

Acceptability and feasibility of Talking 2gether: Collaborative Health Visitor and Early Years Practitioner implementation of an early identification and intervention program

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Abstract

Background: Talking 2gether aims to improve the language, and communication skills of children aged 2-3; 06 years by increasing the frequency with which children experience responsive, contingent interaction (RCI). This project explored the acceptability and feasibility of a collaborative model of Talking 2gether, integrating early years practitioners (EYPs) with health visiting teams (HV) to deliver intervention with parents of children identified as at-risk of language difficulties.

Methods: EYPs and HVs were trained in the intervention which involves shared decision-making, parent coaching, and the use of video to model specific RCI behaviours. Four settings delivered the intervention to parents over 6 weekly group sessions, and HVs delivered 4 additional home visits for children most at-risk. Survey and interview feedback was collected from practitioners and parents. Quantitative data was analysed descriptively, and deductive and inductive analyses applied to qualitative data guided by the Theoretical Framework of Acceptability (Sekhon et al 2017) and feasibility constructs outlined in Bowen et al (2009).

Results: Feedback from stakeholders was overwhelmingly positive; the model was acceptable and feasible for all. Practitioners saw the value for families and reported it met a significant need. All groups reported they enjoyed attending or delivering the sessions, the resources were useful, and the techniques were appropriate and easy to carry out. Delivery was manageable for settings as long as significant unexpected staffing issues did not occur. However, there was some variability in degree of collaboration between EYPs and HVs. Additional reported gains in practitioner/parent use of RCI and children's language were identified as well as benefits to parent-practitioner relationships.

Conclusions: The collaborative model of Talking 2gether has demonstrated acceptability and feasibility for a range of stakeholders which has implications for the provision of early language intervention and integrated support for families. Further work is required to develop collaboration between EYPs and HVs.