

# Portsmouth's Commitment to Early Language Development

November 2021

**In Portsmouth we believe that every child deserves the very best start and that early language development is at the heart of this.**

We know that, by age 4, a child from a disadvantaged background has heard 30million fewer words compared to their more advantaged peers.

We know that a child with a poor vocabulary when they are five is more than twice as likely to be unemployed in their thirties and one and a half times more likely to have mental health problems as a similar child with a good vocabulary.



## **In Portsmouth we will:**

Ensure the early years' workforce understand early language development and support children to achieve their very best.

Ensure that families understand the importance of early language development and the vital role that they play.

Ensure that investment in early years' services is a local priority for all and strengthens activity to develop early language.

Portsmouth children will:

Be able to develop spoken communication skills which underpin their learning and support life-long achievement.

Communicate confidently with peers and those around them.

Be ambitious for their future.



## **Families will:**

Use and allow children to hear a broad and rich vocabulary with a wide range of language. Help your child to understand new words by explaining their meanings.

Take time to talk with your child following their cues and their interests and encourage them to talk about the world around them.

Enjoy talking time every day - it may be in the car, the supermarket, the park - start those conversations anywhere!

Talk in any language spoken at home.

Use technology and digital apps to learn together, by sitting together, talking and playing and exploring.

Know and understand that your child is unique and encourage them to be the best and to do the best that they can. Understand the vital role parents have as their child's first and most enduring educator.

Work in partnership with the setting or school to make a positive difference to learning and development.



## **The Local Authority will:**

Ensure that language acquisition is an important part of any local authority planning consideration for our youngest children.

Develop appropriate ways of working, training and practice sharing that supports the delivery of robust and effective approaches to all children's early language development.

Enable services to recognise the importance of peer support, partnership working, co-production and the role of parents as a child's first educator.

Develop a data led approach to the delivery of early language programmes across the city.

Review commissioning activity to ensure that language and communication development are reflected in all priorities for children under 5.



## **Health Service providers will:**

Take every opportunity to raise the importance of language development with parents, starting when babies are in utero. Emphasise the positive impact on attachment that can be achieved when a baby hears the rhythmical sound of their parent talking, reading or singing to them.

Using a range of resources, including digital tools, share key messages about language development with families at every contact.

Develop mechanisms to share best practice across the health workforce, supporting families at all levels of the Healthy Child Programme.

Work with the Portsmouth City Council Early Years and Childcare team to deliver a consistent, robust Continuing Professional Development programme across the workforce.

Working within the agreed information sharing framework, share data to support holistic needs analysis that identifies vulnerable cohorts.



## **Early Years Providers and Schools will:**

Make every interaction count - Seek opportunities to listen and respond to children, exploring their interests and extending vocabulary and communication skills.

Create enabling environments - Promote engaging and stimulating language rich environments.

Celebrate Diversity - Recognise that all languages should be valued, respected and actively encouraged to develop.

Support all levels of development - Support all practitioners to take a graduated approach to language development, using a range of tools and resources to promote and build strong language skills for all children.

Be that role model of good language - Ensure that key staff are trained in a way which provides them with a high level of understanding around the acquisition and development of early language and encourage practitioners to see themselves as role models of language.



## **Cultural and Leisure Partners will:**

Ensure that the environments young children use are rich in opportunities to engage with language.

Provide opportunities for children to interact with each other and adults in meaningful conversation about activities.

Ensure that activities provide opportunities for parents and families to continue and extend learning at home.

Support parents and families to play their part in developing children's early language through events, technology and resources.

Work with other partners and services to maintain the high profile of children's early language development.



## **All Partners will:**

Review strategy and policy documents to ensure that early language development is sufficiently reflected. In doing so, resources will be allocated which allow services to meet the needs of their youngest children.

Actively promote the importance of the home-learning environment, supporting parents to understand what they can do to improve opportunities to develop language skills.

Ensure that "**children's communication and language is 'everybody's business'**". Universally Speaking I CAN, The Communication Trust.

For further information about Early Language Development, see [www.portsmoutheducationpartnership.co.uk/early-years-education](http://www.portsmoutheducationpartnership.co.uk/early-years-education)