Role of the Communication Champion: Suggested Good Practice Guide

Promoting speech, language and communication skills for the 21st century

"Language is our tool for thinking and learning. It is through communication that we build relationships and resolve conflicts. Language and communication skills are vital to the economy. Employers are increasingly concerned about a disconnect between the skills of young people entering the workforce and the demands on them to demonstrate good communication and interaction skills". Burns, M (2016) *Skills for Work: Skills for Life* (2nd edition) ICAN.

Intervention to improve spoken language has been shown to make a difference to school readiness and school attainment. The Education Endowment Foundation found that pupils who participate in spoken language interventions make approximately five months' additional progress over a year. (Details of the full report can be accessed from the Education and Endowment Foundation website: 'Oral Language Interventions).

Speech, language and communication skills are essential for the development of a child's learning and their social and emotional wellbeing. It is important that the nominated Communication Champion has the appropriate skills and knowledge to be able to support other staff in the setting to meet the needs of <u>all</u> children.

Successful Communication Champions will have full support of the management team and will have a leadership role within the workplace. They may have time allocated to fulfil the role. It is good practice to identify a Deputy Communication Champion to support this vital role. In larger teams/settings two Communication Champions could share the role across the provision. The Deputy Communication Champion would take on the role of the nominated Communication Champion in their absence.

What the role involves

- Ensuring all practitioners have an understanding of what typical communication and language development looks like for young children.

- Commitment to attend and disseminate essential communication and language training such as the Early Communication and Language Journey and WellComm training.

- Commitment to attend the termly Communication and Language briefings.

- Commitment to keep their knowledge current through attending briefings like the Communication Champion briefings.

- Understand the Bolton Communication and Language Pathway to enable appropriate support for children to be promptly accessed within the setting and from other professionals. Share this understanding across the team and families.

- Provide regular training to staff team, sharing expertise, disseminating key information and developing quality interactions for all children.

- Be confident to use the WellComm screen and intervention to fidelity (ensuring it is implemented with accuracy) and in line with the Bolton Good Practice Audit.

- Work with staff to monitor the effectiveness of any interventions as appropriate in- line with the Early Communication and Language Journey and WellComm screen and intervention. Supply data to the Local Authority on request.

- To be highly skilled in observing children's learning and identifying next steps in their communication & language development. Can support other staff to identify if children are not working at age related expectations.

- Ensure communication and language is embedded in all planning for all children across the whole setting or caseload.

- Liaise with local Public Health Nursing Team/other Early Years Provider/ SENDCO/ Literacy coordinator/ Senior Leadership Team to ensure appropriate support is being provided for identified children. Be confident to discuss communication and language development with parents and identify further support.

- Facilitate joint working with parents/carers to enhance children's communicative opportunities within the home learning environment.

- To contribute to sharing best practice, develop case studies/networking with others.

- Embed peer observations focusing on good practitioner interactions with children and promote peer to peer observations.