Learning Language and Loving It (TM) - The Hanen Program® for Early Childhood Educators Pilot

The Hanen Centre is a Canadian charity that has developed a suite of programmes to support language development. The Learning Language and Loving It programme (LLLI) provides training for Early Years practitioners to promote language and early literacy. It provides practical strategies for helping all children in the classroom build language and social skills. These strategies include encouraging children to initiate and engage in conversational interaction, encouraging extended individual and group conversations between adults and children, and modelling more sophisticated language to expand the child’s oral language skills and facilitate the development of abstract language.

In this project, LLLI will be delivered by Communicate SLT CIC, a Blackpool-based organisation with previous experience of delivering Hanen programmes. Hanen-certified trainers will deliver training to two groups of around 18 Early Years Professionals. Training consists of eight, 2.5-hour group training sessions (total 20 hours) and six individual video feedback sessions. In the video feedback sessions, EY professionals’ interactions with children are videotaped by and reviewed with the programme tutor.

Why are we funding it?

This programme was recommended for further evaluation by the recent EEF-funded review of early language interventions. It appears to be well-informed by research on child development and early language. There have been several trials of the programme internationally, but no trials in the UK.

How are we evaluating it?

We have appointed a team from NatCen, led by Lydia Marshall, to evaluate the programme. This pilot will focus on testing the feasibility of the programme in the UK context, and the delivery model proposed by the delivery team. In February 2019, the evaluation team will provide a short report summarising pilot findings to date. This will be used to decide whether to start recruiting for a full trial (the trial would start in September 2019).

When will the evaluation report be due?

If the EEF decides to fund an efficacy trial, we will not publish a report on the pilot immediately. In this case we will publish a description of the pilot with the efficacy trial report at a later date. If we do not fund an efficacy trial, we will publish a report on the pilot project in summer 2021.