

SEND AWARE

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Speech and Language Special



After another of those training days where you come away invigorated and raring to put into practice what you have heard, I wanted to put the spotlight on SALT in this issue.

The Communication Trust (www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk) highlighted the scale of the challenges for many children in this country in the keynote speech-in some areas of deprivation more than 50% of children start school with a speech and language challenge. We also know through current research (BCRP) that under identification remains a real issue for these

youngsters. As a result The Communication Trust has set up an online searchable database of interventions at universal, targeted and specialist levels to support practitioners.

In addition there is a self-evaluation tool to identify gaps in skills and knowledge at www.talkingpoint.org.uk/slcf which signposts to relevant training and CPD. The Talk of the Town is currently being trialled through the support of the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) to improve children's attainment across primary schools.

EARLY LANGUAGE SUPPORT

All studies show that a child's capacity early on to use language is crucial to their normal, secure development. Our Speech and Language support does not wait for a child to fail but intervenes as early as possible to ensure that our children do not become statistics. Our support focuses on specifics: Where is the child struggling? What does the child need? Our systems are having an impact already and children are becoming more confident about communicating even in the early years. As a Team we are hoping to now move into Nurseries to help them to support oral language development skills. Intervention as early as possible is the key to securing better outcomes and at Huntingtower we want to support our colleagues to enable this to happen.

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- Early Language Support
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- What is SLI?
- Beyond phonics
- What works for SLI...and dyslexia
- The Code
- Enclosures: Word Web, Working memory, EAL support ideas

WHAT GOES WRONG IN COMPREHENSION?

Maggie Snowling raised this question at the Conference, having completed a significant and long-term project investigating the co-occurrence of SL and Dyslexia.

For Snowling there are several areas:

- *poor decoding does not allow much space for comprehension

- *lexical knowledge issues lead to real challenges with sentence structures

- *some children cannot move beyond the literal (children with ASD, for example)

- *general knowledge issues, including poor literacy in the home, English not spoken in the home, etc)

Snowling's study highlighted that 40% of children are likely to experience SL/Dyslexia within family groups in any of the at-risk groups. This is not far off the 50% of children who start school with some form of SLD (nearly 11 million children).

Snowling's study highlighted that the reader profiles are affected by the phonology AND the language. Now this does not sound like a revelation until we recall the current strategy of phonics, phonics, phonics. Snowling made the point that we must be smarter at identifying the area with the deficit and then provide the intervention that addresses this. And she also demonstrated through her research that vocabulary knowledge must come before phonics to ensure that children can progress and find enjoyment in reading.

One such way of targeting vocabulary uses '*Bring Words to Life*' (2002) where Tier 2 words must be learned as these are the very words usually only found in books that poor readers will not come across. They are the words with the most productivity and kudos for children-children do not simply learn these words through conversation and so must be explicitly taught.

WHAT IS SPECIFIC LANGUAGE IMPAIRMENT?

A child has SLI if language abilities are below chronological age expectations, these language deficits are not explained by other developmental concerns, and, these language impairments interfere with everyday life at home or at school.

Recent research has also indicated that children with SLI at the most severe level are more likely to also have lower scores on non-verbal measures.

These children are more likely to have co-occurring difficulties in cognition, motor development, attention control, social skills and academic achievement. There is also some evidence for psychiatric disturbance by adolescence.

Interestingly behaviour problems in children with SLI have only been apparent in those children with associated reading challenges and are a consequence of school failure and educational self-esteem issues.

The SCALES project has identified that 'specific' language impairment is not so specific and covers many aspects. By the end of reception children with SLI are not achieving academically and continue to experience literacy difficulties.

BEYOND PHONICS

How do we support our poor learners to engage with and explore morphology and etymology? Good learners extend their vocabulary through 'graphic representation'. Good spellers absorb the conventions of spelling and do not need to question or mess around with the logic of it.

Our poor readers and spellers do not have these skills and often struggle to go beyond basic decoding and encoding. They are not exposed to enough vocabulary to make links and spot patterns.

If a child focuses on phonics we often see these mistakes:

sed = said

mtiriel = material

surcul = circle.

In English we do not 'speak' the sound or word the way it is written. When phonics is consistent, it works and can help even our less confident readers and spellers. But we must be teaching the whole word, the meaning, the structure, the use, the look and the feel to help our struggling children

Orthography (the correct spelling of words)

Phonology (the study of speech sounds)

Morphology (the study of parts of words, suffixes and prefixes, that change the form of words)

Etymology (the origin of words)

Cacography (poor spelling/handwriting)

English is NOT a transparent orthography.

As we attach meaning to the VISUAL representation of the word, morphology is the most important area to support.

We must teach that '*wr*' in a word comes from the Anglo-Saxon, often meaning '*twisted*'. As such, '*write*' needs this sound at the beginning as it means '*twisted marks*'.

We can also teach that '*sign*' is from the Latin, meaning 'symbol to notice'. Then we can see that '*signal*', '*signature*' and '*signet*' come from the same root.

The Normans could not say the low guttural sounds of the Anglo-Saxons and so kept the spelling but changed the pronunciation, hence '*knicht*' (pronounced k-nicht) for '*knight*' (pronounced nite) but the '*k*' remained as a silent letter.

We must ensure that children know what parts of the language are-if they do not know what an '*adjective*' is how can they change '*attract*' into '*attractive*'?

Make 'explanation'; cards rather than 'definition' cards to jog the memory and support understanding.

The key is to try to keep them away from phonics for all these activities so that they can move beyond and see that there are many ways to decode and encode, so that reading and spelling becomes more of an opportunity to investigate the wonders of lan-

WHAT WORKS FOR...SLI AND DYSLEXIA

1. Phonological awareness: learn letter sounds, identify or provide words that rhyme, identify the number of syllables in a word, make speech clear.
2. Vocabulary: extend vocabulary knowledge, recall new vocabulary that has been taught, retrieve words when speaking, be specific about the word used rather than using non-specific language, e.g. 'thingy'.
3. Grammar knowledge: extend sentences to show knowledge of more complex sentence structures, develop competent and age appropriate grammar knowledge and use, be confident in the use of specific grammar structures, such as past tense endings, pronouns or plurals, be accurate with word order.
4. Social communication difficulties: show empathy and understand other's feelings, offer up the right amount of information in a conversation, are able to initiate and continue a conversation, maintain appropriate eye contact during

a conversation, wait turns, make and maintain friendships.

5. Listening and attention: need to be able to sit and pay attention in class, need to take in what is being said and understand this, need to respond appropriately to talk in the classroom, need to make right choices during listening, talk time and quiet time, need to recall what has been said, need to be able to filter out extraneous noise.
6. Working memory: listen carefully and hold the information to work on it, be able to order the information so that it can be used productively and accurately, have an idea of how to manipulate the information or instructions before they are forgotten.

Check out '*Active Listening for Active Learning*' by Maggie Johnson and Carolyn Player.

Need more advice? Want to know more? Come and see DB!

The Code

Language and literacy go hand in hand. Good oral language skills are fundamental to developing literacy. Children must: know which sounds in which order make a particular word, speak clearly and understand what words or sentences mean., know about word structure (morphology) and sentence structure (syntax), and be able to use language to communicate with others.

Without these skills they cannot function in a classroom where they must:

- *Learn and respond
- *Develop and use written language skills
- *use language to support intellectual development and
- *Communicate with others successfully



"Away from noise of battle,
Away from bombs and shells,
I'll lie where browse the cattle,
Or pluck the purple bells." 11.11.14