

Early language
advocacy kit
for early years professionals



Talk To Your Baby
Developing language for life

“As with all the best initiatives, **Talk To Your Baby** is a simple message that has the potential to make a real difference to future generations of babies and young children.”
Lesley Staggs, National Director of the Foundation Stage

2004

Last revised March 2005

www.talktoyourbaby.org.uk

CONTENTS	page
Introduction	3
1. Why do we need a Talk To Your Baby campaign?	4
2. Why is early years communication a problem now?	6
3. Why does it matter?	7
4. What is happening?	8
5. What can we do?	9
6. Frequently asked questions	12
7. Resources	14
8. References	16
Appendices	17

Talk To Your Baby thanks the following for their help in putting this advocacy kit together (but any errors are solely the responsibility of Talk To Your Baby):

Sarah Amer, Children's Learning Team, Sure Start Unit
Sam Brookes, National Literacy Trust
Jessica Guerin, Specialist Speech and Language Therapist, Bilston & Ettingshall Sure Start
Elizabeth Lowton and Penny Layne, Speech and Language Therapists, Sure Start Westminster Church Street

INTRODUCTION

The National Literacy Trust created **Talk To Your Baby: Developing Language for Life** to provide a forum to facilitate national debate on the issue of children's early communication skills, to advocate the vital role of parents as their child's first educators, to encourage and support good practice, and to engage the media in creating a cultural change. This advocacy kit provides the evidence and the arguments for the campaign; we hope it will be a useful resource to anyone wishing to make a case for more attention or staffing to support work in the early language field.

Talk To Your Baby has big ambitions to have a major influence by raising awareness, sharing good practice, and making partnerships with key players. Talk To Your Baby is a campaign, not a scheme, and has dedicated web pages, an email newsletter, an advocacy role and a number of changing themes to highlight. The title is about talking – but this also embraces listening, socialisation, body language and the wide range of communication young children need to learn. Talking is a two way experience.

Talk To Your Baby aims to:

- support professionals directly involved with language and communication
- inform and encourage professionals indirectly involved
- inform and encourage parents and carers and wider society
- educate future parents whilst they are still at school.

“Overwhelmingly, parents want to do right by their children. The problem is that in our fast-paced world, mothers and fathers find it difficult to spend time with their children, to talk with them at leisure, to help expand their world.” *Ernest L. Boyer (1991)*

“As they held their first baby in their arms, 99% of those parents who fail wanted desperately to succeed. They have been defeated by the mountain of multiple disadvantage against which they have to struggle.” *Lord Northbourne, House of Lords, Unstarred question (26 March 2003)*

1. Why do we need a Talk To Your Baby campaign?

Children need to be confident communicators in order to lead happy, fulfilled and successful lives. There is evidence of high levels of speech, language and communication difficulties amongst young children, and the negative effects this has on children's social-emotional and educational development.

The majority of pre-schoolers' time is spent with their parents, and it is parents who are in the best position to effect change and promote the development of their children's communication skills. Parents are their child's first and most enduring teachers, and the years from birth to three are crucial in developing all aspects of a young child's growing need to communicate.

"Language, without question, is the key to learning. Children who fail to develop adequate speech and language skills in the first years of life are up to six times more likely to experience reading problems in school than those who receive adequate stimulation. When asked to identify the areas in which students are most deficient, teachers overwhelmingly cited 'lack of proficiency in language' ... Helping children should be viewed as an investment, not a cost, since failure to act surely will mean far higher payments later on in remedial education, in unemployment, in crime – in wasted lives and promises unfulfilled."
Ernest L. Boyer (1991)

"The acquisition of a first language is the most complex skill anyone ever learns. And this task needs to be virtually complete by the time a child reaches school age."

David Crystal, Cambridge Encyclopaedia of Language (1987)

"We are extremely challenged by the impoverished language that our children bring to the nursery."

Primary School Head, London (2003)

"Communication is taken for granted but it is estimated that 1 in 10 children have speech and language difficulties and are at serious risk of social isolation and real educational disadvantage" *I CAN (2004)*

"There is substantial evidence that literacy achievement in the early school years is closely tied to the quality of literacy-related experiences and language development in early childhood (Burns, Snow & Griffin, 1999)... Early language development is an important indicator of later reading proficiency ... It has been estimated that 50% of reading difficulties are preventable if students are provided effective language development experiences in pre-school and kindergarten and effective reading instruction in the primary grades (Slavin et al 1996)" *M. Regalado, C. Goldenberg and E. Appel (2001)*
[see appendices]

10 key reasons why Talk To Your Baby is necessary

1. 75% of heads of nurseries and schools admitting three-year-olds are concerned about a significant decline during the last five years in children's language competence at entry. (National Literacy Trust, 2001)
2. Teachers' perceptions are that children's talking and listening skills have declined over the last five years – particularly the ability to speak audibly and be understood. (Basic Skills Agency, 2002)
3. Too many children are receiving a “disrupted and dishevelled” upbringing, according to Head of Ofsted, David Bell. As a result the verbal and behavioural skills of the nation's five-year-olds are at an all-time low, causing severe difficulties for schools. Many are unable to speak properly when they start school. (Sunday Telegraph, 2003)
4. “A high proportion of children (41-75%) with identified speech and language difficulties in their pre-school years go on to have difficulties with reading skills during their school years.” (Royal College of Speech and Language Therapy, 1999)
5. There is a suggested link between the home language experiences of children of low socio-economic status and their subsequent literacy skills development: “If reading success is so dependent on oral language skills, should we not be placing more emphasis on vocabulary and rich language environments in the home, pre-school and primary grades, rather than assuming that word reading skills alone will suffice?” (Snow, 2001)
6. Ann Locke at the University of Sheffield has highlighted “the enormous differences in the quantity of language addressed to children from different socio-economic backgrounds in their first two and a half years of life,” and emphasises the fact that early spoken language underlies subsequent reading and writing.
7. An analysis of 350 Ofsted reports found that inspectors were concerned about the speaking and listening skills of half the four and five-year-olds starting school in September 2003 (TES, 2004)
8. “While children from different backgrounds typically develop language skills around the same age, the subsequent rate of vocabulary growth is strongly influenced by how much parents talk to their children. Children from professional families (who were found to talk to their children more) gain vocabulary at a quicker rate than their peers in working class and welfare families ... by kindergarten, a child from a welfare family could have heard 32 million words fewer than a classmate from a professional family ... children in professional families heard a higher ratio of encouragements to discouragements than their working class and welfare counterparts.” (Hart and Risley, 1995)
9. A survey of nursery workers showed that 89% are worried that the occurrence of speech, language and communication difficulties amongst pre-school children is growing. The lack of adult and child time spent talking together was highlighted as the key reason by 92% of them. (I CAN, 2004)
10. “Experts warn that the window to stimulate brain development closes quickly. In the first three years of life, the brain grows from 25% to 90% of its adult weight. And nearly 50% of a child's learning occurs in the first four years of life... Brain development is largely a function of stimulus. The more stimulus babies and young children get in terms of being read and talked to, the greater their capacity for language and literacy.” (www.earlywords.net)

2. Why is early years communication a problem now?

Speech and language impairment is the most common neuro-developmental condition in the pre-school period (Law, 1997). Recent research is finding increasingly high levels of speech, language and communications impairment amongst young children. Service providers are becoming increasingly aware of the centrality of communication skills to a child's social-emotional and educational development.

“What *has* changed, however, is the loss of community, the increased fragmentation of family life, the competing, often conflicting, pressures that keep family members on the go and out of touch with one another.”
Ernest L. Boyer (1991)

There are a number of possible reasons why; you will be able to think of others.

- Lack of parental awareness of the importance and pleasure of talking and listening, and of how communicative behaviours start from birth onwards
- An expectation that children will just pick up speaking skills from general chatter around them, or learn language once they begin at nursery school
- Parents' working patterns and the pace of living – less time to talk to each other
- Loss of extended family surrounding baby, and smaller family units
- Family gatherings rare e.g. no family mealtimes
- Background noise, from TV and radio
- Babies and small children are strapped into buggies and car seats, and not physically held so much
- Pushchairs face away from the pusher
- Children should be seen not heard – hence dummies to keep quiet
- Children and childhood not valued in the UK, low status of children
- Perhaps parents have lost the ability to engage in imaginative, active play?
- General lack of awareness of the importance of pretend play, music, rhythm and rhyme on language development
- Parents may feel they should strive to provide expensive toys/equipment, when time playing with their child would bring as much pleasure and more benefits
- Solitary activities that don't foster dialogue dominate the home
- Central heating means that families do not need to congregate in one warm room

Whatever the cause, we are not going to solve the problem by blaming others. It is unlikely that parents and carers are wilfully not talking to young children - perhaps they don't know that they should? Or perhaps they think it is a teacher's job to ensure that their child can communicate adequately, while teachers believe it is the parent's responsibility? We need to help parents recognise their vital role as their child's first teacher, and ensure that teachers and carers receive adequate training and resources to be able to facilitate early language development and improve communication skills. Everyone has an important role to play.

3. Why does it matter?

Verbal communication is the method used by the vast majority of us to communicate. We use it to have our needs met, to indicate our likes and dislikes, to request information, to refute something, to socialise, as well as to establish and maintain relationships.

Children who have difficulty communicating often go on to develop behavioural problems as children who are unable to express their needs are unable to participate in social exchange, unable to achieve in education and they understandably become frustrated.

Children with speech, language and communication impairments do not 'grow out' of their difficulties as education progresses. The research shows a consistently poor outcome for children who do not receive intervention for their difficulties.

Children's early communication skills are regarded as the single best predictor of future cognitive skills and school performance (Rosetti, 1996). Children who have speech, language and communication difficulties are significantly disadvantaged in their ability to access the national curriculum since "almost every educational skill presupposes the use of language" (Dockrell and Lindsay, 1998).

"As a baby absorbs new sights, textures, scents, and sounds, the connections in her brain that make learning possible multiply and become stronger. If a child does not use certain brain connections, or does not use them enough, the connections are simply shed, lost forever."
Dorothy P Dougherty, How To Talk To Your Baby (1999)

"The importance of human capital to future growth is well understood. By some measures the UK does well – the top 25% of school-children are world class; some UK universities are the best in Europe ... However, there is a long tail of underachievement with roots in the early years." *Prime Minister's Strategy Unit (2003)*

"Social background is a more powerful predictor of educational outcomes by age 10 than attainment at 22 months – less able richer children overtake more able poorer children by the age of five" *Leon Feinstein, Economica (2003)* [see appendices]

"Verbal, communication and planning skills will be more important in 2010 than today ... the demand for these skills by the service and creative industries will continue to grow." *Institute for Employment Research/Cambridge Econometrics (2001)*

"Literacy begins with speaking and listening. Adults are so familiar with these faculties we rarely acknowledge them as complex, learned skills, except when visiting a foreign country. Speaking and listening are the primary means by which young people understand and participate in the social/cultural world around them, linking their internal, individual experience to that of the community." *Colin Grigg, Visual Paths to Literacy, Tate National Programmes, London (2003)*

4. What is happening?

Alongside Talk To Your Baby, there are a number of national initiatives underway that support the issues:

Birth to Three Matters is a framework of effective practice to support staff working with children under three. One of the four aspects, A Skilful Communicator, covers Being Together as a sociable and effective communicator; Finding a Voice to become a confident and competent language user; Listening and Responding appropriately to the language of others; and Making Meaning to understand others and be understood. *Order from DfES Publications on 0845 60 222 60.*

Sure Start local programmes are participating in a speech and language measure, and many local programmes have a variety of initiatives underway to address communication issues. See www.surestart.gov.uk

Communicating Matters is the Early Language and Communications Initiative, 3-5, from Sure Start and the National Primary Strategy, targeting training for early years staff. See www.communicatingmatters.com

Speaking, listening, learning, produced in partnership by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and the Department for Education and Skills, provides cross-curricular objectives for speaking and listening in Years 1 to 6. *Order from DfES Publications on 0845 60 222 60.*

Bookstart, the world's first national baby book-gifting programme, works through health visitors to provide every baby in the UK with a free Bookstart pack of books and guidance materials that encourage use of the local library. See www.bookstart.org.uk

Specific programmes include:

- Reading Is Fundamental, UK's Shared Beginning programme – www.rif.org.uk
- Hanen, promoting positive parent-child interaction – www.hanen.org
- Peers Early Education Partnership – www.peep.org.uk
- Basic Skills Agency's Early Start programme – www.basic-skills.co.uk
- Language and Play – www.basic-skills-wales.org
- Parents in Partnership Parent Information Network – www.pippin.org.uk

But millions of homes remain untouched by these programmes and initiatives.

“Our six-week ‘Look Who’s Talking’ baby group is offered to all parents with babies between six and twelve months. Parents learn how to promote their baby’s early communication skills such as looking, listening, turn-taking, imitation and play skills. They also learn nursery rhymes, simple toy-making, and have access to a toy loan scheme... We offer many enticements to encourage attendance including free drinking cups, nursery rhyme tapes and books and crèche vouchers...It is not sufficient to tell parents to play, talk and interact with their babies and young children; many of them need to be shown.” *Sure Start Bilston and Ettingshall*

5. What can we do?

We need to find ways to:

- Promote early identification and intervention, pointing parents in the right direction for advice and support i.e. Health Visitor, Speech and Language Therapy Department
- Increase parents' levels of expectations from their children
- Model and demonstrate the importance of positive adult-child interaction. Many parents want to do it right, but need help in doing it
- Train all early years staff in awareness of communication issues, and how to handle them.

We need to acknowledge the fears and anxieties of new parents. Talking adds no anxiety, it is nothing to do with feeling guilty – it's easy, and it just brings pleasure. We need to emphasise that talking to your baby doesn't have to be at a specific time of day but should just be part of everyday activities, such as the time when the baby's nappy is changed. As Lynne Murray and Liz Andrews advocate in their book *The Social Baby*, parents need to be alert to the need for their own observational skills; to be aware of their child's responses and attempts at communication from the earliest age. (Murray and Andrews, 2000)

Raising awareness amongst parents

The key to helping young children to speak, listen, read, write and socialise better lies in encouraging parents and carers to talk to them more, and to respond to their attempts to communicate. All parents wish to do their best for their children, but often lack the confidence or knowledge to implement powerful parenting practices, such as attentive listening, singing songs, playing rhyming games and sharing books. Parents need to be empowered to recognise their valuable contribution to their child's ability to make sense of the world, through encouraging communication at every opportunity. They may not know how important (and easy) this is. Young children are active learners and the pleasure to be gained by both child and adult in simply talking together is undervalued as a vital first step.

“Essentially, promoting speech and language development in young children is not just about actions for individual children or even for individual families: it is about changing the way communities view speech and language development, and changing the social and community context within which children develop.” *Sure Start: Promoting Speech and Language Development (2001)*

“Close attention to the early language environment of children, with efforts to promote the richness of children's verbal experiences, is a potentially effective intervention to optimise children's language development and emergent literacy skills ... Family support systems in communities should promote multi-faceted approaches ... and teach parents and other care providers effective ways of interacting with their children to promote oral language and emergent literacy skills along with other developmental competencies.” *M. Regalado, C. Goldenberg and E. Appel (2001)*

Ideas to promote the value of early communication

- To engage parents in coming to a drop-in session, think of drama or music to lure them in. Or set up a baby massage session, and then introduce singing.
- When you are talking to a parent and child, do you always look each child in the eyes as you talk to them? Showcasing and modelling are powerful learning tools.
- Encouraging parents to listen out for, and record, their child's first word is a good way to motivate them to talk and listen to their baby. Ian Dodds from Bromley Library remembers a boy who came to a rhyme and music group whose first word was "maracas".
- Do you have a booklist of simple books that you can lend to encourage adult-child shared communication? Books are a useful talking tool as they provide something easy to talk about, and usefully show adults that children like to hear single voices directed at them.
- Do you have active play toys or nursery rhyme tapes that you can lend?
- Could you run a Chatterbox Challenge? During the annual week in February, young children across the country are sponsored to learn a song, rhyme or story. See www.ican.org.uk/chatterbox
- Devise a simple quiz for parents, for example, at what age can a baby start copying you?

"More important than the mother's educational qualifications is what the mother does with the child. Education matters...but if the mother reads to the child, plays rhyming games, sings songs, talks about letters and sounds, and takes the child to the library, these behaviours at home are more important." *Professor Kathy Sylva (2000) Evidence to the House of Commons Select Committee on Education and Employment, First Report*

"Every child, to be educationally successful, needs a language-rich environment, one in which adults speak well, listen attentively, and read aloud every day...If every child is to be ready for school, language must become a priority in every home." Ernest L. Boyer, (1991)

Things to consider

- If parents in your area would like some help with their parenting, would they know where to go, who to ask?
- For parents who simply don't think that communication with their baby matters, how are you going to introduce the topic?
- Can you do something specific to target teenage/vulnerable parents, who might need even more help?
- Don't forget grandparents – more than a third of grandparents spend the equivalent of three days a week caring for their grandchildren.
- Consider, too, the difficulties of siblings of children with special needs, who may suffer from lack of attention.

"Listening to children shows our respect for them and builds their self esteem." *P. Petrie, Communicating with Children and Adults, Arnold (1997)*

"There is no greater gift that you can give your child at the beginning of life than the ability to communicate." *Dr Sally Ward, Babytalk (2000)*

Key messages

We also need to make sure parents receive consistent messages on the importance of language development. Otherwise, a wide range of conflicting messages and initiatives can cause confusion and leave parents not knowing where to start.

“Consistent evidence from this research shows that access to high quality services makes a difference, particularly for disadvantaged children.” *Ann Mooney and Peter Moss, Early Years and Childcare*

International Evidence Project, Thomas Coram Research Unit/Institute of Education, University of London (2003)

Perhaps some of the messages should be:

- Babies can communicate from birth. Talk to them from day one and give them time to respond to you
- Pleasure is the key – for the adult, for the child: enjoy your baby
- You don't need any special toys or equipment to develop your baby's communication skills. All you need is the time to talk and respond to their attempts to communicate while sharing and enjoying everyday experiences together
- Even if you have not seen other family members or friends talking to their babies, you should
- Use everyday activities to talk about what is going on – children will learn by repetition and visual clues
- Washing, dressing and mealtimes are the best talking times
- Listen to your toddler and give her time to finish talking
- Toddlers who talk do not need to have so many tantrums – they can tell you why they are cross, upset, or anxious
- By all means look to see how many new toys your child's potential carer has, but check also to see that there is lots of talking/communicating too
- Speak to your child in the language you know best. It doesn't have to be English
- Talk *with* your baby not *at* them
- Children who talk well will write better
- Don't be silent – talk to your baby
- Talk To Your Baby now and it will make your baby more interesting for you

Whichever way you introduce this topic, the simple, memorable part of the discussion always needs to be “Talk To Your Baby.”

6. Frequently asked questions

Q: If Talk To Your Baby gets mentioned to journalists, they ask

- Can it really be necessary?
- Why has it become so bad?
- Isn't it a bit nanny state to think you can do anything?

A: It is a very big challenge, but we must try. The gains could be phenomenal with high leverage for targeted effort. Parents simply may not know how important early communication is for their child. We need to find ways to make them feel proud to be talking to their young children, and give them the confidence to do so, and make talking and listening a part of their everyday experience.

Q: Is television the major culprit?

A: Television is not the only reason that things have become so worrying – there are probably multiple reasons. But televisions and radios often provide a constant background noise in the home, and distract adults from giving talking and listening time to young children. Health visitors and other early years professionals have developed their own tactics for bringing this to parents' attention. "When I visit a home where the television is on, I start off speaking very quietly and soon the parent gets up to turn it off, saying that they can't quite hear. It's not so good if they just turn the sound down, though." (Health Visitor, Somerset)
"Sometimes I have the television on loudly in the room, and then I start the session. It doesn't take long for one of the group to stride across to turn the TV off, pleased with themselves that they have made it easier for everyone to hear me." (Early years professional, Nottingham)
There is very little research into the impact on children under two, but for children aged three to five there is evidence that age-appropriate, 'educational' programming can be beneficial to language learning. It is also worth noting that watching videos, with their familiarity and repetition, is likely to be more beneficial for language skills than watching new programmes.

Q: What makes a good talking environment?

A: Anywhere that children are listened to and encouraged to speak, and adults are guided and encouraged to interact.

Q: How can we get parents in to our group?

A: You need to go where parents are in order to make them aware of your services, not expect them to come looking for you. Crèche facilities and refreshments are essential, and music/drama/play/massage/signing can be useful enticements. Some groups have found incentives (phone cards, books, beakers) useful in encouraging attendance.

Q: How can I persuade funders that baby massage groups, music and singing groups, are not just fun but help children develop?

A: These structured skills-based sessions provide a useful way in for parents to get involved – it is hard to invite them in to just talk, as they may not see the point. Like art-based projects for older children, these non-threatening activities are a good way to build relationships with parents, and confidence and communication skills will grow. Focusing on these soft indicators may help persuade funders of the importance of these activities.

Q: Where can I find out more?

A: See www.talktoyourbaby.org.uk and see also resources and references below.

Q: How can outcomes be measured from Talk To Your Baby initiatives?

A: The Effective Provision of Pre-School Education project (EPPE) has highlighted the importance, by the age of three, of the home learning environment, and that children significantly benefit from simple home practices, regardless of the educational background of their parents and the level of home income: "More important than the mother's educational qualifications is what the mother does with the child. Education matters ... but if the mother reads to the child, plays rhyming games, sings songs, talks about letters and sounds, and takes the child to the library, these behaviours at home are more important." *Professor Kathy Sylva (2000) Evidence to the House of Commons Select Committee on Education and Employment, First Report.*

"The value of early intervention is high, where the approach integrates education, care, family support and health. US experience suggests that benefits can be up to ten times the cost, and benefits are greatest for pre-school children and the most deprived." *Prime Minister's Strategy Unit (2003)*

Parents and carers might ask:

Q: How will I know if my child's language development is "normal"?

A: Children develop language at different rates. Some say their first word before they're a year old, while others may not speak until they're over two. Generally, however, most children start to talk by 18 months, have a burst of language development before they turn two, and begin to join words together by two and a half years. Most three-year-olds will use three or four word sentences and be understood by familiar adults most of the time. By four, most children will use four or five word sentences, use grammar correctly most of the time, and be understood by most people. Between two and three, many children who were lagging behind in their verbal ability often start to catch up with those who were racing ahead. But if you're worried about your child's progress, see your doctor who can refer you to a speech therapist.

Q: I'm worried about my child's language development. What can I do?

A: A speech and language therapist has been professionally trained to advise, diagnose and work with adults and children who have communication difficulties. Your health visitor or doctor may be able to put you in contact with a speech therapist, but if not, you can refer your child yourself. Your doctor's surgery will give you the number to ring, and then you can telephone and ask for their first available appointment. Unfortunately there is often a long waiting list to get an appointment with a therapist. In the meantime you can telephone the Afasic* helpline on 0845 355 5577, or you can visit the Talking Point website (www.talkingpoint.org.uk), a useful first stop for information on speech and language difficulties in children. Before your appointment it's a good idea to note down examples of the language problems your child is experiencing. And always praise what your child can do, talk to him or her whenever you can and listen and respond to any attempt to communicate.

*Association For All Speech Impaired Children

7. Resources

Visit www.talktoyourbaby.org.uk – a one-stop shop for information and free resources on early communication.

All of our resources can be downloaded from our website and photocopied to pass on to parents and professionals.

Our resources include:

Talk To Your Baby - quick tips

Eight sheets of tips on topics such as sharing books, dummies and play, available in nine languages.

'Talk To Your Baby' leaflet for parents and carers

Outlines the benefits of talking to children from birth.

A parent's guide to television

A guide for parents on how to make TV watching beneficial for young children's language and social development.



As well as downloadable resources, our website includes hundreds of articles exploring early communication issues, and features the latest language initiatives for children across the UK.

If you are involved in early language work that you would like to share with others via the Talk To Your Baby website, send details to talktoyourbaby@literacytrust.org.uk

Other resources

Help Your Child To Talk is a free leaflet for parents produced by the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists. Download from the Talk To Your Baby website as above or contact the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists on 020 7378 1200.

Listening, talking, loving and sharing - more things to do with books is a Bookstart booklet for parents of children aged eighteen months. It shows how books can be used creatively to help build language skills, social skills and literacy skills. Contact Bookstart on 020 8516 2995 or email bookstart@booktrust.org.uk

The Peers Early Education Partnership, based in Oxford, works with children from birth to school age. It offers parents materials, group sessions and home visits which aim to lay solid foundations for communication and language development through listening, talking, playing and singing together. PEEP publications, training and events enable other practitioners to develop a similar approach. Contact PEEP on 01865 395145 or visit www.peep.org.uk

Talk and Listen Together is a Basic Skills Agency pack for parents of children aged three and under. It outlines how children's communication skills develop and provides practical ideas for activities to do together to help promote children's language skills. Order from Basic Skills Agency Publications on 0870 600 2400 or visit www.basic-skills.co.uk

Books

Professor James Law (2004) *Johnson's Everyday Babycare: Learning to Talk*, Dorling Kindersley, Ltd

Dorothy P. Dougherty (1999) *How To Talk To Your Baby*, Avery/Penguin Putnam Inc.

Peter Hobson (2002) *The Cradle of Thought: Exploring the Origins of Thinking*, Macmillan

Laurie Makin and Marian Whitehead (2004) *How to Develop Children's Early Literacy: A Guide for Professional Carers and Educators*, Paul Chapman Publishing.

Ayala Manolson (1995) *You Make The Difference In Helping Your Child To Learn*, Hanen Early Language Programme

Lynne Murray and Liz Andrews (2000) *The Social Baby*, CP Publishing.

Dr Sally Ward (2000) *Babytalk*, Century/Random House Group.

Dr Richard C. Woolfson (2002) *Small Talk*, Hamlyn.

UK websites

www.afasic.org.uk Afasic (speech, language and communication charity)

www.bbc.co.uk/parenting BBC parenting website

www.bookstart.co.uk Bookstart

www.early-education.org.uk British Association for Early Childhood Education

www.eyln.org.uk Early Years Library Network

www.ioe.ac.uk/cdl/eppe/ Effective Provision of Pre-School Education Project (EPPE)

www.gicm.org.uk Guild of Infant and Child Massage

www.ncb.org.uk National Children's Bureau

www.nfpi.org National Family and Parenting Institute

www.parenting-forum.org.uk Parenting Education and Support Forum

www.pre-school.org.uk Pre-School Learning Alliance

www.surestart.gov.uk Sure Start Unit, Department for Education and Skills

www.talkingpoint.org.uk Talking Point (partnership between the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists, I CAN and Afasic)

www.natll.org.uk (National Association of Toy & Leisure Libraries)

Other websites

www.zerotothree.org

www.earlywords.net

www.reachoutandread.org

www.brainconnection.com

www.connectforkids.org

<http://firstwords.fsu.edu/>

www.beyond-words.org

www.ala.org (search button: Workshops for Parents and Caregivers)

8. References

Basic Skills Agency (2002) Survey into Young Children's Skills on Entry to Education, Wales: Basic Skills Agency.

Ernest L. Boyer (1991) *Ready to Learn*, The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

J. Dockrell and G. Lindsay (1998) The ways in which speech and language difficulties impact on children's access to the curriculum, *Child Language Teaching and Therapy*, vol. 14, pp. 117-133.

Jessica Guerin (2003) *Look Who's Talking: Speech and Language Therapy Provision – a review of the first 3 years*, Bilston & Ettingshall Sure Start.

Betty Hart and Todd R. Risley (1995) *Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Experience of Young American Children*, Baltimore, MD, USA: Brookes Publishing (revised, January 2003).

I CAN (2004) Nursery workers' poll says "Turn off the TV", www.ican.org.uk/news/news.asp?NewsReference=55.

James Law (1997) Evaluating intervention for language impaired children: a review of the literature, *European Journal of Disorders of Communication*, vol. 32, pp. 1-14.

Lynne Murray and Liz Andrews (2000) *The Social Baby*, Richmond, Surrey: CP Publishing.

National Literacy Trust and National Association of Head Teachers (2001) Early language survey of headteachers, www.literacytrust.org.uk/talktoyourbaby/survey.html.

M.A. Nippold (2002) Do children recover from specific language impairment? *Advances in Speech and Language Pathology*, vol. 4, no. 1, pp. 41-49.

Prime Minister's Strategy Unit (2003) *Strategic Audit: Discussion Document*, www.strategy.gov.uk.

M. Regalado, C. Goldenberg and E. Appel (2001) Reading and early literacy, in N. Halfon, E. Shulman and M. Hochstein, eds., *Building Community Systems for Young Children*, UCLA Center for Healthier Children, Families and Communities, <http://healthychild.ucla.edu>.

L.M. Rosetti (1996) *Communication Intervention: Birth to Three*, London: Singular.

Royal College of Speech and Language Therapy (1999) *Early Communication Audit Manual*, London: Royal College of Speech and Language Therapy.

Professor C.E. Snow (2001) *The Centrality of Language: a longitudinal study of language and literacy development in low income children*, Institute of Education, University of London.

Sunday Telegraph (2003) Schools chief: Parents have raised worst generation yet, 31 August 2003.

Times Educational Supplement (2004) From grunting to greeting, 30 January 2004.

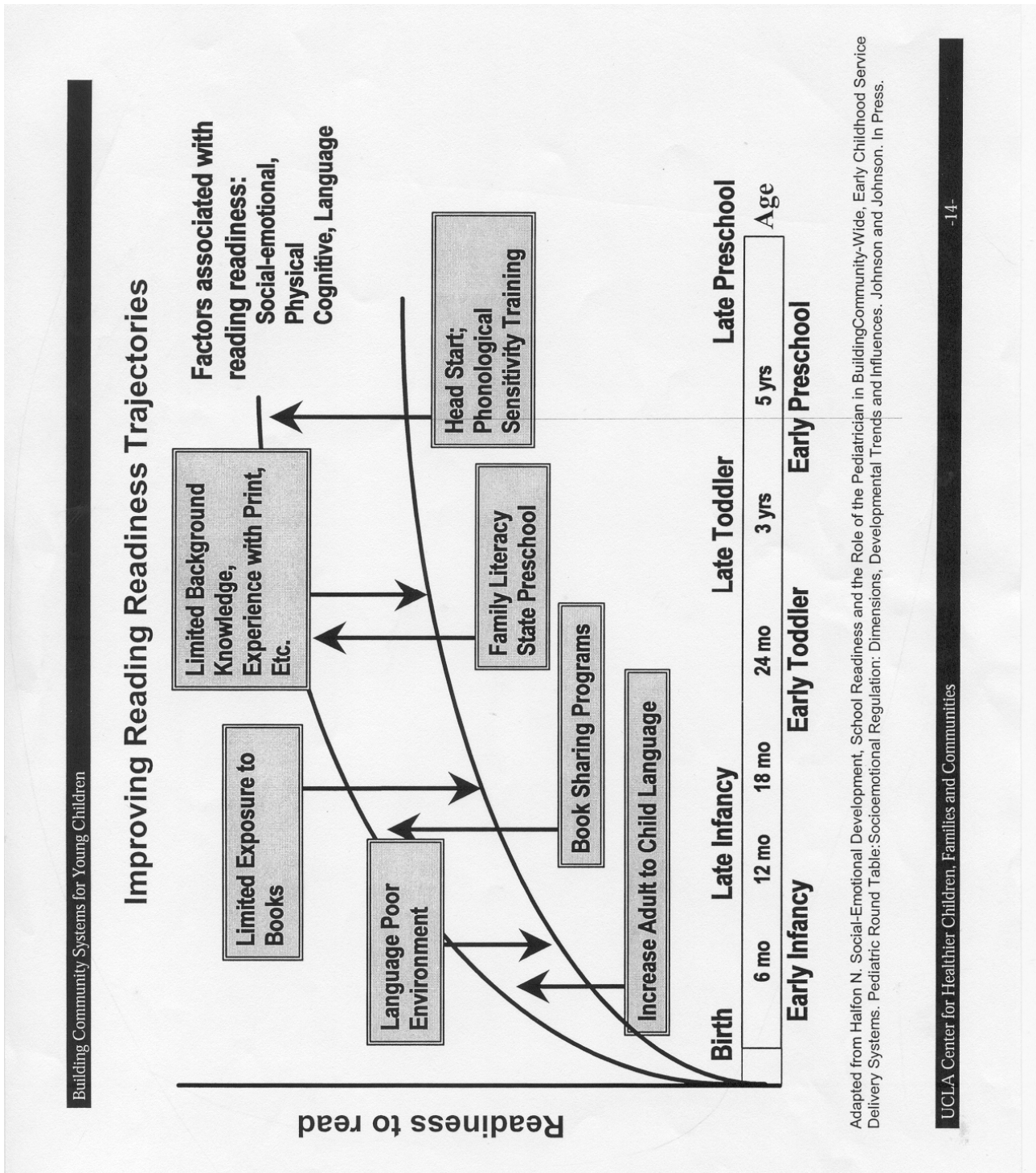
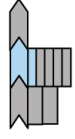


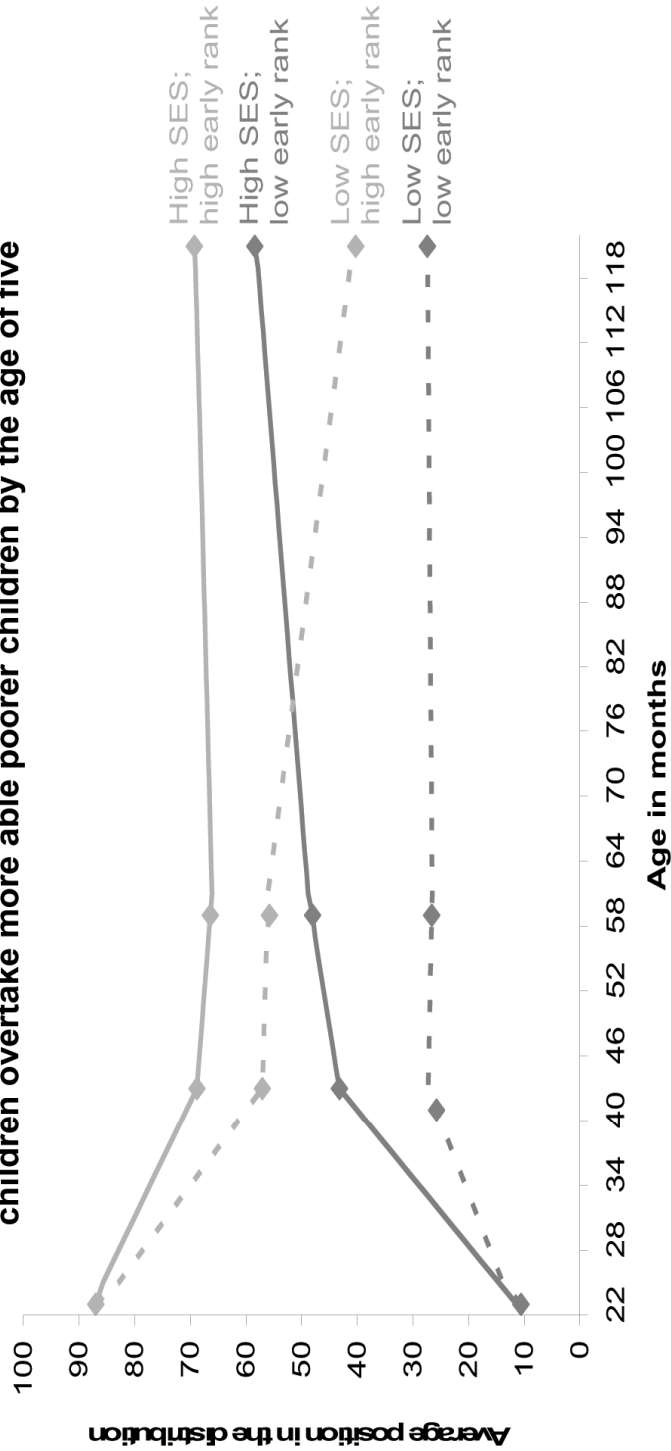
Chart from M. Regalado, C. Goldenberg and E. Appel (2001)



Note: this discussion document does not represent Government policy.

The social class gap is present by 22 months... and very wide by age 5 - a gap that school does not close

Social background is a more powerful predictor of educational outcomes by age 10 than attainment at 22 months - less able richer children overtake more able poorer children by the age of five



Source: Feinstein, Economica (2003): SES - Socio-economic status