using the Unique Child sections in Development Matters in the EYFS and Early Years Outcomes.
- For children who received an AMBER score on Wellcomm, rescreen after 12 weeks of intervention to monitor progress and inform next steps.
- Meet with parent/carers to discuss plans and progress and address any learning and development needs, with interpreters where necessary.

SEN Support

Description of need

- The child has moderate, persistent difficulties and is not making expected progress in identified areas for development despite a range of interventions, quality first teaching and differentiated provision over time.
- Difficulties are becoming increasingly apparent and there is evidence the child continues to work at levels below age related expectations in some or all aspects of the prime areas of learning.
- Repeated Assess, Plan, Do, Review (APDR) cycles have not resulted in a marked increase in progress and assessments over time indicate a more individualised or differentiated cycle is required.
- Professional judgement – practitioners and parent/carers agree the child has achieved limited progress and requires an enhanced level of intervention with an individually targeted approach.
- There is an evident speech, language and/or communication difficulty i.e. the child is experiencing difficulty with speaking, understanding and/or interaction.
- Speech sounds may still be developing and the child may have difficulties producing a range of speech sounds. This will affect the child's ability to be understood by familiar adults such as parents, relatives and practitioners.
- The child uses one or more atypical speech sound processes and/or speech simplification processes are continuing for approximately 6 months beyond the expected time at which they typically resolve (see TASS for guidance).
- The child will present with some difficulties with play and interaction with other children; however, play may be better with familiar adults.
- The pupil will require some support to participate in setting activities. Some children may not be able to listen and continue with play at the same time.
- The child may understand some instructions that relate to the 'here and now' by relying on familiar routines or events; however, they are unlikely to be able to recall past events and follow longer, more complex instructions.
- The child uses verbal language for a limited range of communicative purposes e.g. only using language to request or reject an object or action, rather than for social use e.g. greeting, directing an adult's attention or sharing information.
- Progress within the EYFS curriculum will be moderately affected.
- In the Wellcomm screening assessment, the child achieves RED (significant delay) in their

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SEN Support

age equivalent section.

- Following repeated Wellcomm screens, the child achieves 2 or more consecutive AMBER scores, indicating a more differentiated approach to developing language skills is required.

Assess and Plan

- Ongoing assessment is central for all early years children. More intense and regular assessment is needed for children with significant emerging concerns and reasonable adjustments must be made to the assessment process.
- Children who may need SEN Support in the Early Years often have difficulties in using and understanding language making it difficult to assess precisely the level of delay in their overall development. Practitioners can contact [Trafford Area SENCO](#) for advice on supporting and monitoring children with SEND.
- Continue to use the Wellcomm screening tool and the TASS as appropriate.
- The following additional tools are recommended at this level:

Early Years Developmental Journal: This helps identify areas where extra help may be needed as age ranges are narrower than those within the Early Years Outcomes, for example the 0 to 11 months age band is broken down into 4 steps. It therefore provides a more precise picture of a child's strengths and areas for development and of where support should be targeted.

Portage SEND Best Practice Assessment Checklist: This links into the EYFS curriculum and aids assessment and planning. The skills are broken down into small steps so that parents and practitioners can assess and celebrate every skill that the child has achieved. It can then act as a guide to the design of teaching activities to further promote development.

- **If a child appears to have very significant needs, contact the Trafford Area SENCO for advice at the earliest opportunity without waiting for 2 APDR cycles.**
- The key person should liaise more frequently with the school/setting SENCO, the Communication Champion and parent/carers to share concerns. This will enable an individual support plan to begin. Ensure this plan incorporates the views of parent/carers, along with any specialist advice.
- Continue to monitor and review the individual support plan, recording the child's progress and the impact of strategies and interventions used. This should be completed at least every 6 weeks as part of the APDR cycle.
- Contact your link Health Visitor and consider calling an integrated review with the HV, key person and parent/carer.
- Consider referral to the Speech and Language Therapy (SLT) service. Parents/carers must give written consent for referral to SLT.

Do

- Continue to use the strategies and resources as outlined above in the universal provision - quality first teaching section.
- In addition, staff must incorporate specialist advice (e.g. from TEDS, SLT and/or SENAS) to support the appropriate differentiation of provision for the child.

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- Consider accessing Elklan training for practitioners (settings must have achieved the 'gold' level of the Giving Voice Recognition Award to be eligible for a free place on Elklan – see Giving Voice FAQs).
- Use of ICAN's Early Talk Boost <https://icancharity.org.uk/early-talk-boost-homepage>
- Wellcomm Big Book of Ideas groups and/or individual intervention. Activities should relate to the child's areas of difficulty, which have been highlighted from the Wellcomm screening assessment. Aim for language group input at least 3 x per week.
- Visual supports are used more frequently and consistently across staff members, including approaches such as visual timetables, now/next boards, timers, transition cards, choice cards etc.
- Some children who have difficulty with the motivation/desire to communicate will benefit from the use of communicative temptations, e.g. a preferred toy slightly out of reach, paper out but no crayons. Encourage the child to communicate by whatever means possible in order for them to access the desired object.

Review

- Parent/carer and Multiagency (PAM) review meetings should be held every 6 weeks as part of the APDR approach. Ideally this will be chaired by the SENCO with a written record of the meeting circulated afterwards.
- The views of any involved external agencies who are unable to attend should be sought prior to the meeting if possible – this can be done by the SENCO.
- Assessments are presented and updated at review meetings. Where specialist advice exists (e.g. Speech and Language Therapy, SENAS), recommendations should be highlighted to staff and implemented within the new Individual Plans.
- There should be increased involvement of parent/carers in the assessment, monitoring and review process. During reviews, the views of parents/carers and children, wherever possible, should be sought, recorded and respected.
- Parent/carers should be encouraged to provide information about anything happening at home which may help or hinder their child's development and share ideas with practitioners on how to support their child.

High Level SEN Support

Description of need

- The child will have complex and persistent difficulties and is not making expected progress despite significant levels of focused intervention, implementation of specialist advice and extensive differentiation of the EYFS curriculum.
- The child will be experiencing on-going speech, language, communication and/or interaction difficulties, affecting his/her development of social relationships and causing substantial barriers to learning, despite implementation of individualised support, e.g. Speech and Language Therapy programmes.
- There is a significant speech, language and/or communication difficulty i.e. the child is

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High Level SEN Support

- having considerable difficulty with speaking, understanding and/or interaction.
- Speech sounds will be disordered and the child will have difficulties producing a range of speech sounds. This will affect the child's intelligibility and they will find it difficult to be understood by very familiar adults.
- The child will have more than two atypical speech sound process and/or speech simplification processes are continuing, significantly beyond the expected time at which they typically resolve.
- The child will present with clear difficulties with play and interaction with others, may avoid interactions and prefer to play alone.
- The pupil will require considerable support in order to participate in setting activities.
- Children may have a limited capacity to listen and follow simple instructions.
- Children will tend to move between activities and will only be able to engage in motivating activities for short periods of time.
- The child may appear to understand some instructions that relate to the 'here and now'; however, they rely heavily on situational clues such as watching peers or relying on a familiar routine.
- The child uses limited verbal language or is non-verbal. Language is significantly delayed in comparison to similarly aged children (see [Early Years risk factors for Developmental Language Disorder \(DLA\)](#))
- Progress within the EYFS curriculum will be severely affected.
- A Speech and Language Therapy assessment has been completed and indicates that the child has severely delayed (below 5th percentile) language and communication skills in more than one developmental area e.g. comprehension, vocabulary, speech sounds etc.
- The child is likely to require a high level of adult support in the setting.

Assess and Plan

- Assessment and planning should be as within the SEN Support section, plus the following:

Early Years Provision Maps

At this stage, where children need high levels of support, schools/settings should complete an [Early Years Provision Map](#) instead of other forms of individual support plans. Provision mapping is a way of evaluating the impact on children's progress of provision that is additional to and different from the school/setting's curriculum. Evaluated provision maps can help settings manage this provision to ensure that it is and continues to be effective in helping children to make progress. The provision mapping and evaluation cycle should run in parallel with the school/setting's system for tracking and evaluating children's progress and it should feed into the Parent and Multiagency (PAM) review meetings. The provision map should be constructed in partnership with the parents/carers during the Assess, Plan, Do, Review (APDR) process and parents should be involved in agreeing the outcomes.

- Ensure that all staff have relevant SEND training to support the child within the school/setting.
- Highly personalised individual learning plans are in place, which incorporate specialist advice from external agencies e.g. Speech and Language Therapy, SENAS etc.

Do

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High Level SEN Support

- Continue to use the strategies and resources outlined in the above two sections (Universal provision and SEN Support), as appropriate for the needs of the child. The following may be additions at this stage...
- Intensive Interaction
- AAC – PECS / high tech vs low tech
- Making referrals to EPs/Paedts/OT/PT/SENAS
- Specific language and communication targets planned with practitioners/school staff and reviewed termly in school/nursery by the speech and language therapist.
- Highly personalised individual learning plans are carried out, and incorporate specialist targets from external agencies e.g. Speech and Language Therapy, SENAS etc.

Review

- Parent/carer and Multiagency (PAM) review meetings should continue to be held every 6 weeks as part of the APDR approach. The child's provision map should be reviewed as part of this process.
- Where early years practitioners and parent//carers are happy with the progress being made, consideration should be given to returning to the earlier stages of the graduated approach or to universal provision.
- Where there continues to be ongoing concern about a child's rate of progress and needs are being seen as potentially significant and long term then schools/settings can consider applying for an [Early Years SEND Grant](#). This resource is for the very small number of children with highly complex needs to support them to access their early education place. Applications are considered monthly by the Early Years SEND Panel and must be supported by a provision map which outlines the projected outcomes for the child and strategies required to meet them. This should be linked to the resources/funding needed to achieve this.
- As early years children are very young and still at the early stages of development, funding is allocated on a short term basis initially for either one or two terms. After this period, the school/setting must submit an evaluated provision map and decide whether to return to an earlier stage of the graduated approach or to apply for another Early Years SEND Grant.
- Discuss referral to specialist SLT services e.g. Language Outreach, Inclusive Nursery Outreach.
- Consider referral to diagnostic services e.g. Trafford Autism and Social Communication (TASC) Pathway.

Requesting an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Needs Assessment

The following actions should be evident before considering a referral for EHC Needs Assessment, usually following implementation of support through an Early Years SEND Grant.

- Targets for individual plans have been informed by external advice from specialists and reviewed every 6 weeks over a significant period of time.
- Advice has been regularly sought from agencies appropriate to child's needs and there is clear evidence of its implementation. This could include from Early Years Service, SEN Advisory Service (SENAS), Speech and Language Therapy (SLT), Sensory Impairment Service, Trafford Early Development Service (TEDS).

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High Level SEN Support

- An Early Help Assessment will have been carried out if a child with significant needs has several agencies involved, and the family needs help to coordinate support.
- SEN support has been adapted or modified depending on how effective it has been in achieving the agreed outcomes. If the school/setting have taken relevant and purposeful action to identify, assess and meet the SEN of the child but they have not made expected progress, the school/setting or parents should consider requesting an EHC Needs Assessment.