



EARLY
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Workshop D

How can we apply evidence in practice?

What works to improve early language and behaviour

Professor Leon Feinstein, Director of Evidence, Early Intervention Foundation (Chair)

Professor Kathy Sylva, Professor of Educational Psychology, University of Oxford



Opening remarks from the chair

Professor Leon Feinstein,
Director of Evidence,
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What works to improve early language and behaviour

Professor Kathy Sylva
University of Oxford

*Early Years, Parenting and Family Relationships
Conference, Birmingham*

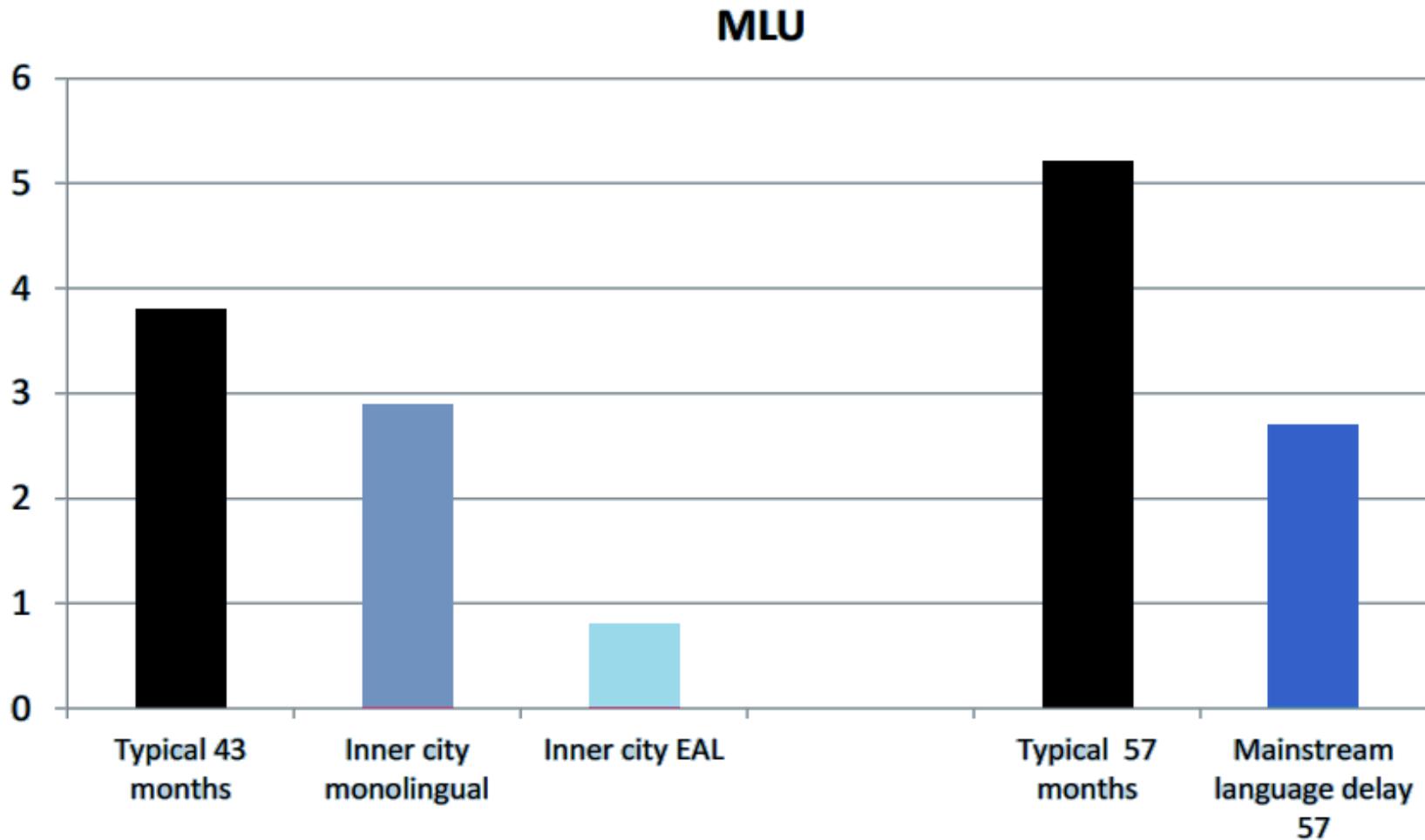
12th July 2016



Disproportionate risk

- Children who come from
 - Disadvantaged backgrounds
 - Have English as an additional language
 - Significantly more likely to be identified as having language difficulties
(Dockrell & Howell, 2015)

Variability in Sentence Length



Lower SES and the Young Child

- Caregivers from different SES backgrounds provide their children with substantially different amounts of oral language input
- Mothers of from lower SES backgrounds
 - Have fewer utterances per hour
 - Shorter durations of speech
 - Respond significantly less to their children's utterances
 - Use more exact repetitions than expansions (Vanormelingen & Gillis, 2016)

The Importance of Oral Language

- Literacy
 - Decoding and comprehension
 - Spelling
 - Writing
- Social emotional and behaviour
 - Adult relationships
 - Peer relationships
 - Bullying
 - Self-esteem
- Other areas of the curriculum
 - Numeracy etc.

Variability in Vocabulary

Children's Total Vocabulary Size

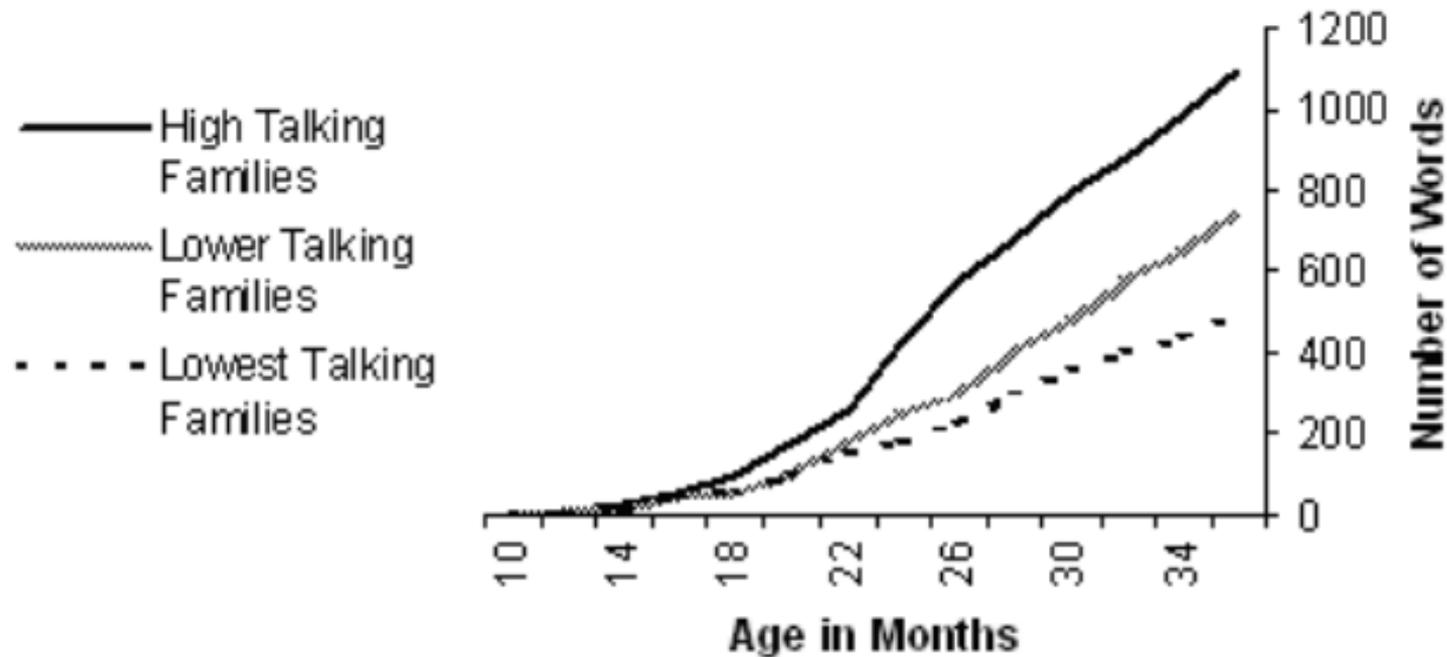


Figure 2. Based on data in Hart and Risley, *Meaningful Differences*, 1995

Is 'just talking' enough?

- Children need opportunities to talk, use vocabulary words, and respond to adults' questions
- Adults need to create opportunities to talk, provide quality feedback on children's language, and use a lot of new vocabulary repeatedly in meaningful contexts (Hindman & Wasik, 2015)
- Adults also need to use complicated sentence structure, it's a 'brain gym' for the young child

Evidence from The Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) on language

The Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) project is the first major European longitudinal study of a national sample of young children's development between the ages of 3 and 18 years.

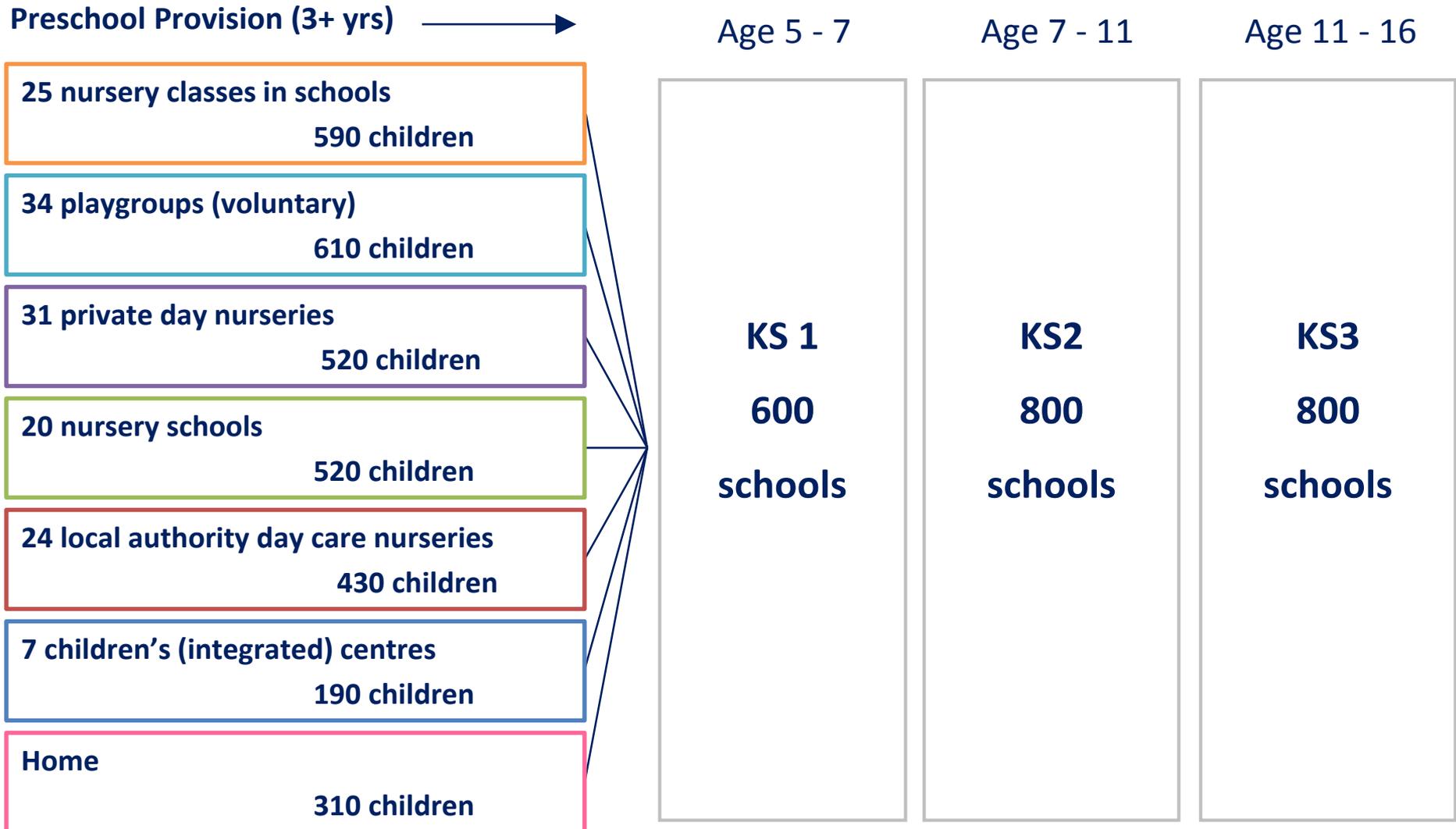


Sample

- **3000+** children recruited across England from **141** pre-schools and homes
- Sample followed through primary school with data collection at **age 5, 7 and 11**, and then into secondary schools
- 11% of the sample at school entry had English as an Additional Language (more than 300 EAL)
- However, only 1.9% actually required extra EAL support by the end of primary school and EAL children actually did better at GCSE exams!

Sample

5 Regions, 141 preschools and 3,000 + children



Specific tests: Outcome Measures at age 5

- Code-related skills:
 - *Letter recognition: lower/upper case alphabet letters*
 - *Phonological Awareness: rhyme and alliteration*
- Oral Language skills:
 - *BAS-II Verbal Comprehension*
 - *BAS-II Naming Vocabulary*

Home predictors of code-related skills

Factors	Effect Size	
Prior Verbal Attainment	.89	
Prior Non-verbal Attainment	.34	
Gender	girls vs. boys	.21
Ethnicity	Minority group 3 vs. White	.70
No. of siblings	3+ vs. none	-.15
English as an Additional Language	EAL vs. English as mother tongue	.34
Birth weight	low vs. average/above average	-.19
Free school meal eligibility	eligible vs. not eligible	-.12
Mother's qualification level	degree vs. no degree	.25
Family SES	unskilled/semi-skilled manual vs. professional non-manual	-.27
HLE Item 4: Playing with letters/numbers	daily vs. never	.36
HLE Item 5: Learning activities with the alphabet	4-7 times per week vs never	.51
Duration of pre-school		.33
% of children in centre 1SD below GCA mean		.19
% of children in centre with mothers who have a degree or higher		.24

Impact of prior attainment, child, parent, home environment and other composition of intake measures on code-related progress over the pre-school period.

Home predictors of oral language skills

Factors	Effect Size	
Prior Verbal Attainment	1.52	
Prior Non-verbal Attainment	.34	
Ethnicity	Minority group 5 vs. White	-.59
No. of siblings	3+ vs. none	-.17
English as an Additional Language	EAL vs. English as mother tongue	-.24
Mother's qualification level	degree vs. no degree	.24
Family SES	semi-skilled manual vs. professional non-manual	-.23
HLE Item 1: Being read to	daily vs. rarely	.27
HLE Item 3: Going to the library	fortnightly vs. never	.18
HLE Item 7: Learning activities with songs/poems	3 times per week vs. never	.20
Duration of pre-school		.14
% of children in centre with mothers who have a degree or higher		.19

Impact of prior attainment, child, parent, home environment and other composition of intake measures on oral language progress over the pre-school period.

REAL (Raising Early Achievement in Literacy)

- REAL aims to improve disadvantaged children's language development by teaching parents effective strategies for supporting their three year old child's pre-literacy skills
- Five group sessions and 10 home visits over a period of 12 to 18 months)
- Components include home visits; provision of literacy resources (particularly books); centre-based group activities; special events (e.g. group library visits); and postal communication between the teacher and child.
- The programme is based on the ORIM concepts (Opportunities, Recognition, Interaction and Models of literacy).
 - **O**pportunities to learn
 - **R**ecognising and valuing early achievements
 - **I**nteracting in learning situations
 - **M**odelling literacy behaviours.

Some promising programmes

- Reviewed by the EIF in recent publication

REAL (Raising Early Achievement in Literacy)

Strength of evidence rating: 3

Cost rating: 3

Most consistent child impacts: Improved literacy and letter recognition

Target Population: Families living in disadvantaged communities

Child's age: 3.5-5 years

Type of programme: Home visiting and group sessions

Settings: Mother's home and group

Delivered by: QCF 6 qualified teachers

Let's Play in Tandem

- A school-readiness programme for children aged three living in socially disadvantaged communities.
- Aims to improve children's cognitive development and self-regulation.
- Each family is assigned a project worker who visits the family in the home each week for 90 to 120 minutes. They deliver a pack of three educational activities to develop pre-reading and numerical skills, and promote vocabulary and general knowledge.
- The activities are designed to facilitate one-on-one verbal interaction and teach parents key scaffolding skills. The activities specifically focus on school readiness in terms of children's knowledge (name, address, colours), numeracy, listening and communication.

Let's Play in Tandem

Strength of evidence rating: 3

Cost rating: 3

Most consistent child impacts: Improvements in children's inhibitory control and other school readiness skills.

Target Population: Families living in disadvantaged communities

Child's age: 3 years

Type of programme: Home visiting and centre-based

Settings: Mother's home and group/preschool

Delivered by: QCF 6 qualified teachers

References

Dockrell, J. & Howell, P. (2015). Identifying the challenges and opportunities to meet the needs of children with speech, language and communication difficulties. *British Journal of Special Education*, 42(2), 411-428.

Hindman, A. H., & Wasik, B. A. (2015). Building vocabulary in two languages: An examination of Spanish-speaking Dual Language Learners in Head Start. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 31, 19-33.

Vanormelingen, L., & Gillis, S. (2016). The influence of socio-economic status on mothers' volubility and responsiveness in a monolingual Dutch-speaking sample. *First Language*, 36(2), 140-156.

Also see website on Effective Preschool, Primary and Secondary Education (EPPSE) Project at Institute of Education, University College, London



Group discussion

- How much influence does and should research evidence have on practice in this transformation area?
- What are the implications of the new evidence for service commissioning and delivery?
- What can evidence be designed to better inform local practice?



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Questions and comments from the floor with

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and

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