

## **Elklan Let's Talk with Under 5's** **Course Evaluation**

June 2008

An Elklan Let's Talk with the Under 5's course took place between April and June 2008 in Artigarvan Primary and Nursery School. The course was held on a weekly basis in the evening from 7-9pm in the school premises.

It was facilitated by two Advisory Speech and Language Therapists, Shauna McCrea from Western Education and Library Board and Breege Gormley from Strabane SureStart. These therapists have been trained by Elklan and are certified to facilitate this programme.

The need for this course was identified by the therapists as they were offering input to the primary and nursery school at this time. The Primary school was participating in the WELB Speech and Language Project 2007-2008 and the Nursery School staff attended a 10 week Elklan Speech and Language Support for Under 5's course at Strabane Surestart.

An information session was held prior to the course starting. Fourteen parents attended this and nine parents completed the course.

The following information provides a brief summary of the course and the parents' opinions of it.

### **What is the Let's Talk Programme?**

This is a seven week course for parents and preschool staff. It provides information to help promote the communication skills of pre-schoolchildren. Participants on the course are eligible to gain Open College Network accreditation at level one but this optional.

The aims of the course are:

- To share information about normal speech and language development.
- To discuss ideas to help children learn to listen, understand and talk.
- To understand more about the communication difficulties that some children can experience.

The core topics covered in the course are:

- What is communication?
- Adult – child interaction
- Play. The link between play and language

- Understanding language
- Using words and sentences
- Asking questions and sharing books
- Helping children with unclear speech

### **Programme Requirements**

To receive their certificates parents were required to:

- Complete a minimum of five sessions
- Complete weekly practical activities with their child and record these in their guidebook.
- The guidebooks of parents completing OCN accreditation were marked by the SLTs.

### **How the course was evaluated?**

The SLTs devised a weekly evaluation form which allowed them to gauge parental opinion as the weeks progressed. During some sessions parents were asked to complete this. At the end parents were also asked to complete a general course evaluation provided by Elklan. Six out of nine parents returned the final evaluation forms.

We have attached a summary of some comments given by parents in these evaluations.

### **Summary and recommendations.**

This course was very successful. Consistent numbers of parents attended each week and very positive comments were received. Each session had a short tea/coffee break and this was useful for informal discussion between the therapists and parents. This is the first time this course has been offered locally in a school setting in this sector of the Western Trust/ Education Board. It was helpful that a staff representative from the Nursery and/or Primary school attended the majority of sessions.

On the final evening the School Principal arranged for a photographer from a local newspaper to take a photo of the group being presented with their certificates. This was published the following week with a short explanation of the course content.

During the course the books were funded by the school and parents who completed OCN accreditation paid this extra cost themselves.

In general individual schools/groups decide how they wish to fund this course.

Due to the success of this course the SLTs plan to offer this course to further schools in the 2008/09 school year.

**Breege Gormley**  
**Speech and Language Therapist**  
**Strabane Surestart**

**Shauna McCrea**  
**Advisory Speech and Language**  
**Therapist, WELB**

**APPENDICES:**  
**Weekly Evaluations**

Question	Week One	Week three
What is your overall impression of the session?	“ very worthwhile – made me appreciate the difficulties a child faces.”	7/8 parents gave positive comments e.g “ very interesting and made you think about playing with your child” but one parent commented “ there was a lot of information to take in”
Which aspects did you like?	“About how to talk to your child and what skills you need” “ Each heading was applied to a realistic situation”	“ the whole subject of learning to talk through play” “ splitting up into groups”
Which aspects did you dislike or find irrelevant?	None	None
Would you recommend any changes?	No changes for 8/9 parents but one comment re communication chain activity “ write down maybe the thing you talked about so you remember”	No

**Final Evaluation**

Question	Sample of comments
Do you think you have helped your child develop the ‘orange’ skill? ( one aspect the parent would like to help their child with during the course)	Parents focused more on knowledge they had gained during the course e.g “I found repeating back the words helps my child say sounds correctly” “no – but I found out he may be too young to say the ‘th’ sound”
Are you still concerned about the aspect of communication you identified at the start?	Only one parent said yes.
What is the most useful thing you have learnt during the course?	“ to stop and think about your child and the situation and take time and listen using clear speech” “ about using different types of play, to have special time and to stop and listen to what your child has to say” “ not to repeat mispronounced words and then ask him to repeat them”
What do you think about the course?	All parents gave very positive comments e.g “extremely helpful and informative”
What changes would you like to suggest?	“ None the course content, resources, exercises and facilitators were all very easy to understand and helpful” One parent commented they would like “ more time on helping children with unclear speech”
Other comments	None