



## **Early Years Improvement Fund – Application Guidance**

*'The most fundamental life skill for children is the ability to communicate. It directly impacts on their ability to learn, to develop friendships and on their life chances. More than 1.4 million children and young people in the UK have speech, language and communication needs. Language disorder alone is one of the most common disorders of childhood, affecting 10% of all children. In areas of social disadvantage this number can rise to 50%. Poor understanding of and insufficient resourcing for Speech, Language and Communication means many children and young people receive inadequate, ineffective and inequitable support, impacting on their educational outcomes, their employability and their mental health' (Bercow 2008, pg 3).*

The Fenland and East Cambridgeshire Opportunity Area (OA) was launched by the government in January 2017 as one of 12 OAs across England. Our aim is to raise education standards, providing every child and young person in the area with the chance to reach their full potential. Our Delivery Plan outlines our four key priorities in more detail, including:

*Priority One: Accelerate the progress of disadvantaged children and young people in the acquisition and development of communication, language and reading.*

The Early Years Improvement Fund (EYIF) is your opportunity to access funding to support collaboration across settings, develop your workforce, and implement new evidence-based projects to support the children in your care to succeed in the early years and beyond.

In this guidance document you will find information on how to apply, including eligibility and criteria, some useful resources to help you submit a successful application, and contact details should you wish to speak to a member of the team for further support.

### **Eligibility**

- All named providers must be located in Fenland and East Cambridgeshire (please contact a member of the team if you are unsure)
- Bids must include participation from three or more settings
- The total cost for the intended project or development plan must not exceed £10,000

**Based on identified needs in the area, bids that demonstrate the below criteria are likely to be prioritised:**

- Commitment to participation or support from the appropriate feeder school
- An element of parental engagement
- Support for children with:
  - English as a second language
  - Clarity of speech
  - Phonics

### **Support Links**

If you are interested in making an application and would like advice or support please contact:

Paula Durrant: OA Early Years Specialist Lead

[paula.durrant@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:paula.durrant@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)

Rebecca Pentney: Lead, East Cambridgeshire and Fenland Research School

Alternatively you can contact your Local Authority Early Years Adviser or, for Childminders, your CDSOs.

You may find it useful to think through the following questions and topics with colleagues and nearby providers when designing your bid.

**1. Where are we now?**

Research the current climate, locally and nationally. What is being said about Communication, Language and Literacy (CLL) in relation to attainment? Put this into context through analysing your own position (i.e. current cohort assessment/ECAT data). What does this tell you?

**2. Where do we want to be?**

Consider the improvements you would like to make to support improved outcomes for children's CLL. Be realistic and keep the ideas SMART. (Remember the project should be able to show starting points, your intended interventions and any progress achieved).

**3. How do we get there?**

What do you need to do to make your identified changes to improve children's CLL? Give an outline of the resources required for your project and how these will be used. Remember to demonstrate a good balance between resources and support for teaching/learning and staff development.

**4. Making the changes**

Consider how you will implement your project or development plan. You may want to consider a phased approach and/or a pilot with a controlled and non-controlled group to demonstrate impact of the project and support validation.

**5. Sustaining success**

How will you reflect on the outcome of your project and share its success? You will want to consider how you will use the results to further embed good practice and roll out the project to a wider network.

## Useful References

*Below are some useful links for further reading and research on the acquisition and development of communication, language and literacy. Whilst this is by no means an exhaustive list it should provide a good starting point for your own research in the subject matter.*

Bercow Ten Years on (2018): [Independent Review of provision for children and young people with speech, language and communication needs in England](#)

Better Communication [research programme](#)

The Communication Trust: <https://www.local.gov.uk/marmot-review-report-fair-society-healthy-lives>

National Literacy Trust: <https://literacytrust.org.uk/>

[Time to Talk: implementing outstanding practice in speech, language and communication](#) Jean Gross 2013

Beyond the 30-Million-Word Gap: Children's Conversational Exposure is associated with language-related brain function:

<https://mitil.mit.edu/sites/default/files/project-documents/Beyond%2030%20Million%20Word%20Gap.pdf>

EEF- Early Language Development October 2017: <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence-summaries/evidence-reviews/early-language/>

EEF- Working with parents to support children's learning December 2018:

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/news/new-guidance-for-schools-on-engaging-parents/>