



Top tips for delivering *Early Talk Boost* over the Summer term 2020

This guidance should be shared directly with practitioners involved in the delivery of the intervention, perhaps during training, via email or at a staff briefing.

The Government is advising:

All planned activities should be risk assessed in light of Coronavirus, in conjunction with relevant staff where applicable, and due consideration given to how usual practice may need to be adapted

In line with this, I CAN have drafted some guidance based on government advice about the safe use of the intervention, so that you can continue to support children's communication and language skills. It is not an exhaustive list, but should provide some tips and ideas of how to deliver the materials at this time. In addition to our guidance you may have other ideas – that's great. Keep in touch and let us know so that we can share them with other practitioners.

We've identified three areas that you need to think about:

- Cleaning and hygiene
- Space management
- Partnership with parents

Cleaning and Hygiene

DfE guidance May 2020 stipulates:

It is challenging to reduce contact between young children in early years settings. Regular cleaning and disinfection of surfaces, objects and toys, as well as handwashing, are particularly important. The use of soft toys and toys with intricate parts or that are otherwise hard to clean should be avoided

I CAN's recommendations:

- Put the contents of the sack into a plastic, box or crate.
- Clean the cards and plastic toys before and after each session. As part of the *Early Talk Boost* routine include the washing of hands at the beginning and end of the session.
- Tizzy puppet is a key part of the intervention. Continue to make Tizzy part of the group, perhaps he can sit and watch the children. In some of the activities where the children would usually handle him e.g. **Week 1 Session 3 Activity 1** you may want to give each child a plastic animal, including a tiger and call them 'Tizzy's friends.' In this activity, whilst the instrument is played, children can make their animal perform an action e.g. rolling, jumping, running, and when the music stops they must hold their animal very still.
 - In **Week 3 Session 3 Activity 1** perhaps substitute a soft toy with a little plastic hand warmer. You could either have one for each child or wipe it after each turn.

- Limit the sharing of toys
 - Have more than one of the resources needed e.g. in **Week 2 Session 1 Activity 1** which involves rolling a ball you could perhaps have as many balls as number of children. Say a child's name and roll the ball to them. Encourage them to look at another child and say their name and you then roll a different ball to that child.
 - Use musical instruments with handles so that you can wipe them after each use e.g. **Week 2 Session 1 Activity 2**.
 - Limit the number of resources children come into contact with e.g. In **Week 3 Session 2 Activity 2** and **Week 4 Session 3 Activity 1** –substitute the feelie bag for a box and only put one object in at a time so that each child only touches one thing during their turn.
- Ask children to point to cards e.g. in **Week 4 Session 2 Activity 1**, rather than pick them up.
- You might want to carry out some of the activities that children usually do, e.g. in **Week 5 Session 2 Activity 2** you help Tizzy to carry out the actions. Make it fun to keep children engaged – perhaps Tizzy doesn't always get things right!
- **Activities involving food are left out and replaced.**
 - In the intervention this would include fruit and jelly, e.g. **Week 3 Session 1 Activity 1** – use plastic rather than real fruit. For **Week 3 Session 2 Activity 1** have a picture of jelly – can the children wobble like jelly? Ask who's tried jelly before? For **Week 8 Session 3 Activity** – handwashing would be a great substitution for making a sandwich.

Space Management

DfE guidance May 2020 stipulates:

Settings should manage risks by keeping children in small groups and trying, as far as possible, to keep the same children and staff members together from day to day

I CAN's recommendations:

- Recommended group sizes in settings are 8, which fits with the *Early Talk Boost* recommended group size. However, if you have limited space you could consider running smaller sized groups. It may be that some of the children are not those who would fit the selection criteria. Normally we would recommend that these children would not go into the group, but if due to current staffing and numbers they need to be included this is not a problem as they will still enjoy and benefit from the activities and provide target children with good language models. The progress of these children though would not be assessed using the Tracker.
- The group environment needs to be organised to maintain social distancing throughout each session. This may be easier if chairs are used and children are in a semi-circle or children are each provided with their own plastic disc that they sit on.



- **Activities need to be delivered to children in the same area. Those activities where children are required to move are adjusted to limit moving around as much as possible if 2 metres social distancing cannot be maintained.**
 - Depending on the space you have, activities with actions can be done on the spot. For example, when you play the bubble game in **Week 1 Session 1 Activity 2** children can be encouraged to stand up in their own space and not move about.
 - When blowing feathers one child can have a turn at a time (**Week 1 Session 2 Activity 2**). The feathers need to be thrown away afterwards.
 - When playing Stop and go games, substitute listed actions for those that can be done on the spot e.g. **Week 2 Session 2 Activity 2** - jump, clap, and in **Week 2 Session 3 Activity 1** – traffic lights – children can pretend to drive on the spot.
- Deliver as many sessions as possible outdoors. Lots of the activities lend themselves to the outside.
- It is recommended that the same staff are assigned to each group and as far as possible these are kept the same during the day and on subsequent days. If a member of staff is not trained as an *Early Talk Boost* practitioner but has children in their group who would benefit from the intervention, try to arrange an online training session. If this is not possible ensure regular contact with the trained member of staff. When government guidelines are lifted seek out training if the member of staff is going to continue running the intervention.

Partnership with Parents

Supporting parents to provide a positive learning environment at home is essential:

- Communicate with parents via email/letter about the intervention
- It will not be possible to send the books home at the end of each week as items brought from home need to be kept to a minimum. However, you can share Tizzy's top tips and encourage parents to share books with their child. Perhaps they can let you know which books they have both enjoyed.
- Some children may not be in the setting yet. For these children activities could be delivered to parents online or shared via programmes such as Tapestry.

Tracking progress and preparing for transition:

- The Tracker is still an important part of the intervention. It will help you to think about the child's communication and language skills and if they might require some adjustments/support next year. When administering the Tracker consider using the advice above about how you will meet the guidance around cleaning, social distancing and working with parents.

For further information and support contact info@ican.org.uk or call on 020 7843 2515