

**Barnsley Primary Care (NHS) Trust
Children's Speech and Language Therapy Department.**

**EVALUATION OF SURE START SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPY
GROUPS TO PILOT NURSERY**

Introduction

This evaluation looks at the progress of children within Kendray nursery, the chosen pilot site following regular group work and attendance of the nursery teacher to an intensive course run by the Speech and Language Therapy Department. The evaluation involved a group of children who were within the 0-4 age range under Sure Start guidelines. However, the entire nursery was included in the group activities. The groups were based on overall general Speech and Language skills aimed at developing early literacy skills and all round language development. The intensive training course was the Hanen programme for Early Childhood Educators.

Background to the Hanen Programme for Early Childhood Educators

The Hanen centre received funding in 1988 to adapt the 'It Takes Two To Talk'- the already existing programme for parents that was established in 1977 by Ayola Manolson in Canada. This was so it could be offered to teachers and assistants within child care settings. Due to the move towards inclusion with special needs into mainstream settings, it was thought to be paramount that the frontline caregivers and teachers be able to facilitate these children's language development. It also addresses the needs of those without identified special needs, who without being addressed could have long term repercussions for their language, social and emotional development.

By 1993, a guidebook, introductory videotape and a teaching videotape all titled learning language and loving it had been produced.

The programme can be offered by a Hanen certified Speech and Language Therapist and aims to address the following: -

- Prevention of language delay in high risk populations
- Intervention for children with identified delays
- Enrichment for children with typical language development

The programme combines group teaching sessions with individual video taping and feedback sessions.

For an overview of the components of the Learning Language and Loving It programme see appendix 1.

For an example of a teaching session see appendix 2.

Evidence/Research

Research shows that there are no negative effects from being in childcare as long as it is a quality setting. It has been reported that children in quality child care:

- Get along better with peers
- Follow directions better
- Have superior language skills
- Have higher developmental play levels (related to reading and language skills)
- Have fewer behavioural problems (Doherty, G., 1991)

For references to general evidence on early intervention and language development and to research for the Hanen programme see appendix 3.

Preparation for the Identified Pilot Nursery- Running Groups and Training

Prior to running the training programme Learning Language and Loving it as well as the groups in nursery, each child in nursery within the Sure Start age limit of 3; 11 and who was going to remain in nursery for the duration of the evaluation was assessed. The children were assessed on the Reynell Developmental Language Scales III. In addition the therapists attended a 2 or 3 day intensive course to be trained to deliver Learning Language and Loving It. Materials and session plans were devised for running the children's groups, concentrating on attention, listening, understanding and expression- see appendix 4 for session samples.

The Nursery Group

The nursery teacher followed the Hanen programme before and after the Summer holidays as well as observing a weekly group for 8 weeks with follow on work and activities until October 2002. Following this, all the children who were eligible for assessment were reassessed in the November and |December of 2002. The following 2 tables summarise the comprehension and expression scores pre and post training and nursery groups.

Comprehension

Child	C.A	A.E	PERCENTILE	C.A	A.E	PERCENTILE
1	3;7	2;4	1	4;4	3	1
2	3;2	2;6	1	3;11	4;3	67
3	3;4	3;00	26	4;2	4;3	57
4	3;7	3;10	68	4;6	4;11-5;5	73
5	3;11	2;9	1	4;10	3;1	1
6	3;3	2;6	3	4;2	3;11-4;0	40
7	3;6	3;3-3;6	49	4;4	4;1-4;2	33
8	3;4	3;2	43	4;2	4;11-5;5	86
9	3;2	3;10	73	4	6;6	98
10	3;5	2;3	1	4;3	3	1
11	3;1	2;3	1	3;11	3;9	37
12	3;10	3;7-3;8	37	4;8	6-6;6	92
13	3;4	-	-	4;3	2;1	1
14	3;1	2;8	12	4	4;4-4;5	91
15	3;9	3;3-3;6	36	4;5	4;6-4;7	58
16	3;7	2;10	37	4;4	5;6-5;7	87
17	3;7	2;10	8	4;4	4;4-4;5	53
18	3;11	2;5	1	4;8	3;7-3;8	1
19	3;1	1;10	1	3;11	2;8	1
20	3;6	2;8	5	4;2	4;4-4;5	66

Expression

Child	C.A	A.E	PERCENTILE	C.A	A.E	PERCENTILE
1	3;7	2;9	4	4;4	3;3-3;4	4
2	3;2	2;9	10	3;11	3;5-3;6	22
3	3;4	2;11	11	4;2	4;4	61
4	3;7	4	81	4;6	5;7	89
5	3;11	2;5	1	4;10	3;2	1
6	3;3	2;11	12	4;2	3	2
7	3;6	3;10	73	4;4	5;1-5;2	82
8	3;4	3;7-3;8	63	4;2	5;8	98
9	3;2	3;1	45	4	4;4	74
10	3;5	2;4	1	4;3	3	1
11	3;1	2;4	1	3;11	3;3-3;4	17
12	3;10	3;9	40	4;8	4	16
13	3;4	-	-	4;3	-	-
14	3;1	2;11	35	4	4;1	60
15	3;9	2;11	4	4;5	4;9-4;11	66
16	3;7	2;11	9	4;4	4;1	32

17	3;7	3;7-3;8	52	4;4	4;4-4;5	47
18	3;11	Under 1;9	1	4;8	3;7-3;8	4
19	3;1	Under 1;9	1	3;11	2;4	1
20	3;6	3;10	73	4;2	5	85

Assessment Outcomes

As mentioned previously, the children were assessed prior to the commencement of the groups and training to the nursery teacher in late January/February 2002 and reassessed post groups, training and consolidation in November/ December 2002. The tables above summarise the child's chronological age (C.A) at the time of testing and their age equivalent (A.E) score as well as percentile rank. This was for both receptive and expressive abilities. A score on the 4th 20th percentile indicates language is within normal limits.

As can be seen for from the results, there were pleasing improvements made in either percentile rank scores or age equivalent scores.

- **Comprehension**

14 of the 20 children all made good progress with their levels as comprehension as shown by the increase in percentile rank. A number of the children showed improvements with their age equivalent scores, which shows that despite no improvement with percentile rank, which is derived from a standardised score nationally, they were actually improving regarding their development of understanding. Some of these children were improving at the rate of normal development, others improving but at a slower rate. For example child no.1 developed by 8 months in a 9 month period where as child no.5 developed 4 months in a 10 month period. It is worth noting that child number 13 who has special needs was unable to be assessed the first time round due to low level of ability and extreme extractability but was able to be assessed the second time despite low scores. This shows good improvement as she could be assessed. Child number 19 had also been identified as having Speech and Language needs prior to the pilot and both mentioned children were receiving input from the Speech and Language Therapy Department. One child out of the 20 showed a decrease in percentile rank but an increase in age equivalent score. This shows progress despite the reduction in percentile rank.

When considering both the receptive and expressive scores, several points must be taken into consideration which can on occasions affect the test score:-

- Lack of familiarity with assessor
- Distractibility on the day
- Change in routine/environment

All 14 of the children who had made progress had levels of understanding well above those expected of normal language development limits and those with low

scores were already identified and receiving additional support from the nursery of the Speech and Language Therapy department.

- **Expression**

12 out of the 20 children had made good progress shown by their percentile rank score and 12 out of 20 children also had speech and language scores above normal limits. 7 out of the 8 children who hadn't shown progress with their percentile rank scores had shown progress with their age equivalent scores in varying degrees as mentioned previously. One child with identified special needs of a severe nature was unable to be assessed for expressive language. 5 of those children had good progress along normal developmental lines.

Although there are children requiring either specific intervention or small group work within nursery, the overall results for comprehension and expression are good with the majority of children making progress, some of them great improvements in their language skills across the assessment and intervention period.

Discussion

The data obtained from the pre and post assessments show that there had been good overall progress in the language development of the children following the introduction of the group sessions and the approach provided from the training. Although it is difficult to ascertain that the progress was a direct result of this type of early intervention and approach, it has been shown through research that working in such a way to promote children's early language development through enriching the environment and developing adult child interaction is key the promotion of language development.

APPENDIX 1

LEARNING LANGUAGE AND LOVING IT PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

Session 1- Take a closer look at communication

First videotaping and feedback session

Session 2- Get every child in on the act- so all the children can interact

Second videotaping and feedback session

Session 3- Take turns together

Third videotaping and feedback session

Session 4- Provide information and experience that promote language learning

Fourth videotaping and feedback session

Session 5- Encourage interaction and language learning in group situations

Fifth videotaping and feedback session

Session 6- Let language lead the way to literacy

Sixth videotaping and feedback session

Session 7- Wrap-Up

This is based on sessions being 2 ½ hours long but it can be delivered in different ways as long as the teaching hours are achieved. According to the agreement 4 video sessions need to be achieved but 5-6 are ideal.

APPENDIX 2

EXAMPLE TEACHING SESSION

Get Every Child In On The Act-So All The Children Can Interact

1. Introduction and Welcome
 - a) Welcome
 - b) Review Session's Agenda
2. Review Of Children's Conversational Styles and Teachers' Roles
3. Play and Peer Interaction
 - a) The importance of Play and Peer Interaction to the Development of Language- Teachers Playing Collaboratively with a Toy
 - b) "Making Friends" Videotape
 - c) Types of Play and Amount of Social Interaction
4. How and Why Children Communicate and The Seven Stages of Language Development
 - a) For what reason do we use the telephone
 - b) Why and How Children Communicate and the Seven Stages of Language Development- using the teaching tape
 - c) Why and How Children Communicate and the Seven Stages of Language Development- Analysing Videotapes
 - d) " " " - Observation Guide2
5. Let The Child Lead
 - a) " I really hate it when I'm talking to someone and they..."
 - b) Let the child Lead
 - In order to allow the child to lead, we have to let go of the lead
 - How do we follow the Child's Lead?
 - i)OWL (observe, wait, listen)
 - ii) Be face to face (role-play)
 - iii) Respond with interest
 - c) Role-Play "Follow the Child's Lead"
 - d) Using high interest activities with the hard to engage child
 - e) "Back to Class" sheet " Letting Children Lead"
6. Closing