Supporting All Children's Communication Development

Ealing Quality Indicators

This is a toolkit for improving children's outcomes through developing their language and communication skills. It is aimed at managers, speech and language therapists, teachers and educational practitioners, development workers and LA consultants working within maintained and non-maintained settings, as well as childminding and out-of-school services.

Key aims:

1. To support managers and practitioners in identifying their key strengths and areas for improvement in promoting all children's language and communication development.

2. To help practitioners monitor their progress in supporting children's communication development, through a continual process of self-evaluation, improvement planning and review.

3. To provide settings with a framework for creating a quality communication environment.

4. To provide an outline on how to actively involve parents and carers in their children's communication development.

5. To develop the skills of early years practitioners in supporting children's language and communication development, through identifying training and support needs.

The quality indicators have arisen in part from the work carried out as part of the Every Child a Talker (ECaT) project - a national strategy which has principles that apply to all early years settings within Ealing.

Ealing
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Quality Indicators for supporting all children's communication development linked to the key aspects of the EYFS

The Unique Child

- Every child's unique journey in learning to talk and understand others is valued and celebrated.
- Practitioners can describe each child's communication strengths and needs accurately.
- Practitioners are aware of the typical stages children go through in developing their language and communication, but also know that there can be considerable variation within this range.
- Shy/quiet children or those with language and communication needs are given the support they need to participate in activities.

Positive Relationships

- Practitioners build positive relationships with families and are sensitive to their varied needs.
- Practitioners and parents routinely share information with one another on children's interests, needs and progress in talking and learning.
- Adults ensure that they give children plenty of time to respond and take turns in communicating with them.
- Adults take time to tune into children's interests and make comments about what they are interested in or what they are doing.

Enabling Environments

- The environment provides a wealth of language-rich opportunities, motivating children to play and talk about their experiences.
- A wide range of age-appropriate books is available, including traditional stories, dual language, non-fiction and hand-made books based on children's experiences.
- Resources are labelled with photographs and text - supporting children's independent access and promoting links between language and literacy.
- Visual supports, such as visual timetables, real objects, story bags and gestures are used to support all children's talking.

Learning and Development

- Children's progress in language and communication is monitored closely.
- Creative exploration and problem solving are actively developed, through effective resources and adult support.
- Dressing-up/role play areas are well resourced and appealing with meaningful and purposeful links across all six areas of learning.
- Practitioners encourage children to interact with one another, in order to support their social and emotional development.

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Quality Indicators for supporting all children's communication development

Setting: _____   Date: _____

Area of focus	Criteria	Limited 1	Developing 2	Consistent 3
Section A **Practitioners use a range of strategies to support children's language and communication development.**	Adults use language at the right level for the child's stage of development.			
	Time is taken to tune into the child's interest and make comments about what the child is interested in or is doing.			
	Regular conversations or interactions take place with children around their interests and activities.			
	Objects and events are labelled to help children develop their vocabulary skills.			
	Adults model simple sentences, e.g. child says 'me go shop', adult says 'you're going to the shop'.			
	Adult extends child's vocabulary by adding a word to what he/she has said. Child says 'I've got the ball', adult adds 'yes you've got the big ball'.			
	Adults get down to the children's level when interacting with them.			
	Adults ask genuine questions that extend children's thinking, but don't bombard them with unnecessary questions.			
	Children are encouraged to interact with one another and develop their conversational and social skills using their home language if preferred.			
	Children with language and communication needs are given frequent opportunities to participate, by any means possible, e.g. using objects, gestures, pictures and/or words.			
	Adults give children plenty of time to respond and take turns in interacting with them.			
	Visual supports, such as visual time-tables, props, story bags, song/rhyme bags etc are used to support children's talking.			
	Natural gestures and some key word signing used in interactions with children.			
Section B **Snack periods provide opportunities for children to learn new vocabulary, make choices and interact with other children.**	Children are offered a real choice during snack periods.			
	Children who need it are provided with visual supports/signs during snack periods.			
	Adults are deployed effectively so that children are clear who is supporting their snack periods.			

Area of focus	Criteria	Limited 1	Developing 2	Consistent 3
Section B (continued)	Adults sit with children and engage in interaction about foods, tastes, likes, dislikes, interests, experiences etc.			
Section C **The listening environment is one which supports children's development of listening and attention.**	Background noise levels are managed, and children and adults are able to hear one another with ease.			
	Children's listening skills are actively developed through a range of activities, which involve tuning into sounds, making sense of sounds, having fun with sounds and talking about sounds.			
	Children are taught 'good listening' rules – reinforced with visual cues.			
	Transition times are managed effectively, so that noise levels are not excessive and children know what to expect next.			
	Adults model good listening by: • Being at the child's level • Giving the child time to speak • Responding to what the child says			
	Quiet areas are available where children can retreat to have 'down time' or engage in smaller group activities.			
Section D **Children learn in language-rich environments, both inside and outside.** **Play activities promote communication and imagination.**	Appropriate resources and opportunities are available across the six areas of learning, both inside and outside.			
	Learning areas, resources and activities are labelled with pictures/words, supporting children's independent access.			
	An appropriate range of books is available in the book area, including traditional stories, bilingual/dual language books and a variety of genres and books related to children's own experiences.			
	Non-fiction books, books on specific topics or interests of the children are also available in other learning areas.			
	Children's own work is displayed and labelled appropriately, encouraging them to talk about their activities and interests.			
	Dressing-up/role play areas are well resourced and culturally-rich, with meaningful links across other areas of learning.			
	Good quality toys, small world objects and real/natural resources are available to support children's development of play.			
	Musical instruments, noise-makers and puppets are available for self-selection.			

Area of focus	Criteria	Limited 1	Developing 2	Consistent 3
Section D (continued)	Adults engage with children to extend their language and communication during outside play.			
	Children are supported to develop friendships with their peers.			
	Shy/quiet children or those with language and communication needs are included in play activities through adults drawing them in and supporting their participation and talking.			
Section E **Practitioners show an awareness of children's communication strengths and needs and how to support their language and communication development.**	Practitioners can describe children's communication skills and needs accurately.			
	Practitioners understand the difference between a child with delayed language and a child learning EAL.			
	Practitioners can describe strategies for supporting children who are quiet or who need additional support developing communication.			
	Key persons are aware of children's SEN targets.			
	Practitioners know what steps to take if there is a child in the setting whose communication skills are causing concern.			
Section F **Organisation and planning.**	Daily and weekly plans are on view for all staff to consult.			
	The planning shows the differentiation of content and support for children with varying needs.			
	Groups are of a size and composition which promotes children's learning and communication.			
	Observations of children feed into the setting's planning.			
Section G **Engaging families.**	The setting provides a range of events aimed at improving parental engagement in children's language development e.g. story-telling/nursery rhyme sessions, workshops on playing/singing with your child etc.			
	Practitioners take additional steps to engage their at-risk families, such as home visits, use of interpreters, signposting to local support networks, adult literacy support, parenting classes, children's centres, etc.			
	Parents are given accessible information on practical things to help their child's communication development and learning through discussions, health promotion events, etc.			

Area of focus	Criteria	Limited 1	Developing 2	Consistent 3
Section G (continued)	Staff and parents routinely share information with one another on the child's interests, needs and progress in talking and learning (including the home language).			

Summary of observations and discussion

Highlight the most relevant statement for each section, based on observations and discussion:

Section A	Limited 1	Developing 2	Consistent 3	No opportunity to observe/discuss
Section B	Limited 1	Developing 2	Consistent 3	No opportunity to observe/discuss
Section C	Limited 1	Developing 2	Consistent 3	No opportunity to observe/discuss
Section D	Limited 1	Developing 2	Consistent 3	No opportunity to observe/discuss
Section E	Limited 1	Developing 2	Consistent 3	No opportunity to observe/discuss
Section F	Limited 1	Developing 2	Consistent 3	No opportunity to observe/discuss
Section G	Limited 1	Developing 2	Consistent 3	No opportunity to observe/discuss

Three target areas to develop based on above summary:

Target 1	Action:	Achieved by (date):
Target 2	Action:	Achieved by (date):
Target 3	Action:	Achieved by (date):

References

- Hammersmith and Fulham, NHS PCT, Kensington and Chelsea, NHS PCT and Westminster NHS PCT. 'Checklist For Creating A Communication Environment' (unpublished).
- ICan 2007 'Early Talk' Supportive Level, www.ican.org.uk
- Letters and Sounds: Principles and Practice of High Quality Phonics – Phase One Teaching Programme 2008. The National Strategies – Primary, DCSF.
- McKiernan, A (2008 Unpublished) 'Communication Audit of The Learning Environment'.

Resources

- ICan is the leading children's communication charity in the UK. It has a wide range of resources on promoting children's language and communication development, visit www.ican.org.uk and www.talkingpoint.org.uk DVDs include 'Learning to talk – talking to learn' and 'Chatter matters'.
- www.talktoyourbaby.org.uk provides advice sheets on supporting children's language and communication, translated into several different languages, useful for parents and early years practitioners.
- National Deaf Children's Society www.ndcs.org.uk provides a useful range of tools, in supporting children with hearing impairment and promoting positive listening environments within settings.
- British Stammering Association has a range of resources and a helpline www.stammering.org
- Ealing Good Practice Guidelines, publications section www.childrenscentres.org.uk
- Inclusion Development Programme. Supporting children with speech, language and communication needs: Guidance for practitioners in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The National Strategies – Early Years (DCSF 2008).