



**Bristol Speech and
Language Therapy
Research Unit**

Parent's and children's views on speech and language therapy

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Bristol Speech and Language Therapy Research Unit



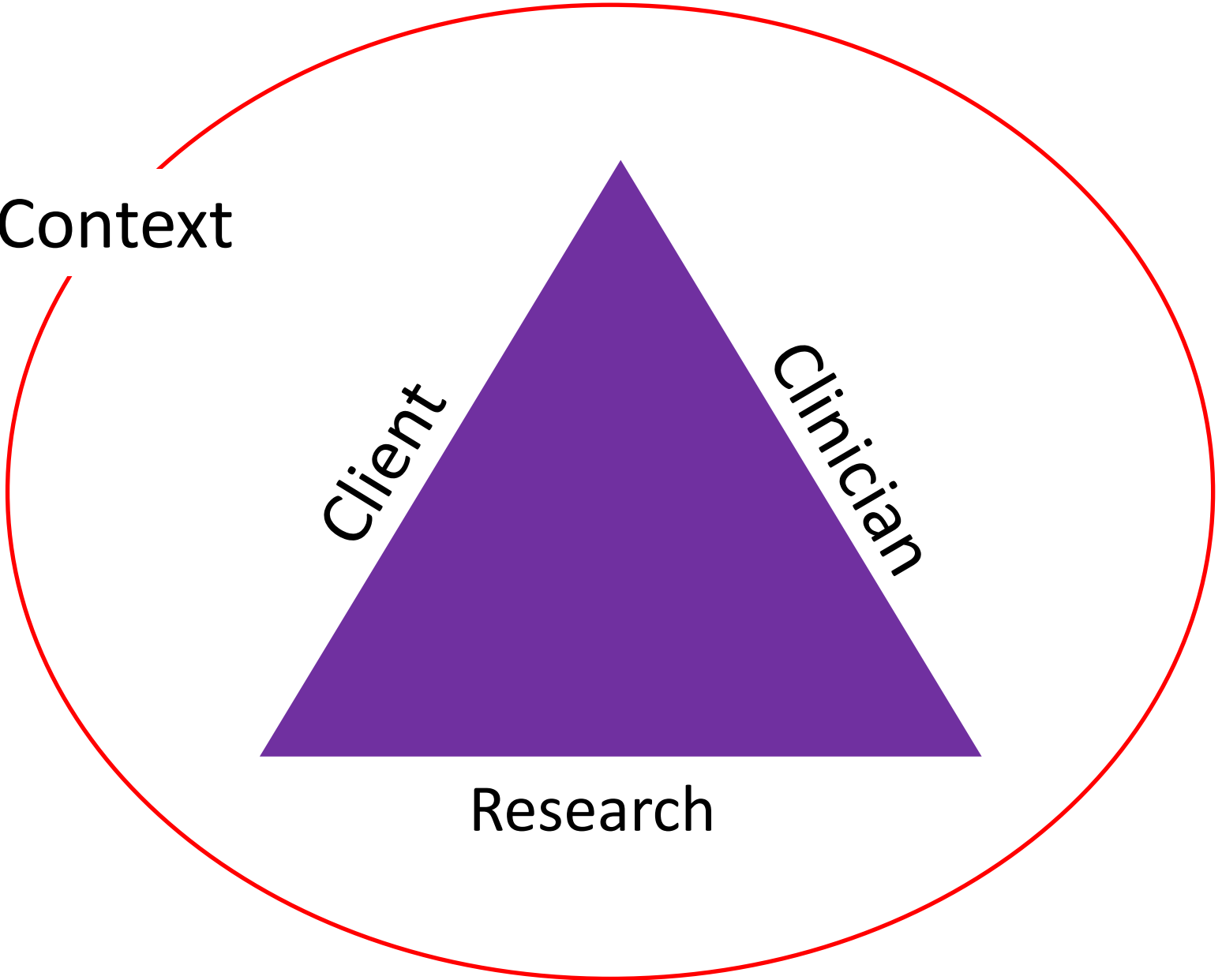
A collage of three images. The top image is a 'SAMPLE MEDICAL INFORMATION FORM' with fields for trip dates, venue, emergency contact, and medical information. The middle image is a portrait of a middle-aged man with light brown hair, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and red tie. The bottom image is a photograph of a multi-story brick building with many windows, likely a school or institutional building.

Context

Client

Clinician

Research



Overview

- How far does current practice take account of the perspectives of children and their parents?
- Introduction to the research programmes
- Four questions:
 - Does clinical practice and research address outcomes of value to parents and children?
 - How do we listen to the perspectives of preschool children?
 - What do parents' perceptions of therapy say about how well we get our messages across?
 - What about the parents who don't access our services?
- The way forward?



Better Communication Research Programme: Preferred Outcomes



Core Team

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with

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Funded by the DCSF

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/better-communication-research-programme>

Dockrell, J., Lindsay, G., Law, J., Roulstone, S. (2014) Supporting children with speech language and communication needs: an overview of the results of the better communication research programme. *International Journal of Language and Communication Disorders*, 49(5), 534-555.



Methods



Children

- Recruited and seen in groups in school
 - mainstream and special
- Aged 8-11 and 12-16 years
- With 'SLCN'
- $n = 37$
- Arts-based activities
- Focus on 'what's good about my life'

Parents

- Recruited via national and local parent organisations
- Focus groups around England ($n = 27$)
- Online survey ($n = 90$)
- Focus on achievements
- Children with a range of SLCN



Methods



Therapists

- Open to SLTs working with a broad range of children
- Focus groups:
 - 14 SLT services
 - 33 SLTs
- National survey
 - 576 responses



- **Evidence-based intervention**
- **for pre-school children with**
- **primary speech and language impairment**

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The views expressed are those of the author(s) and not necessarily those of the NHS, the NIHR or the Department of Health.

<http://www.speech-therapy.org.uk/projects/child-talk>

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Methods

SLTs n=218

- Focus groups in six services
- Two national surveys
- 4 regional workshops
- 2 national workshops
- SLTs with an interest, experience or expertise in the area of preschool children with primary speech & language impairments

Parents n=133

- Focus groups and interviews
- Some had children with impairments
- Others were from diverse groups

Children n=24

- 4 groups of 4-6 children run over 4 weeks
- Age 2-5 yrs
- Attending local children's centres





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Does clinical practice and
research address outcomes of
value to parents and children?

Children's Outcomes

**Time for fun &
laughter**

Feeling supported

Friendships

**Emotions:
Feeling angry, sad & bored**

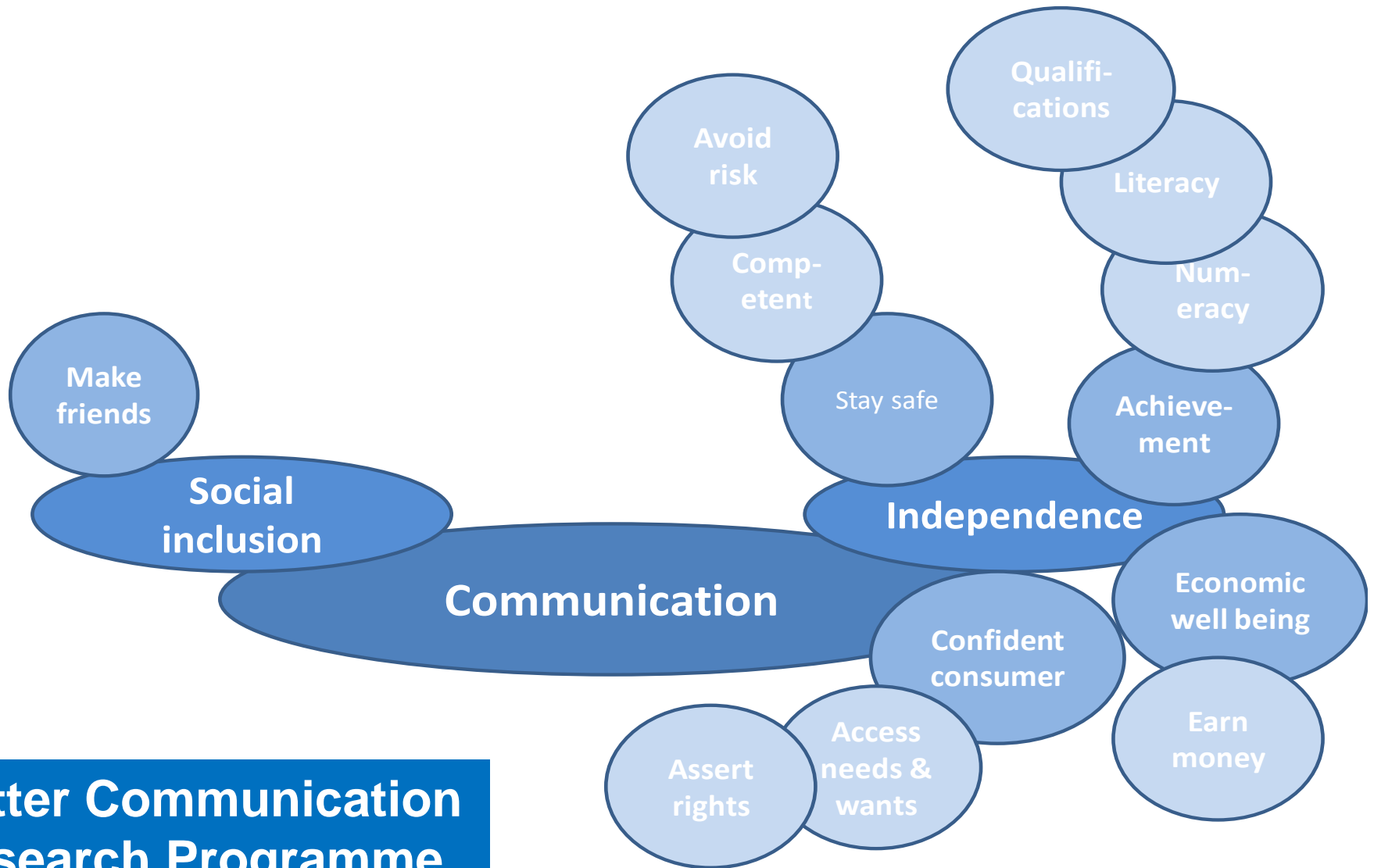
School work

**Other people's behaviour:
(listening, helping, not shouting,
not teasing or interrupting)**

Communication



Parents' Views of Outcomes



Outcome domains identified by clinicians

Social interaction
Behaviour
Emotional wellbeing
Educational achievement
Independence
Participation and inclusion
Adult-child relationship
Adult knowledge and use of strategies
Adult-SLT partnership
Improved assessment scores
Attention & listening
Understanding and use of language
Intelligibility
Self awareness
Communicative competence



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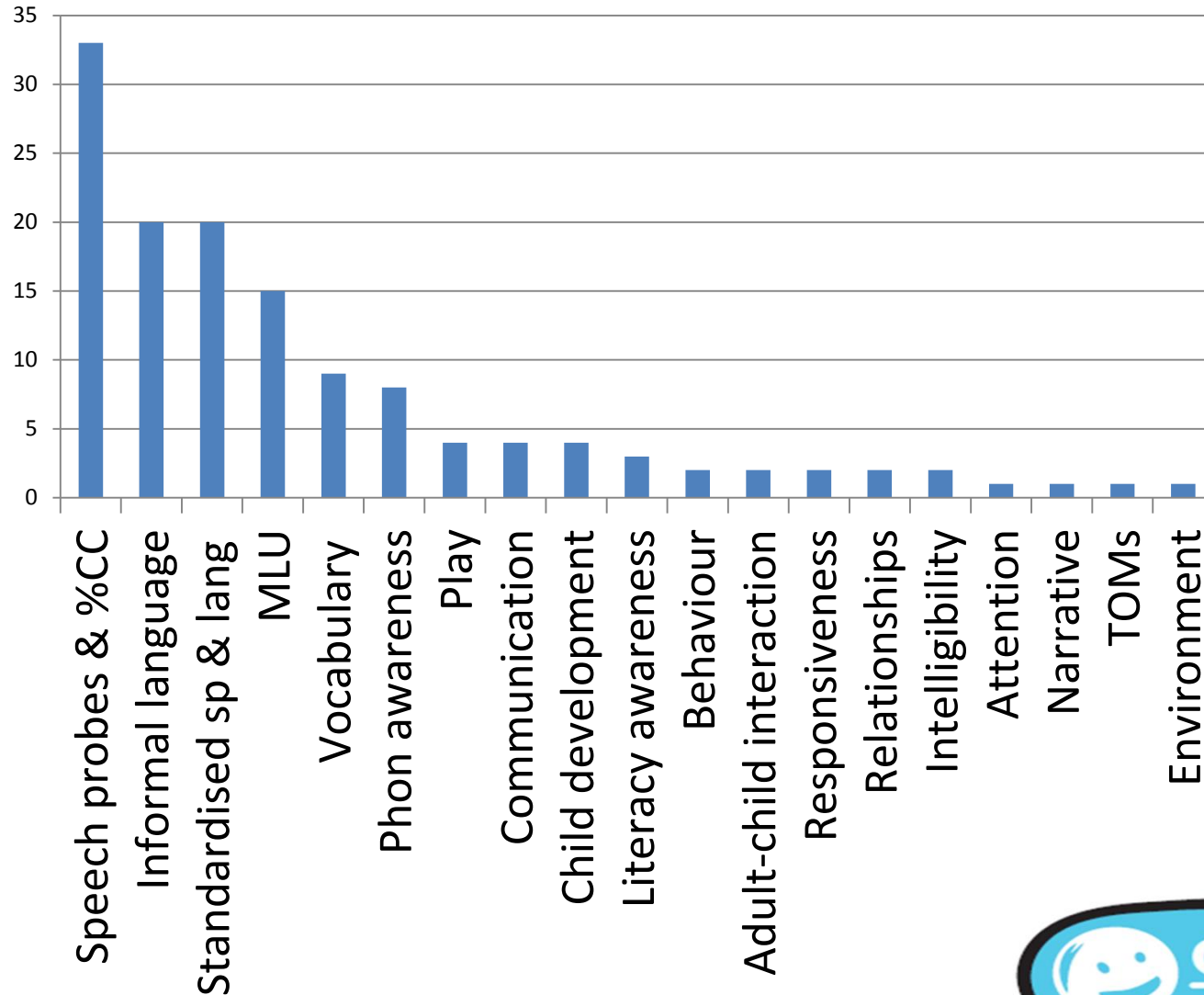
Intelligibility

Self awareness

Communicative competence



Measures used in papers in systematic review



What outcome measures are used in England?

Only 33% (out of 536) submitted outcome data to head of service

RCSLT recommend the use of TOMs core scale and will be collecting national data

Projects to develop consensus on outcomes for specialist fields

Does clinical practice and research address outcomes of value to parents and children?

- Outcomes that parents and children value are reflected in therapists' goals and descriptions of interventions
- But not measured in practice or in research
- Therefore little evidence to support whether or not these outcomes are achieved
- But exciting RCSLT initiative to collect and collate national data using TOMs

Perspectives of preschool children

How do we listen to/ take account of the perspectives of preschool children?



Methods

Observations of 24 children:

16 Male, 8 Female

Age: 26mths to 47mths; Average Age: 39mths

Concern about speech and language development

Set up a range of mock SLT activities

Eg, for vocabulary, symbolic play, listening and attention, turntaking

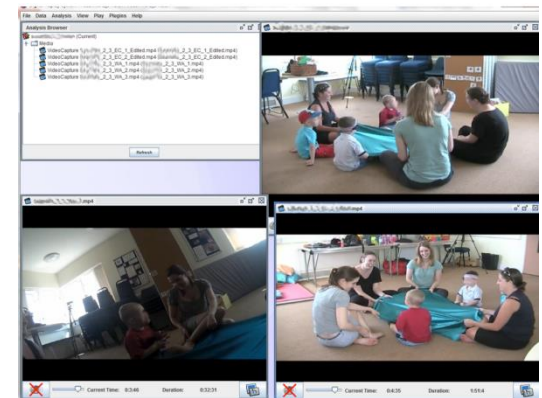
Structured and unstructured

Groups ran over 4 sessions at each location



Methods for observing children

- Wide angle cameras
- Kiddicam
- Multiple view analysis (DRS)
- Field notes



Findings

Observation of children's:

- Body language
- Vocalisations
- Visual attention



Interpretations of children's:

- *Level of interest*
- *Focus of interest*
- *Confidence to participate*
- *Willingness to participate*
- *Enjoyment of activities*



Body position closed



'When offered an instrument Christopher looked up but kept his head down. He made no attempt to select an instrument and put fingers from both hands in his mouth.'
Musical Instruments, Site 3, Session 3

Uncomfortable or unsure, didn't wish to participate



Body movement (expressing excitement)

Saul also watches Lydia and when the triangle comes out he does a little wiggle of excitement, and then slaps his knees when the tambourine comes out.

Musical instruments, Group 1, Session 1

Responsive, excited to participate



Child-initiated vocalisation (commenting)

'Jazz then plays with a cup and shows Naomi [SLT]. Jazz says something to Naomi and then tells her 'I'm getting dressed up'. Naomi repeats her more clearly 'you're getting dressed up'. Jazz says again 'I'm getting dressed up'.'

Miniature world, Group 2, Session 2

Engaged, seeking out and enjoying interaction with SLT during play



How do we to/ take account of the perspectives of preschool children?

- If children are not engaged in a session do we
 - work harder to get them engaged?
 - accept that this is their perspective and respect their desire not to be engaged?
 - always work through the parents, the child's relationship with us is immaterial?



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**What do parents' perceptions of therapy say
about how well we get our messages across?**

Parents' perspective of therapy

Therapists descriptions of preschool interventions suggest nine themes of work:

- Adult understanding
- Adult-child interaction
- Foundation skills
- Comprehension
- Expressive language
- Speech
- Self-monitoring
- Generalisation
- Functional communication

Do parents perceptions of therapy reflect what SLTs say they do?



Perspectives on therapy

- Clinicians

96% of therapists
always or sometimes
make activities fun

Children

*Tajo ... is confident in
his movements as he
puts the bricks on one
by one and smiles
when they come
down. (Bricks.
00:08:03.095
Location2, Session 4)*

- Parents

*PAR_TELL_518: Yeah, yeah I do, he,
well most importantly he really
enjoyed going there...and he really
enjoyed he really enjoyed playing the
games and he never it was never he
never felt like he was there because
he couldn't do something*

*PAR_TELL_521: I think really, it's
getting the children comfortable,
familiarising them with the situation,
and I think as well again like I say, I
think the fact that they would do a
similar activity with different toys to
start off the session each time, built
his trust in the group to speak*



Perspectives on therapy: speech

- Clinician

..one task I do is sorting objects according to umm the sounds that we're working on, so if the child has got no word final consonants,, you might have a group of objects ending 's' a little house, a mouse, a purse,.. then some ending in a 't' so a cat, a tart, a boat ... you have the pictorial representation and when you bring a toy out the bag I say it I say 'mouse' and they have to put the mouse on the picture...

Parent_TEL_517: *he had the letter sounds on the cards and then he like she'd pick up a chair and she'd say to[child] what is this, it's a chair what sound do we need a ch, a s or a k and he'd have to choose what sound it was*

Parent_TEL_603: *a monkey game in which ..she'd say the word, he'd say the word and then put the monkey on if he got it correctly*





Perspectives on therapy: expression

- Clinician

if it was a verb, ..lotto and then encouraging them to look at the actions in the pictures so. So when it is your turn you describe what the person is doing



Parent_TEL_046: *matching the cards and the dogs jumping and that was the use of verbs certainly in the second sessions was quite, it was something he wasn't tending to do at that point, he wasn't, obviously to make a sentence to encourage him to use jumping or you know verb generally. Action verbs rather than anything else*





Perspectives on therapy: adult understanding

- Clinicians

They have to accept that there is a problem, they have to accept that it is not the child being lazy, it is a difficulty that they have got and they have to accept that they are the major tool of change

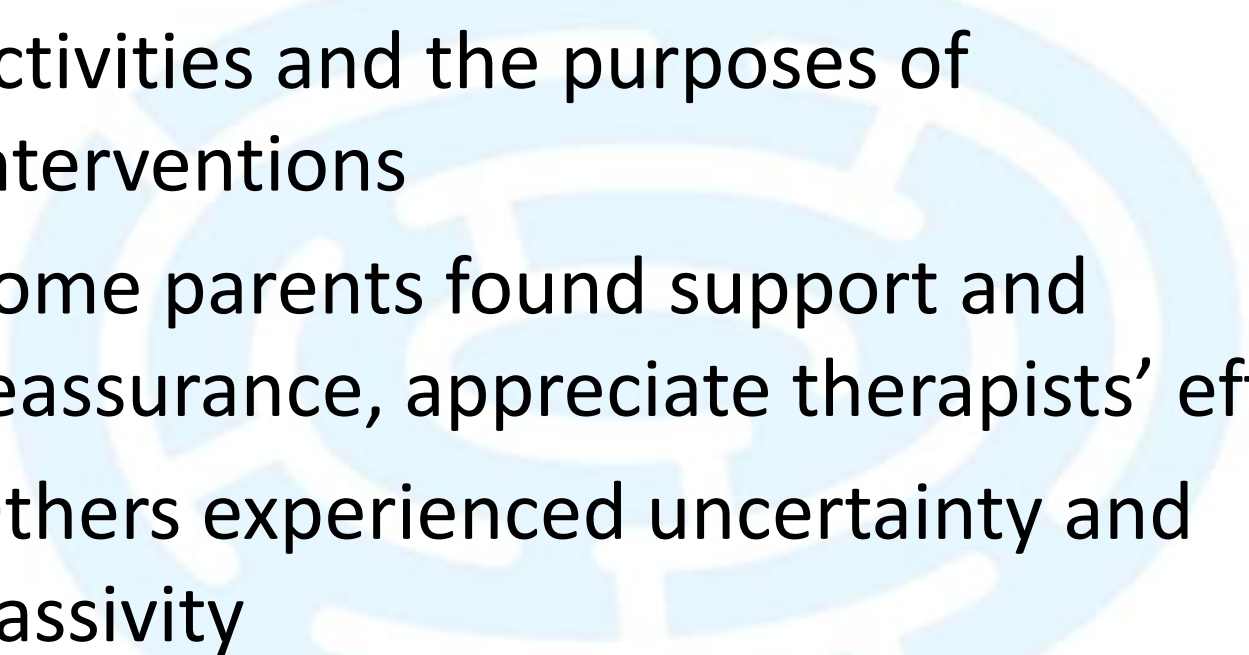
Parent_TELL_518: *Well to be honest I was sort of grateful to be receiving it at all really*

Parent_TELL_521: *it was like oh my god..this is like gonna be a massive part of his development that is missing. I mean I don't know whether I just sort of thought merrily it would all happen [laughs] it'll be fine! Um but I really appreciated that honesty, that I mean they were really supportive, and I've always felt that I've been able to just ask them something at the end of the group.*

Parent_TELL_515: *..as a parent it did seem like there was more important things to concentrate on than her using the word 'the' and 'is' but like I say I don't understand the grounding behind it I guess and the reason for doing it in that particular way*



What do parents' perceptions of therapy say about how well we get our messages across?

- Parents remember and can recount activities and the purposes of interventions
 - Some parents found support and reassurance, appreciate therapists' efforts
 - Others experienced uncertainty and passivity
- 

What about the parents who don't access our services?

- Research of families perspectives comes mainly from 'the usual suspects'
- Some families don't *seem* to be proportionately represented in SLT clinics
- Difficult to ask 'why don't you come?'
- Project investigated perspectives on language development, impairment and what to do about it

Perspectives of parents from 'under-served' communities

- Language development and environment
 - Lots of 'legitimate' ideas about context in which children learn to talk
 - Telling stories, imitation., singing, trips out, using exaggerated intonation
 - Comments about fathers lack of interaction with children
 - Mixed opinions about the role of TV
 - Presented themselves as competent parents

Perspectives of parents from 'under-served' communities

- Language development and environment
- Causes and signs of speech language and communication impairments
 - Intrinsic: hearing loss, cleft palate, genetic, lazy,
 - Extrinsic/environmental: lack of parental input, withdrawn, depressed mothers, socially isolated families, stressed families, infections, air pollution, poor food and nutrition

Perspectives of parents from 'under-served' communities

- Language development and environment
- Causes and signs of speech language and communication impairments
- Responses to children with speech language and communication impairments
 - Community support eg neighbours, family, religious leaders
 - 'medical' – cutting lingual frenulum, medicines,
 - Parent support – signing, spending time and attention
 - Non-intervention – wait and see
 - Limited knowledge about SLT

What about the parents who don't access our services?

- Knowledge of language development reflected commonly used interaction activities and strategies but some views that conflict with 'good' practice
- Wide variation in knowledge and practice regarding speech and language impairments, the support available and accessed



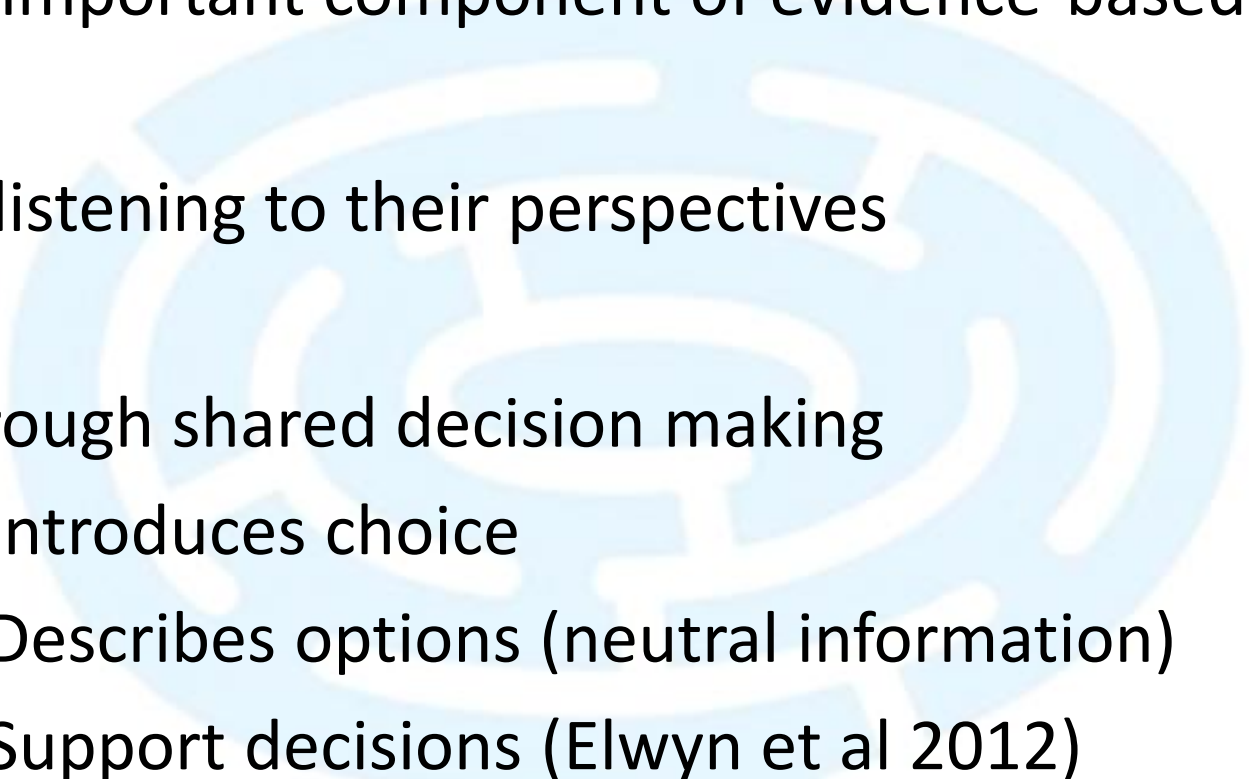
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The way forward?

Taking account of user perspectives

- Need for evidence linking showing changes achieved in communication can deliver improvements in children's independence and social inclusion.
- How do we take account of young children's perspectives? – what do they think is going on ?
- Increasing our awareness of parents' understanding of their child's difficulties and their role.
- Accessible information for parents about therapy

Taking account of user perspectives

- An important component of evidence-based practice
 - By listening to their perspectives
 - Through shared decision making
 - Introduces choice
 - Describes options (neutral information)
 - Support decisions (Elwyn et al 2012)
- 

Thank you

To all the children and families, speech and language therapists,
early years practitioners and teachers who took part in our
research

To our funders: UK Dept for Education and NIHR

To our many colleagues who have worked on these projects

To you for listening



Bristol Speech and Language Therapy Research Unit



- We aim to improve the care and management of people with speech, language and communication disorders.
- We specialise in primary language delays, speech impairments, aphasia, acquired language impairments and stuttering.
- Our research is entirely funded by grants and charitable donations.

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