

Press Release – For Immediate Release (27.03.2012)

COMMUNICATION LOBBY LENDS ITS VOICE TO EYFS ANNOUNCEMENT

The Communication Trust, a coalition of nearly 50 voluntary groups specialising in children’s speech, language and communication, has given its support to Government intentions to place language and communication at the heart of education for toddlers.

The revised Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which will begin on 1st September 2012, put communication and language as one of the three prime areas for children’s healthy development and announced a new progress check at the age of two for a child’s development.

The Communication Trust was involved in the consultation process for the EYFS. Ensuring children’s speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) are identified as early as possible is a key premise of the Trust’s work.

Anita Kerwin-Nye, Director of the Trust, said: “We are pleased that the Government is placing such an emphasis on good communication skills, and on identifying children who struggle so they can get help. However, this will only be a benefit to children and their families if staff locally are properly trained to carry out progress checks and advise families accordingly.”

The Communication Trust is also pleased to note the interim report of Professor Cathy Nutbrown in which she called for better skills among the children’s workforce. The Trust has long been calling for newly qualified teachers and early years professionals to be better trained in supporting children in developing their communication skills.

This belief led The Communication Trust to develop, in partnership with City & Guilds, a new **Level 3 Award in Supporting Children and Young People’s Speech Language and Communication** (City and Guilds Number: 4337, Cache 600/425716).

This continued professional development (CPD) award is for practitioners, including early years practitioners, working with children and young people from 0-19 across education, health, youth justice, and social care. Through enabling members of the entire children's workforce to gain accredited CPD in speech, language and communication, this award supports the recommendations of the EYFS.

Kerwin-Nye continued: “We have always known that improving the skills of the workforce is key in helping children to develop good communication skills. We also know that in some areas of the UK, particularly in deprived areas, upwards of 50% of children will start school with a language delay. They can catch up to their peers but only if staff are trained to recognise when children are struggling.

“The Trust supports the call for early years staff to have the highest possible level of qualification and hopes that all staff will be supported to achieve at least a level 3 qualification with graduate status an important component in effective early years leadership.”

The Communication Trust has developed materials to support learners and tutors to deliver this Award. These can be downloaded for free at www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/qualifications

Free resources that support parents and practitioners in supporting children’s communication development, and in identifying early SLCN, can be downloaded or ordered www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/resources

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For more information contact Press and PR Officer Lynne Milford on 0207 843 2564 or email lmilford@thecommunicationtrust.org.uk

Notes to editors

About The Communication Trust

- The Communication Trust is a campaigning voice for children with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN). It raises awareness, influences policy, promotes best practice among the children’s workforce and commissions work from its members.
- The Communication Trust is a coalition of nearly 50 leading voluntary sector and community based organisations.
- It has an extensive advisory and partner network that includes the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT), Achievement for All, Council for Disabled Children, Early Support Programme and specialists across early years, schools and youth justice.
- Recently, the Trust ran the *Hello* campaign (national year of communication) in partnership with Jean Gross in her role as the Government’s Communication Champion for children.
- The Communication Trust in 2012 is building on the legacy of *Hello* by showcasing best practice from the voluntary sector around what works to support all children’s

communication, particularly those with SLCN, and disseminating it to the widest possible audience.

- This work will include launching later in the year a campaign to place communication at the heart of schools' policy and practice.
- For more information, visit www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk