Building communication rich environments in early learning settings

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Overview
• Underpinning theories
• The approach
• The importance of foundational knowledge
• Current progress
• Future plans

Underpinning theories

Directive = ‘Business Talk’
• Stops and starts with one turn
• Simple, straightforward talk
• Not very interesting or engaging

Talkative = ‘Dancing’
• Stay on the topic
• Ask questions, make comments
• Use longer words, longer sentences
• Several turns (Strive for Five)

Hart & Risley, 1995

Meaningful differences

Interactions in childcare
• 40% routine tasks
• 40% business talk
• 20% quality interactions

Of the quality interactions, “what was lacking was in-depth conversations with children that really provided the opportunity for children to express what they were feeling and what was happening for them” (Tregenza, 2008 - as cited in Cole, 2013)

Evidence Informed Practice
• Public health approach - strategies that amplify every child’s development
• Predictors of later language difficulty
• Policy context for high quality early learning and care (EYLF and NQS)
• Influencing the practice of early childhood educators
The approach

Talking → Quality of care

The cycle of silence

Key Practices

Enhancing routine activities & tasks
Talking & Language Knowledge
- Vocabulary: Dancing vs. Business Talk (Hart & Risley)
- Naming Initiatives (Marte Meo)
- Observe Wait Listen + Respond (Hanen)
- You, Me, See (Carolyn Cole)
- Strive for 5 (Hanen)

Early Reading Skills
- Book sharing
- Referral

A Typical Day:
- Participating in room routines & making observations of interactions
- Modelling communication techniques & ways of working within the site
- Real time feedback & coaching
- Using video footage as tool for reflection/learning
- Discussing recommendations/strategies for staff and families
- Delivering presentation to staff and/or families

Strive for five
Foundational Knowledge

• Pre requisite training
• Family Connections
• Selection criteria

Current Progress

• Enhancing Children's Outcomes (EChO) Program
• South Australia: 3 X centres vulnerable communities
  Students
• New South Wales: 4 X centres
  Mentor model/SPTH resources
• Victoria: 4 X centres FY2016
  Currently recruiting for a SPTH
• University of Wollongong

Future Plans

• Further research
• Continued in SA
• National opportunities - procurement of Speech Pathology resources

Thank you

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References

• Pepper, J., & Markham, P. (2004). "It takes 2 to talk." Toronto: Hanen Early Language Program.