

Language Support Model

Document 1



INTRODUCTION TO THE LANGUAGE SUPPORT MODEL:

for Teachers

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INTRODUCTION

The language support model is a package of information, suggestions, meetings and advice designed to foster collaboration amongst teachers and speech and language therapists (SLTs) in working together to support children with language learning difficulties.

It has been developed for use with children defined as having **primary language impairment**. These are children whose language learning difficulties are severe enough to cause them difficulties but where there is no known cause for their problems – they have hearing and non-verbal abilities within normal limits and have had good exposure to language.

The model is designed to support such children in their mainstream primary schools, where their language needs can be met in the classroom by differentiating the 5 –14 Listening and Talking Curriculum. This provides opportunities for learning relevant language and for reinforcing learning. The Language Support model is concerned with aspects of language that can be developed through work carried out by teachers and/or classroom assistants. It does not involve aspects of language that would require the specialist skills of the SLT.

The Support Model is therefore geared to help classroom teachers, who manage learning within the classroom in co-operation with therapists. It does not deal with how referral is made to the SLT service, nor how SLTs and teachers establish whether the child has language impairment. It is designed as a guide to assist joint working after the child's SLT, parents and headteacher have agreed that work within the classroom would be appropriate.

Further information about the development of the Support Model and references to its background are listed in Document Seven, Development of the Language Support Model.

OUTLINE OF THE LANGUAGE SUPPORT MODEL

The Need for Flexibility

A child can be identified as requiring language support at any time during the school year, as their needs are recognised. This makes forward planning within the classroom cycle difficult. Children in mainstream schools can meet many teachers who have had no additional training in language support, teaching staff can change throughout the school year and supply staff can be involved in providing cover. For such reasons the Support Model is designed to be taken up

quickly by teachers, and to provide sufficient information to get started without prior training or extensive consultation.

The Support Model involves the SLT and teacher discussing and setting language targets for the child, and the SLT listing language teaching games and activities to help the child meet the targets. Where special materials are needed for activities they come from published packs that allow free reproduction for teaching purposes, and are available via schools library services.

The Language Areas and Activities Involved.

The language areas targeted vary from child to child. The Support Model documents cover:

- how to create a '**communication friendly**' classroom (Principles of the Communication Friendly Classroom for Teachers: Document 2)
- how a child can **monitor their own level of language comprehension** (Principles of Comprehension Monitoring for Teachers: Document 3)
- how to work on **vocabulary development** (Principles of Vocabulary Development for Teachers: Document 4).
- how to work on **grammar** (Principles of Grammar Development for Teachers: Document 5)
- how to work on **narrative development** (Principles of Oral Narrative Development for Teachers: Document 6).

The language activities are carried out by school staff, usually class teachers, assistants such as classroom assistants or learning support assistants, and learning support teachers, working in concert. The language activities are chosen to help the child meet language targets decided upon by the class teacher and SLT, with the learning support teacher if possible.

Language work is supported by written information as follows:

- seven **Support Model documents** – as above, presenting principles of how the language area(s) being worked on by an individual child can be taught,
- **Extracts from a Therapy Manual** – giving specific ideas on how the child's exact language targets can be tackled, taken from a Therapy Manual developed by SLTs
- **Games and activities** – taken from language teaching packs of materials developed by publishers for work specifically in this field.

The Support Model in Outline

The Support Model involves three meetings, with monitoring between:

Meeting 1. Held between the SLT, the head or deputy head teacher and the class teacher when the teacher is going to use the Language Support Model for the first time. It is used to explain how the model works; how to set up a **Communication Friendly Classroom** (Document 2), and how to help the child in **Monitoring Comprehension** of language in the classroom (Document 3).

Meeting 2. Held two weeks afterwards, where language targets are set and discussed. Information sheets are provided by the SLT that give general advice on how to teach within the area(s) of language within which targets are set. There are three main areas:

- **Vocabulary Development** (Document 4);
- **Grammar Development** (Document 5) and
- **Narrative Development** (Document 6).

Specific language learning activities and games materials are also listed, and materials then acquired from the school library service.

Monitoring. Confirming that language learning activities are **taking place** and 'troubleshooting' by email, to ensure that progress is being made. A further meeting to review targets is set up.

Meeting 3. Following the planned review of progress by the SLT, new targets are set or further decisions made.

THE SUPPORT MODEL CHART

Details of the meetings and monitoring procedures, detailing the personnel involved, the decisions to be taken and the materials needed appear in the Support Model Chart, attached, Page 7.

FINDING TIME FOR LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES

The **Communication Friendly Classroom** and **Comprehension Monitoring** documents contain information on activities useful for many children that can permeate teaching. The other language areas (**Vocabulary Development**, **Grammar Development** and **Narrative Development**) may need activities to be carried out with an individual child, or with a small group of children. For these activities there is a need to find time to carry out the specific language activities.

Activities can be carried out by a classroom teacher or a classroom assistant, but fitting them in to the school day requires careful planning. It seems from the research results so far that regular short sessions are best. Working three times per week for about thirty minutes each time has been shown to be effective in helping language output.

Examples of 'good practice' where schools found innovative ways of arranging time include:

1. regular special time with a classroom assistant;
2. a class teacher, learning support teacher and assistant sharing the workload. In some classes they worked on one target each, in others they worked on the same target in different ways with different games and activities;
3. class teachers using the language activities as group activities within a class work programme;
4. class teachers using language activities as whole class activities;
5. a child, who had been coming into school 10 minutes late to avoid the bustle of the cloakroom, coming in 10 minutes early instead, allowing him to get organised for the day and to fit in language activities;
6. a learning support teacher and learning support assistant including children with language impairment in groups of children they were working with, and carrying out language activities in the group. The learning support assistant also worked with children individually through the week;
7. learning support teachers supporting learning support assistants to carry out activities, planning for a week at a time;
8. learning support assistants being time-tabled for the first part of each day to work with several language impaired children;

9. learning support teachers breaking down language activities into daily tasks for learning support assistants to carry out;
10. a learning support assistant taking turns with a class teacher and a learning support teacher in carrying out activities;
11. a class teacher carrying out the activities, directing the learning support assistant to carry out other tasks with the class;
12. a school organising training for a number of learning support assistants from the speech and language therapist;
13. the speech and language therapist can offer support and some demonstration to teachers;
14. class teachers may be able to use collegiate time to watch a speech and language therapist working with children from their class and to discuss activities.

RECORDING LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES

Each child requires two A4 sheets kept in the classroom as a specific record of language work. One records the language targets set and achieved, the other the language activities carried out. The following headings should be used.

Language Targets Set

Child _____ Dates _____ to _____

Language targets	Teaching timetable	Staff involved	Methods/tasks/resources required	Evaluation
				Date achieved

Language Activities Record Sheet

Child _____ Dates _____ to _____
Support model weeks _____ to _____

Date	Activities	Notes, comments	Signed

SUPPORT MODEL CHART

This chart relates to the process of implementing the Support Model for an individual child. Before language teaching begins, assessment will have been undertaken, the SLT will have decided the Support Model is appropriate, the head teacher will have agreed that it is feasible to deliver it within the child's classroom, and parents will have given consent. The Support Model Chart starts with Meeting 1. 'Assistant' includes learning support assistant and classroom assistant. 'X' is the number of weeks a child is expected to remain on the targets set, and will be decided for an individual child when targets are set. It is typically 6 – 9 weeks, but this is flexible and can be reviewed.

<u>Support Model Weeks</u>	<u>Meetings and Monitoring</u>	<u>People involved</u>	<u>Purpose and Decisions</u>	<u>Documentation</u>
Week 1	Meeting 1 - Setting up the Support Model	HT/DHT, CT, SLT, LST*	<p>1 Understand the model.</p> <p>2 Exchange contact information - email, phone, addresses. Decide upon main school contact i.e. CT or Assistant. Update by the relevant service if any changes take place.</p> <p>3 Decide upon weekly time-table for delivering support, to ensure a regular, predictable time plan for the intervention, and who will undertake it.</p> <p>4 Discuss how to obtain language materials. CT/HT - Contact the IT technician re. setting up CDs if needed. CT/HT - Contact school libraries services re. supplying materials</p>	<p>1 Document 1. Introduction to the Language Support Model.</p> <p>2 Contact information: SLT, class/school contacts.</p> <p>3 Document 2. Principles of the 'Communication Friendly' Classroom. Document 3. Principles of Comprehension Monitoring.</p> <p>4 Any relevant schools libraries or IT service leaflets.</p>

<u>Support Model Weeks</u>	<u>Meetings and Monitoring</u>	<u>People involved</u>	<u>Purpose and Decisions</u>	<u>Documentation</u>
Week 3	Meeting 2 - Setting First Targets	CT, SLT, LST*, Assistant*	<p>1 Plan language targets.</p> <p>2 Discuss activities.</p> <p>3 Confirm timetable for delivery of activities Discuss language work record sheets.</p> <p>4 'Pencil in' target review meeting date in X weeks.</p> <p>5 Inform parents of targets and timetable.</p>	<p>1 Documents 4,5,6 re. area(s) of language intervention as relevant. Document 7 for information. Detailed intervention ideas re. child specific target(s) from Therapy Manual.</p> <p>2 Published materials for activities.</p> <p>3 Language work record sheets.</p> <p>4 Note of Meeting 3 in SLT and school diaries.</p> <p>5 SLT - Template letter to parents</p>
Weeks 4, 5	Starting activities and 'troubleshooting'.	CT to SLT	<p>1 Call SLT if any difficulties arise, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • materials not suitable/not liked by the child, • activities too easy/hard, • need for reassurance that something is 'OK', • activities missed for two weeks for any reason, • child not doing well, • materials have run out, • any other concerns. 	<p>1 Email correspondence or telephone: meeting if necessary.</p>

<u>Support Model Weeks</u>	<u>Meetings and Monitoring</u>	<u>People involved</u>	<u>Purpose and Decisions</u>	<u>Documentation</u>
Week 6	Ongoing work and routine email	SLT to CT, Assistant*, LST*	1 If no correspondence has arisen about difficulties, routine email sent checking all is progressing as planned.	1 Routine email to those carrying out activities: 'Since we have not heard otherwise, we assume all is going to plan. Please email back a brief comment on how things are progressing. Do be honest - improvements can often be made.'
Week X -1, (i.e. 1 week before targets are due to be completed.)	Confirm or re-schedule Meeting 3	CT to SLT	Either: 1 Agree to continue with targets for a stated number of weeks, then review. Or: 2 Confirm arrangements for SLT to see child to set new targets, and for target-setting Meeting.3	1 Note of review in SLT and school diaries. 2 Note of Meeting 3 in SLT and school diaries.
Week X	Meeting 3 - Setting next targets	CT, SLT, LST*, Assistant*	1 SLT sees child to carry out probes for attainment of targets, and plans next/ongoing targets. Meets with CT, *Assistant, *LST 2 SLT informs parents of next/ongoing targets	1 Language activity record sheets completed with comments. SLT - Probes and assessment materials. 2 SLT - Template letter to parents.

Starting, 'troubleshooting', routine monitoring and alerting cycle is repeated for new targets. Alternatively, a decision can be made to change the model. It could be agreed for example to stop language activities and to review after some months, or to discharge the child from SLT service, or to develop another aspect of communication, such as speech, or to move the child to direct SLT intervention.

* If relevant and available. CD- Compact disc; CT- class teacher; DHT- depute head teacher; IT- information technology; LST- learning support teacher, SLT- speech and language therapist.