SENSS
Hearing Impairment Team
Early Years’ Protocol
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- VISION STATEMENT
- PRINCIPLES AND VALUES UPON WHICH THE SERVICE DELIVERY IS BASED
- AIMS
- HOW THESE AIMS ARE PUT INTO PRACTICE IN OXFORDSHIRE
The families of babies with hearing impairment in Oxfordshire will be offered Early Years’ support from diagnosis. The Teachers of the Deaf providing this support will be well trained, qualified and skilled in facilitating the parent’s/carer’s ability to enable their babies to acquire the best language and communication skills they can in their chosen mode(s) of communication. The ethos of Early Support will be central to family support.
PRINCIPLES AND VALUES UPON WHICH THE SERVICE DELIVERY IS BASED

- Families have the central role in the development of their child.

- A child with a hearing impairment should be given the support necessary to allow them to achieve their potential, regardless of the level of their hearing loss.

- Early identification and intervention is vital in order to optimise habilitation programmes.

- Early identification will only ameliorate the effects of hearing impairment if there is good quality appropriate intervention.

- Early, consistent use of appropriate amplification is a key factor in the effective development of the child.

- A facilitative environment will help the child on the path to communicative competence.

- Working practice will emphasise a “family friendly” approach in line with the ethos of Early Support.

- When hearing impairment is the main identified difficulty the Teacher of the Deaf is likely to be the family’s lead professional.
1. To work in partnership with families and caregivers, to support, encourage and enable them to acknowledge, understand and manage their child's hearing impairment.

2. To work closely with Health Authority Paediatric Audiology teams to ensure a child with hearing impairment has access to appropriate amplification, that is regularly checked and assessed.

3. To give parents information about the range of communication options available to children with hearing impairment. To develop with families an appropriate way of encouraging communication to allow the child to be fully included in their family life and wider society, as well as to achieve their personal ambitions.

4. To establish alongside the parents the most facilitative environment to encourage the development of communicative competence.

5. To ensure a seamless approach to multi-agency working following the 'Early Support' model to ensure that the child's needs are fully met.

6. To work effectively alongside Foundation Stage staff to ensure that the child's needs are appropriately met.

7. To monitor and evaluate the child's progress closely, following agreed procedures for reviewing and report writing.

8. To provide appropriate Early Years' support that meets the child's agreed needs.

9. To prepare the child and family for school entry

10. To develop the knowledge base of Early Years' Teachers of the Deaf
HOW THESE AIMS ARE PUT INTO PRACTICE IN OXFORDSHIRE

AIM 1

To work in partnership with families, to support, encourage and enable them to acknowledge, understand and manage their child’s hearing impairment.

Objectives

i) Support and counsel the families through the initial stages following confirmation of hearing loss identification so that they in time come to acknowledge, understand and manage their child’s hearing impairment in a positive way.

ii) Provide appropriate information in an accessible format to empower families and caregivers.

iii) Skill and empower the family in their understanding of audiological information and in hearing aid management.

iv) Provide balanced information and advice to support parents in their views concerning communication methods for their child.

v) Enable the family to communicate naturally and confidently with their child by developing their knowledge and understanding of the factors that facilitate this within their chosen context.

vi) Offer parents contact with other parents of children with a hearing impairment.

vii) Offer parents contact with young people and adults who are hearing impaired.

viii) Offer parents a contact at the Oxfordshire Deaf Children’s Society.

ix) Offer parents a contact with Special Educational Needs and Disability Information, Advice & Support Service (SENDIASS) as appropriate
AIM 2

To work closely with Health Authority Paediatric Audiology teams to ensure a child with hearing impairment has access to appropriate amplification, that is regularly checked and assessed.

Objectives

i) A Teacher of the Deaf to follow up with the family within working days of confirmation of a child’s hearing loss and offer a visit within 10 working days if this is the wish of the family.

ii) Conduct regular electro-acoustic testing of amplification equipment.

iii) Provide feedback to Paediatric Audiology staff on the child’s listening development.

iv) Follow liaison protocols for children with Cochlear Implants.

v) Support and empower parents in their audiological management role.

vi) Work with the Paediatric Audiology team to provide a family friendly service for mould impression taking.

vii) To liaise with Paediatric Audiology about hearing aid / amplification device verification at interim times between regular appointments as necessary.

AIM 3

To give parents information about the range of communication options available to children with hearing impairment. To develop with families an appropriate way of encouraging communication to allow the child to be fully included in their family life and wider society, as well as to achieve their personal ambitions.

Objectives

i) Discuss with parents the range of communication options for their child and to offer the parents written information.

ii) To offer support to extended family members and the opportunity to discuss the child’s hearing impairment and its implications.

iii) To facilitate support from other professionals, such as the Speech and Language Therapists, where appropriate.
AIM 4

To establish alongside the child’s parents/carer’s the most facilitative environment to encourage the development of communicative competence.

Objectives

i) Provide advice and guidance as appropriate to the parents/caregivers in fostering communicative behaviour, enhancing their confidence in the skills they demonstrate.

ii) Share and where possible jointly complete profiles / assessments of the child’s communicative behaviour.

iii) Jointly set up Individual Family Plans to facilitate the development of communicative behaviour.

AIM 5

To ensure a seamless approach to multi-agency working following the Early Support Principles to ensure that the child's needs are fully met.

Objectives

i) Place the child at the centre of partnership working.

ii) Take on the role of lead professional with the family if hearing impairment is identified as the child’s main special educational need and if this is the wish of the family.

iii) After initial diagnosis make other agencies aware of our involvement with the child.

iv) Maintain direct links with other agencies as appropriate to the child and family.

v) Provide information to other agencies about the child’s functioning and needs as required and always with the agreement and full involvement of the family.

vi) Use the NHSP Interagency Group to support the monitoring of quality standards and good practice in the Early Years.
AIM 6

To work effectively alongside Foundation stage staff to ensure that the child's needs are appropriately met.

Objectives

i) Provide initial and ongoing training.

ii) Agree a level of support with the Area Team Manager.

iii) Liaise with and encourage families to be fully involved in the child's early years education.

iv) Contribute to and support delivery of the child's provision.

v) Assess and monitor the Early Years' setting and support the placement in requesting funding for acoustic treatment / Sound Field systems for example through the Access Initiative.

vi) Provide and maintain amplification devices such as Radio Aid Systems as appropriate.

AIM 7

To monitor and evaluate the child's progress closely, following agreed procedures for reviewing and report writing.

Objectives

i) Regularly assess children using the Monitoring Protocol and other assessments as needed (see Assessment Protocol) and to use the information gained formatively.

ii) Complete Family Plan with parents.

ii) Involve other agencies in reviews as appropriate.

iii) Produce reports for reviews, statutory assessment, Multi-Disciplinary Assessments and other agencies as necessary.
AIM 8

To provide appropriate Early Years' support that meets the child's agreed needs.

Objectives

i) Discuss and agree with parents the initial home visit frequency. Offer some visits where both parents and possibly extended family can be present.

ii) Offer support to attend the Pre-School Family Support Group held on a fortnightly basis.

iii) Staff to support parents in their choice of early years placements.

iv) Discuss and arrange with the family and placement the level of support to be provided and the balance of home: placement support.

v) Provide a service to families during term time plus on-call during school holidays.

AIM 9

To prepare the child and family for school entry.

Objectives

i) Support the family when considering educational placements for their child.

ii) Liaise with the placement to plan transition

iii) Ensure that audiological equipment such as a radio aid system is provided where appropriate.

iv) Provide training to the placement staff.
AIM 10

To develop the knowledge base of Early Years’ Teachers of the Deaf

Objectives

i) Encourage all Early Years’ Teachers of the Deaf to undertake continuing professional development in working with deaf infants and their families.

ii) For Teachers working in the Early Years to meet regularly to review the management of caseloads and support into the home and Early Year’s settings. To share good practice and to revisit protocols and written support materials including review formats.

iii) Encourage staff to undertake Early Years’ training modules relevant to working with children with hearing impairment as a Teacher of the Deaf.

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