**Speech and Language Therapy Service: SEND Therapy Team**

**Communication Friendly Environment: Early Years Provision Audit and Action Plan**

***‘A communication friendly environment should make communication as easy, effective and enjoyable as possible. It should provide opportunities for everyone to talk, listen, understand and take* part’ – The Communication Trust**

A communication friendly environment supports the development of all children’s communication skills, including those with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN). It is good practice to analyse and reflect on what you have in place and what might be appropriate to focus on developing within your setting.

The communication friendly environment audit can be carried out by any member of staff, but involvement from a member of senior leadership is advised. Some parts of the audit can be completed from information already known. Other parts require observation across your setting. Once the audit is complete, it can be used to formulate a whole setting action plan. The audit can then be completed again to review progress at a later date.

To create a communication friendly environment, the following 4 areas should be considered:

1. **Whole Setting Approach**

Does the whole setting ethos promote and support communication and the inclusion of children with SLCN?

1. **Physical Environment**

Does the physical learning environment support communication?

1. **Communication Opportunities**

Are opportunities to support communication included in planning and are they observed within the setting?

1. **Adult Strategies**

Are adults aware of strategies to support communication and are they used?

**Communication Friendly Environment Audit**

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| **Name(s) of person(s) completing audit:** | | | | **Date:** | | |
| **Date for review:** | | |
|  | | | |  | | |
| **Whole Setting Approach**  Does the whole setting’s ethos promote and support communication and the inclusion of children with SLCN? | | | | | | | |
|  | | **No** | **Sometimes** | | **Yes** | **Examples/Comments** | |
| 1 | Are approaches to support communication promoted via discussion at staff meetings and incorporated into the setting’s development plan? |  |  | |  |  | |
| 2 | Are visuals (e.g. photos/pictures/symbols) used consistently across the setting in all areas? |  |  | |  |  | |
| 3 | Do all staff who work with children with SLCN have access to reports, assessment information and intervention programmes from professionals involved? |  |  | |  |  | |
| 4 | Are resources to support SLCN available for staff to use to support children’s learning? |  |  | |  |  | |
| 5 | Are there opportunities for staff to share information and knowledge around SLCN gained from experience and CPD? |  |  | |  |  | |

Score 1 point for ‘yes’

Total: /5

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| **Physical Environment**  Does the physical learning environment support communication? | | | | | |
|  | | **Yes** | **Sometimes** | **No** | **Examples/Comments** |
| 1 | Are learning areas clearly defined and labelled throughout the setting? |  |  |  |  |
| 2 | Are background noise levels managed so that it is easy for children and adults to hear and be heard? |  |  |  |  |
| 3 | Is lighting is managed so that it is easy to see people’s faces when they speak? |  |  |  |  |
| 4 | Are there quiet, cosy areas are available for talking and for quiet time? |  |  |  |  |
| 5 | Are visuals are used to support understanding? |  |  |  |  |
| 6 | Do outside environments include spaces in which children can interact with each other? |  |  |  |  |
| 7 | Is key vocabulary clearly displayed and visually supported? |  |  |  |  |
| 8 | Are children’s verbal comments included in displays? |  |  |  |  |
| 9 | Are book specific areas available, containing a range of books? |  |  |  |  |
| 10 | Are resourced that are available for free play easily reached by the children within their line of vision? |  |  |  |  |
| 11 | Do indoor and outdoor spaces include opportunities for imaginative role play? |  |  |  |  |
| 12 | Are there a range of toys available?  (E.g. small world, real/natural resources) |  |  |  |  |

Score 1 point for ‘yes’

Total: /12

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| **Communication Opportunities**  Are opportunities to support communication included in planning and are they observed within the setting? | | | | | | | |
|  | | **Tick Box to Record Each Example Observed** | | | | | **Examples/Comments** |
| 1 | Are small group opportunities to talk facilitated by adults? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2 | Is asking questions and seeking clarification is actively encouraged? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3 | Is learning multi-sensory?  (E.g. symbols, pictures, props, practical activities etc.) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4 | Do children have a chance to talk about what they are learning? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5 | Do children have opportunities to engage in interactive book reading with an adult? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 6 | Do children have opportunities to engage in conversations with adults? |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Score 1 point for each area with 5 ticks

Total: /6

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Adult Strategies**  Are adults aware of strategies to support communication and are they used? | | | | | | | |
|  | | **Tick Box to Record Each Example Observed** | | | | | **Examples/Comments** |
| 1 | Do adults get down to the children’s level when interacting with them? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2 | Do adults say children’s names to gain their attention? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3 | Do adults repeat back what children have said to show they have listened and understood? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4 | Do adults comment on what is happening or what children are doing at that time? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5 | Do adults repeat what children say, adding a few words as a good model?  (E.g. ‘scissors’, ‘Wow, big scissors’) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 6 | Do adults recast what children say when they make mistakes (E.g. ‘I falled over’, ‘oh no, you fell over) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 7 | Do adults label objects, actions and feelings? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 8 | Do adults repeat the same language in familiar routines?  (E.g. ‘it’s snack time, first we sit in a circle’) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 9 | Do adults provide children with choices?  (E.g. ‘would you like to read a story or play on the computer?’) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 10 | Do adults facilitate turn taking? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 11 | Do adults reinforce what ‘good listening’ means and praise children for doing this? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 12 | Do adults adapt their language to match children’s levels of understanding?  (E.g. using simple instructions) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 13 | Do adults use visuals to support spoken language?  (E.g. gesture, Makaton, symbols) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 14 | Do adults break information into chunks, using a slower pace and pausing to allow thinking/processing time? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 15 | Do adults use pausing to encourage children initiation, participation and turn taking in discussions? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 16 | Do adults use open questions to support children’s thinking, reflection and explanation? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 17 | Do adults build children’s confidence and willingness to participate by offering praise and encouragement? |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Score 1 point for each area with 5 ticks

Total: /17

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| **Total Score /40** |  |

**Speech and Language Therapy Service: SEND Therapy Team**

**Communication Friendly Environment Action Plan**

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| **Name(s) of person(s) completing plan:** | **Date:** |
| **Date for review:** |

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| **Area to Develop** | **Plan** | **Who is Taking Lead Responsibility?** | **Who Else is Involved?** | **Date for Review** |
|  |  |  |  |  |
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***References***

* + - * *Primary and Secondary Inclusion Development Programme: Teaching and Supporting Children with Speech, Language and Communication Needs*
      * *Making your Place Great For Communication – The Communication Trust*
      * *Communication Friendly Environments Checklist – The Communication Trust*
      * *ICAN Factsheet 2 Support for Professionals: SLCN Classroom Strategies for Primary School*
      * *Developing a Communication Supporting Classroom Observation Tool, Dockrell et.al. Better Communication Research Programme 2012*
      * *National Autism Standard for Schools and Educational Settings - Autism Education Trust*