



Small Circles Project

Petal DuVerney-Ruse (Area SENCO)
Cherry Cornell and Hadassah Lev
(Surestart Speech and Language
Therapists)



Outline of the Workshop

- Introduction, background and aims
- Training, project outline, language group sessions-content and structure
- Outcomes, questions and workshop activity.



Introduction

What is the Barnet Small Circles Language Group project?

- An accredited training package for early years settings
- Model of joint working
- Support for children with language and communication needs in pre-school settings.



Background

- Pilot project phase 1 –
2005-2006
- Pilot project phase 2 –
2006-2008




Why is there a need for this project?

“Language, Without Question, Is the Key to Learning”


(Ernest L. Boyer, 1999)

a Leading Educationalist in the US and Former President of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.



“Effective Oral Language Skills Are the Building Blocks on Which Subsequent Literacy and Numeracy Development Is Based. Without Solid Foundations in Language and Communication Skills, Children Run the Risk of School Failure, Low Self Esteem and Poor Social Skills”.

(From “The Cost to the Nation of Children’s Poor Communication”. – A Report Produced by I Can in 2006.)



A Basic Skills Agency survey, carried out in 2002, showed that school staff believe that around 50% of children UK wide start school lacking the skills that are vital for an effective start to learning.

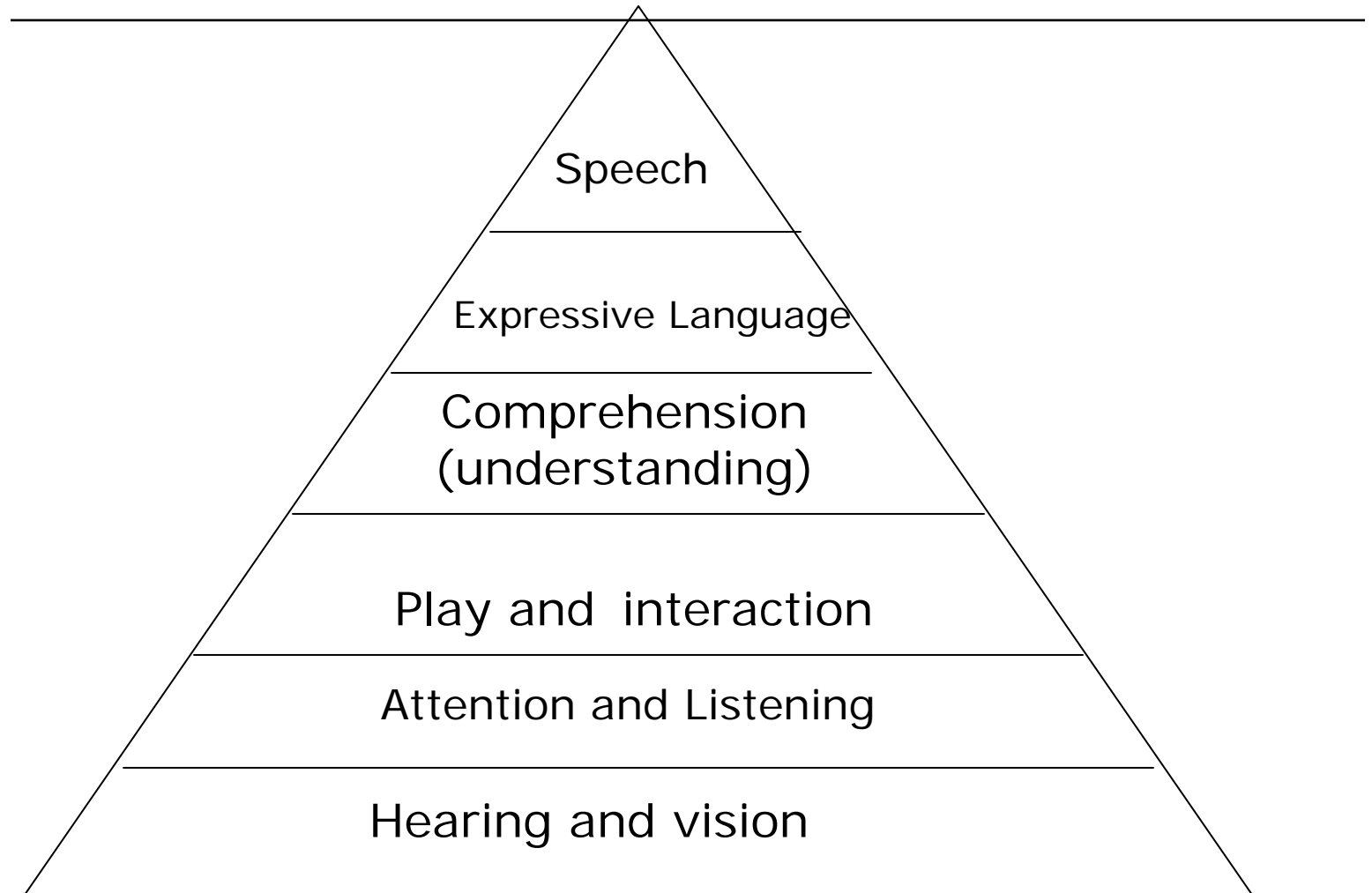


Aims

The Small Circles Project's aims are:

- To provide early intervention for children with language and communication needs.
- To provide training in developing childrens' attention and listening and communication skills for early years practitioners.

Pyramid of Communication





Small Circles Training

The 6 week block of sessions trains practitioners in:

- Identification
- Planning and running language groups
- Specific strategies
- Keeping records of children's progress



Small Circles Project Outline

- Introductory Meeting
- Weeks 1 and 2 planned and run by Speech and Language Therapist or Area SENCO observed by Early Years Practitioner
- Weeks 3 and 4 planned and run jointly by SLT or Area SENCO and Early Years Practitioner
- Weeks 5 and 6 planned and run by Early Years Practitioner
- Follow up meeting and observation of a further group



Small Circles Sessions

The main focus of sessions is on:

- Developing attention and listening skills
- Developing comprehension skills
- Improving expressive language skills
- Improving social interaction skills



Small Circles Group Structure

- Welcome Song (Hello Song)
- Group Rules (Group Rules)
- Ice Breaker
- Attention and Listening and Comprehension Game (Syllables Game)
- Expressive Language Game Interactive Story (Springy Spiders)

- Goodbye Song



Ice Breaker Activity

- Pass the teddy
- Pass the bean bag
- Changing places
- Name games



Group Rules

- Good Looking
- Good Listening
- Good Sitting
- Good Waiting



Attention & Listening / Comprehension Activity

- Musical instruments
- Sound lotto
- Clapping syllables
- Following Instructions
- Fishing
- Springy spiders
- Post box



Expressive Language Activity

- Feely bag
- Springy spiders
- Fishing
- Children giving Instructions
- Shopping Game



Interactive Story

- Where's Spot
- Dear Zoo
- Spot Goes to the Farm
- Noisy Farm
- My Presents
- Oh Dear



Small Circles Project

Outcome One

For target children to make progress in:

- Attention and listening
- Comprehension
- Expressive language
- Turn taking/waiting
- Social use of language
- Participating in group activities
- Confidence



Small Circles Project

Outcome Two

To train setting staff:

- To run language groups without outside agencies
- To build staff's confidence to run language groups
- To increase language learning opportunities in the pre-school setting
- To raise language levels so that children have the language skills they need to access learning in Reception.



Workshop Activities

- Choose an **activity** that could be played during a Small Circles session and note which language skills they would develop. (You may wish to refer to the Language Pyramid)
- Use the planning sheets provided to **create a Small Circles language group session** of your own.