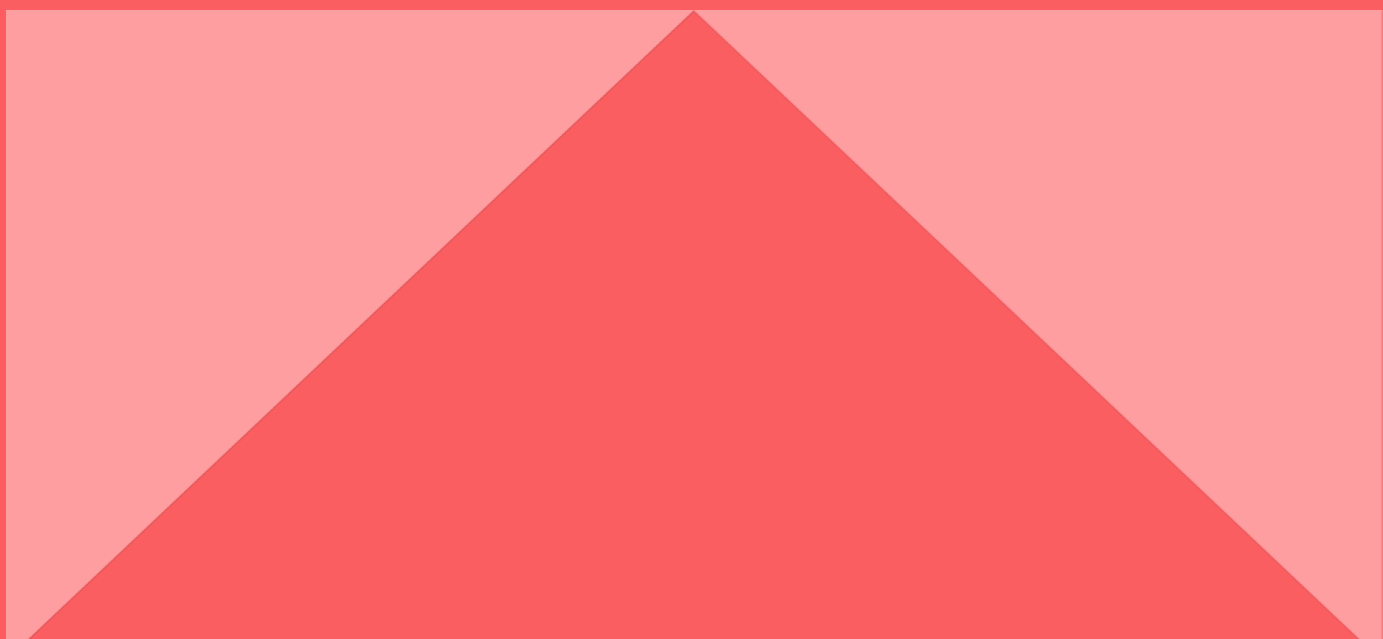
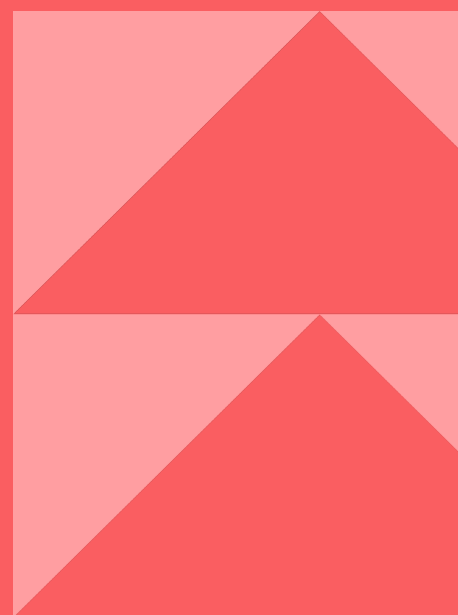


Janet Grauberg
June 2024



CECIL: Final Report

Coaching early conversations,
interaction and language





About the Sutton Trust

The Sutton Trust is a charity which improves social mobility in the UK through evidence-based programmes, research and policy advocacy.

Copyright © 2024 Sutton Trust. All rights reserved. Please cite the Sutton Trust when using material from this research.

About the author

Janet Grauberg is an independent strategy and learning consultant, specialising in children's services. Janet acted as scale-up consultant to the CECIL programme.

This report was produced in collaboration with Laura Barbour from the Sutton Trust and the IES (Institute for Employment Studies) team.

Acknowledgements

The Sutton Trust would like to thank the Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust Speech and Language Therapy team led by Bibiana Wigley; the Children's Integrated Speech and Language Therapy Service for Hackney and the City led by Karen Humfress; the Everton Nursery School team led by Dr Lesley Curtis; and the Communicate SLT CIC team led by Caroline Coyne. All the CECIL delivery teams have given their time, enthusiasm, and commitment to the project despite the obstacles of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the pressures of delivering services in busy early years environments. We would also like to thank all the Early Years practitioners and setting managers who made the project possible by taking part and demonstrating their commitment to improving the speech, language and communication outcomes for the children in their care.

Thank you to Laura Barbour, Early Years lead from the Sutton Trust, who has inspired and led the project from start to finish, and to Janet Grauberg, who has provided an objective and clear view as CECIL's scale up consultant.

The Steering Group have provided valuable insights and challenge: Doug Thomson and Binda Patel, Sutton Trust (Chairs), Derek Munn, Director of Policy and Public Affairs and Caroline Wright, Policy Advisor, Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT); Naomi Eisenstadt, Early years consultant; Professor Kathy Sylva, Honorary research fellow and professor emeritus the University of Oxford, Catherine Hillis, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation; Sarah Tillotson, Programme Manager, Education Endowment Foundation.

Many thanks to Dr Anneka Dawson, Dr Clare Huxley, Dr Alexandra Nancarrow, and Olivia Garner from the Institute for Employment Studies (IES) who led on the implementation and process evaluations and theory of change studies. They have been invaluable critical friends throughout the project and it has benefited significantly from their insight and expertise. Thanks also to Professor Kathy Sylva, Dr Ariel Lindorff, Allen Joseph, and Dr Katharina Ereky-Stevens from the University of Oxford for their thoughtful and diligent approach to the impact trial of the first phase of CECIL, despite the obstacles posed by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Thank you to Henrietta Lindsell for her support and faith in this investigative mixed-method research project, and to Catherine Hillis for being such an actively engaged and responsive funder. Thanks to the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, The Lindsell Foundation, Shine Trust and the Sutton Trust Trustees for supporting the project throughout. We are grateful for the opportunity you have given to undertake this work.



Table of contents

Executive Summary	5
Introduction	12
Why CECIL – the case for supporting communication and language in the Early Years	13
The CECIL Approach – A Coaching approach to Continuing Professional Development	14
CECIL Nottinghamshire and CECIL Hackney (CECIL 2020-2021)	16
Sustaining the Impact of CPD – CECIL Nottinghamshire Sustainability (CECIL 2021-2022)	19
Sustaining the Impact of CPD – Alternative Delivery Models (CECIL Preston, Nottinghamshire & Merseyside 2022-2023)	21
Discussion: Learning from the CECIL Sustainability & Alternative Delivery Model Projects	31
Conclusion	38
References	41

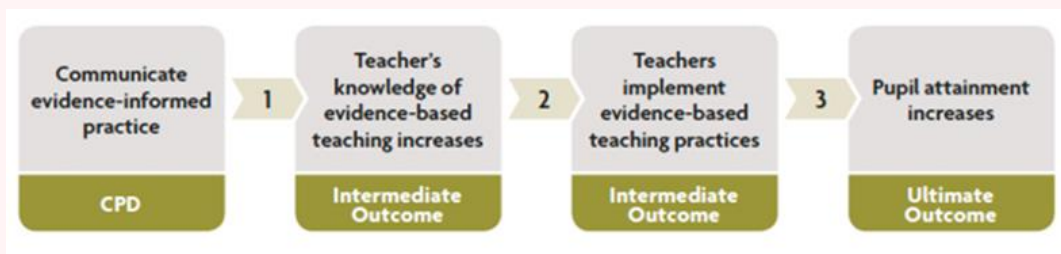
Executive Summary

The CECIL Programme

It is now well understood that early language skills are a critical factor in social disadvantage, and the case for investing in early language and communication as a route to narrowing the disadvantage gap among children is widely accepted (Waldfoegel and Washbrook, 2010; Law et al, 2017a). Early language skills are demonstrated to have long-term implications for future educational and work outcomes (Law et al, 2017b).

The Coaching Early Conversation Interaction and Language (CECIL) Project, which started in September 2020, has focused on coaching-led approaches to support the implementation of early language interventions, especially in Private, Voluntary & Independent (PVI) settings. This focus reflects the large number and increasing proportion of disadvantaged children receiving their early care and education in these settings (Stewart and Reader, 2021).

At the core of the CECIL approach is a way of thinking about continuing professional development (CPD) informed by the logic model in Figure 1 (Sims and Moss, 2017).



This logic model suggests that:

- Children’s language will improve if early years practitioners effectively deliver evidence-based early language interventions.
- Early years practitioners will benefit from training in evidence-based early language interventions, followed up by coaching support to build their motivation, confidence, knowledge, and skills to put these interventions into practice in their own setting. Delivering training alone is not sufficient to ensure effective and sustained implementation.

The approach has been reinforced by the Guidance Report on Professional Development published by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF), which stresses the importance of activities to embed practice (Collin and Smith, 2021).

CECIL Delivery

The first year of CECIL (2020-21) supported delivery of two projects delivered by Speech & Language Therapists (SaLTs), the locally developed Hackney Launchpad for Language and the Nottinghamshire “Let’s Interact” programme. The Nottinghamshire programme included a licensed lighter-touch version of the Hanen Learning Language and Loving It™ programme. Although the projects were considerably disrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic, requiring virtual rather than face-to-face interaction, evaluations undertaken by the Institute for Employment Studies (IES) and the University of Oxford concluded that practitioners reported increased skills, confidence, and motivation to support children’s language development, and reported using strategies to enable language interactions to be child-led (Lindorff et al, 2022; Dawson et al, 2022).

The learning from the first year indicated that practitioners valued:

- The coaching approach, which fitted with the challenging context of a PVI setting (tight staff ratios, limited time, space or resources for training, and an under-qualified workforce).
- The bespoke/responsive offer, in which the SaLTs adjusted the programme on offer in light of the settings’ needs and priorities.
- The expert input offered by the SaLT coaches.
- Access to resources such as handbooks or posters to reinforce and sustain learning.

The second year (2021-22) built on the learning from the first year with face-to-face delivery of Let’s Interact training and follow-up coaching support to nine settings in Nottinghamshire. The conclusions of the IES evaluation of this project were that the training and follow-up coaching had helped practitioners improve their practice, embed learning, and refresh their knowledge, and that additional support was particularly valuable in settings where a practitioner had moved rooms or left the setting (Dawson et al, 2023a).

In the third year (2022-23), the focus turned to sustaining the impact of training that had previously been delivered, in this case Hanen “Learning Language and Loving It™” delivered as part of the EEF trials programme, and to exploring other professionals taking the expert coaching role.

In the CECIL Merseyside project, a team of experienced early years teachers were the coaches. They were led by the head of a maintained nursery (Everton Nursery Centre), which subsequently became one of the DfE’s Stronger Practice Hubs. The settings reported effective embedding of learning and improved practitioner confidence and knowledge in interacting with children. The evaluation undertaken by IES noted evidence of children providing more words when responding to the practitioners (Nancarrow et al, 2024a).

In the CECIL Preston project, Language Development Workers (LDWs), who were experienced early years practitioners or teachers, delivered the coaching support, which was reported by practitioners to be helpful in sustaining knowledge and enabling it to be shared with other practitioners within the setting (Dawson and Huxley, 2024).

Discussion

The CECIL programme has delivered significant learning about what enables the effective implementation of evidence-based early language interventions in early years settings, including small PVIs.

Programme Delivery Enablers

1. In Nottinghamshire and Hackney, the NHS was commissioning expert SaLTs to support early years settings, but this is not the case in every area, and has now stopped in Nottinghamshire. There are other examples of individual Local Authorities or foundations funding early years language support, but there is no body or organisation with a national remit to drive improvement in early years language in every locality.
2. SaLTs and early years teachers offered excellent coaching support but are geographically limited to where they are commissioned to work, or by their existing commitments. The LDW model, delivered by Communicate SLT, a Community Interest Company, is likely to be a more scalable model of delivery.

Setting Level Enablers and Barriers

3. The support and commitment of setting managers was a key enabler of successful delivery, particularly in releasing practitioners to attend coaching sessions and other activities.
4. The main barriers to successful programme delivery were at the setting level, particularly relating to staff vacancies or sickness preventing practitioners from attending coaching sessions, lack of space to hold coaching sessions, technical issues in accessing online activities, and lack of facilities or funds to print resources such as posters for the setting.
5. A key barrier to implementing the early language interventions was high staff turnover. For example, the CECIL Merseyside project found settings where between the Hanen training completing in July and the sustainability coaching starting in September, both trained practitioners had left the setting. Two practitioners still in post was felt to be an enabler for sustaining the learning.

Enablers for the coaches' activities

6. The expertise of the coaches was a key enabler. Specifically, that they had knowledge of the relevant interventions, understanding of the early years context, and experience in coaching approaches.
7. SaLTs, Early Years Teachers and LDWs all offered a valued coaching experience to practitioners, although the LDWs worked more closely with their supervising SaLT in setting the delivery priorities and handling queries about specific children who might be experiencing language delay.
8. An important enabler for the coaches was the provision of supervision, either 1-1 or in a peer group. The projects all used some form of coaching record, and tools to audit the setting and to support practitioners in self-reflection and reporting of progress.

The programme also delivered learning about the key features of the programme which led to it being valued by practitioners and delivering effective support.

Key features of the coaching offer

9. The bespoke nature of the coaching offer was a key feature, with all of the projects offering some type of “co-design” conversation with setting managers at the start to adjust the coaching offer to the setting’s priorities, and flexing the support provided as needs emerged.
10. Flexibility in arranging coaching sessions was also important, and the offer to visit face-to-face rather than online. This enabled ratios to be covered, reduced reliance on digital access, and provided opportunities for the coaches to observe children whose language might be giving cause for concern in the setting context.
11. The projects demonstrated some of the key features of effective coaching cited in extant coaching literature, including building rapport with practitioners and creating an effective professional dialogue. The components of the coaching conversation described by Elek and Page (2019) of Observation, Feedback, Goal-setting, and Reflection were all apparent in the approach taken by the CECIL coaches.
12. The coaching sessions were supplemented by the provision of resources such as posters and handouts, or online folders.
13. Other activities which featured in some of the projects included visits to the settings where the coaches worked to see how they created language-rich environments and put Hanen strategies into practice, participation in peer networks, and support to share learning with other practitioners in the setting.

CECIL Programme Impact

The impact evaluation carried out by the University of Oxford for the first phase of CECIL identified a borderline statistically significant effect on child language development in Nottinghamshire. Although no significant difference was found in Hackney, this does not mean that the intervention had no effect, only that the evaluation was not able to detect an effect, which may be a result of the very small analytical sample size. There was no consistent collection of child level impact in Merseyside or Preston.

The conclusions of the implementation and process evaluations carried out by the Institute for Employment Studies (IES) in Hackney,

Nottinghamshire and Merseyside and the feedback from the Preston project were that all practitioners reported increased skills, confidence and motivation to support children's language development, and an increase in the use of key evidence-based speech and language strategies.

In the CECIL Merseyside project, the delivery team also said that practitioners self-reported increases in implementing learning from Hanen in practice, and in the CECIL Preston project the delivery team noted both an increased self-rated confidence score and an improved observed competence score.

Other outcomes referred to by the delivery teams themselves included some increases in parental engagement on language development and progress made by individual children who were reluctant talkers.

Conclusions

The CECIL programme has been valuable in demonstrating that a coaching approach can help to support the effective implementation and sustaining of training in the use of evidence-based early language interventions in early years settings, including in the PVI sector.

The characteristics of a coaching approach – flexible, responsive, and delivered face-to-face are particularly suited to professional development in these settings, which are characterised by high staff turnover, lower levels of qualifications held by staff, and lack of time and resources for training and development.

The learning from CECIL has demonstrated that the specific professional background and qualifications of the coach matters less than their knowledge of the relevant evidence-based interventions, their understanding of the setting context, and their coaching experience.

The evaluations of the CECIL projects demonstrated that the coaching was valued and led to increases in practitioners' motivation, confidence, knowledge and skills to use key language strategies, and to increases in the practitioners putting these strategies into practice during and in the year following training. Although child-level impacts were not systematically evaluated in every project, the CECIL logic model implies that children would have better language outcomes as a result.

There is much more to explore in this field – including considering how learning from training and follow-on coaching can be shared more

systematically across the setting and beyond the individual practitioners who were trained; developing a greater understanding of the offer and uptake of continuing professional development, especially in the resource-constrained PVI and childminder sectors, and what might enable it to become more widespread; and how support for early language development can be more widely available in the absence of a single body or organisation with a national remit to drive change in every locality.

Introduction

This document summarises the key learning from the Coaching Early Conversation Interaction and Language (CECIL) Project, led by the Sutton Trust in collaboration with the Institute for Employment Studies (IES). It builds on the CECIL summary published in March 2022 (Barbour, 2022) which described Phase 1 of the project, by describing the activity and outcomes of Phases 2 and 3 and pulling together the key findings from the programme as a whole.

Why CECIL – the case for supporting communication and language in the Early Years

The mission of the Sutton Trust is to increase social mobility from birth to the workplace so that every young person – no matter who their parents are, what school they go to, or where they live – has the chance to succeed in life.

Research by the Sutton Trust (Waldfogel and Washbrook, 2010) has contributed to the evidence that language skills are a critical factor in social disadvantage and in the intergenerational cycles that perpetuate poverty (Stewart & Waldfogel, 2017; Law et al, 2017a). There has long been compelling evidence that greater socioeconomic disadvantage is associated with weaker language skills at school entry (Sylva et al. 2004; Melhuish & Gardiner, 2018).

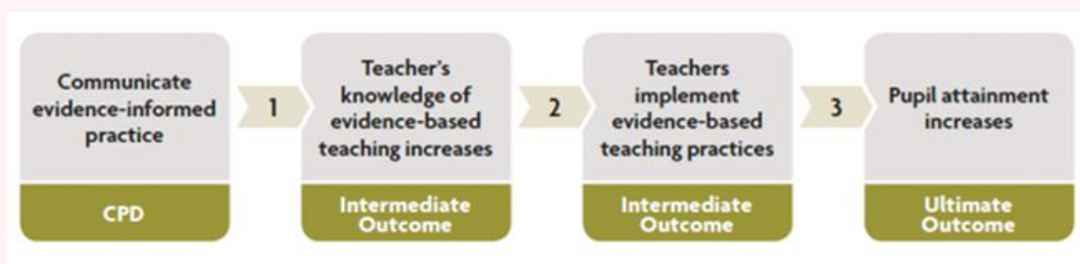
Once gaps are created early, they can be difficult to disrupt through the life span (Hutchinson et al, 2019; Andrews et al, 2017; Fernald et al, 2013; Bradbury et al, 2015). Vocabulary at age five has been found to be one of the best predictors of whether children who experienced social deprivation in childhood were able to ‘buck the trend’ and escape poverty in later life, compared, for example, to the social class mix of schools attended or later educational interventions (Blanden, 2006). The case for investing in early language and communication as a route to narrowing the disadvantage gap among children is well made and accepted (Law et al, 2017a), with early language skills known to have an impact on future educational and work outcomes. (Law et al, 2017b). This was evident even before the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which highlighted the negative impact of missing out (Bowyer-Crane et al, 2021: 9).

The CECIL project has focused on childcare settings, especially Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) settings, because this is where the majority of children receive care and education in their early years. In England in 2021, 68% of 0–4-year-olds were enrolled in childcare settings, and there were 21,600 group-based providers (PVI), 9,600 school-based providers, and 28,200 childminders throughout the country (DfE, 2022). Further, the proportion of disadvantaged children in PVI settings has been increasing (Stewart and Reader, 2021). Research has shown that the quality of these settings is key to ensuring good outcomes, especially for those from disadvantaged backgrounds (Meluish & Gardiner, 2023).

The CECIL Approach – A Coaching approach to Continuing Professional Development

The Coaching Early Conversations Interaction and Language (CECIL) programme seeks to explore how coaching can be used to support early years practitioners to embed and sustain learning around supporting children with their language and communication. It is conceptualised as an approach to Continuing Professional Development (CPD), which has enabled thinking about the way in which early years practitioners both learn about effective strategies to improve children’s early language and development **and** how they implement them in practice (see Figure 1) (Sims and Moss, 2017).

Figure 1: Programme theory for CPD



A similar conceptual approach has been taken by Sandra Mathers’ team at the University of Oxford (Mathers et al, 2022), which focuses on how to assess teacher knowledge – the two intermediate outcomes in the programme theory for CPD above. The Observing Language Pedagogy (OLP) assessment measure captures three facets: perceiving (the ability to identify language-supporting strategies); naming (the use of specific professional vocabulary to describe interactions); and interpreting (the ability to interpret the interactions observed) with naming and interpreting proving the strongest predictors of improved child outcomes.

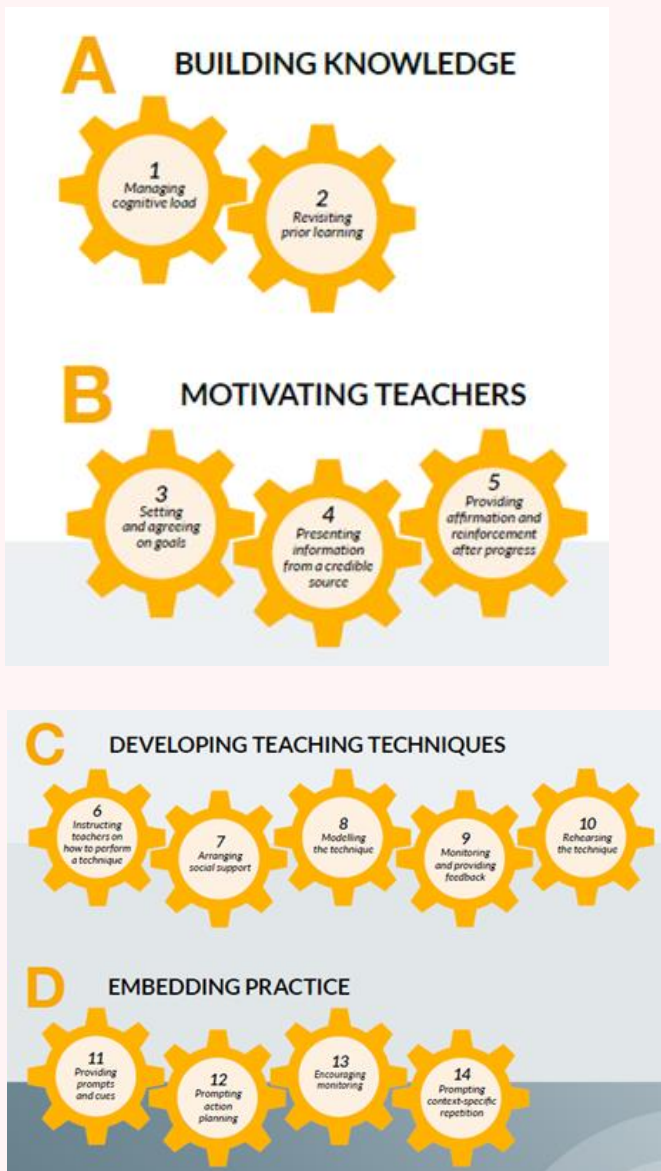
The CECIL approach has also been informed by a review of effective CPD by the Education Endowment Foundation and an associated Guidance Report (Collin and Smith, 2021). This recommends:

1. **When designing and selecting professional development, focus on the mechanisms.** Establishing the mechanisms of an intervention through a detailed theory of change process is key to understanding how the intervention could lead to outcomes.

2. Ensure that professional development effectively (1) builds knowledge, (2) motivates staff, (3) develops teaching techniques, and (4) embeds practice.

These points are presented as cogs which link together – grouping 14 key mechanisms under the four headings (See Figure 2):

Figure 2: Mechanisms of Change in CPD



CECIL Nottinghamshire and CECIL Hackney (CECIL 2020-2021)

The first phase of CECIL, delivered over the academic year 2020-21, comprised two projects focused on coaching delivered by speech and language therapists (SaLTs), exploring the impact on PVI nursery practitioners supporting early childhood language and communication skills, using the Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust Speech and Language Therapy team's 'Let's Interact' programme (Nottinghamshire CECIL) and the Hackney Speech and Language Therapy Team's 'Launchpad for Language' programme (Hackney CECIL).

These programmes were evaluated for impact (Lindorff et al, 2022) and to understand the implementation processes involved (Dawson et al, 2022). The learning from these programmes was summarised in a paper published by the Sutton Trust in March 2022 (Barbour, 2022).

The key findings of the two evaluations were:

1. There was a borderline statistically significant impact on children's language (number of words) in Nottinghamshire CECIL.
2. Those **practitioners who agreed to an interview reported increased skills, confidence and motivation to support children's language development**, although the practitioner survey carried out as part of the impact evaluation did not find any significant difference in terms of change in practitioners' self-reported confidence and skills.
3. **Practitioners who were interviewed also reported increased knowledge and awareness of individual children's language and reported using strategies to enable interactions to be child-led**, eg slowing down, balancing comments and questions, and OWLing (Observe, Wait, Listen).
4. Practitioners thought **the strategies and activities were applicable for both universal and targeted approaches, and straightforward to implement into regular practice**.

5. **The support offered by the SaLT team, including coaching and responding to queries, enabled practitioners to make the most of the programme.**

Barriers to settings participating in the interventions were:

1. Staff shortages.
2. Time taken – with staff not able to leave the room to take part in programme activities due to tight ratios and long days.
3. Technical issues in accessing online training, coaching and resources.
4. Lack of space to hold one-to-one coaching sessions.
5. Lack of funds to print resources such as posters for the setting.

Enablers for participating included:

1. Manager support to take time out for the programme or resolve tech or resource issues.
2. SaLT support – they were highly valued for their expertise.
3. Peer support – from other practitioners on the programme.

The main conclusions from the CECIL Hackney and CECIL Nottinghamshire studies were:

1. **The value of a coaching approach to professional development support.** The characteristics of PVI settings (tight staff ratios, limited time, space and resources for training, under-qualified workforce) suggest that conventional approaches to CPD will have limited impact.
2. **The value of a bespoke/responsive offer.** The Hackney Launchpad for Language programme provides a menu of modules enabling the setting to select the ones that fit them best. The Nottinghamshire SaLT team were able to offer additional coaching hours to practitioners or settings where it was felt this would be beneficial.

3. **The value of expert input.** The SaLTs were able to combine expert knowledge of early childhood language and communication, encouraging and supportive coaching methods, flexible and solution-focused approaches and strategies, resources and prompts to reinforce practitioner learning.

4. **The value of “static” resources such as handbooks or posters to keep alongside the SaLT input to reinforce and sustain the learning.**

Sustaining the Impact of CPD – CECIL Nottinghamshire Sustainability (CECIL 2021-2022)

During 2021-2022, the Nottinghamshire CECIL team continued with face-to-face delivery of “Let’s Interact” training and follow-up coaching support to nine settings in Nottinghamshire. The programme was adjusted to add two additional review observation sessions after the end of the training in March 2022 and a pack of resources “Let’s keep interacting”, referred to as the sustainability menu. This project was also evaluated by the IES team (Dawson et al, 2023a).

The findings chime very closely with those of the earlier Nottinghamshire and Hackney projects. In addition, the evaluation found that:

1. The additional coaching had helped practitioners to improve their practice, embed learning and refresh their knowledge.
2. Practitioners and managers felt able to continue to use all the strategies they had learned in the longer term, but they also said they would benefit from continued support from the SaLT team.
3. As things returned to normal after Covid, managers and practitioners said they preferred face-to-face delivery over remote delivery as they did not need to rely on a stable Wi-Fi connection, and it allowed for greater opportunities for interactive learning.

The project also identified a number of additional considerations for supporting settings over a longer time-period:

1. **Momentum from the programme and a focus on early language may be lost if a manager or practitioner leaves the setting or moves room.** Additional support should be offered to practitioners who did not take part in the programme or new managers when they start at a setting. Further emphasis and support on cascading learning for practitioners and managers would help with this.
2. **If a practitioner changes roles, additional coaching could be useful to support them in adapting their practice to a new age group.** SaLTs could also work with managers to consider how the

programme could support recruitment and retention, for example by creating new roles.

3. **High quality resources and the “Learning Language and Loving it™”** book should be referred to in the coaching sessions to keep them in the front of practitioners’ minds. They should also be accessible to all members of the setting to aid dissemination and sustainability. Some settings will prefer hard copy resources, others an online folder of resources.
4. **Ongoing coaching on a termly basis would keep the learning fresh and embedded.**
5. **Managers and practitioners valued contact with other settings to support learning.** This suggests that in-person delivery is more beneficial than remote delivery to enable peer networks to develop. This would ideally be integrated into other networks (e.g. those led by the Local Authority).
6. **Areas for future development included:** helping practitioners outline strategies for working with individual children and hosting sessions with parents to train them in the key language development strategies.

Sustaining the Impact of CPD – Alternative Delivery Models (CECIL Preston, Nottinghamshire & Merseyside 2022-2023)

The learning from the first phase of CECIL demonstrated the benefits of using experienced and expert Speech & Language Therapists to train and coach early years practitioners, including in PVI settings. It also demonstrated the value of ongoing coaching over a longer period of time to support embedding of the new practices into the setting. The design of the second phase of CECIL addressed two issues which built on this approach:

1. **Sustain-only activity following training in an evidence-based programme.** The first phase of CECIL involved the SaLTs training practitioners in key strategies to improve children’s early language, followed up by coaching to support embedding in practice. The second phase offered follow-up coaching to practitioners who had previously been trained in the Hanen “Learning Language and Loving It™” Programme. This intervention was selected following the publication of encouraging results from an initial efficacy trial, started by the EEF, but which had to be cancelled due to Covid and the decision by the EEF to carry out a large-scale efficacy trial through their accelerator fund.
2. **Alternative expert coaches.** Speech & Language Therapists are an expensive and scarce resource. The second phase of CECIL explored whether it was possible to deliver the benefits of coaching by using alternative expertise, such as early years teachers based in nursery schools, or experienced early years practitioners, supervised by SaLTs.

CECIL Preston, Nottinghamshire and Merseyside therefore focused on reinforcing key strategies from the Hanen “Learning Language and Loving it™” programme and encouraging practitioners to embed these strategies into their practice.

Using the language of the EEF review of professional development in education, the focus was on “D: Embedding Practice” (Figure 2, Page 15). In April 2023, the EEF published a version of this guidance report specifically for the early years which drew out two mechanisms for embedding change which are particularly relevant for early years settings (Education Endowment Foundation, 2023). These are ‘providing prompts and cues’ and ‘prompting action planning’. Developing ways to embed learning in settings is particularly critical in the early years sector because annual turnover of this group of staff is considerably higher, at 18% in group-based providers and 9% in school-based providers, than other professions (Dawson et al, 2023b).

CECIL Merseyside – Early Years Teachers from the Everton Nursery Centre

The CECIL Merseyside project was described in an implementation and process evaluation report from IES, published in March 2024, alongside a summary infographic (Nancarrow et al, 2024a, 2024b).

Key features of the project were:

1. 15 settings which had participated in the pilot for the Hanen Learning Language and Loving It™ efficacy trial, which had been delivered in Merseyside in the 2021-22 academic year, were offered the opportunity to have follow-on coaching in 2022-23.
2. 11 settings opted to take part, with two practitioners per setting invited to take part, ideally those who had received the Hanen training the previous year.
3. Everton Nursery School recruited five early years teachers who were also experienced coaches and who had been trained in the Hanen intervention to deliver the coaching support.
4. The Everton Nursery School Programme Lead provided ongoing supervision and support for the coaches, including peer supervision.
5. Each coach provided 4-8 face-to-face coaching sessions to each setting (approximately two per term) to support ongoing implementation of the Hanen approach and strategic planning for language support within the setting.

6. The coaches completed “notes of visit” forms and kept in touch with the settings outside meetings by phone / email, including responding to ad hoc queries.
7. Practitioners were encouraged to complete termly “Professional Growth Records” describing their experiences to use the Teacher Rating of Oral Language and Literacy (TROLL) record for assessing children’s learning outcomes.

Key findings from the IES evaluation (Nancarrow et al, 2024a) were:

1. **Do practitioners and setting managers find the sustainability work useful and are they able to incorporate it into their practice? Do they feel able to continue this in the longer term?**
 - a. Successful sharing of knowledge and strategies to setting staff and overall improved practitioner understanding of how to support children’s developing communication and language skills.
 - b. Effective embedding of learning was demonstrated in practice, and there was successful sharing of knowledge. Data from the professional growth records, completed by practitioners during the project, highlighted an increase in implementing learning from Hanen in practice.
 - c. The coach visits were viewed as useful.
2. **What are the barriers or enablers for nurseries to participating in the sustainability work?**
 - a. Lack of staff cover was viewed as a key barrier.
 - b. The general complexity of how early years settings were organised was also viewed as a barrier, for example in finding good times for coaches to visit.
 - c. A key enabler was the presence of effective leadership and management.
 - d. Allowing for practitioners to visit other settings.

3. What are the perceived impacts of the CECIL Merseyside project on practitioners' skills, knowledge and confidence?

- a. Increased practitioner confidence and improved practitioner interactions with children. Practitioners not only demonstrated improved knowledge of which strategies they were using with children but also used new strategies with children (e.g. commenting) or tweaked strategies they already knew. Specifically, data from the professional growth records, completed by practitioners during the course of the project, demonstrated that professional confidence, self-efficacy and openness to change had increased.
- b. Managers generally made more effort to engage parents, and there were some increases in parental engagement.

4. What are the perceived impacts of the CECIL Merseyside project on children's language and communication skills?

- a. Positive impact of the programme on children's language and communication skills (e.g. providing more words in responses).

5. What factors may need to be considered in scaling up the CECIL Merseyside project and sustainability work to deliver it in more nurseries in the future?

- a. The provision of staff cover.
- b. Face-to-face meetings preferred over virtual meetings.

CECIL Preston – the Language Development Worker (LDW) Sustainability project

The CECIL Preston project was described in a theory of change report from IES, published in April 2024 (Dawson and Huxley, 2024).

Key features of the project were:

1. Eight settings which had participated in the original disrupted EEF-funded Hanen trial (September 2019 – July 2021) were offered the opportunity of follow-up coaching. Five settings booked onto

information sessions and three settings opted to receive the support. These were all state-maintained nurseries in a school setting, reflecting the fact that the EEF had historically worked mainly with this group in order to track pupils' progress over time.

2. Each setting is allocated an LDW who delivers coaching and support and liaises with the settings.
3. LDWs are expected to be experienced early years practitioners or teachers who are familiar with the Hanen programme and strategies.
4. The LDW is supervised by an experienced SaLT who joins the LDW on some visits to the setting, works with them to develop a plan for the setting, provides expert/clinical guidance and resources and problem-solves as necessary.
5. The LDW provides an initial information session online and two audit and target-setting visits to the setting, together with the SLT, to build relationships and agree the focus of the coaching programme.
6. The LDW then provides individual coaching sessions to the practitioners in the setting which are tailored to the setting's needs and targets. The frequency is flexible – in the pilot settings received up to four visits, together with informal check-in conversations between the visits.
7. Each practitioner is given access to Padlet, an online resource platform, and each setting receives a copy of the Hanen Learning Language and Loving it™ Guidebook.
8. The coaching materials used by the LDWs included a coaching protocol packet, template visit report documents, the Communication Friendly Setting Audit, and competency and confidence rating scales to be completed post initial and final visits.
9. There is a final visit with the LDW and the SLT to reflect upon the support, the practitioners complete the confidence rating scores and a project feedback form.

CECIL Nottinghamshire – the SaLT Sustainability project

The CECIL Nottinghamshire sustainability project was described in theory of change report from IES, published in April 2024 (Dawson and Huxley, 2024).

Key features of the project were:

1. Sustainability support is offered by SaLTs who have expertise in early years language development as in coaching, to settings that have already received training in the Hanen Learning Language and Loving it™ or Let's Interact intervention.
2. There is an initial information session for managers and practitioners to outline the programme and share the resource pack, the "Let's keep interacting sustainability menu".
3. The sustainability menu signposts to key sections of the LLLI handbook, includes information about children's language development, and contains templates for planning and reflecting on video interactions and action planning.
4. There is an initial setting visit to talk to the setting leaders about their priorities, including how learning might be shared across the setting. This is followed by half-termly setting visits to review progress with the leaders.
5. Practitioners who received the Let's Interact training receive one coaching visit per half term to support them to develop their skills and share activities across the setting. Coaches use a coaching protocol to plan the coaching sessions, to support use of the tools, and to record key outputs from each coaching session.
6. There is capacity for additional support to be offered to practitioners who needed it, assessed by a coaching framework developed in earlier CECIL projects.
7. The coaches use texts to confirm tasks and appointments, are available for "Keep in Touch" calls when needed and provide copies of posters describing the key strategies.
8. Practitioners are able to join termly network meetings to bring practitioners together across an area to share good practice.

9. Practitioners are also encouraged to share the learning with parents and carers.
10. There is an online “closure” meeting with the setting, involving managers and practitioners to review progress over the year and agree next steps.

Key Findings from the Preston & Nottinghamshire Sustainability Projects

Shared features of the CECIL Nottinghamshire and Preston models include:

1. Delivery by expert professionals with expertise in working with early years, language and communication, as well as coaching specific expertise.
2. The importance of coaching/mentoring to embed and sustain knowledge and practice from evidence-based training.
3. Self-reflection being critical to continued progress, and as a skill for practitioners to take forward in their practice.
4. Regular contact (once per half term for Nottinghamshire model, monthly for Preston model) with flexibility dependent on practitioner need.
5. Discussions with setting managers to agree a bespoke offer for improvement work (setting action plans for Nottinghamshire model and setting targets for Preston model).
6. Encouragement of sharing learning with other practitioners within the setting (cascading plan for Nottinghamshire model, Language Lead role in Preston model).
7. Facilitating network sessions for settings to share practice with other local settings and create a community for peer learning, as well as being able to signpost to local resources, support/referral pathways and relevant training (termly for Nottinghamshire model, twice a year for Preston model).
8. Regular supervision for coaches where they can share their experiences/learning, seek support, discuss strategies, reflect on

their own practice, and draw upon wider experience and expertise;
and

9. Both involve ongoing review and development of the coaching protocol, to ensure that it fits the local needs and context, and incorporates the latest available evidence.

In reflecting with the delivery teams in Preston and Merseyside, a further finding was identified, namely the value of face-to-face visits. Coaches valued an initial visit to the setting to familiarise themselves, speak to setting managers, and plan a tailored approach, e.g. to provide strategies to support reluctant talkers. Practitioners valued the opportunity offered by subsequent visits to ask the SaLT or LDW for advice on supporting the language development of specific children, offering benefits to the setting over and above the coaching approach.

Learning from the two projects suggested some further refinements to the model would help future implementation which can be taken forward in any future CECIL models. These included:

1. Providing extra support for cascading or embedding learning in the setting, as exactly what is most helpful for this is still to be established. A promising model is currently part of an EEF efficacy trial – Elklan Communication Friendly Settings.
2. How to train new delivery team members who have not already been involved in delivery of a Hanen or related project, or have existing relationships with settings; as both of these factors help develop relationships quickly but are not always possible in a scaled-up version of either model.
3. Ensuring managers/headteachers are committed to releasing staff for the time needed, as this continues to prove difficult in the sector due to staff ratios, staff sickness, staff turnover and competing priorities.
4. Improving practitioner digital skills so that they can have some sessions online if needed – this was less of an issue than we saw in previous CECIL evaluations but still could be improved further.
5. Helping to create a culture which values language and communication and facilitates good practice (e.g. inclusion in

professional development plans for individuals, workforce development plans for the setting and setting priorities).

6. At the conclusion of the delivery phase of CECIL, the IES team updated their initial programme Theory of Change document to reflect the learning from the programme, as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Theory of Change for CECIL project



Discussion: Learning from the CECIL Sustainability & Alternative Delivery Model Projects

The second phase of CECIL focused on exploring two aspects – whether the benefits of a coaching-led evidence-based early language intervention could be sustained after the intensive training model had been completed, and how this could be done using a range of professionals including early years teachers, Language Development Workers (LDWs) and Speech and Language Therapists (SaLT)s.

There is learning from this phase of work about four aspects:

1. The context in which settings operate, and how this influences uptake and use of the sustainability support.
2. The nature of the coaching support and the expertise of the coach.
3. The activities of the coach and the other support offered by the project
4. The activities of the practitioner.

The key features of the CECIL sustainability approach are summarised in the Theory of Change (ToC) document in Figure 4 (Page 39). The two right-hand columns describe the impact that is being sought (children start school with better speech and language), and the outcomes in terms of the action that practitioners take to achieve that outcome, and the knowledge, motivation and confidence that practitioners need to take those actions. (These columns match to the intermediate outcomes and the ultimate outcomes in the CPD Programme Theory referenced in Figure 1, Page 14).

The CECIL Target Group and the Rationale for a Coaching Approach

The CECIL programme has focused on 2, 3, and 4 year-olds, particularly in PVI settings, because that is where the majority of children receive early years education and care, including an increasing number of disadvantaged children (Stewart and Reader, 2021). A coaching approach is well-evidenced in the literature (Lofthouse et al, 2018; Elek and Page, 2019; Yang et al 2022). The experience of the CECIL programme is also that the coaching approach, which offers 1-1 support to the practitioner in their setting at a time which is agreed with them, is a more accessible form of CPD than off-site training, because of the constraints around the staff : child ratio requirements. It is also an approach that is able to adapt to the varied level and range of qualifications seen among early years practitioners (Education Endowment Foundation, 2023). These factors are summarised in the left-hand column of the ToC document.

Programme Enablers and Inputs

A key learning from the CECIL programme is around the motivation and capacity to deliver an intervention such as CECIL to early years settings. Hackney and Nottinghamshire Speech & Language Therapy teams have historically been funded by their NHS commissioners to deliver limited support to their local early years settings, but this has now stopped in Nottinghamshire and is not a universal offer in every NHS area. The Sutton Trust and partners provided the funding for both the coaching team and the IES evaluators for CECIL Merseyside and CECIL Preston, but this is necessarily time-limited. There are examples of other philanthropically funded programmes such as the Thrive at Five programme which supports the delivery of the Nuffield Early Language Intervention (NELI) in Stoke on Trent, or where the Local Authority has taken the lead (such as the Early Talk for York programme).

A related issue is the availability of expert coaches – experienced professionals with expertise in both early years and coaching. In Nottinghamshire and Hackney the NHS SaLTs play this role. In CECIL Merseyside Early Years Teachers from a nursery school were the coaches for settings in their local area. They were hugely experienced, expert and valued by the settings, but were fitting in the visits to other settings around their responsibilities in their nursery school and therefore did not have the flexibility to travel beyond their local area. For CECIL Preston the Communicate SLT, a Community Interest Company (CIC) were contracted

to commission Language Development Workers to deliver the coaching and SaLTs to act as supervisors for them. This was a more scalable model.

The programme has also identified enablers and barriers at setting level. A key consideration is the role of the setting leader(s) in agreeing to the sustainability programme, and their willingness /funding capacity to support the trained practitioners in making time for coaching sessions and other activities such as network meetings, including providing staff cover if necessary. In terms of barriers, staff vacancies or sickness were repeatedly cited as reasons why practitioners were unable to attend planned coaching sessions and asked for them to be rearranged. Practical barriers that were consistently reported were lack of space to hold one-to-one coaching sessions, technical and skills issues in accessing online training, coaching and resources, and lack of facilities or funds to print resources such as posters for the setting.

A key enabler for the sustainability programme was that practitioners who had been trained in the Hanen LLLI programme were still in post. Staff turnover is a key issue in early years settings and in several of the CECIL Merseyside project settings one of the trained practitioners had left the setting between the Hanen training completing in July and the coaching programme starting in September. It was felt that ideally there would be two practitioners who had received training who were still in post.

The core intervention offered by the programme is the coaching sessions provided by the expert coaches. The literature on coaching in early childhood supports the findings of the CECIL programme that domain-specific expertise, i.e. knowledge of early language strategies and understanding of the early years setting environment are valued parts of the coaching offer, alongside experience in coaching approaches (Yang et al, 2022).

The CECIL sustainability projects in Merseyside, Nottinghamshire and Preston indicate that a range of professionals (Early Years Teachers, SaLTs and Language Development Workers) could offer a valued coaching experience to practitioners, although the Language Development Workers referred issues, such as advice on individual cases where speech and language delay or disorder might be present, to the supervising SaLT. A key skill for the coaches was the ability to adapt the planned approaches and use professional judgement to tailor the approach for each setting and work with the setting managers to agree priority activity. For the Language Development Workers this was done together with the supervising SaLT at the initial visit.

During the CECIL programme the role of supervision and support for the front-line coaches came to the fore. This was particularly a feature of the CECIL Merseyside and CECIL Preston projects where the coaches were senior practitioners, rather than the experienced and senior professional SaLTs employed by Hackney and Nottinghamshire NHS. The Merseyside project, which comprised five coaches working in eight settings, also developed a peer supervision approach. In all the sustainability projects the coaching team developed a suite of “coaching resources”, such as templates for coaching conversation records, tools to audit the “communication-friendliness” of the setting, and Professional Growth Record forms for practitioners to complete.

Coach and Practitioner Activities

A critical activity in all of the projects was the dialogue at the start of the project with each setting to understand the setting’s context and priorities. This covered the level of training already received, the characteristics of the children (e.g. those with English as an Additional Language), and any constraints in terms of time and space in the setting. In the first phase of CECIL the Hackney Launchpad for Language programme provided a menu of modules enabling the setting to select the ones that fit them best. The Nottinghamshire SaLT team were able to offer additional coaching hours to practitioners or settings where it was felt this would be beneficial. For the sustainability projects, each setting was offered a bespoke follow-on programme drawn from the full Hanen Learning Language and Loving it™ programme and co-created between the coach and the setting leaders. Depending on how many practitioners who had received the training were still in post, the coaches also provided refresher training on key strategies.

This flexibility extended to the delivery of the programme, with the coaches visiting roughly half-termly, but at a frequency and time arranged with each practitioner. One strong feature of the programme was a clear preference for face-to-face coaching sessions, rather than virtual. This was both practical, as the practitioners did not need to rely on a stable Wi-Fi connection, and perceived to enable greater opportunities for interactive learning. It enabled coaches to demonstrate language strategies with children and enabled practitioners to ask the SaLT or LDW for advice on supporting the language development of specific children, who could be directly observed in the setting. All of the sustainability projects also used phone calls for ad hoc check-ins and texts to arrange visits.

In terms of the content of the coaching sessions, the projects demonstrated some of the key features of effective coaching from the literature, including building rapport with practitioners in the settings and

creating an effective professional dialogue. Elek and Page (2019) describe the critical features of effective coaching for early childhood educators as below. These activities were all observed in the CECIL coaching sessions.

1. Observation – the coach onsite directly observing the practitioner interacting with children or online via watching video recording of interactions.
2. Feedback – giving both directive feedback containing suggestions for use of strategies or approaches, and reflective feedback, which is led by the practitioner and uses questions.
3. Goal-setting – supporting the practitioner to set future goals, using a collaborative and non-judgemental approach.
4. Reflection – involving discussion between the coach and the practitioner, perhaps based on a self-assessment or a video. This includes reflection on knowledge, beliefs and attitudes as well as practice.

The coaching sessions in the sustainability projects were also supplemented by the provision of resources or highlighting of existing resources (such as those which are part of the Hanen Guidebook) that the practitioners and settings could use. These included posters and handouts covering key strategies, and/or online folders containing supporting information. This is an example of providing “prompts and cues” as described in the EEF Effective Professional Development Guidance. In Preston and Nottinghamshire the practitioners who had been trained in Hanen and were receiving follow-on support were also invited to take part in peer networks with others who had received the training, which was valued.

Coaching is a two-way process, and the CECIL projects also learnt about the activities that the practitioners were undertaking, in particular putting the key strategies into practice and reflecting on their interactions with the children. This was sometimes supplemented by video recording of the interactions and self-reflection notes sent back to the coach. In Merseyside a number of practitioners asked to visit other settings, such as the Everton Nursery School, the well-respected maintained nursery school which employed several of the early years teachers who were the coaches, in order to see how they created language-rich environments and put the Hanen strategies into practice. (Everton Nursery School was later selected

as one of the DfE-funded Stronger Practice Hubs to offer further support to settings in the region.)

The sustainability projects also supported the practitioners to share their learning with colleagues in the setting. The way this was done varied from project to project, with CECIL Merseyside formalising the process through a “Hanan Buddy” system, the Preston project utilising the Local Authority-led “Language Lead” role and the Nottinghamshire project developing “cascading plans”.

Impact on Practitioner Knowledge, Confidence and Motivation, and on usage of evidence-based strategies.

The IES implementation & process evaluation of the first phase of CECIL found that most practitioners reported increased skills, confidence and motivation to support children’s language development (Dawson et al, 2022). It also said that practitioners “reported using strategies which enable interactions to be child led, e.g. slowing down, balancing comments and questions, and OWLing” - a key Hanen Strategy (OWLing – Observe, Wait, Listen). **This demonstrates that the coaching activities described in the middle column of the ToC are leading to both an increase in the practitioners’ knowledge outcomes, but also an increase in the usage of evidence-based speech and language strategies.**

This finding is repeated in the CECIL Merseyside project, which reported increased practitioner confidence, self-reported increases in self-efficacy (through the professional growth records), and improved practitioner interactions with children. It reported practitioners self-reporting implementing learning from Hanen in practice, demonstrating improved knowledge of which strategies they were using with children and also **using new strategies** with children (e.g. commenting) or tweaking strategies they already knew. The Merseyside team also said they had found that the professional growth records, completed by practitioners during the project, highlighted an increase in implementing learning from Hanen in practice.

Other outcomes from the CECIL Merseyside project were that managers generally made more effort to engage parents, and there were some increases in parental engagement, and that managers reported a positive impact of the programme on children’s language and communication skills (e.g. providing more words in responses).

In CECIL Preston, the Communicate SLT CIC delivery team said that practitioners reported an increase in their self-rated confidence score (12-13%) and their competence score rated by the LDW and SLT (10%). The LDW and SLT were also able to observe some of the short-term outcomes identified in the TOC, such as changes to the setting to facilitate a high-quality, communication friendly environment. During discussion of the findings, the Communicate SLT team reflected that there had been positive outcomes and improvement across settings with different levels of confidence and competence. At one setting where staff were quite experienced and familiar with the Hanen strategies, the LDW and SLT were able to help them with strategies to support children who were reluctant talkers, and all three children were talking by the time programme delivery finished.

Conclusion

The CECIL programme has been valuable in demonstrating that a coaching approach can help to support the effective implementation and sustaining of training in the use of evidence-based early language interventions in early years settings, including in the PVI sector.

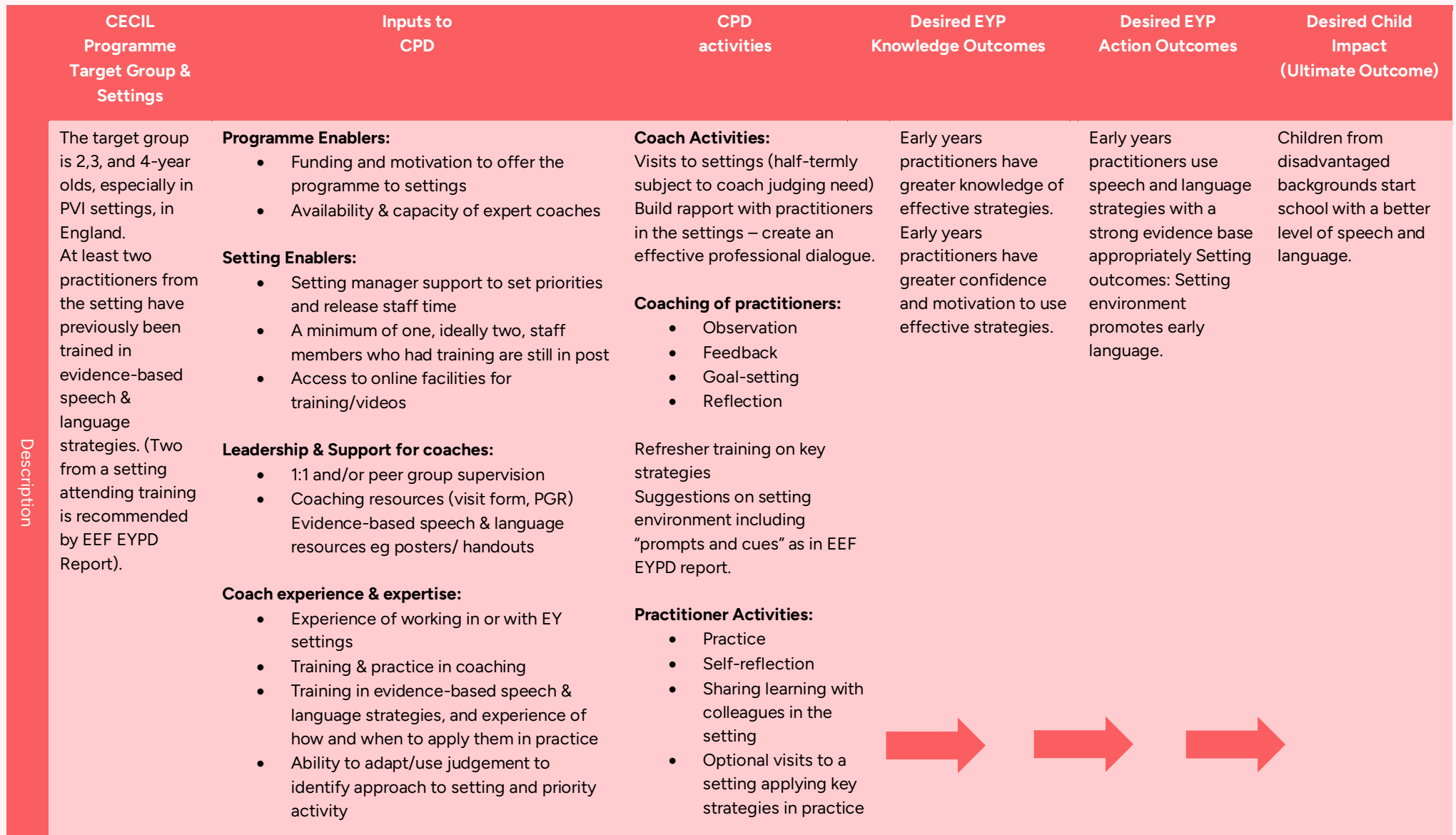
The characteristics of a coaching approach – flexible, responsive, and delivered face-to-face are particularly suited to professional development in these settings, which are characterised by high staff turnover, underqualified staff and lack of time and resources for training and development.

The learning from CECIL has demonstrated that the specific professional background and qualifications of the coach matters less than their knowledge of the relevant evidence-based interventions, their understanding of the setting context, and their coaching experience.

The evaluations of the CECIL projects demonstrated that the coaching was valued and led to increases in practitioners' motivation, confidence, knowledge and skills to use key language strategies, and to increases in the practitioners putting these strategies into practice during and in the year following training. Although child-level impacts were only researched in the first year of CECIL, the theory of change implies that children would have better language outcomes as a result.

There is much more to explore in this field – including how learning from training and follow-on coaching can be shared beyond the individual practitioners who were trained across the setting; how continuing professional development can become more widespread in the resource-constrained PVI sector; and how support for early language development can be more widely available in the absence of a body or organisation driving change in every locality.

Figure 4: CECIL overarching Theory of Change for sustainability



Linking assumptions	Rationale for CECIL	Rationale for Coaching Approach	Mechanisms of change			
	Why PVI, 3-year-olds and coaching	Why this coaching approach	Coaching intervention to EYP Knowledge & Confidence	EYP Knowledge & Confidence to Action	Action to Outcomes	Outcomes to Impact
			Why these activities will equip EYPs with knowledge & motivation	Why more knowledge & motivation, will lead to more use of effective strategies	Why more use of effective strategies will lead to better child early language outcomes	Why better child early language is important
	<p>3-year olds: We know that starting early matters, but there are no universal speech & language interventions for 2 year-olds with robust evidence.</p> <p>PVIs: 60% of 3-year-olds are in PVIs and the proportion of disadvantaged children in PVIs is increasing.</p> <p>Coaching: Evidence base for coaching in EY settings.</p> <p>Coaching: The practicalities of staff: child ratios make an in-setting CPD offer more accessible.</p> <p>It is a tailored approach – “Early years professionals may have a wide range of qualifications and experience.” EEF EYPD Report.</p>	<p>Yang demonstrates the value of expert, credible coaches able to foster a supportive relationship with [educators].</p> <p>Elek & Page describe the four components of effective coaching listed in CPD Activities.</p> <p>EEF Effective PD reports stress the value of embedding learning in practice eg through ongoing professional conversations.</p>	<p>The EEF Effective PD Reports identify key mechanisms. These include many coaching components such as setting & agreeing goals, modelling the technique, providing feedback, prompting context specific repetition and encouraging self-reflection.</p> <p>The IES implementation & process evaluation of CECIL found that most practitioners reported increased skills, confidence and motivation to support children’s language development.</p>	<p>The IES Evaluation of CECIL found that practitioners “reported using strategies which enable interactions to be child led eg slowing down, balancing comments and questions, and OWLing” - a key Hanen Strategy.</p>	<p>A review of early language interventions identified a number of promising approaches (Law et al 2017). The EEF is funding an efficacy trial of the Hanen Learning Language & Loving It™ programme, including in PVI settings.</p>	<p>The evidence for the value of early language to school success is well established (Blanden, 2006; Law et al 2017).</p>

References

1. Andrews, J., Robinson, D., and Hutchinson, J. (2017). Closing the Gap? Trends in Educational Attainment and Disadvantage. *Education Policy Institute, London*. Available at: <https://epi.org.uk/publications-and-research/closing-gap-trends-educational-attainment-disadvantage/>
2. Barbour, 2022, CECIL: Coaching early conversations interaction and language. *The Sutton Trust: London*. Available at: <https://www.suttontrust.com/our-research/coaching-early-conversations-interaction-and-language/>
3. Blanden, J., 2006. 'Bucking the trend': what enables those who are disadvantaged in childhood to succeed later in life?. Department for Work and Pensions, London.
4. Bowyer-Crane, C. et al. (2021). The impact of Covid-19 on school starters: Interim briefing 1- Parent and school concerns about children starting school, *Education Endowment Foundation: London*. Available at: https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Impact_of_Covid19_on_School_Starters_-_Interim_Briefing_1_-_April_2021_-_Final.pdf
5. Bradbury, B., Corak, M., Waldfogel, J. and Washbrook, E., 2015. *Too many children left behind: The US achievement gap in comparative perspective*. Russell Sage Foundation.
6. Collin, J. and Smith, E (2021). Effective Professional Development: Guidance Report. Education Endowment Foundation, London. Available at: <https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/eef-guidance-reports/effective-professional-development/EEF-Effective-Professional-Development-Guidance-Report.pdf>
7. Dawson A, Huxley C, Garner O. (2022), Coaching Early Conversation Interaction and Language (CECIL) Evaluation: Implementation and process evaluation, *Institute for Employment Studies*. Available at: <https://www.employment-studies.co.uk/resource/coaching-earlyconversation-interaction-and-language-cecil-evaluation>
8. Dawson A, Garner O, Nancarrow A (2023), Coaching Early Conversation Interaction and Language (CECIL) Nottinghamshire sustainability evaluation. Implementation and process evaluation. *Institute for Employment Studies*. Available at: <https://www.employment-studies.co.uk/resource/coaching-early-conversation-interaction-and-language-cecil-nottinghamshire-sustainability>
9. Dawson A, Williams C., Nancarrow A. (2023), The childcare sector: providers and workforce in England. From expanding childcare: Time for children, parents and family

- learning. Wright, J & Corney, M. (Eds). *Campaign for Learning*. Available at: [Expanding_Childcare_Time_for_Children_Parents_Family_Learning_Final.pdf \(campaign-for-learning.org.uk\)](#)
10. Dawson, A., and Huxley, C. (2024) Coaching Early Conversations Interaction and Language (CECIL) Evaluation Theory of Change process with CECIL Preston and Nottinghamshire. Available at: <https://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/CECIL-Preston-and-Nottinghamshire.pdf>
 11. Education Endowment Foundation (2023). Guide to Effective Professional Development in the Early Years. Available at <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/support-for-schools/evidence-for-the-early-years/early-years-evidence-store/guide-to-effective-professional-development-in-the-early-years>
 12. DfE (2022), Childcare and early years providers survey: 2022. *Department for Education: London*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/childcare-and-early-years-providers-survey-20212>
 13. Elek, C. and Page, J., 2019. Critical features of effective coaching for early childhood educators: A review of empirical research literature. *Professional Development in Education*, 45(4), pp.567-585.
 14. Fernald, A., Marchman, V., and Weisleder, A. (2013). SES differences in language processing skill and vocabulary are evident at 18 months. *Developmental Science*, 16, pp. 234-48. <https://doi.org/10.1111/desc.12019>
 15. Hutchinson, J. et al. (2019) Education in England: Annual Report 2019, *Education Policy Institute: London*. Available at: <https://www.epi.org.uk/publications-and-research/annualreport-2019>
 16. Law J, Charlton J, Dockrell J, Gascoigne M, McKean C, Theakston A (2017), Early language development: Needs, provision, and intervention for preschool children from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds. *Education Endowment Foundation: London*. Available at: https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Law_et_al_Early_Language_Development_final.pdf
 17. Law, J., Charlton, J., Asmussen, K. (2017). Language as a wellbeing indicator. *Early Intervention Foundation, London*. Available at: <https://www.eif.org.uk/report/language-as-a-child-wellbeing-indicator>

18. Lindorff, A., Sylva, K., Ereky-Stevens, K., & Joseph, A. (2022). Coaching Early Conversation, Interaction and Language (CECIL) Impact evaluation. *The Sutton Trust: London*. <https://ora.ox.ac.uk/objects/uuid:e2ac208a-e2fd-4340-8e70-a2b25a0fa6b8>
19. Lofthouse, R.M., Flanagan, J. and Wigley, B., 2018. Talking it through: using specialist coaching to enhance teachers' knowledge from speech and language sciences. *Impact: Journal of the Chartered College of Teaching*, (2), pp.85-88.
20. Mathers, S., Malmberg, L.E., Lindorff, A.M. & Gardiner, J. (2022) Early educators' knowledge of early language pedagogy: How can it be measured and does it matter for child language outcomes? *Nuffield Foundation: London*. Available at <https://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Full-report-Early-Educators-Knowledge-of-Early-Language-Pedagogy-October-2022.pdf>
21. Melhuish, E. and Gardiner, J., 2018. Study of Early Education and Development (SEED): Study of quality of early years provision in England (revised). *Research brief (London, Department for Education)*, pp.1-2.
22. Melhuish E, Gardiner J (2023), Equal hours? The impact of hours spent in early years provision on children's outcomes at age five by socio-economic background. *The Sutton Trust: London*. Available at: <https://www.suttontrust.com/our-research/equal-hours/>
23. Nancarrow, A., Garner O., Dawson A. (2024) Coaching Early Conversations Interaction and Language (CECIL) Merseyside Evaluation. Institute for Employment Studies. Available at <https://www.employment-studies.co.uk/resource/coaching-early-conversations-interaction-and-language-cecil-merseyside-evaluation>
24. Nancarrow, A., Garner O., Dawson A. (2024) Coaching Early Conversations Interaction and Language (CECIL) Merseyside Evaluation Infographic. Institute for Employment Studies. Available at <https://www.employment-studies.co.uk/resource/coaching-early-conversations-interaction-and-language-cecil-merseyside-evaluation-0>
25. Sims, S. & Moss, G. "Teacher journal clubs: How do they work and can they increase evidence-based practice? *Impact: Journal of the Chartered College of Teaching* (1) p1ff.
26. Stewart, K. and Reader, M., 2021. The Conservative governments' record on early childhood from May 2015 to pre-COVID 2020: policies, spending and outcomes. *The London School of Economics and Political Science: London*. https://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/case/_new/publications/abstract/?index=7717
27. Stewart K, Waldfogel J (2017), Closing Gaps Early. *The Sutton Trust: London*. Available at: <https://www.lse.ac.uk/business/consulting/assets/documents/closing-gaps-early.pdf>

28. Sylva, K., Melhuish, E., Sammons, P., Siraj-Blatchford, I. and Taggart, B., 2004. The effective provision of pre-school education (EPPE) project technical paper 12: The final report-effective pre-school education.
29. Waldfogel, J. and Washbrook, E., 2010. Low income and early cognitive development in the UK. *The Sutton Trust: London*. Available at: <https://www.suttontrust.com/our-research/low-income-early-cognitive-development-u-k/>
30. Yang, W., Huang, R., Su, Y., Zhu, J., Hsieh, W.Y. and Li, H., 2022. Coaching early childhood teachers: A systematic review of its effects on teacher instruction and child development. *Review of Education*, 10(1), p.e3343.



The Sutton Trust
9th Floor
Millbank Tower
21-24 Millbank
London, SW1P 4QP

T: 020 7802 1660

F: 020 7802 1661

W: www.suttontrust.com

Twitter: [@suttontrust](https://twitter.com/suttontrust)