

# Northern Lights



## Communication and Language

Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> January 2024

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*“1.9 million children in the UK are struggling with learning to talk and understand words, the highest number ever recorded. This equates to 20% of all pupils throughout the UK and 1 in 5 of our school aged children.”*

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The evidence tells us that there is a wide variation in young children's exposure to vocabulary.

Research also shows us that vocabulary size relates to academic success

We know children will have had a wide variation in their exposure to vocabulary and level of experiences whilst being at home with their families, some children will understand more and know more because of the quality and quantity of interactions they have already had. However some children will start nursery and school with a poor understanding of language

Therefore **exposure to vocabulary** at nursery is key – this could be through stories, songs, rhymes but most importantly our general interaction.

It is our role to identify which children will need extra support - what are the children's starting points, then consider and plan for their next step. Nothing we do should happen by chance or because we think it will be nice.

This is where the Evidence store can be really helpful to teachers and staff within school.



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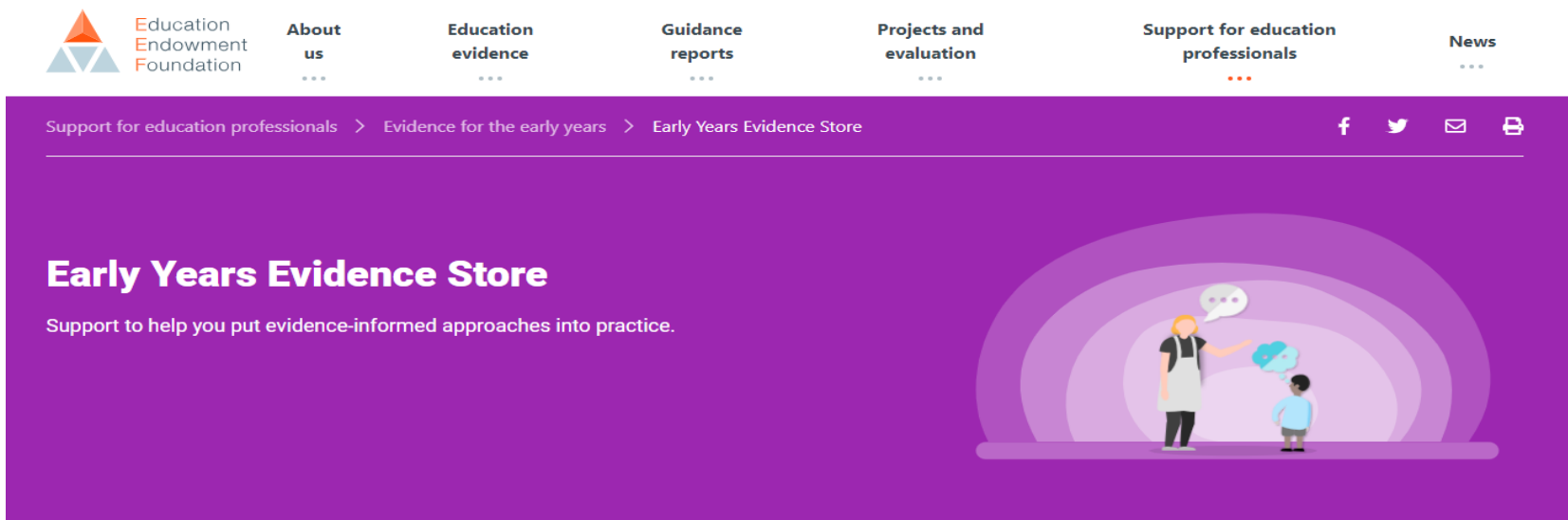


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Developed to support the [DfE's Stronger Practice Hubs programme](#), the Evidence Store has been designed to support Stronger Practice Hubs work with early years providers, but it can be used by everyone working in the early years.

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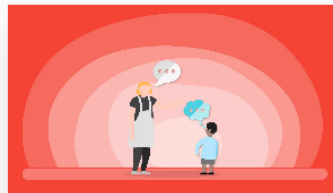
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## Key themes

The Evidence Store currently includes four key themes. These areas have been prioritised due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on children's learning and experiences in these areas. More themes will be added over time.

The next theme will be **Self-Regulation and Executive Function**.



### Early Years Evidence Store

#### Communication and Language

Approaches and practices to support Communication and Language development in the Early Years

5 Approaches  
Last updated 2 months ago

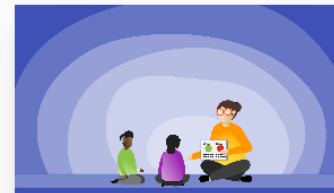


### Early Years Evidence Store

#### Personal Social and Emotional Development

Approaches and practices to support Personal, Social and Emotional development in the Early Years

7 Approaches  
Last updated 2 months ago

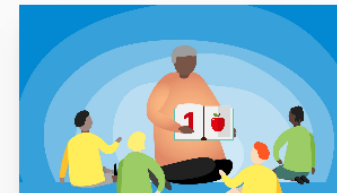


### Early Years Evidence Store

#### Early Literacy

Approaches and practices to support literacy in the early years

6 Approaches  
Last updated 3 days ago



### Early Years Evidence Store

#### Early Mathematics

Approaches and practices to support mathematics in the early years

5 Approaches  
Last updated 2 months ago

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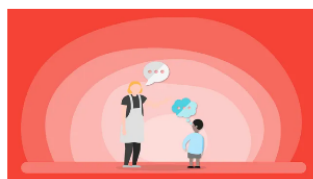


## Communication and Language

Approaches and practices to support communication and language development in the early years.



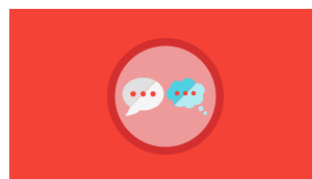
### Approaches for supporting communication and language development



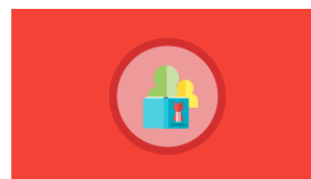
Communication and Language  
Overview



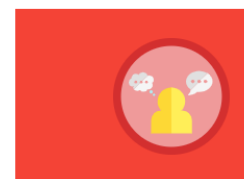
1. Teaching and Modelling  
Vocabulary



2. Teaching and Modelling  
Language



3. Interactive Reading



4. Teaching through  
Collaborative Talk

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# What do the Educational programmes in the EYFS Statutory Framework say about interactions?

## Communication and Language

**Children's back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development.** The number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial. By commenting on what children are interested in or doing and echoing back what they say with new vocabulary added, practitioners will build children's language effectively.

## Personal, social and emotional development

Underpinning their personal development are the important attachments that shape their social world. Strong, warm and supportive relationships with adults enable children to learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others. These attachments and supportive relationships are built through positive interactions.

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‘The Development of children’s spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development.’ EYFS 2021

Again evidence tells us that activities are not enough.

Our curriculum within EYFS should focus on:

- 1) Building vocabulary and language structure
- 2) Providing opportunities for children to use new vocabulary and language structures.

These things can only happen through high quality interactions

- Relationships are key for effective learning to take place

- Children need to feel safe, secure and loved.

- All children need a special someone within school – someone who won’t give up on them, someone who nurtures them, someone who VALUES them



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# What does Ofsted say about 'effective interactions?'

Teaching should not be taken to imply a top down or formal way of working.

It is a broad term that covers the many different ways in which adults help young children learn.

It includes their interactions with children during planned and child-initiated play and activities; communicating and modelling language; showing, explaining, demonstrating, exploring ideas; encouraging, questioning, recalling; providing a narrative for what they are doing; facilitating and setting challenges.

It takes account of the equipment adults provide and the attention given to the physical environment, as well as the structure and routines of the day that establish expectations.

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# What does the research say about effective interactions?

## The evidence on high-quality interactions

We know from several decades of research that high-quality early childhood education and care (ECEC) has a positive effect on children's educational, cognitive, behavioural and social development. Effective early years provision combines care with education, focusing on both social and cognitive development.

The report [Preparing for Literacy](#) highlights the need to prioritise the development of young children's early communication and language, with an emphasis on supporting educators to engage in high-quality interactions.

*“A distinction is sometimes drawn between talking with children and simply talking to children; talking to children tends to be more passive, while talking with children is based on their immediate experiences and activities and is likely to be more effective.”*

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As highlighted in the EEF guidance report [Preparing for Literacy](#):

*“When done well, high quality interactions often look effortless but they are not easy to do well and professional development is likely to be beneficial.”*



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The aim of [the ShREC approach](#) is to provide early years professionals with a simple and memorable set of specific evidence informed strategies that can be embedded into everyday practice to support high quality interactions.

Share attention  
Respond  
Expand  
Conversation

# What does ShREC describe?

HIGH QUALITY INTERACTIONS IN THE EARLY YEARS  
The 'ShREC' approach



The aim of the ShREC approach is to provide early years professionals with a simple, memorable set of specific evidence informed strategies that can be embedded into everyday practice.

*"When done well, high quality interactions often look effortless but they are not easy to do well."*

EEF Guidance Report, Preparing for Literacy



This resource supports the 'Preparing for Literacy' guidance report.

Sh



Share attention

Be at the child's level. Pay attention to what they are focused on.

R



Respond

Follow the child's lead. Respond to their non-verbal and verbal communications. You could make a brief comment on what they can see, hear or feel.

E



Expand

Repeat what the child says and build on it by adding more words to turn it into a sentence.

C



Conversation

Have extended back and forth interactions. Give children time to listen, process and reply.

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# Communication Friendly Settings

Become an environment which supports the communication and language development of all children by completing Elklan's Communication Friendly Settings programme (CFS).

CFS is Elklan's fastest growing training programme which has the largest impact on both the staff and the children within your setting. The process begins with a select number of your staff completing Elklan's acclaimed 10-week course, Speech and Language Support (SLS). This course explores the complex subject of speech, language and communication development in children and young people and gives participants practical knowledge and skills to support children with speech, language and communication needs.

The core messages and strategies from the SLS course are then cascaded to the whole staff team in your setting (or English and SEN departments for Secondary CFS) by those who completed the SLS course. The SLS participants delivering the cascade are known as Lead Communication Practitioners (LCPs). The cascade involves five bite-sized sessions called Communication Counts. This short course gives the key methods and strategies of the SLS course to **all** the staff. Elklan will provide everything you need including the full support and mentoring of an Elklan Tutor during your delivery of Communication Counts.

At the end of the cascade, the LCPs receive a Level 4 accreditation and your setting is accredited as 'Communication Friendly'. Your staff are now equipped with the knowledge, skills and strategies to create a setting that enhances and develops children's communication, creating a rich learning environment for all and supporting children who have communication needs.



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# Free professional development that can support quality supervision time in EY settings

## Current Modules

- Module 1: Understanding child development and the EYFS
- Module 2: Brain development and how children learn
- Module 3: Supporting children's personal, social and emotional development
- Module 4: Supporting language development in the early years

## Coming soon

- Module 5: Supporting physical development in the early years
- Module 6: Mathematics

## Early years child development training

This free, online training provides an overview of child development and gives practical advice for supporting the development of children in your early years setting, including reception years.

[Learn more and enrol >](#)



## About this training course

Each training module on this site covers an important area of child development and has been written by early years experts, working with the Department for Education.

## Return to your training

Sign in to continue learning, see your progress and download certificates.

[Sign in](#) or [create an account](#)

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# Key Findings

- Understanding of progression in CL
- Shared understanding
- Common approach
- Increased confidence
- Support and challenge
- Quality interactions

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Houghton Community  
Nursery School

# Staff – The Golden Thread

- All adults working within Early Years are seen as the experts who have professional knowledge – they are the children's role model. They need to be using ACCURATE vocabulary and accurate grammar for example don't call children or babies 'babas'.
- All adults working with children need to be responsive to their needs – how do staff know which children need more support?
- A language rich environment is vital – but this doesn't mean having words stuck on the wall. They want to see high quality interactions – are children immersed in high quality interactions with adults? Remember ALL interactions are a teaching opportunity and it is this that will make the biggest difference.
- We need to reflect and ask ourselves – Do ALL children have opportunities to engage in conversation?
- Questions Ofsted will ask – **WHY THIS? WHY NOW? WHAT HAPPENED BEFORE? WHAT WILL YOU DO NEXT?**



∞  
I FACILITATE THINKING  
*I engage minds*  
I LISTEN TO QUESTIONS  
I encourage risk  
I support struggle  
*I cultivate dreams*  
I LEARN EVERY DAY  
I TEACH  
∞

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## **Adults' role:**

Follow the child's lead

Respond

Repeating

Expanding

Monitor

Time

Listen



# Be a Reflector

Ask yourself :

- “What is actually happening?”
- “What have you seen?”
- “What have you heard?”
- “What has worked well?”
- “Why has it worked well?”

"THE MOST VALUABLE RESOURCE THAT ALL TEACHERS HAVE IS EACH OTHER. WITHOUT COLLABORATION OUR GROWTH IS LIMITED TO OUR OWN PERSPECTIVES."

ROBERT JOHN MEEHAN

*Rockmyclassroom.com*



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# Be an Assessor



Then decide what you are going to do about it – must take TIME to reflect deeply (most affective when you can do this with your team)

How can you give the children a voice and value their thoughts and ideas. They have a right to be listened to and respected.

When is the right time to intervene and ensure you move the learning on?

When is it right to just stand back and let the child explore, investigate, play, interact independently?

How can you extend their learning – ***what questions do you need to ask? What do you need to provide?***

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# Be the Creator

- Is your environment progressive?
- Does it look inviting?
- What areas are most important to the children?
- What experiences are you going to provide?
- What provocations can be created to support development stages in learning as well as nurturing interest and passions of children?



**Play and everyday playful encounters are crucial for the development of children's vocabulary.**

## **Remember play and vocabulary development go hand in hand**

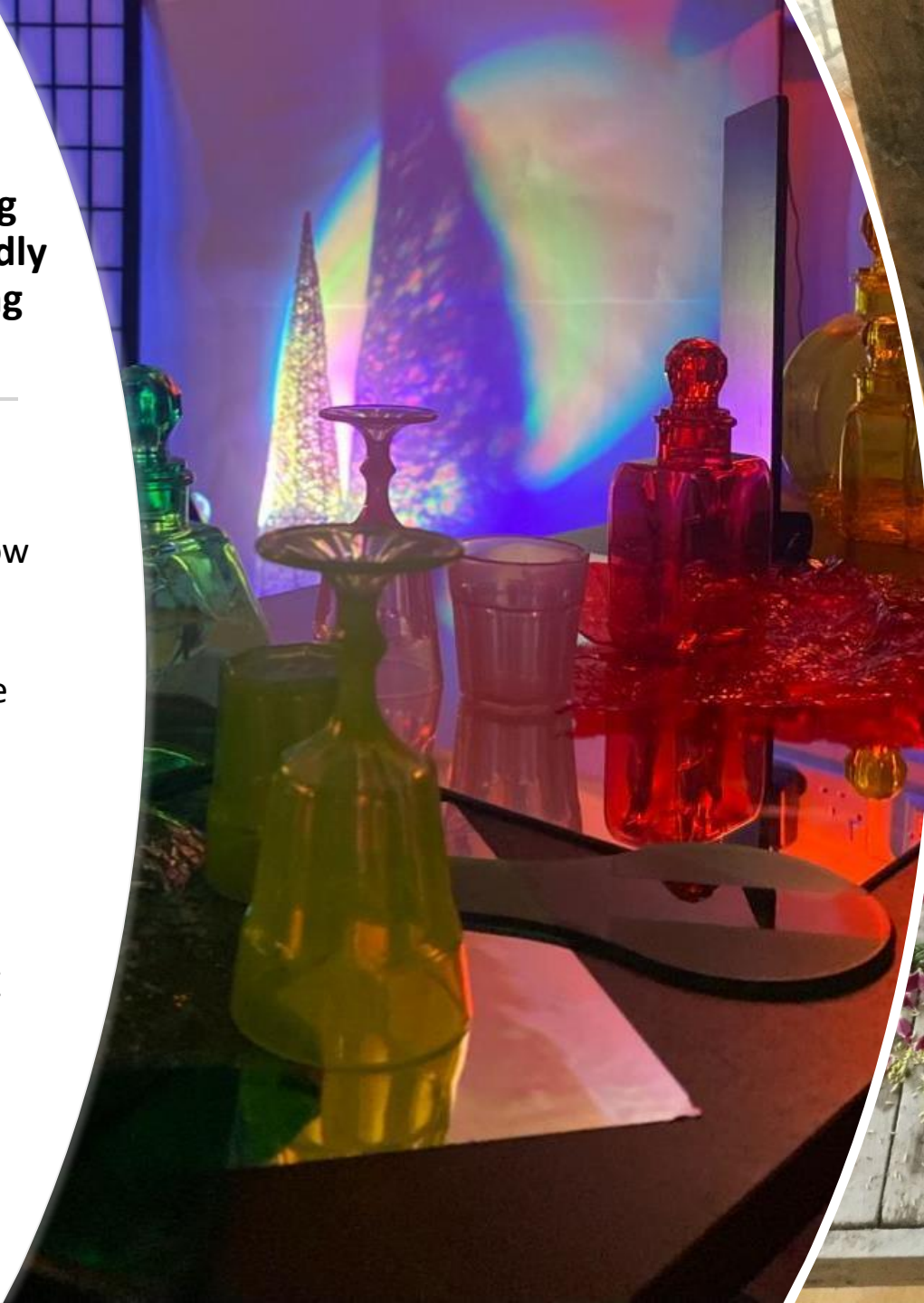
Very young children like to explore objects and then in turn begin to learn 'all about' the object.

- Learning what the object looks like and initially what it feels like (0-5 months)
- The child then learns what you can do with it. Recognises an object as part of a situation (5-11 months)
- By 9 months a child will start to use objects appropriately. This is them then defining an object by use.
- Uses the everyday object on themselves (8-20 months)
- The child pretends to play, however has made the shift beyond themselves. They involve a character like a teddy (16-24 months)

Over time the child will gradually add more information about the object including then how to recognise it, respond to adult's request when asking for it and then how to say the word.

**Creating and ensuring a setting remains communication-friendly ought to consider the following points;**

- The physical environment both indoors and outdoors
- Open – ended resources and how they are offered to children
- The level of distractions both in terms of clutter free and noise free
- The use and visibility of visual support materials
- How routines move through transitions
- Access to small-group language opportunities like story times. (DfE 2021)



# Be the Facilitator



- Be fascinated
- Need for subject knowledge
- Sustained shared play and thinking
- However, educators must think about the big picture – fundamentally they must move children’s learning forward. We have to think about how can we make their learning deeper?
- Demonstrate new skills
- Give children time – don’t rush them too quickly. Things need to be repeated and revisited.



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# Consider levels of Involvement

- How can we help children to 'find' problems? By doing this we lead children to greater innovation and allow them to seek solutions ... Hence deeper learning.
- Must carry out own research ..... Alongside the children as co-researchers who work together to find out things. Practitioners don't have to know all the answers, but they need to be prepared to be a companion in discovery.
- Or at time they must research independently (at home), so that you can bring knowledge, new vocabulary, new skills to the children.



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# Time for you to talk to each other

May have noticed that you have a basket of resources on the table.

There are 3 different baskets that represent different rooms within our learning environment:

- Atelier
- Theatre
- Studio

Please take some time to explore the different resources within the baskets

There are some sheets with questions on that you can work through and consider.

There is also a book which links to the area that your basket is from. The book highlights all the different opportunities that children can access within the different spaces and looks at the continuous provision that is provided for the children to access.

Whilst looking at the books, *consider 'How does your continuous provision develop children's communication and language skills?'*

One final question to consider together is **'What does professional development look like for C&L in your school?'**

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