

National Literacy Trust welcomes findings of Bercow Review

The National Literacy Trust (NLT) welcomes recommendations in the independent review into the speech, language and communication needs of 0-19 year olds by John Bercow MP published today (Tuesday 8 July).

In particular, as speaking and listening skills are the fundamental first stage of literacy, the NLT believes the recommendations will have a profound effect on the future literacy of the nation.

The NLT campaign Talk To Your Baby encourages parents and carers to talk more to children from birth to three.

Liz Attenborough, Talk To Your Baby manager, said:

“Speech, language and communication skills developed from birth to three are the foundations of literacy in later years. There is currently not enough awareness of their importance and this is jeopardising the literacy of the nation.

“The Bercow Review recognises that literacy is a key life skill for every child, and will impact on their potential to achieve at school, make friends and be successful in later life.

“We welcome the Review’s strong emphasis on the need for all parents to have a better understanding of the role of speech, language and communication in supporting their child’s development.

“In particular, we support the call for universal services to support the development of these early communications skills in all children. As the Review states, it is important that the entire children’s workforce has a clear understanding of the issue, alongside the specialist practitioners.

“www.talktoyourbaby.org.uk has a wealth of information and free downloadable resources on early communication issues. The campaign is helping to raise the profile of early communication skills amongst practitioners, and aid the recommended early intervention and preventative work.”

The Government is also announcing today £52 million funding to implement the recommendations. £40 million will pay for the Every Child a Talker programme, which will support early years professionals and help identify children with difficulties at an early age.

Liz Attenborough said:

“We’re delighted to welcome the Every Child a Talker programme, with its emphasis on ensuring that all early years practitioners understand early language development so that they can ensure young children become confident communicators.”

The National Literacy Trust will be producing a full response to the Review. This will be published on 31 July 2008 at www.literacytrust.org.uk

ends.

Notes to Editors:

1. Talk To Your Baby

Talk To Your Baby is a campaign run by the National Literacy Trust to encourage parents and carers to talk more to children from birth to three. For more information visit

www.talktoyourbaby.org.uk

2. National Literacy Trust

The National Literacy Trust is an independent charity that changes lives through literacy. It links home, school and the wider community to inspire learners and create opportunities for everyone. The National Literacy Trust is a registered charity in England and Wales, no.

1116260, and a company limited by guarantee, no. 5836486, Registered office: 68 South Lambeth Road, London SW8 1RL

The National Literacy Trust believes full literacy requires skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening. www.literacytrust.org.uk

3. The Bercow Review

The Bercow Review Of Services For Children And Young People (0-19) With Speech, Language And Communication Needs is published at:

www.dcsf.gov.uk/bercowreview

The Government made its formal response via a Written Ministerial Statement which will be available from Hansard. A detailed implementation plan setting out how the Government will take forward the recommendations will be published in the autumn.

4. Every Child a Talker

Children's Minister Beverley Hughes will announce more details of the Every Child a Talker programme on Wednesday 9 July.

5. The 2008 National Year of Reading

The 2008 National Year of Reading is a year-long celebration of reading, in all its forms. It will help to build a greater national passion for reading – for children, families and adult learners alike. The Year will encourage people to read in businesses, homes, and communities around the country, providing new opportunities to read and helping people to access help and support through schools and libraries. The 2008 National Year of Reading is being managed by the National Literacy Trust and lead partner The Reading Agency.

www.yearofreading.org.uk