

Speechlink Case Studies

Child A

School: A

Teaching Assistant: K M

When Child A was initially assessed using the Speechlink screen he was substituting several sounds: 't', 'd', 'f', 's', 'sh' changed to 'g' or 'b'. This was happening at the beginning and in the middle of words so for example, a word such as 'food' became 'boog'. This was making him very difficult to understand and was causing a lot of frustration. When child A was assessed using the Speechlink screen it recommended several programmes. The main programme focused on was the 't/d' programme. Work was carried out over 10 weeks starting in mid September and finishing in December. Approximately three sessions of 15 minutes were carried out each week and T's progress was recorded each time. By the end of the 10 week programme Child A was able to use 't' and 'd' at the beginning of words and had started to use 's'. At the 10 week review Teaching Assistant, K.M. commented that she could now understand child A 'most of the time', compared to understanding him 'some of the time' at the start of the programme. Child A was reassessed by the Speech and Language Therapist in April 07. By this point he had established ALL single sounds in words and was using most sound blends. He was fully intelligible and staff reported that he had gained lots of confidence to speak to others in school, including in the playground.

Child B

School: B

Teaching Assistant: M. W.

When child B was initially assessed using the Speechlink screen this showed that he was not using the following sounds: 't', 'd', 's', 'sh', 'l' and 's' blends. This was happening at the beginning, middle and end of words and made him very difficult to understand, for example 'spade' became 'bage'. Child B was very aware of this and was not confident to speak in front of people and was therefore not contributing in class/playground activities. The Speechlink screen recommended several programmes including the 'l/y', 'f/v', 't/d' and 'sh' programme. Child B was seen three times a week by Teaching Assistant, M. W., and the Speechlink programme was actually extended beyond the 10 week period to give him extra time. In total 16 weeks were carried out; the 'f/v', 't/d' and blends programme were completed. By the time Child B was reassessed by the Speech and Language Therapist in April 2007 he was using 'f' and 'v' appropriately in all positions. He was also starting to use 's' initially and could use it confidently in the middle and at the end of words. He was much more confident to use blends and had started to use 'd' although the sound 't' was still difficult for him. M.W commented that she felt the individual time had been really helpful to Child B. He had gained confidence and was now a much happier more involved member of school. He had received lots of praise and encouragement from the teaching staff and M.W felt his self esteem had really improved as a direct result of his speech.

Child C
Teaching Assistant: H. F.

School: C

When Child C started the Speech Link programme he was a five year old with a severe speech sound delay. He had been referred to the Speech and Language Therapy Service but was discharged due to non-attendance. At the beginning of the programme staff commented that, 'the majority of his speech is unclear' and he was, 'very difficult to understand most of the time'. He did not use any of the long, hissy sounds, such as 's', 'z', 'f' and 'v'. He missed some final consonant sounds, so 'nose' sounded like 'no'. He also produced some quiet sounds (voiceless consonants) as noisy sounds (voiced consonants), so 'pen' sounded like 'ben'. His Teaching Assistant, H. F. worked through the Speech Link programme carrying out a range of activities to develop his ability to discriminate (hear the difference between) and produce sounds. At the end of the Speech Link programme reassessment showed that child C had made excellent progress and was using a wide range of sounds. His speech now showed a mild rather than severe delay for his age with only later developing sounds, such as 'r' and consonant blends, missing.

Child D
Teaching Assistant: J. C.

School: D

The initial Speechlink assessment, completed in October 2006, showed that Child D was not using the sounds 'l', 'r', 'sh', 'ch' and 'j' in his speech. Although child D was able to make himself understood a number of errors were made, for example 'leaf' sounded like 'weaf' and 'ring' was produced as 'wing'. His Teaching Assistant, J. C, worked with him regularly providing individual support and giving Child D encouragement to use the correct sounds in his everyday speech. When reassessed at the end of the programme Child D was using all the above sounds correctly in all word positions. School staff noted improvements in his confidence and literacy skills, for example that he was starting to segment and blend. Parents reported that his speech had improved greatly and that he was thinking about sounds before saying them and self correcting. Child D felt Speech Link had helped him to 'get good' and he had enjoyed the assessment and activities. School staff have also set up a mentoring system so he has been sharing his experience of Speechlink by helping another child who is beginning the programme.