

The Link

PRIMARY

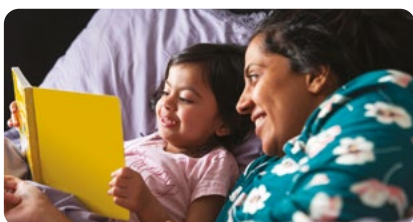
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THE SPEECH & LANGUAGE MAGAZINE FOR SCHOOLS

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Link Community
(Find out more on page 16)

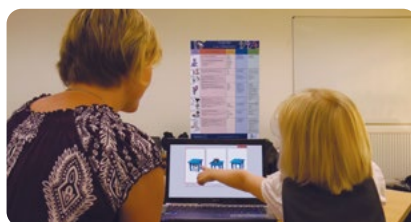


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**SLEEP AND LANGUAGE
THE CRUCIAL LINK**

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RESEARCH PROJECT

Take part and get Infant Language
Link FREE for a year!

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**ASK A THERAPIST
AM I DOING ENOUGH
FOR MY SLCN LEARNERS?**

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Editor's Letter



Hello and welcome,

This term we have an issue packed with articles from specialist contributors along with lots of opportunities for you and your school to get involved. Here are just a few of the highlights.

You might have noticed our front cover has a new look. We're celebrating the launch of our new membership area, The Link Community, and felt it deserved a special touch. Join us as a member and gain access to a wealth of speech and language resources and information to assist you in supporting your pupils with SLCN.

Best of all – it's completely FREE. Head over to pages 16-17 to find out more and sign up!

For many schools, effectively meeting the needs of all their pupils with SLCN can be a real challenge – perhaps even feeling impossible at times! We hope you'll be inspired by two of our guest contributors, who share their successful approaches to providing SLCN support within an academy trust. It's also great to hear how Speech Link and Language Link form part of the wraparound support offered in both. (Pages 3 and 6-7)

Juliet Leonard, one of our specialist speech and language therapists, addresses a frequently asked question, "Am I doing enough for my SLCN learners?"

(pages 12-13). Juliet offers insights into fostering challenging, independent learning strategies to ensure all pupils, including those with SLCN, can achieve their maximum potential.

On pages 14-15 Sue Newman from Boogie Mites explains the significance of movement and rhythm in language sound processing and literacy development. This approach ensures that children have fun while they learn. Sue also has a great offer for our readers.

We finish with a lovely School Spotlight story. Discover how Inclusion Manager, Jennie, along with her cockapoo Robbie, contribute to the wellbeing of their school in Romford. Learn about Robbie's role in supporting the children. He's just 'Pawsome'!

Have a great summer.

Best wishes,

Claire Chambers

*Editor, The Link
Speech & Language Link,
award-winning support for SLCN*

Take part in our latest research project and get our Infant Language Link support package FREE for your school for a year!

See pages 12-13 for more information.



www.speechandlanguage.info

Contact our Speech and Language Help Desk
at: helpdesk@speechlink.co.uk
or phone 0333 577 0784



One HLTA to another

Our speech and language support



By **Katie Cherryman**, HLTA and strategic lead for speech, language and communication at Hawkes Farm Academy, East Sussex

Our school has a high percentage of children on the SEND register with 'Communication and Interaction' as their primary need. This was how my role was created!

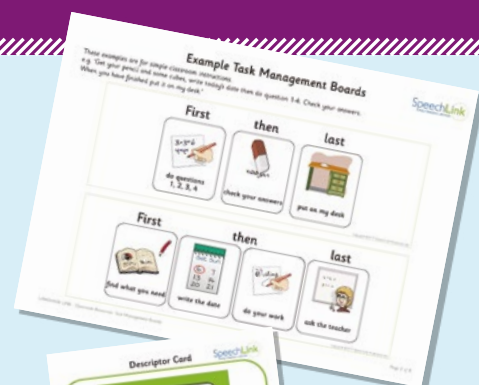
Having received speech therapy as a child, speech and language was always an area I wanted to learn more about. Following 10 years of experience learning on the job, working with speech therapists, then seeing a rise of need, I completed more training to try and 'fill the gap' between school and therapists. I am also a recently licenced Makaton tutor.

Fast forward to now, as a SEND HLTA coordinating speech, language and communication across 4 schools, my role is as important as ever! We have seen a staggeringly high number of children starting Early Years as non-verbal, pre-verbal, or with complex difficulties with speech and/or language. Given the limited availability of therapists, tools such as **Speech Link and Language Link** are essential for me to effectively support these needs.

I work with staff and children to establish baselines and gain an understanding of the needs of our pupils, enabling us to provide the best support. Our total communication approach is invaluable in reducing barriers to learning, ensuring teachers understand the needs of their pupils and the nature of the interventions they are receiving. We use lots of visuals to support the daily routines which reduce distress and frustration. These include 'now and next boards', 'understanding cards' and 'task planners'.

Each term I meet with support staff to review pupil progress and discuss targets going forwards. I model strategies and intervention sessions with the children so staff can learn the tips and tricks that I've gathered along the way.

With training and tools such as Speech Link and Language Link to assess and provide intervention, my role is a lot easier in ensuring children are having their needs met and are achieving to their fullest!



KATIE'S TOP TIP

I've learnt that children with SLCN should be offered 10 seconds of thinking time to allow them to understand what has been said and form a response. Try it yourself, count to 10. People do not realise how long 10 seconds actually is!



The crucial link between sleep and language acquisition: a guide for teachers and SENDCos



By CEO and Founder of The Sleep Charity, **Vicki Beevers**

In the realm of education, the connection between sleep and academic performance has long been acknowledged. However, recent research, *'Timing story time to maximize children's ability to retain new vocabulary'*,^{*1} has shed light on a fascinating and intricate correlation between sleep deprivation and language acquisition in children, particularly those with speech and language difficulties.

As educators, understanding this link and the impact of sleep on language development is imperative for providing effective support to youngsters and their families.

Sleep deprivation and language acquisition

Numerous studies have underscored the significance of quality sleep in facilitating various aspects of cognitive development, including language acquisition such as *'Sleep-dependent consolidation in children with comprehension and vocabulary weaknesses: it'll be alright on the night?'*^{*2}. Children experiencing sleep deprivation may exhibit challenges in

speech and language skills, creating additional hurdles in their academic journey.

Bedtime stories: a gateway to language enrichment

One intriguing aspect of the sleep-language connection is the role bedtime stories play in vocabulary retention. Research suggests that children are more likely to retain new words when exposed to them before bedtime^{*1}. Bedtime stories, with their rhythmic cadence and engaging narratives, provide a conducive environment for language assimilation during the crucial pre-sleep period.

Importance of bedtime stories in routines

Incorporating bedtime stories into nightly routines can have far-reaching benefits for children, which includes reading and a sense of stability and comfort for the child according to The Sleep Charity. This predictability can be particularly reassuring for children with speech and language difficulties, as it fosters a positive association with language and learning.

Encouraging families to establish bedtime stories

Here are some practical tips to achieve this:

- Provide resources: offer families a curated list of age-appropriate books that align with their child's interests
- Host family reading events: organise school-wide or class-specific family reading events to emphasise the collective importance of bedtime stories
- Model reading behaviour: share personal experiences of reading with students and parents and discuss the positive impact bedtime stories can have on language development

Increasing vocabulary through quality sleep

Research consistently highlights the role of sleep in consolidating new information, including vocabulary as shown in *'Goodnight book: sleep consolidation improves word learning via storybooks'*^{*3} which shows children who get adequate and quality sleep are better equipped to recall and integrate new words into their linguistic repertoire.

*1 <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0022096521001259?via%3Dihub>

*2 <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32367542/> It'll be alright on the night | Emma James (emma-james.co.uk)

*3 *Goodnight book: sleep consolidation improves word learning via storybooks* Sophie E. Williams Jessica S. Horst* <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2014.00184/full>

Practical strategies for teachers and SENDCos

- Educate parents and caregivers about the critical role sleep plays in language acquisition
- Recognise that children with speech and language difficulties may face challenges during traditional class hours
- Maintain open lines of communication with parents regarding their child's sleep patterns. Collaborate on strategies to improve sleep quality, emphasising the positive impact it can have on language development.

Conclusion

Understanding the intricate link between sleep deprivation and language acquisition is paramount for educators in fostering the academic success of children, particularly those facing speech and language difficulties. As advocates for the holistic development of every child, teachers and SENDCos can empower families to establish bedtime routines that contribute not only to a good night's sleep but also to the lifelong gift of language.

Please read the extended article on our blog at:
speechandlanguage.info/blog

Join over 5,000 people who have trained nationally and internationally, through sleepwellacademy's wide-range of high quality, skill-enhancing, knowledge boosting courses, brought to you by The Sleep Charity, one of the UK's leading sleep training providers.

Sleepwellacademy.org.uk

Yin Collighan, specialist speech and language therapist at Speech & Language Link, says:

“ I've often seen tiredness affect therapy sessions, especially after lunch or later in the week and as the school term goes on. Students take longer to respond, struggle with recall and find wordy tasks much harder.

Short, snappy activities are the best when students are tired, with frequent movement breaks in between. I've often offered a selection of games that they really like and let them choose. We usually go over things they've almost mastered and don't start anything too hard. ”



Why bringing speech and language teams into schools is key



By **Kylie Rio-Wood**, trust Leader for speech and language and lead speech and language therapist at the Ted Wragg Multi-Academy Trust

2024 started with the announcement that there has been an unprecedented rise in children needing speech and language therapy, resulting in thousands of them sitting on NHS waiting lists. At the end of October last year, over four thousand children had been on NHS community waiting lists for speech and language therapy for over a year ⁽¹⁾.

As a speech and language therapist, I know how harmful delays in securing help can be for children with communication problems. I am troubled by the findings of a YouGov survey ⁽²⁾ of teachers in England and Wales conducted last year which concluded that 1.9 million children are behind either with speaking or understanding language.

Many different theories have been put forward as to why more children are struggling with their communication, from lockdowns to screen time. However, I am also keen to explore how schools can play a role in supporting the children who are waiting on these lists.

It's essential to support children's communication development during their primary school journey and intervention at an early stage is key to avoid any detrimental effects to their wellbeing and achievement. Enabling children to communicate effectively is pivotal when they are learning to be independent in an educational setting, especially for those who may be away from their families for the first time in an unfamiliar environment.

Speech and language therapy can enhance both the educational and

social experiences of children. Good communication skills are so vital that I screen all reception children in our primary schools trust wide. I created an informal assessment which covers areas of speech and language that, from evidence, a 4-year-old would be expected to be able to reach.

From these screens, myself, and my team of specialist teaching assistants (TAs) in speech and language, and speech and language therapy assistants carry out interventions to support children in need. Throughout 2023 we carried out group or 1:1 intervention with more than 340 students.

It also allows us to see which young people will definitely need NHS support and means we can signpost them to ensure they are on NHS waiting lists or referred to any other specialists that may be of help to them.

This work has been so beneficial to schools, but we knew we could do more! We purchased the **Speech Link and Language Link** programmes trust wide using the Speech Link element of it to support the reception screen, it's really easy to use and follow.

From this we realised the potential

"I would say that having specialist TAs is key to delivering this service. The idea of a TA simply being allocated to sit with one child all day is an outdated one."

Wellbeing

External programme
(Speech and Language Link)

Training

References (1) <https://tinyurl.com/2s32w99d> (2) <https://tinyurl.com/9rfnced4>

Language Link could have for our children and supplied all our staff with logins so that children in other year groups could be assessed and supported too by teachers and TAs.

The Infant, Junior and Secondary Language Link packages combine robust, standardised assessments with planned and fully resourced, targeted small-group interventions. All training is included via online videos and webinars and the Help Desk team provides support whenever it is required.

Some schools have a selected member of staff who supports children across the school to access this tool. Other schools have decided to screen all low readers to assess any underlying speech and language needs.

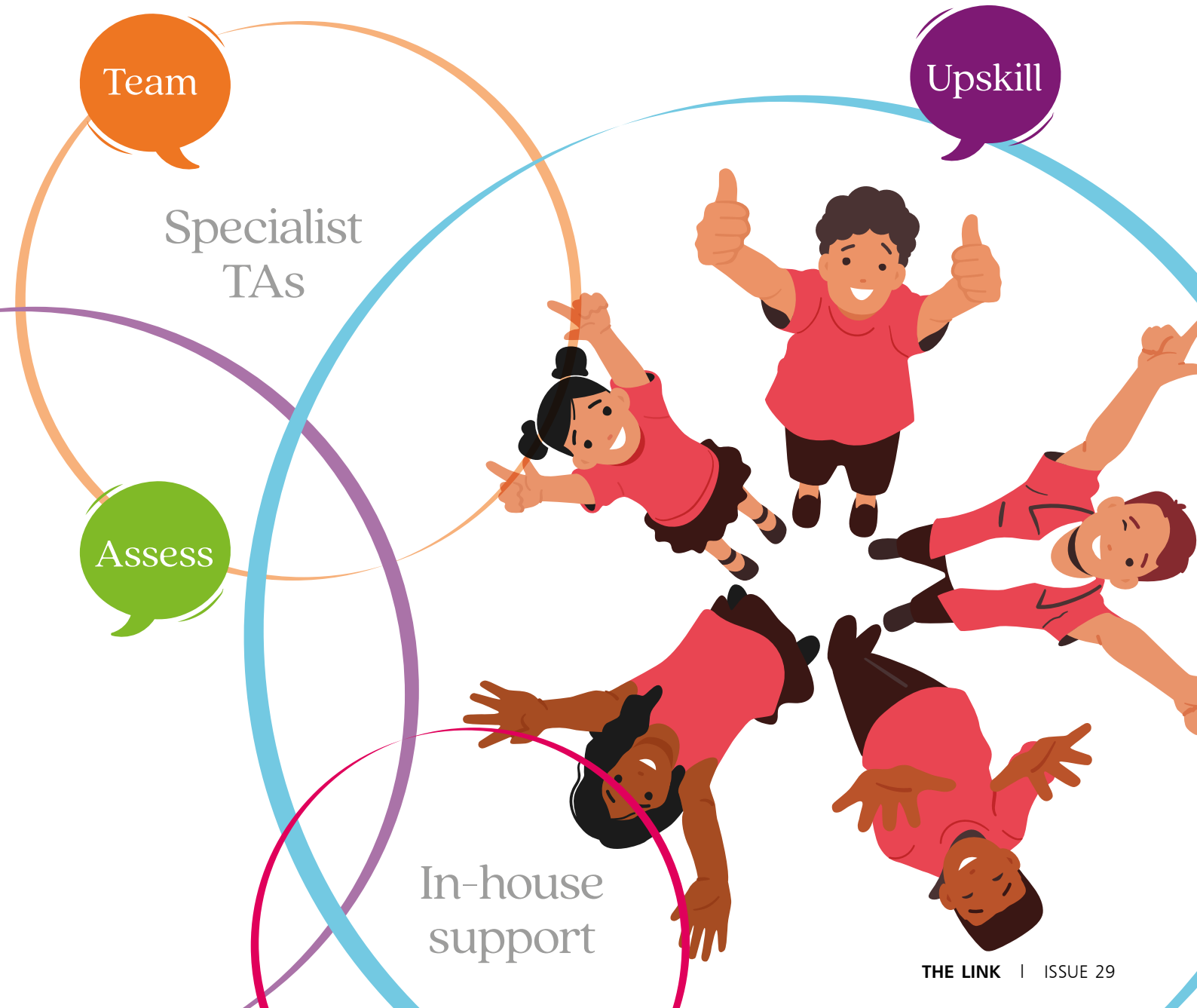
My team provides constant training and trust wide support to ensure all of our staff and children are supported in speech and language and we now also use an external speech and language service which can assess and offer remote therapy to children trust wide.

I would say that having specialist TAs is key to delivering this service. The idea of a TA simply being allocated to sit with one child all day is an outdated one and I believe allowing them to specialise and undertake more training enhances their job satisfaction and promotes staff retention.

I think it's really important that SENCos consider the best approach for their school depending on its size, resources, and staffing levels.

I have been very fortunate that the trust I work for has really taken on board the need to address communication issues in young people and I am proud to lead a team of speech and language assistants and specialist TAs.

It might be that some schools only have the ability to upskill existing staff or might only have the budget to employ an external speech and language support system. However, it's achieved, I believe all primary schools need to be examining what speech and language support they offer, or introducing some if they don't already. With so many children in need of support we need to make sure that in-house school provision reaches every pupil that needs it.



Having conversations about listening



By **Alison Fowle** and **Juliet Leonard**,
specialist speech and language therapists



We know that listening and attention are vital precursors necessary for language skills, social relationships, and educational attainment. But what are the components of listening and attention, and do we think about and teach them enough?

Listening is complex! For children to become good listeners who can focus on their learning, and on what is being said, they need to initially learn "listening rules": the foundations of listening upon which the building blocks of language and educational attainment can be built.

Readiness for listening

There is a crucial preparation to get right before we expect a child to listen – they have to be in a 'ready state' for it. Consider how difficult it is to listen, attend and take in information if you are feeling scared, anxious, angry, or wound up. We cannot expect children to make a fast switch from vigilance or extreme alertness, to being 'ready for listening'.

Level of alertness and regulation are therefore essential for active listening. Many schools help children to find this 'optimum state', by providing early morning sensory circuits, a golden mile, a readiness activity or a 'wake up shake up' to reach this. For those children with lower levels of alertness, additional support and alternative approaches will be needed to engage and be active in their learning.

The environment also plays a key role. A communication friendly classroom with minimal audible and visual distractions will go a long way towards aiding pupils' ability to engage.

There are some excellent approaches to help children develop insight into their level of alertness, (for example, The Alert program* or The Zones of Regulation**) and develop strategies which help them to find the state at which they feel ready to listen and learn.

Learning the foundations of listening... and the evolution

When children first learn about a topic, such as the planets of the solar system, they are taught broad facts and ideas – later they add to these, with more complex information. Likewise, with younger children (key stage 1, and below) we often refer to 'good listening rules' as a broad set of instructions that start the conversation about listening. As children mature, they add to these ideas to develop fine-tuned, responsive listening and attention cues.

Good looking

We teach children that, to show they are listening, they need to look at the person who is talking. As the 'rule' matures, children learn that this does not have to be intense focus but refers to the way that we 'check in' with the speaker, by looking, nodding, interjecting or making

affirmatory noises to show that we are tuned in.

Good sitting

Young children are taught the 'rule' that, at carpet time, they sit still; keeping their limbs to themselves means that they are not distracting others and are showing listening readiness. As they mature, they learn that 'sitting' is not the aim, rather it is to be attentive to the person speaking and not prevent others from doing so. This might even be standing, so long as they are close and focussing on the speaker rather than another task.

Good thinking

To help young children to make sense of what they are hearing, we ask them to think about the meaning of the words, not just listen to the incoming sounds. This is an active process – a way of joining in with the 'listening conversation'. Children need to learn to employ thinking skills so that, as they mature, they can add more complex reasoning skills to their repertoire. They also need to develop the skills to effectively let the speaker know that they are thinking rather than ignoring them, to avoid awkward silences and communication breakdowns.

Moving beyond the foundations

Children who find listening and attention difficult in the early days of their education are likely to need ongoing help to learn to advance



these skills to meet their learning and communication needs. As the foundation of all learning, listening skills will need to be a focus throughout their education. Towards the end of key stage 2, children can start to identify for themselves the particular strategies that help them to listen and use these throughout their lives.

Referring to listening and attention is important, and often overlooked. We may talk about 'good listening', but we might not overtly acknowledge and praise it, particularly with older children, and whilst we might commend a young child for 'good sitting', we might not consider praising their 'good checking in'.

So how can we ensure that listening and attention remains high on the agenda, given that it is such a vital prerequisite for the development of language and learning? Here are a few pointers...

Make sure you've done the groundwork

Never skip the vital 'listening readiness' step. Every person, of every age, needs to be in the right 'zone' for listening. Be aware of your role in this readiness and what signals you can give to help them find their optimum zone. Help

children to recognise how alert they are feeling and give them strategies to use if they need a boost.

Make it a priority

After key stage 1 it's often forgotten that listening and attention skills underpin learning throughout our lives. Bring it to the forefront by highlighting to children what they are doing right, what they do differently, and talk about the roles of both the listener and their partner in the listening interaction.

Expect it to evolve

We fine-tune our listening skills as we mature, and this has a direct impact on learning, engagement and relationships. Expect to see a progression in skills, awareness, and strategies over time and importantly, acknowledge them, talk about them and encourage them.

The Infant Language Link and Junior Language Link interventions include a fully planned and resourced 8-session **Listening Group** which can be used by teachers or support staff with whole classes or smaller groups. The intervention helps children to think about and develop their listening skills and covers the 'rules of listening'.

FREE TRIAL!

Take a FREE trial of Language Link and get access to a resourced Listening Group session at: www.speechandlanguage.info/trial



*<https://www.alertprogram.com/teachers/> **<https://zonesofregulation.com/>

Join our national research project and...

Get Infant Language Link FREE for 1 year!

Help us improve identification of children with speech, language and communication needs at school entry



By Louise Burton,
research lead and speech and language therapist

At Speech Link Multimedia Ltd we have been helping schools to effectively support children with speech and language needs for 20 years. We, and the University of Cambridge Psychometrics Centre, have an exciting research opportunity for schools to improve the identification of children with SLCN at school entry.

Early identification and intervention are essential

Did you know that?

- Upwards of 50% of children in some areas are starting school with significant language and communication needs
- The impact of these difficulties can range from difficulty developing literacy skills and poor academic attainment, through to challenging behaviour and school non-attendance
- Research shows that as many as 40% are going unidentified
- Difficulties are often 'hidden', and impossible to identify from observation alone
- Children are much more likely to be noticed for more observable difficulties, such as difficulty paying attention in class, or struggling with literacy
- Time and resources often target the effects of the difficulty, but not the underlying language difficulty that is the cause

It is crucial that schools have a reliable and efficient method to identify children struggling with language development on school entry, so that support can be put in place where needed.



Infant Language Link Assessment

Our Infant Language Link package contains a standardised assessment of the understanding of language. The assessment is designed to be used universally in Reception to ensure that no children with difficulties are missed or misidentified.

Not only are children with difficulties identified, but the level of support they require is indicated within three tiers; many children can be supported through the use of universal classroom strategies designed to support the development of speech and language skills for all, others need more targeted intervention groups delivered by school staff, and a small subset may need support from specialist services. This ensures that not only are all children with difficulties identified, but the school is able to plan and utilise their resources efficiently to make the most difference.



The Research Project

We have an exciting opportunity for teaching staff to get involved with a research project that we are completing with the University of Cambridge Psychometrics Centre.

- We are improving our Infant Language Link screening assessment for children on school entry to make it quicker, without losing accuracy.
- The project is taking place over the next academic year from September 2024 to July 2025.
- We are looking for schools who do not currently use our Infant Language Link package to take part.
- Each school will need to complete our online assessment with a minimum of 20 children.
- The assessment takes 15-20 minutes and is delivered online through our website. Each school will be asked to assess their pupils at one time point in the year.

HOW CAN YOUR SCHOOL GET INVOLVED?

If your school would like to help with this research, go to: speechandlanguage.info/study (or scan the QR code) to find out more information and to express your interest. We are expecting interest to be high, and places are limited, so please register to secure your place.

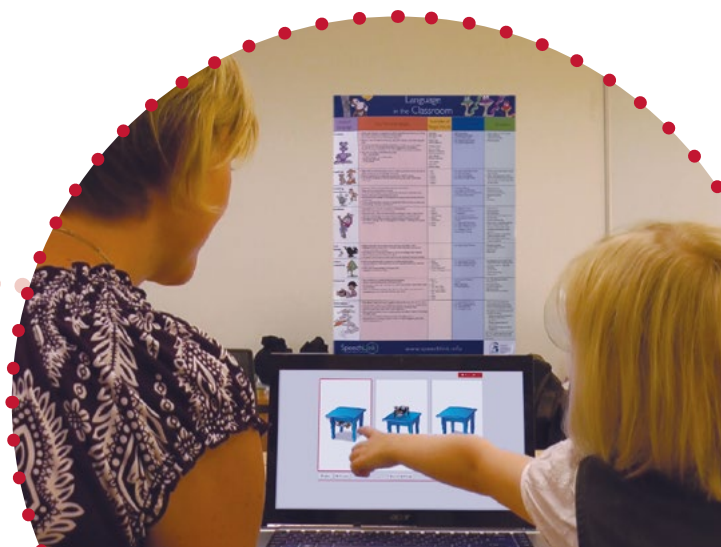
Speech & Language Link

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
The Psychometrics Centre



“We absolutely rely on Language link to support us in putting the best provision possible in place for our children as soon as possible.”

Tina Godden, SENDCo,
Willesborough Infant School



WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS TO SCHOOLS OF TAKING PART?



- ✓ We will pay for the time required for a member of TA staff to complete the assessments
- ✓ A summary report for the group of children assessed, will be provided, that indicates their level of difficulty understanding language and tier of support needed (universal, targeted, specialist)
- ✓ A free subscription to our award-winning Infant Language Link package for 1 year

More about

INFANT LANGUAGE LINK

Our award-winning Infant Language Link package has the standardised assessment at its core, but it provides much more than just this for schools by:

- ✓ Enabling schools to track and support children from Reception to the end of Key Stage 1
- ✓ Providing in-package and webinar training to boost staff knowledge and skills
- ✓ Giving access to our Help Desk support by email or phone every day when needed. This includes our speech and language therapy team for more specialist questions.

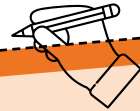
Infant Language Link provides planned and resourced interventions at three levels: *whole class* strategies and resources, *small group* language intervention groups and *individual* intervention for children who need an extra boost following a group.

www.speechandlanguage.info/infant

Beyond the worksheet:



Q Am I doing enough for my SLCN learners?



ASK A Therapist



By **Juliet Leonard**,
specialist speech and language therapist






This is a brave but important question to ask. It sometimes feels that, by activities to support learners with speech, language, and communication (SLCN), we are focussing on making things easier rather than challenging these learners to achieve their very best.

This is particularly true of the 'worksheet' task. Completion of a worksheet might meet the learning objective, but it has not necessarily provided the extension opportunities that these learners need to further their understanding, consolidate their knowledge, and ultimately reach their true potential.

So, here are some top tips on how to go 'beyond the worksheet', and provide a challenging, enriching but supportive learning experience for students with SLCN:

First, optimise the environment

We all learn best when we feel safe, comfortable, confident, and supported. What does this child need to do their best?

-  A quieter area of the classroom, perhaps away from a window?
-  A sensitive talk partner sitting next to them?
-  Regular check-ins and prompts by an adult?

Definitely a classroom in which asking questions or requesting help is encouraged, supported and celebrated.

Know your learners

Providing targeted and bespoke support to individuals means that each pupil has the best chance of excelling. Knowing the language strengths and needs of a learner and the most beneficial strategies to scaffold their difficulties, means you are ready to help them where they need it.

Use key strategies

Core strategies such as clearly explaining what a child is required to do before starting a task and adapting worksheets by simplifying the layout, adding more visuals and ensuring that the questions are worded clearly with accessible vocabulary, can mean that a pupil can carry out a task independently and better understand what is required of them. Pupils who feel confident about what they have

been asked to do, are more likely to achieve the task and to push themselves further.

Be ready and equipped

SLCN is the largest area of need in the primary school SEN register (DfE, 2023). With so much to learn about these wide-ranging difficulties, and their impact on learning, it's important to keep abreast of how to spot the signs and make a difference. Ask your SENCo to allow you time to keep up with CPD, through courses or by attending webinars, reading or joining the excellent forums available on social media.



Speech & Language Link

If you are a Language Link subscribing school, familiarise yourself with your pupils' language screening results, which outline specific areas of need and make use of the numerous visual resources available in 'Classroom Resources' including graphic organisers, **Help Me cards**, and **sentence planners**.

To find out more about how Infant and Junior Language Link can help you identify and support learners with SLCN, take a **FREE trial**: speechandlanguage.info/trial

Talking it out

Talking around the pupil's answers, vocabulary, thoughts and deductions can really help to cement and consolidate their understanding and extend the learning beyond the worksheet.

Don't be afraid to ask extra, more taxing questions and to challenge some of their answers – for example: "Why do you think x?", or "Can you think of a time when you did/felt x?". Model examples of

answers if needed and remember to use the '10 second rule' by allowing the student thinking time after asking each question.

Encourage independence

By helping children to identify what they have not understood on a worksheet, will help to encourage their sense of autonomy. Ask them individually which bits they found hard or if they have any questions about the worksheet.

If they have left the answers blank or written 'don't know', explore why they struggled with this question/section. Perhaps they didn't understand a key word or they weren't sure how to present or structure their answer?

With these strategies in place, you'll have the all the ingredients needed to take learning beyond the worksheet and your pupils beyond their difficulties.

The Power of RHYTHMIC AWARENESS for Language and Literacy Learning



By **Sue Newman**, Boogie Mites UK Ltd

Research indicates that the ability to coordinate and time our movements impacts upon children's ability to learn language, read and write. Movement involves timing skills supported by the ability to keep the beat and rhythmic awareness, skills which are also found to be important in the processing of language sounds and learning to read.

The level of synchronisation that is needed between the auditory, visual and motor cortices of the brain to make sense of the messages (language or music) is tied to the

motor circuit which is developed through keeping the beat and rhythmic awareness activities promoted through music practice.

Rhythm is an integral part of both music and language

Research studies by Dr Nina Kraus at Northwestern University, Brainvolts Project*, find biological evidence linking music, rhythmic abilities and language skills – specifically linking the ability to keep a beat to the neural encoding of speech sounds.

Her studies also demonstrate that:

- Distinct rhythmic abilities were found to align with phonological

awareness and rapid naming in school-age children

- Difficulty in performing rhythmic tasks often co-occurs with literacy difficulties
- Rhythmic interventions can be tailored to address phonological awareness and rapid automated naming deficits specifically in reading disabled children

Can you feel the beat?

In one particular study carried out by Nina Kraus and her team, synchronisers (children aged 3-4 who could keep a steady beat) were found to have:



- More accurate brainstem processing of speech than non-synchronisers
- Higher pre-literacy skills (phonological processing, auditory short-term memory, and rapid naming)

This finding suggests a significant influence on the development of pre-literacy skills during early childhood and a need for daily music activities that include lots of beat keeping and rhythmic movement exercises!

Rhythmic activities

Traditional music and nursery rhymes are great, they harness some of the benefits evidenced by neuroscience and research studies.

To harness all of the benefits we need to **include lots of rhythmic activities, keeping the beat, playing with tempo and different rhythms...** best achieved through use of recorded music written for this age group and purpose. Daily music activities should include:



- Marching to the beat
- Bobbing up and down to the beat
- Dancing
- Body percussion – clapping, stamping, thigh slapping. Start with simple repetition of one body percussion action, progress to sequences such as clap, clap, stamp, stamp...
- Use different music with different tempo, starting with slow and progressing to faster
- Use different genres of music including from different cultures to experience different rhythms
- Tapping sticks with the beat (wooden spoons will do)
- Tapping rhythms of words and phrases as part of a fun song
- Banging a drum (a box or tub will do)

All activities are best done in a group or with a parent/carer. Adults can model and children will fall into synchronise with the group/adult with regular practise. There are many other benefits to daily music making, they include impact on sound processing, memory, reward system, emotional network – promoting pro-social behaviour and bonding.

ABOUT BOOGIE MITES

Boogie Mites Core Music Programmes:

Boogie Mites music programmes provide everything you need to equip your team with the training and resources to boost your music provision in the setting and outside, for each age group (from crawlers to 5 years), boosting rhythmic awareness, sound processing, mood and cognitive development for all involved – staff and children.

Music for under 5s | Our Music | Boogie Mites | United Kingdom

Contact sue@boogiemites.co.uk for a video call to explore options for boosting listening, language and literacy through music provision at your settings.

Boogie Mites App



BOOGIE MITES COLLABORATION WITH MICHAEL ROSEN

Boogie Mites have recently completed a project writing songs and interpreting some of them through movement and dance for some poems and nonsense rhymes written by Michael Rosen and published in his recent books: Ready For Spaghetti and A Great Big Cuddle. Please share this with parents who can access 18 music activities for free for the first month trial.

Boogie Mite App: Building Strong Foundations For Language and literacy Through Music



References *Brainvolts studies

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- Bonacina S, Krizman J, White-Schwoch T, Kraus N Clapping in time parallels literacy and calls upon overlapping neural mechanisms in early readers. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*.
- Tierney A, White-Schwoch T, MacLean J, Kraus N Individual differences in rhythmic skills: links with neural consistency and linguistic ability. *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience*.
- *2 <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2013-09-importance-link-ability-language-skills.html>

Welcome to THE LINK COMMUNITY MEMBERSHIP






We are inviting SENCOs, teachers, TAs/LSAs and HLTAs to join The Link Community, our new free online membership area

We know that if you read The Link you are interested in supporting speech and language. So we set out to give you access to interesting articles and support resources all year round, in addition to your termly magazine.

Introducing The Link Community




We have created this unique online support area with the aim to alleviate some of the challenges you face supporting pupils with SLCN. Your FREE membership provides access to resources and information to help you to work effectively with your pupils.

We understand how precious your time is and the struggle it can be to:

-  Locate suitable resources to support a student
-  Access accurate information about the different types of SLCN
-  Determine the most effective ways to deliver support












The Link Community can help you answer these challenges by:

-  Providing relevant resources – not just more generic worksheets
-  Enabling you to discover what the different types of SLCN are and what they mean in the classroom
-  Offering a free CPD event with access to The Link Live speech and language conference (tickets normally £80+VAT)

The new Link Community membership area contains a wealth of free information and specialist resources carefully planned and created by the therapy team behind Speech & Language Link. Over 4000 schools use our Speech Link and Language Link packages and The Link Community members can be assured that the free resources have been created with the same level of depth and insight.

What's included in my membership?

-  The Ultimate Guide to SLCN
-  School speech and language audit tool
-  Access to The Link magazine library
-  Free ticket to The Link Live speech and language conference
-  SLCN support website for your parents & carers
-  The Speech and Language eNewsletter
-  Printable speech and language resources
-  Very special offers on Speech & Language Link services
-  Research opportunities for your school

Sign up today and:

- Be part of a unique community that recognises/understands the barriers you face with a genuine focus on supporting you to overcome them
- Gain access to extensive materials and learning opportunities
- Increase your confidence in supporting SLCN to make a difference for the pupils you support

How much do I need to pay?

Membership is completely FREE.

Where do I sign up?

speechandlanguage.link

*The Link Community
- helping you to make
a difference*



THE LANGUAGE LINK TREE

We are a year in delivering the Language Link programme which has been a great toolkit to use. We now have a room set up for speech and language interventions and have created a lovely Language Link tree on the wall.

Sian Price (ALN teacher)



THE LINK SPEECH AND LANGUAGE CPD



Register for our therapist-led language course offering a truly immersive experience enabling you to transfer learning into your everyday practice.

MODULE 1: Introduction to Speech and Language
Tuesday 1st October

MODULE 2: Language Intervention
Thursday 19th September
Monday 20th January 2025

Each module represents approximately 10 hours of training and costs £225+VAT per participant.



Tickets: [tickettailor.com/events/thelinkcpd](https://www.tickettailor.com/events/thelinkcpd)

CALLING TEACHERS AND TAs

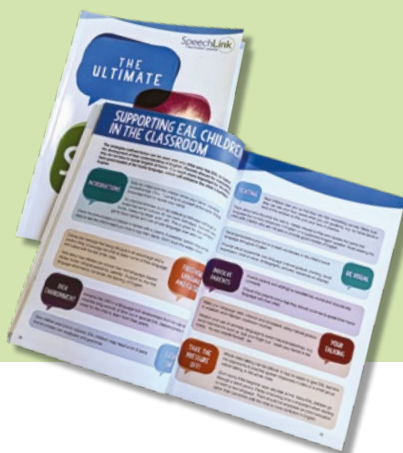
Please take part in a short survey to help us find out the level of training teaching staff receive on SEN/SLCN, particularly language disorders.



Look out for the results in the autumn edition of The Link in an article to promote 'DLD Awareness Day' – 18th October. All entrants have the chance of winning a Speech & Language Link travel mug AND a copy of 'The Ultimate Guide to SLCN'.

Closing date: 31st July 2024.

Good luck!



Dates for your diary

Our events team are looking forward to the following summer conference and exhibitions (please come and say hello):

JUNE 6TH
SEND Conference, Sandy Park, Exeter

JUNE 14TH
National Education Show, Venue Cymru, Llandudno (stand 83)

JULY 3RD
SENCo Conference, Butlins, Bognor Regis, West Sussex

JULY 5TH
nasen LIVE 2024, NEC, Birmingham (stand 15)



Robbie the wellbeing dog



School Spotlight

Jennie Evans is the Inclusion Manager at St Peter's CP School in Romford and Robbie is her 9-year-old cockapoo. Here's how Robbie became the school pet!

Jennie:

"Robbie was introduced to the school to help support the pupils' emotional wellbeing. He's a cockapoo who typically:

- Have lovely natures
- Are highly intelligent and easy to train
- Are great around children of all ages
- Are a low-shedding breed, so are ideal for children with allergies

Initially there was a bit of reluctance from some members of staff about the risks of introducing a dog to the school and so we took things slowly while Robbie completed a training course through **The Dog's Trust***.

"Robbie helps me because when I'm stressed he makes me calm"



Our children are taught how to interact with Robbie. They know they must follow these rules if they want to spend time with him:

- 👍 They must ask me if they can stroke Robbie
- 👍 They wait for him to sit, hold out a flat palm for him to sniff and stroke him with a flat hand, head to tail

Robbie helps our children at St Peter's in different ways. Here are just some examples:

Jessica is a very impulsive child and so she has learnt to wait for permission before she can touch Robbie. I hold him in my arms so she can do so. Gradually she has learnt self-control, patience and to temper her impulsiveness.

Asmah has suffered a bereavement. He comes to my office when he needs a bit of space to sit and just stroke Robbie. No words are needed – just being with Robbie is enough to comfort him and alleviate some of the pain he is experiencing.

Max has great difficulty self-regulating and Robbie helps him come down from a heightened state by providing a great distraction. A conversation can then be had more easily."

Robbie is in school at least one day a week and Robbie joins in with every aspect of school life. If he's not with the children in class or the playground, he can be found (having a snooze) in Jennie's office. Robbie has his own blog on the school website and his own reward stickers. The children think he is 'Pawsome' and we do too.

*<https://www.dogstrust.org.uk/>

The Link Live

speech & language
conference is back for 2024

SAVE
THE DATE



Date: 21st November

Time: 09.00-17.00

Venue: Online

Tickets: Cost £80+VAT*

**DON'T FORGET, JOIN THE
LINK COMMUNITY AND GET
YOUR TICKET FOR FREE**

(*see pages 16-17 for more details)


The Link Live speech and language conference

Bringing speech and language therapists and specialist SEND speakers together to present on a range of topics aimed at helping you support SLCN in early years, primary and secondary settings.

- 👍 8 presentations
- 👍 Delegate chat throughout the day
- 👍 Live Q&A with speakers
- 👍 Special conference prize draw

Who should attend?

SENCOs, teachers, ECTs and TAs and all educators supporting SLCN in schools. The Link Live aims to offer insight, ideas, and practical takeaways for everyone.

 More info: speechandlanguage.info/linklive




The Speech and Language Link
whole school approach