School of Social Sciences
University of Dundee

Tracking progress in closing the language attainment gap in the early years:

e-LIPS

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Psychology

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Vocabulary and SES

Fernald, Marchman & Weisleder (2013)
SES effects not limited to vocabulary

- narrative skills
- syntax comprehension
- language processing efficiency
- complexity of speech
- grammatical development
- vocabulary

narrative skills

language processing efficiency

complexity of speech

grammatical development

vocabulary

syntax comprehension
Developmental trajectory

vocabulary  grammar  discourse

Language and Reading Research Consortium (2015)
Tracking early progress in language development
Fife Education Partnership

Each year, a cohort of 3-year-olds enters early years education with poor communication skills.

These children are “at risk” of difficulties:

→ in socio-emotional development
→ in schooling, especially literacy acquisition

Growing-Up in Scotland (GUS)
identification of population indicators

Fife Data
GUS Birth Cohort 1 at age 3 years

BAS Naming Vocabulary (ScotCen Social Research. 2016)

Mean Percentile Score

Low SES  High SES
e-LIPS

early Language in Play Settings
e-LIPS

appropriate for early years child-centred playrooms

useful for evaluating early intervention
e-LIPS

formalise the knowledge of early years staff

raise awareness of how to support language development
Co-produced research

Educational Psychologists
Early Years Coordinator
Nurseries and family nurture centres
→ head-teachers, early years staff
MSc Developmental Psychology students
University researchers
e-LIPS

List of observational guidelines
→ questions specific to children’s play activities and nursery routine

Expressive language
Saying

Receptive language
Understanding

Social communication
Doing
e-LIPS

reliability and validity
e-LIPS reliability

23 Nursery staff used e-LIPS with their new intake
- Researcher did e-LIPS with the same children

→ High degree of reliability between staff and researchers
CELF-Preschool 2

→ Pragmatics profile
→ Receptive vocabulary (Sentence structure)
→ Expressive vocabulary (Expressive vocabulary + Word structure)
e-LIPS validity

23 Nursery staff used e-LIPS with their new intake
- Researcher did e-LIPS and CELF with the same children

→ Researcher and staff observations showed strong correlations with findings from the standardised language measure – the CELF
Feedback about use in practice
Tracking progress

screens children for targeted early intervention

useful for evaluating early intervention

formalises the knowledge of early years staff

Flags up children in amber zone more quickly (especially in areas like understanding) - whereas before you would have taken longer to notice this
Professional practice

appropriate for early years child-centred playrooms

raises awareness of language development and delay

creates discussion around how to support early language
Thank you!
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- Auchtermuchty
- Pathhead (Kirkcaldy)
- Westfield (Cupar)
- Cairneyhill
- Pitcoudie (Glenrothes)
- Cowdenbeath
- Ladybird (Glenrothes)

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