

### Introduction

The overall aim of this research is to **develop an intervention** for pre-school children with a speech and language disorder. This group are at risk of long-term needs relating to language, literacy and mental health<sup>1,2</sup>. However, there is currently a dearth of evidence-based interventions specifically developed for their clinical profile<sup>3</sup>.

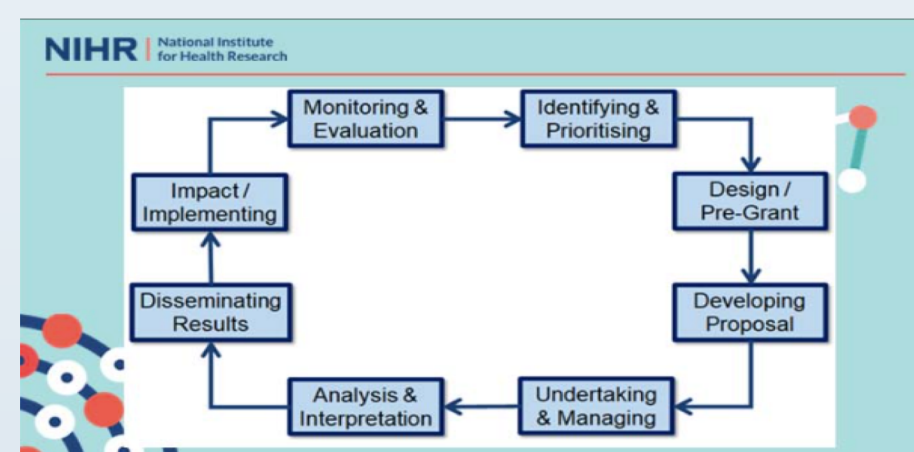
**Parents play a vital role** within the pre-school speech and language therapy process. Together with support from their Speech and Language Therapist (SaLT), they are able to support their child's communication skills within the home environment<sup>4</sup>.



**Picture 1.** Parents are experts by experience

Identifying relevant outcomes is integral to any intervention development project. Within the field of speech and language disorder, a wide range of outcomes may be targeted. Key stakeholders, including parents, are ideally placed to support the researcher in identifying the **outcomes that really matter** to children and their families<sup>5</sup>. This is particularly important in the early stages of the intervention development process (*picture 2*), as identified outcomes will inform all **future development work**.

**Picture 2.** Research cycle: current focus- the design/pre-grant stage



### Aims

The aim of this **Patient and Public Involvement (PPIE)** project was to **identify outcomes to include in an intervention for pre-school children with a speech and language disorder**

### Design

Following a successful application for RDS South East Public Involvement Funds (PIF), the researcher recruited three parents with relevant lived experience via the charity NAPLIC. The researcher spoke with each parent individually over the phone before inviting them to participate in an online group meeting via Microsoft teams (*picture 3*).



**Picture 3.** Parents were given the opportunity to practice using Microsoft teams with the researcher beforehand

In a pre-session activity, parents were asked to **prioritise therapy outcomes** based on those stated in recent research<sup>6</sup>, with the additional option to suggest their own. Their responses were ranked in frequency by the researcher and used as a basis for discussion in the **online meeting**. During the meeting the researcher facilitated discussion by using open ended questions and by writing down comments on a shared '**padlet**' board (*picture 4*).

Following the meeting, outcome measures of potential relevance were then identified by the researcher and presented for further feedback at the next session.



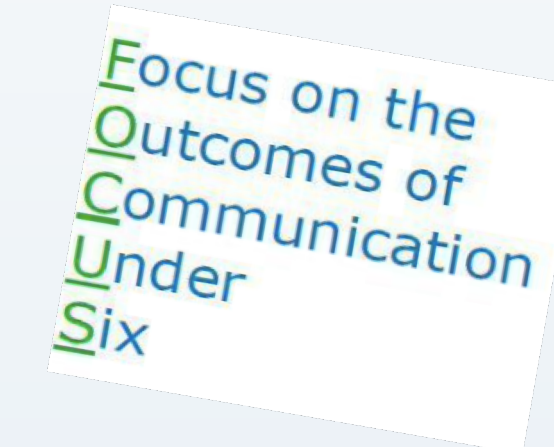
**Picture 4.** All meeting participants could view the 'live' padlet board, which was added to as the discussion progressed

### Findings

- All parents prioritised **participation** and **activity**-based outcomes rather than those related to speech and language skill (i.e. impairment).
- An “**increase in the child's confidence**” was selected as a very important outcome by all parents.
- The parents discussed how a child's confidence may influence many areas, including their **participation** in nursery activities and **engagement in the therapy process**.
- The panel agreed that **Therapy Outcome Measures (TOMs)** (*picture 5*) and the **Focus on the Outcomes of Communication Under Six (FOCUS)** (*picture 6*) could be suitable when measuring the effectiveness of the proposed intervention, as they both measure elements of child confidence and participation.



**Picture 5.** TOMs has historically been used in occupational therapy and physiotherapy as well as speech and language therapy<sup>7</sup>



**Picture 6.** The FOCUS is a speech-language specific measure based on the International classification of functioning (ICF)<sup>8</sup>

### Conclusion

By conducting this PPIE activity, parents have helped the researcher in identifying **meaningful outcomes** and corresponding measures for this intervention. Going forward, this ensures that the intervention will be relevant for those who it seeks to support.

### Overall contribution to knowledge

These findings serve as a reminder of the importance of engaging with key stakeholders to identify meaningful outcomes across the spectrum of healthcare interventions.

### Contact

Lucy Rodgers  
Specialist Speech and Language Therapist  
HEE-NIHR ICA Pre-doctoral Clinical Academic Fellow  
Email: lucy.rodgers4@nhs.net  
Twitter: @lucy\_r\_sl

### References

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