

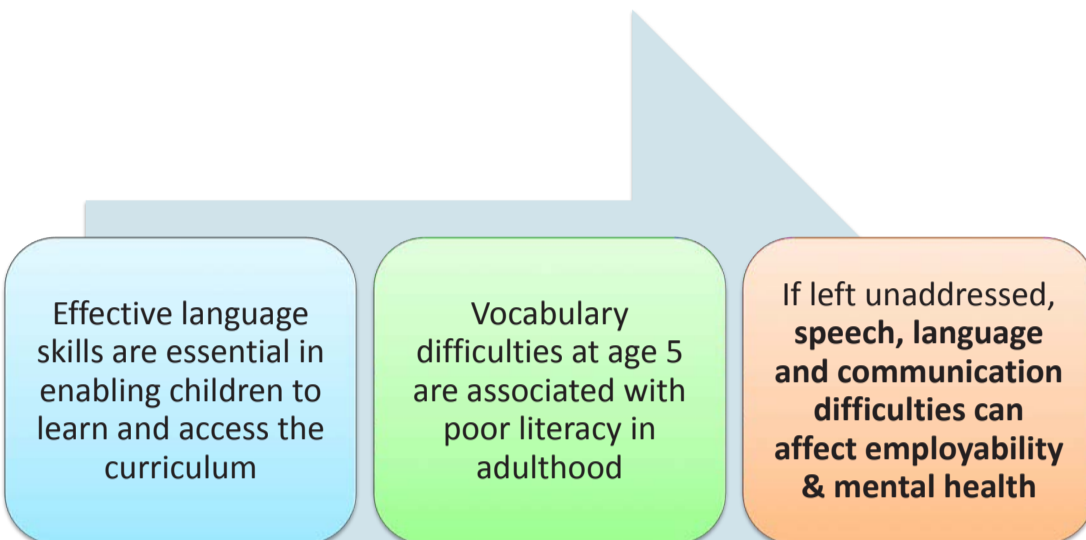
Communication for Life

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Rationale

In areas of high social deprivation, between 40% and 56% of children start school with language delay. The links between communication, mental health and life outcomes are well documented. Positive inclusion practice, universal provision around Speech & Language Therapy (SLT) and adjustments to the learning environment will enable all children to develop their speech, language & communication (SLC) potential. Effective SLC skills are essential in enabling children to learn and access the curriculum.

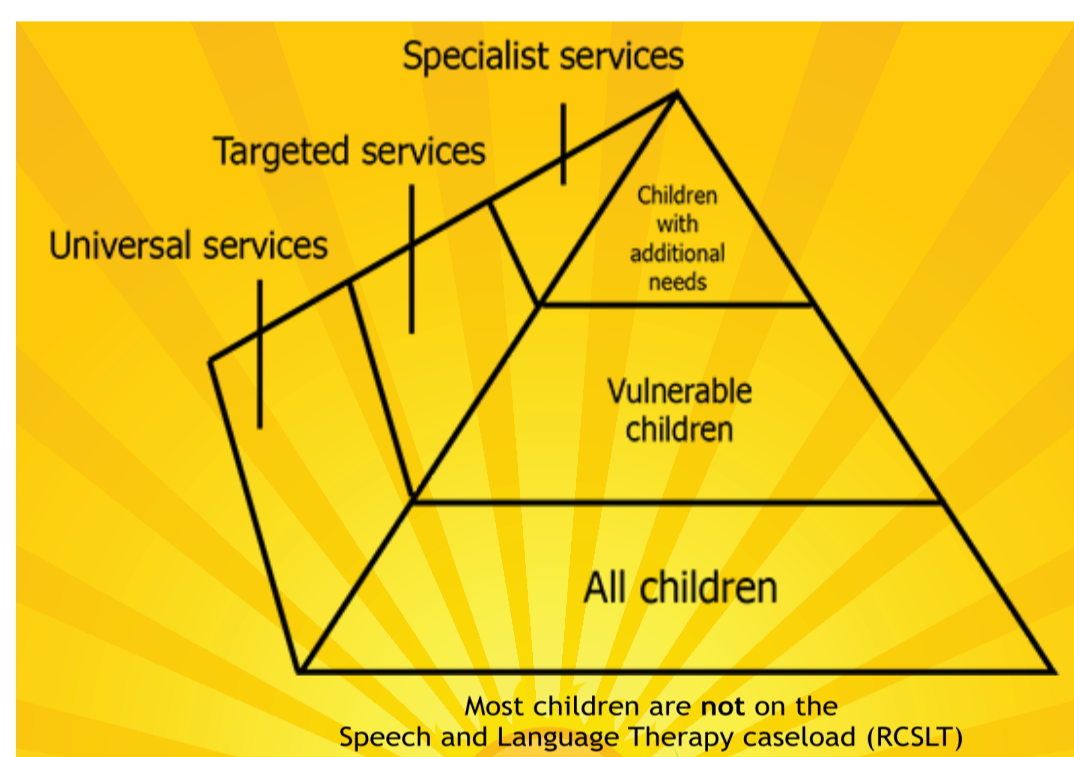
Poverty affects language development



With the right knowledge and information, everyone can make a difference to children's communication, and therefore their wellbeing, attainment and lifelong outcomes.

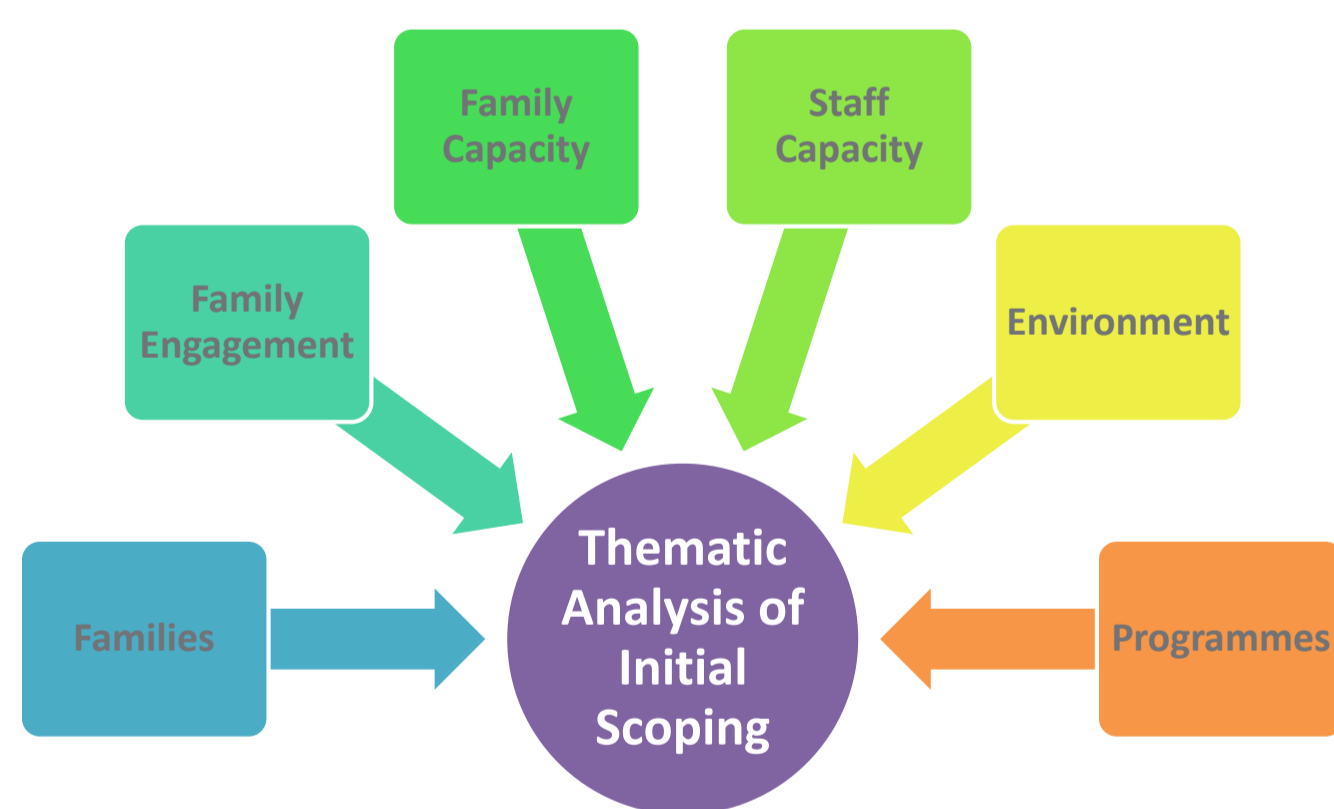
Recognition of this evidence by SLT and Education in East Ayrshire led to the creation of two SLT posts funded by the Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) from 2017 to 2021. This innovative project would, and continues to, focus solely on creating universal support in partnership with SAC schools.

It is everyone's job to support communication



Project Scoping

An asset based exercise was undertaken in April 2017. An asset based exercise based upon conversations with schools was undertaken in April 2017. From this and subsequent discussions, the main ambitions of the project were developed.



Our Ambitions

Our project aims to build capacity within East Ayrshire's primary schools and the surrounding communities, to nurture the language and communication of all our children. This will improve attainment, mental health and life prospects for our communities.



Quality Improvement methods have been used to test and hone training packages and school programmes to deliver on these ambitions.

Achievements

Training Packages

The following training packages and school programmes have been developed. The training packages have been successful in increasing knowledge and awareness of SLC, increasing education staff capacity to have conversations with families around SLC and to signpost them to services/resources, and in increasing education staff uptake of additional CPD around SLC.

Training packages developed



Buddy Language & Communication Training

13 schools have accessed Buddy Language & Communication Training. Over 400 children have received training & coaching on basic language, communication & nurture strategies.

Supports quality transitions between early years and primary school



Communication for Life Short Film

We also produced a short film called 'Communication for Life' which aims to raise awareness of SLC needs in children and young people and how to support SLC development. The video was well received via social media platforms and has had over 17, 000 views to date.

"Fantastic video, well done, this will help loads of kids with speech and language difficulties"

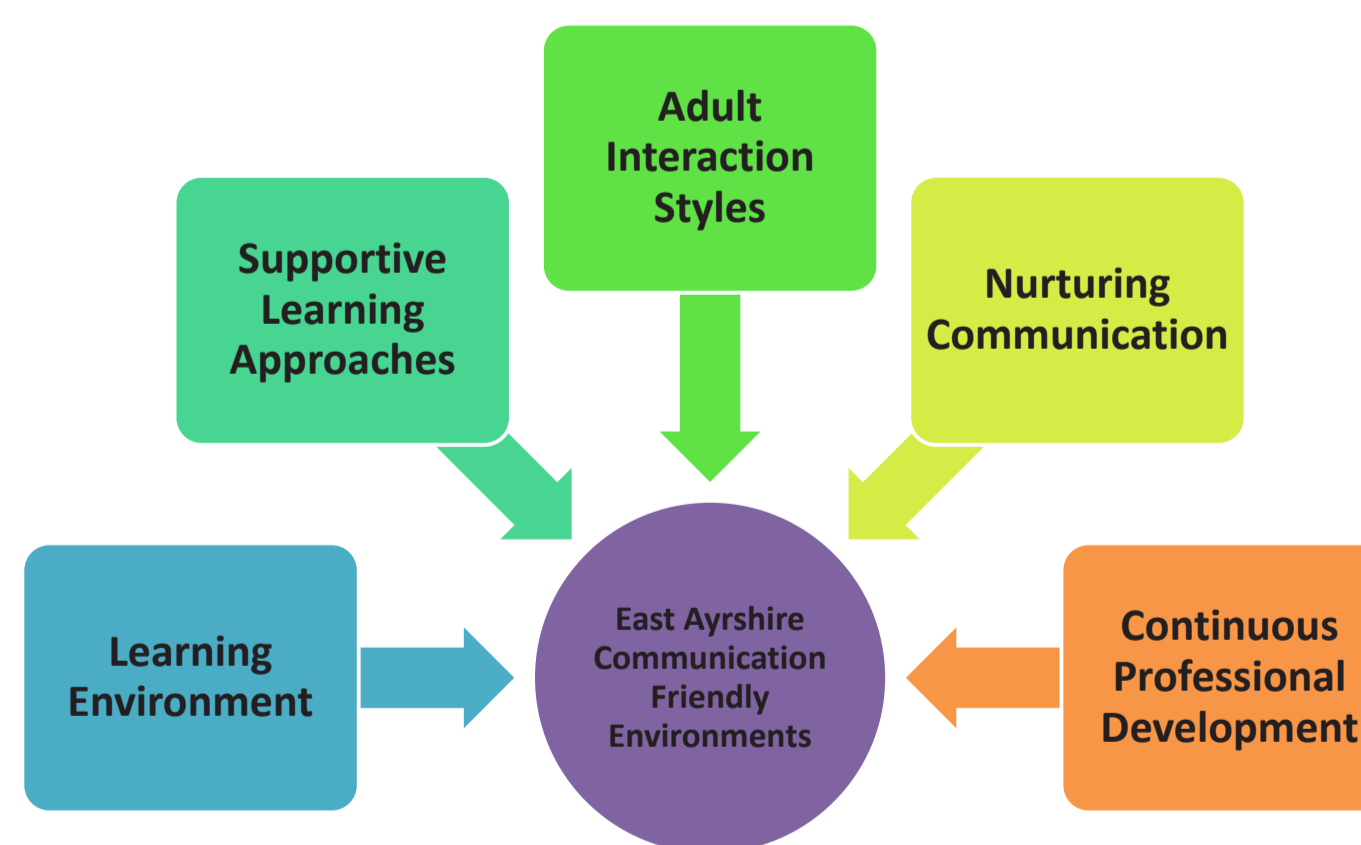


"Absolutely, let's get wee people chatting, this is so important. This video is brilliant!"

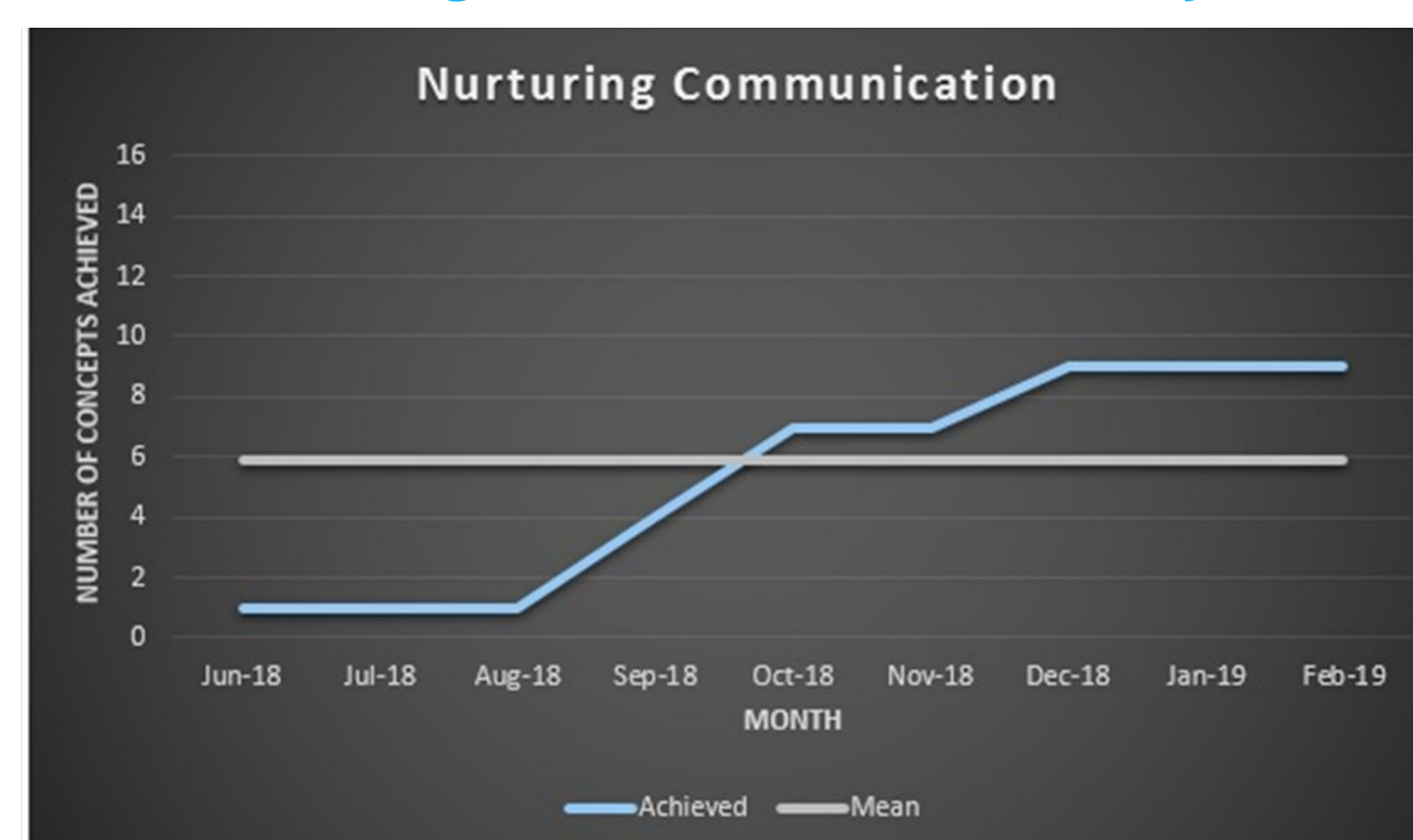
Our East Ayrshire Communication Friendly Environments Vision

A 'Communication Friendly Environments' accreditation programme is being developed in partnership between Speech & Language Therapy, Education and Educational Psychology. Our vision is that we will have one cohesive policy and accreditation programme for early years, primary, specialist provisions and secondary.

We have been part of the CYPIC 'Language meets Literacy Practicum' for quality improvement support.



Patna Primary School: On Their Journey To Being Communication Friendly



Results

Data has a vital part to play in creating effective and supportive universal SLT programmes and has informed and supported all of our changes and innovations.



"Yes, I feel more confident using the strategies I learned at the session, and pupil response has been positive for those involved"

Training: So What?

"I am more able to support children who experience speech and language difficulties"

"[I am] more aware of correction techniques to use in class"

The development of partnership working and compassionate relationships between SLT and education has been central to the success of our project so far

The economic benefits of our preventative & early interventions are unlikely to be realised in the short term and require ongoing commitment and radical leadership from SLT and Education to allow us to provide proactive targeted and universal provision.

We will continue to provide our leaders with the positive data from our project to ensure continued support and funding, and to begin to provide an evidence base for universal SLT.

Scale / Spread

The project is looking at sustainability of our training packages to ensure impact beyond 2021. We will continue to work in partnership to achieve our aim of having a East Ayrshire Communication Friendly Environments programme to nurture the communication skills of all our children and young people in East Ayrshire.

What Next

- CLPL programme**
Continue to develop training opportunities provided centrally for all Education Staff to attend
- ICAN TalkBoost**
Schools will deliver targeted interventions to help children with delayed language catch up with their peers. Data will be used to track impact on children
- Communication Friendly**
Spread & Scale of programme to Cohort 2 schools using data to track impact on schools, children & families
- Relationships & Spread Plan**
Continue to build relationships and links with Education & other partners in East Ayrshire to build on these changes and make them stick



For further information, please contact:

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- Speech & Language Therapy in East Ayrshire #gettingweepeoplechatting

References

- Law et al, Communication Support Needs: A Review of the Literature 2007
- Royal College of Speech & Language Therapists Speech, Language & Communication Capacity A National Asset 2017
- Scottish Government, Ready to Act in Action: An interim report on the implementation of the five ambitions across the allied health professions' children and young people's community in Scotland and recommendations to 2020 November 2018



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