

# SL TOOLS

## SPEECH AND LANGUAGE TOOLS FOR EARLY INTERVENTION FOR TEACHERS



**Speech and Language tools**  
for early intervention by Teachers



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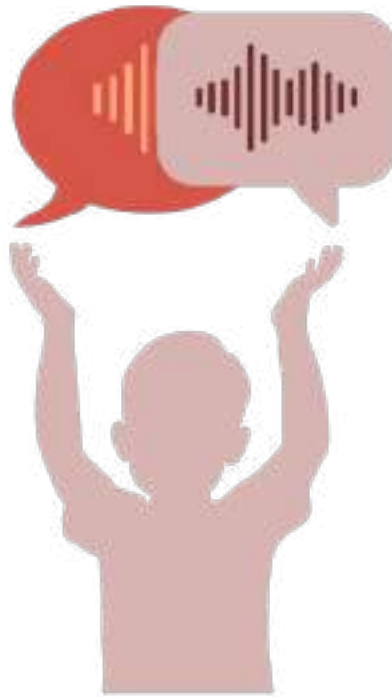
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## **Speech and Language tools for early intervention by Teachers**

**Project No. 2022-1-ES01-KA220-SCH-000084953**

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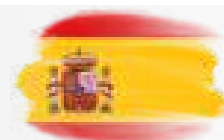
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# NATIONAL DESK RESEARCH REPORT

WPI Benchmarks for speech and language support and educational report

Country: **SPAIN**



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# **1. INTRODUCTION**

This report analyses the existing benchmarks in the Spanish educational system for speech therapy support of students and the current educational report.

The current Education Law, LOMLOE, focuses on the barriers that limit the right to education, thus promoting early detection, early care and inclusive education. This translates into more personalised attention and prevention of difficulties that impede learning.

The educational administrations are responsible for guaranteeing the necessary resources for students who require educational attention different from the ordinary one, due to special educational needs, developmental delay, language and communication development disorders or lack of knowledge of the language of learning, among others. With the aim of enabling students to achieve the greatest possible development of their personal abilities and, likewise, the objectives established in general.

The focus is placed on the early detection of special educational needs, which may be temporary or permanent, by specialised professionals of the educational centres.

Likewise, in this process it is also essential to communicate with families, who must be previously listened to and informed.

In the Infant Education stage, from 0-6 years of age, we will seek to develop and gradually lay the foundations that will facilitate the maximum development of children through meaningful and emotionally positive experiences. In both cycles, special attention will be paid to the manifestations of communication and language.

## **2. OVERVIEW OF STATUS AND TRENDS OF NATIONAL LEGAL REGULATIONS ON SPEECH AND LANGUAGE SUPPORT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**

### ***2.1 Brief language development and therapy background***

Making a great historical leap, the precedents of speech therapy in Spain can be found in the instruction given by Pedro Ponce de León (1510-1584) to subjects with hearing and language problems. Later it would be in Barcelona, in 1800, where an ecclesiastic named Albert Martí, dedicated himself to teach deaf children.

At the beginning of the XIX century, in Spain there were two schools for the deaf and dumb, the one in Madrid and the one in Barcelona; the one in Madrid was created by Godoy at the end of the XVIII century.





Later, the schools for the deaf and dumb in Salamanca and Santiago de Compostela were created. In the last third of the 19th century, following the influence of the Milan Congress of 1880, the Valencian Institute for the Deaf and Dumb was created, which was very important for its dissemination of oralism as a system of communication and teaching of deaf children.

The doctor and pedagogue F. Barberá Martí (1850-1924), who adapted the oral method to the Spanish phonetics in his work "La enseñanza del sordomudo por el método oral" (Teaching the deaf and dumb by the oral method), stands out in this institute.

In 1904 the Catalan Institute for the Deaf and Dumb was created, which was the first private institution in Spain dedicated to this purpose. In the 50's and 60's the first training on language disorders was carried out. An important milestone was the creation in 1960 of the Spanish Association of Speech Therapy, Phoniatics and Audiology (AELFA) by Jordi Perelló.

This renowned scientific association is still in force today and is recognized for its scientific congresses and its journal. Towards the 1970s and as a result of this training effort, clinics that provide speech therapy services such as the Hospital de San Rafael, Red Cross, San Juan de Dios and other private centres appear.

Another important date is the year 1977, when the first training courses began at the School of Speech-Language Pathology (E.P.L.) in Barcelona under the direction of Dr. Joseph Vendrell. These were training courses that dealt with the didactics of language disorders with a three-year teaching system.

This entity is still in force today linked to the Hospital Sant Pau in Barcelona, which continues to train speech therapists, although now focusing on specialisation. The background of the Speech Therapy degree dates back to 1951, when the Ministry of Education offered the first courses for teachers of special schools for the deaf and dumb. Subsequently, in the sixties, the specialty of "Specialized Teacher in Therapeutic Pedagogy" was presented, included in Pedagogy, through which the degree of "Specialized Teacher in Hearing and Oral and Written Language Disturbances" was obtained. Subsequently, other training proposals in Speech Therapy arose in Salamanca, Valladolid and Madrid.

In 1981, a group of professionals chaired by Josep Guixà, founded the Association of Speech Therapy, Therapy and Audiology of Catalonia (ALFAC), under the auspices of Jordi Perelló. In the 90's, Speech Therapy became part of university studies in Spain, after more than 50 years of experience, going through a phase of consolidation as a scientific discipline.

Specifically in 1991 is established by R.D. 1419/1991, of August 30, the official title of Diploma in Speech Therapy, appearing in Valladolid and Madrid.

The implementation of the Diploma in Speech Therapy fulfilled a dual purpose: on the one hand, to provide official university status to existing studies, but not regulated, and on the other hand, to respond to the social demand for trained professionals. Its demand has been constant and growing, progressively arising more studies in Spanish universities, both public and private, adding up to 16 university centres where speech therapy studies are taught.

On November 17, 1994 ALFAC creates the Management Commission for the creation of the Professional Association. The Parliament of Catalonia unanimously approved the law of creation of the Professional College of Speech Therapists of Catalonia (Law 2/1998 of 11/02/98) constituting itself as the first professional college of speech therapists of Spain.

The creation of a national college is thus blocked, conditioning the subsequent creation of colleges in each of the autonomous communities.

## ***2.2. Educational background and special education***

System Language is one of the fundamental aspects in the development of the child, it is the wonderful weapon that opens thousands of doors to other knowledge, it is the tool of relationship with others and allows us to interact adequately. The first place where this language has to be developed is in the family.

It is the family that is in charge of promoting and developing the language from the beginning. On the other hand, there are the Early Childhood Education teachers who must not only be attentive to the difficulties that their students may present, but must also seek to develop their verbal potential to the maximum. Through language, each child is able to make sense of the experiences and the world around them. It is an element that is present in all areas of our lives, allowing us to expand our knowledge, interact with others and discover a world of infinite possibilities.

It should be noted that in Spain schooling for children from 0 to 6 years of age is not compulsory. This means that a child up to the age of 6 may not have been enrolled in any educational centre. Although current legislation does not oblige parents to send their children to school until the age of 6, it is normal for most Spanish children to attend the second cycle of infant education (3 - 6 years).

Students who begin the infant stage may find that some of them still do not have a very developed language. At this early stage, teachers have to assess whether this is normal and appropriate for their age or if, on the contrary, there are some difficulties. In 2009, at the request of the Senate, a statewide study was carried out to analyse the situation of students in the education system in order to study proposals for intervention in the school and socio-community environment. The following link provides access to the study:

<https://www.educacionyfp.gob.es/dam/jcr:4f7e9108-88bc-4bf6-b188-34dd6d2c2a7f/atencion-alumnado-dislexia.pdf>

The general objective of the study was to make a diagnosis of the situation of students who could present dyslexia problems in the educational system as a starting point for other studies and more specific and nuanced future actions. The aim was to obtain information at three specific levels: students with specific educational support needs, students with specific learning difficulties and students with dyslexia.

This study gained importance in Spain and was made known among the various administrations and autonomous communities so that teachers, students, families, etc. could access the study and work together on the difficulties encountered.

Educational centres play a crucial role in the development of language and communicative processes. We must make sure that their space and didactic material are qualified to provide our students with the skills and abilities related to communicative processes such as expression, reading, writing and reasoning. We must keep in mind that this is not an isolated process and that it is also accompanied by the development of other competencies, such as social and auditory skills. When a student reaches the primary school stage without having acquired language, we understand that there is some kind of difficulty in developing it.

Although each child develops language depending on many other factors, it is true that the time in a 6 year old child is the right time to have been able to develop language. If we reach this point, primary school teachers should contact the family and suggest the possibility of a psycho-pedagogical evaluation of their child. With this psycho-pedagogical evaluation in Spain what is done is to rule out or confirm some type of difficulty in the student. This psycho-pedagogical evaluation can be carried out by the educational centre, public medical centres or private medical centres. If the psycho-pedagogical evaluation confirms that the student has some type of special educational needs, then he/she will be classified as a "student with special educational needs".

This means that within the school he/she will be provided with specific support. These supports will work mainly on the difficulties found in the psychopedagogical evaluation. In the same way, curricular and methodological contents can also be adapted in such a way that the student develops 100% of his/her capacities. However, the attention to these students must be guided by the principles of normalisation and inclusion.

### ***2.3 The professions involved in diagnosis and therapy of language disorders***

In Spain there are several professionals who deal with speech or language disorders or both. The professionals in charge of diagnosing language disorders are: Speech therapists are the specialists in language difficulties, both oral and written, that children and adolescents may suffer. They will help to realize in time any problem or delay in language and it will be possible to intervene and help the correct development of communication.

They will work on the oral and written part, thus helping people who may have some degree of dyslexia. Speech therapists are physicians in charge of the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of language, speech and voice disorders, as vehicles of verbal communication.



Their function deals with language from a rather biological point of view. Language difficulties are usually detected by parents and teachers of the student. If the difficulties are due to a biological problem, the child may see a speech therapist. The professionals in charge of the therapy of language disorders in the school environment are: Hearing and Language (AL) teachers who are in charge of promoting and developing the prevention of language problems, to the enhancement of communicative-linguistic abilities and to the solution of specific language and communication problems in an educational centre.

In addition, in Spain there is the specialty of Therapeutic Pedagogy (PT), a teacher specialised in special education whose main function is to promote the integration and inclusion of students with special educational needs through preferential and direct attention in the most normalised environment possible.

Hearing and Language (AL) and Therapeutic Pedagogy (PT) teachers may attend to children in a classroom, always with a prior report from the doctor of the specialty corresponding to their problem.

## ***2.4. Speech and language therapy training programs at universities***

The training of professionals to treat hearing and language problems, such as speech therapy and audiology, is generally carried out through specific academic programs that may be offered by faculties or departments of Special Education, Psychology, Medicine, or Health Sciences Faculties in Spanish universities. This would be an overview of how these universities can train professionals in this field:

**1. Speech Therapy Degree:** Many universities in Spain offer a Speech Therapy Degree that prepares students to work with language and communication disorders. These programs usually last four years and address topics such as the anatomy and physiology of the communication system, evaluation of speech and voice disorders, and speech therapy intervention techniques.

**2. Master's in Speech Therapy:** After completing a speech therapy degree, some students choose to pursue a master's degree in speech therapy to further specialise in the field. These programs may focus on specific areas of speech therapy, such as child speech therapy or health speech therapy.

**3. Psychology Degree:** Some universities offer Psychology Degree programs with a specialisation in neuropsychology or communication psychology. These programs may include courses related to the evaluation and treatment of language and communication disorders.

**4. Medical Degree and Specialization in Otolaryngology or Audiology:** Students who wish to work in the diagnosis and treatment of hearing problems may choose to pursue a medical degree and then specialise in otolaryngology or audiology through residency programs or specific training.

**5. Master's Degree in Clinical Audiology:** For those interested in becoming clinical audiologists, some universities may offer master's degree programs in clinical audiology. These programs focus on the diagnosis and treatment of hearing disorders and may include clinical internships.

**6. Mentions within the teaching degrees:** Within the degree of Early Childhood Education or Primary Education it is possible to access the specialty of Therapeutic Pedagogy and mention in Hearing and Language. In these programs, specific subjects are studied for the attention of students with different difficulties, including problems related to language acquisition.

Specific training to treat hearing and speech problems may vary by university and academic program. Students often acquire practical skills through clinical practicums and internships in hospitals, health centres and schools.

It is important to note that the training and regulation of the speech therapy and audiology professions may vary by autonomous community in Spain, so it is important to consult the specific regulations and requirements of the community in which you wish to practise.

## ***2.5. Legal regulation on speech and language support in early childhood education***

According to Decree 36/2022, which establishes for the Community of Madrid the organisation and curriculum of the Early Childhood Education stage, the educational contents of Early Childhood Education are organised in areas corresponding to areas of experience intrinsically related to each other.

The areas of Infant Education are the following: a) Growth in harmony, b) Discovery and exploration of the environment, c) Communication and representation of reality. This last area focuses on developing learning situations in which children can

use different forms of communication and representation in meaningful and functional contexts. Orality is the communication tool par excellence, therefore it will be stimulated with the mediation of adults in the school environment.

In addition, this area will be worked on the basis of the achievement of certain competencies that the students will have to acquire.

In reference to language, some of the specific competencies of this area are:

- Show interest in interacting in everyday situations. Through the exploration and use of their communicative repertoire, to express needs and intentions and respond to different challenges in their daily lives.

- Interpret and understand messages and representations. They will be able to draw on knowledge and resources from their own experience to respond to communicative situations that arise in their environment.

- Produce messages in an effective, personal and creative way. The different languages will be used, discovering the codes of each one of them and exploring their expressive possibilities.

- To value the linguistic diversity of their environment. The plurality of languages invites to promote the recognition of similarities and differences between their codes and to develop respect for different cultural references.

### **3 MAIN FINDINGS**

#### **3.1 Main strengths and weaknesses**

##### **STRENGTHS**

Any type of language in a communication system, has its own writing and develops in a specific context that in Spain is benefited by many factors that favour this gradual process that evolves differently depending on each child. Language stimulation is very important and in the Spanish system it is strengthened and supported by different factors.

- Speech therapists: they are in charge of detecting, evaluating and treating language-related disorders.

- PTs: specialists in therapeutic pedagogy will attend students with special needs who require specialised treatment in different areas, including language.

These specialists work individually, early and in collaboration with the families and teachers of these

students both in schools and in specific centres, on days independent of school hours.

In Spain, the autonomous communities offer a diagnostic team that, after evaluation, grants the student a place in public centres that allow him/her to undergo therapy with these specialists free of charge.

At the same time, the same service is available for families on a private basis where the costs are paid by the families. The work of the specialists has a very strong point and it is the support of the teachers of the centre where the student is enrolled.

They will work hand in hand with the specialists reinforcing all aspects that can benefit the language development of the students. Within the schools these specialists also work whenever a student needs it. The school day offers specific support to promote language development. There are many strengths in Spain and this mainly helps families in their day to day work, favouring the integral development of their children.

## **DIFFICULTIES**

As we have already mentioned, Spain has a service of specialists, work groups, special centres that favour the development of language from a very early age.

The number of students exceeds the number of hours that the specialists can cover individually, so schools are forced to group students together, which means that a student who needs, for example, five sessions with a specialist may only be able to work three sessions.

It is very common that the schools themselves have a counsellor and a psychopedagogue. The counsellor will be the person in charge of evaluating and diagnosing, if necessary, these students who present language problems together with the speech therapists. The present problem is repeated, the hours that the centres have available for these specialists are very few and this prevents them from being able to cover the needs one hundred percent.

Regarding what we previously mentioned and named as a strong point, there are also proposals for improvement. The autonomous communities and their services for these students with language difficulties have long waiting lists that generate a very important delay in time in the diagnoses. Sometimes families are forced (as long as they can afford it) to take their children to private centres for work and diagnosis.

Not all families can afford this type of expense and they are subjected to a wait that can delay their child's diagnosis by sometimes up to a year.



All these delays in time, lack of specialised staff hours, late diagnoses mainly at early ages, make language problems more acute and more difficult to tackle at later ages.

Teachers and language specialists in schools are well aware of these difficulties and in spite of this they work hand in hand to take advantage of every opportunity to work and improve for the children.

## **4 CONCLUSIONS**

According to what has been analysed throughout this document, the attention offered to students in order to achieve a correct development of language has evolved over the years.

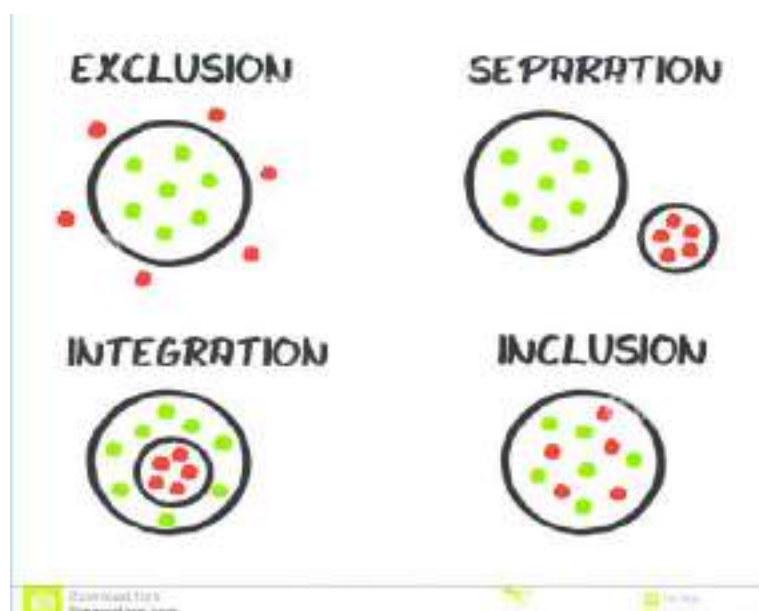
We can clearly see, according to the history analysed, that Spain has gone through different phases in terms of the consideration of students with these difficulties.

At the beginning, these students were excluded from the educational system because it was thought that they would not be able to learn. These students were forced to do without studies and therefore, in the case of entering the labour market, they did so in inferior positions. The label that was placed on them prevented them, once again, from entering society in

a way that was in keeping with their possibilities. Seeking to improve this situation, a new educational modality was introduced through which these students were given the opportunity to be part of the regular educational system through integration.

To this end, the doors were opened to them in regular schools, although they were always treated as a separate group, which meant that the labels were maintained and therefore, the restrictions that these students received when it came to being part of society. We are currently in a new step in our race towards full inclusion and proper attention to the needs of this group of students, eliminating any barriers and labels that pose a problem in their daily lives.

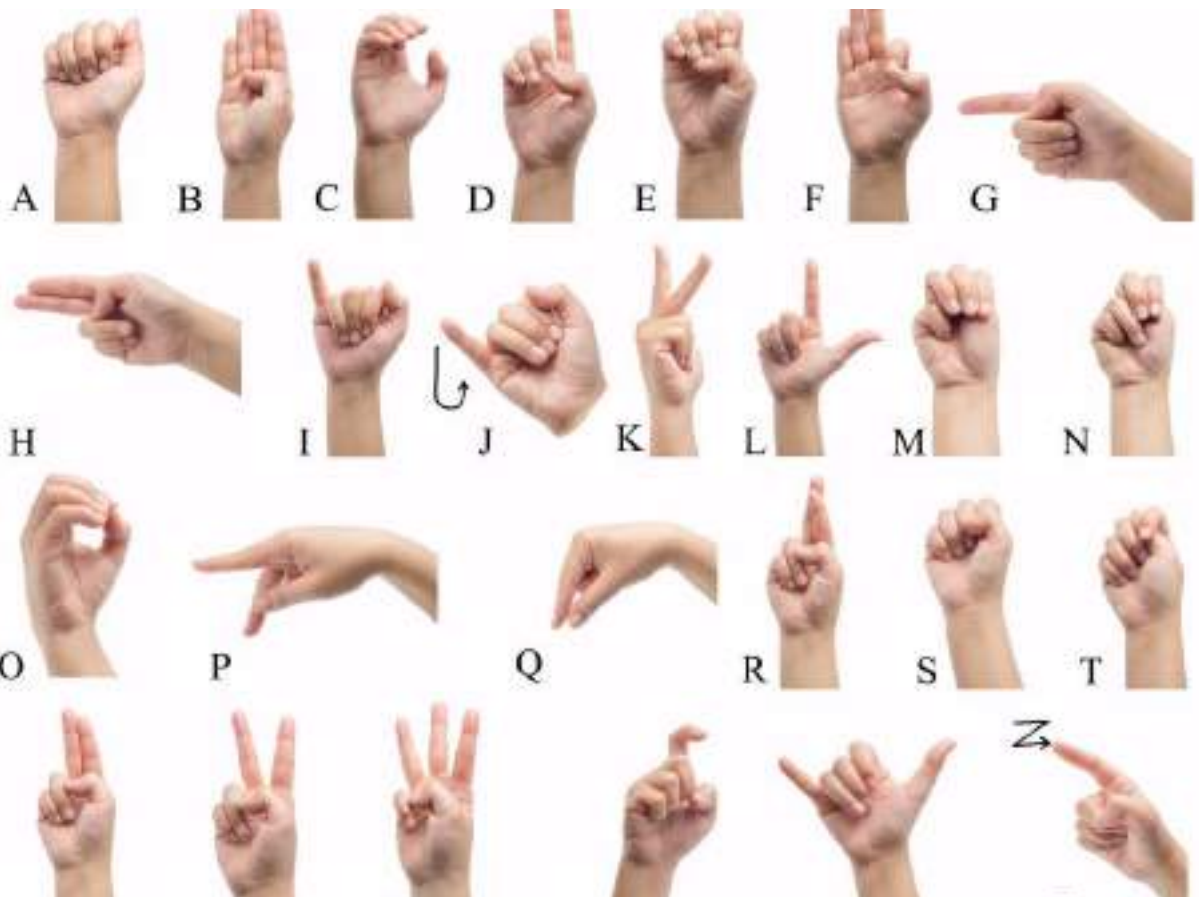
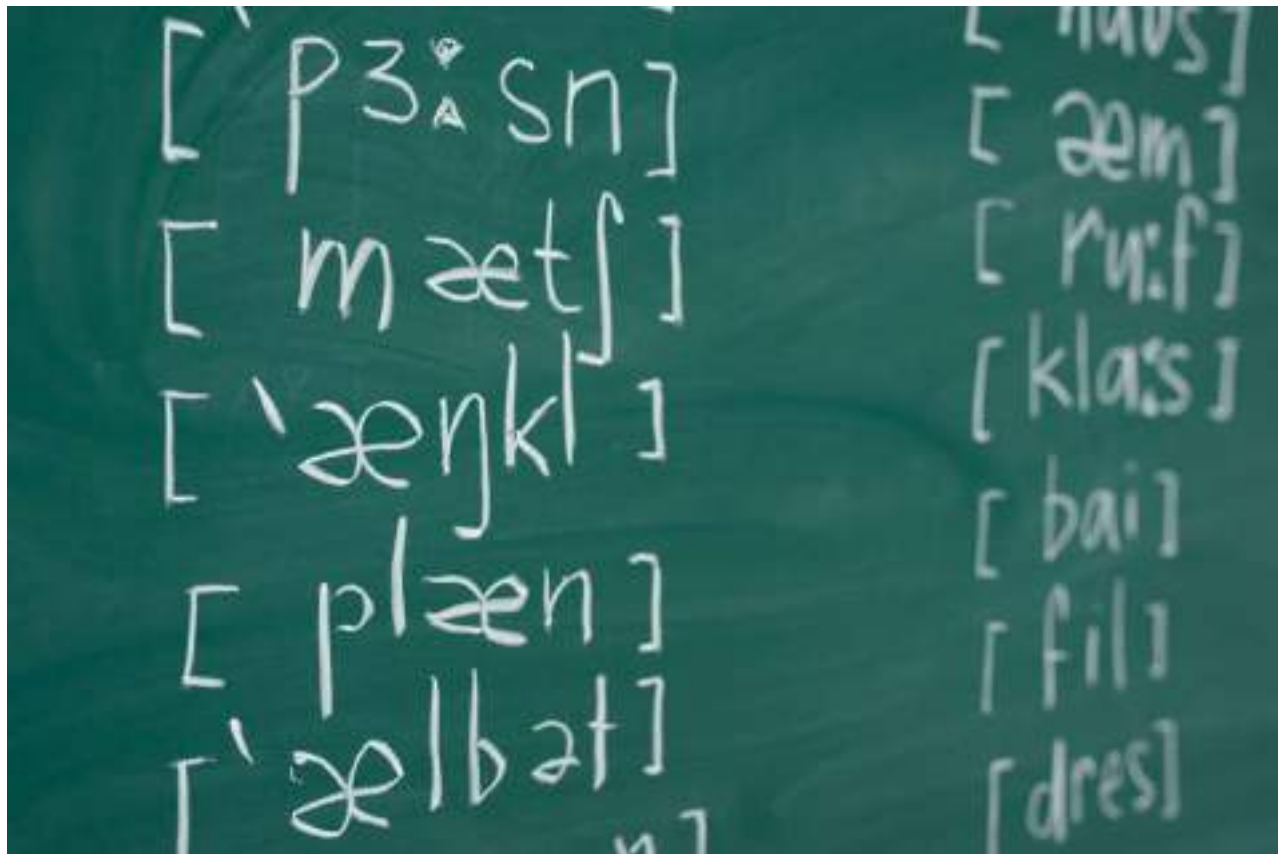
To this end, we are currently working with them inside and outside the classroom with different specialists who, in a coordinated manner, seek to reduce the possible difficulties that these students present.



In order for our students to be cared for in response to their needs, the teacher who works directly with them in the classroom will be the first link for the detection of possible warning signs. In the case of observing immaturity in language or that the child's evolution does not follow the normal typical rhythm, he/she will contact the centre's guidance counsellor to carry out an evaluation. It is of vital importance that the classroom teacher pays special attention to the evolutionary processes of his/her students. Once the counsellor receives notification that a student is having difficulties, he or she will conduct a psycho-pedagogical evaluation to determine the possibility of Special Educational Needs.

In addition, if necessary, the student will attend external sessions with other professionals (speech therapist, speech therapist...) for optimal evolution. The State has a network of professionals at the service of the population, but access to them is very delayed. There are different methodologies that help the student in his evolution and that are carried out through the work with the specialists.

- Re-education of the articulatory system through orofacial exercises and different games that help the student to acquire a correct placement of phonatory organs to achieve correct diction.
- Strengthening of the facial muscles to achieve an optimal use of them in speech.



- Breathing exercises aimed at stimulating and becoming aware of the type of breathing involved in the act of speaking.
- Repetitions. Each repetition should be done slowly. In this way, they will be able to hear and capture all the phonemes.
- Phonological awareness: activities are carried out to develop the ability to recognize phonemes and their subsequent repetition.
- Listening exercises. Different exercises are performed through which the child will develop their auditory discrimination.
- Word games. Once maturity is reached, we take a step further on the speech scale with the creation of words through which the child will begin to develop semantics and understanding of the words to introduce them into the speech.

As a conclusion of the activity, we are on the right path to meet the needs of students with language acquisition difficulties, but we feel that we have a long way to go to make true inclusion a reality, not only in the school environment, but in all the institutions on which the correct implementation of measures to bridge the gap that these students face depends.

# NATIONAL DESK RESEARCH REPORT

WPI Benchmarks for speech and language support and educational report

Country: **Romania**



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# **1. INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this report is to present a comprehensive analysis of the current situation in Romania regarding the existing services focused on speech language therapy/rehabilitation and the legislation that tackles this subject.

Also, it will show how early intervention is approached in Romania, how speech and language difficulties are identified and diagnosed from the earliest years, until primary school. Speech therapy is regulated by the Romanian law as having the main purpose of protecting the health and wellbeing of the beneficiaries, ensuring the right to education, protecting, and carrying for any child or adult in need of speech therapy.

Speech therapist as profession has the role of preventing, education and re-education and correcting of voice or speech and treatment of oral, written and communicating speech disorders. Speech therapy should be as early as possible to be as efficient as possible.

The language and communication disorders that fall under the competence of speech therapists, as mention in the Romanian regulation of functioning of speech language regional centres are:



- pronunciation/articulation disorders;
- disorders of rhythm and fluency of speech;
- disorders of written-reading language;
- language development disorders;
- voice disorders;
- other language disorders that negatively influence the school and social adaptation of children.

The screening for speech language disorders is made in kindergartens by speech language therapists at the beginning of every school year and children who need intervention are enrolled in speech language therapy programs financed by the state.

The number of supported hours is very limited, so, to get good results families need to invest in speech language therapy in private practices. Also, screening is not all regulated for children who are not in preschool/kindergarten programs.

Also isolated communities have difficult access to screening services since the speech language centres are only in the main cities. This report will include all screening option available in Romania, intervention and regulation in terms of policies and laws regarding speech disorders and therapy.

## **2. OVERVIEW OF STATUS AND TRENDS OF NATIONAL LEGAL REGULATIONS ON SPEECH AND LANGUAGE SUPPORT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**

### ***2.1 Brief language development and therapy background***

The first concerns regarding the discipline of speech therapy that had begun to be imposed in the educational activity of speech and language disorders - appeared in Romania in Cluj, in the years 1948-1950, when the course Elements of defectology was introduced into the curriculum of the faculty of psychology.

In 1949, the Minister of Health established the Mental Hygiene Center in Bucharest with a program based on an American project and asked the Dean of the Faculty of Psychology, Prof. Dr. M. Ralea, three students to practice in the field of speech therapy. I was one of the three students and that's how I discovered the wonderful world of speech therapy.

The institute was quickly dissolved, under the accusation that it introduced American scientific documents into the country. As a result, the faculty of psychology is integrated into history-philosophy, and only after 11 years is it re-established according to the old program, as special psychopedagogy.

In 1960–1961, by order no. 3450/1960 of the Minister of Education, the first interschool speech therapy clinics were established in Bucharest and in some regional centers, which operated alongside general schools, middle schools and kindergartens.

In June 1990, the Association of Speech-Language Pathologists from Romania was founded, which through personal relations with specialists from abroad, with associations from adjacent fields, raised the level of training of speech-language pathologists.

In Romania it is used a taxonomy of normal and pathological language development that was proposed in the 1970s and has proven useful, enduring to this day as a frame of reference in the study of language (Bloom & Lahey, 1978; Lahey & Bloom, 1988).

The model considers the three major elements of language: content, form and language use. The three dimensions of language cover all the contents that need to be assessed to build relevant intervention plans. Thus, the content includes the part of phonology, morphology and syntax form the semantic part, lexicon and vocabulary and language use in action, the pragmatic part of communication. In language development, one or more of these components may be affected, with varying degrees of severity.

The diagnosis of delay in language development designates that pathological category that involves the deficient acquisition of language, considering normative, typical benchmarks, which can be recovered during the preschool period, between 2 and 6 years, which means that the diagnosis of delay in development language can be started from the age of 2, and the intervention approach must follow the diagnosis immediately. It is not possible for the diagnosis to be fixed at the age of 2 years and the intervention to be delayed until 4 years.

## ***2.2. Educational background and special education system***

Most children with some form of language delay, but no other known specific disability, were no longer speech impaired by the age of five. Which means that the age of 5 can be considered an extremely important milestone from which the diagnosis of delay in language development can no longer be established according to this researcher. Speech therapy emerged as a necessity to synthesize knowledge about language and to develop specific procedures for stimulating and correcting speech. This scientific branch between psychology and pedagogy has its origins since ancient times, because from all time there have been people who had to face speech difficulties.

The most common language disorders in preschool and school-aged children are: pronunciation disorders, rhythm and fluency disorders, disorders of the written-reading language. Special and special integrated education is an integral part of the Romanian national education system and offers all children/students/young people educational programs adapted to the degree of deficiency and their developmental needs.

It is organized at all levels of pre-university education, depending on the type and degree of disability, as follows: mental, hearing, sight, locomotive, associated. Inclusive education has been adopted in Romania since the 90s by respecting diversity, initiating, and making practical the access and participation in education and social life for all categories of children. Today, about half of students with disabilities are enrolled in mainstream education. The legislation in the field of special education was designed in such a way as to respond to a wide and very varied spectrum of special situations. Considering this reality, special, specially integrated and inclusive education was organized at all levels of pre-university education, depending on the type and degree of disability.

Special education units for students with sensory impairments apply the mainstream school curriculum.

These units only keep their structure and form of organization according to the special education system, and in terms of content, school training and specialization, they are similar to mainstream schools. Special technological high schools, high school classes and special post-high school classes are organized according to the mainstream school model (content, profiles, specializations, goals, objectives and/or skills).

The teaching/learning strategies, modalities and methods remain specific to these units. Upon graduation, the students of these special education units take national exams (tests, baccalaureate, or graduation exam) just like all graduates from mainstream education. For them, facilities and adaptations are stipulated in the methodologies for organizing and conducting the exams. }

For each student with serious, severe, profound, or associated deficiencies, a personalized intervention plan is developed with objectives specific to the needs and psycho-individual development possibilities.

Students with special educational needs benefit from adaptations in examination procedures and in the case of current assessments.

## ***2.3 The professions involved in diagnosis and therapy of language disorders***

In Romania the state offers free services of diagnosis and therapy of language disorders through Interschool Speech Therapy Centres. The speech therapist is a psychopedagogue or psychologist by training, a graduate of the faculties of psychology and education sciences, within the state or private universities, as well as of the professional master's programs. If he carries out his activity in a private environment, i.e. in psychology offices where speech therapy is also carried out, the speech therapist must have a certificate of free practice issued by the College of Psychologists in Romania. If he carries out his activity in a state environment, i.e. in mass education (interschool speech therapy centers) or in special education, he does not need this certificate of free practice.

Within the College of Psychologists in Romania, the certified psychologist goes through several stages of specialization, which he goes through depending on his training and the experience gained at work. Speech therapy activity is included in the Educational Psychology, School and Vocational Counseling commission, the Special Psychopedagogy subcommittee, as well as in the Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy commission.





## ***2.4. Speech and language therapy training programs at universities***

For a speech therapist at the beginning of the journey, recently graduated from the faculty, the first level of specialization to which he has access is that of "practicing psychologist under supervision", and for a period of one year he will have an experienced supervisor who will monitor him carefully the activity. After this year of supervision, the psychologist can become an "autonomous practicing psychologist". After 5 years of experience, he can become a "specialist psychologist", and after 10 years, a "main psychologist".

For each step change, the speech therapist must meet other conditions, apart from those related to the experience gained at work. He must provide proof of participation in continuous training courses and thematic workshops that demonstrate continuous development and the fact that he is concerned with what is happening in the field of speech therapy, at the level of studies, research, therapeutic guidelines.

## ***2.5. Legal regulation on speech and language support in early childhood education***

The speech therapy intervention includes the following stages:

1. Detecting the problem - what needs to be corrected is identified, that part where the child encounters pronunciation difficulties.

2. Complex evaluation - this complex evaluation can be general (notifying the place of communication in the child's personality) or specific (identifying in detail each communication problem).

One of the most important moments of the evaluation is that of establishing the causes that determine the language difficulty. Evaluating a child's language means a measure of difficulty in the specific areas of this mental process to be able to intervene effectively. It is also very important to use appropriate methods of identifying speech problems.

3. The actual intervention - with periodic evaluations: after the end of the previous stage, the speech therapist will know what the child's problem is, he will develop a personalized intervention plan that outlines the therapeutic behavior, individualized according to the child's difficulty and competence.

4. Final evaluation - at the end of the speech therapy intervention, a final evaluation is required. This evaluation identifies the progress achieved, stagnation, improvement or regression, depending on

these results, other methods are programmed, or the speech therapy intervention is ended, if the child's disorder disappears.

The speech language therapy methodology includes:

- the detection, complex evaluation and identification of language and communication disorders in preschool children included or not in kindergartens and in small schools;
- ensuring the preventive nature of the speech therapy activity, by giving priority attention to preschool children with LBJ disorders, to prevent the installation of difficulties in learning to read and write at school age;
- orientation of speech therapy towards correction, recovery, compensation, adaptation, and school and social integration;
- correcting language and communication disorders to reduce the risk of school failure.

## **MAIN FINDINGS**

Speech-language therapy in Romania is poorly financed by the state and mainly by private families of beneficiaries.

Although each county in Romania is equipped with at least one logopedic center, the number of speech therapists employed in these centers is insufficient to cover the actual demand for language therapy in mainstream kindergartens and schools.

For instance, it is not common practice to have a speech therapist employed in every school, which underscores the gap between the available resources and the needs of the population. Only in special education schools, there are a relatively sufficient number of psycho-pedagogues employed. These professionals ensure that the specific therapy needs of their beneficiaries, including speech and language therapy, are adequately met.

### **3.1 Main strengths and weaknesses**

The procedure of evaluation for speech language disorders through Interschool Speech Therapy Centers situated only in the big cities of Romania makes it difficult for some families to have access to these services. The methodology includes:

- the detection, complex evaluation and identification of language and communication disorders in preschool children included or not in kindergartens and in small schools;
- ensuring the preventive nature of the speech therapy activity, by giving priority attention to preschool children with LBJ disorders, in order to prevent the installation of difficulties in learning to read and write at school age;
- orientation of speech therapy towards correction, recovery, compensation, adaptation and school and social integration;
- correcting language and communication disorders in order to reduce the risk of school failure.

CLI's strength lies in its ability to provide comprehensive support to various stakeholders in the educational ecosystem. The centre's emphasis on interdisciplinary collaboration is a significant strength. Also, CLI works with most of the state educational institutions in the city (kindergarten and primary schools) and have a large addressability. Like many educational institutions, CLI faces resource constraints, including funding limitations, staff challenges, or limited access to specialized tools and technologies. These limitations can impact the centre's ability to fully meet the demands of the target group.

Depending on the geographical location, the coverage and reach of CLI's services may vary. In more remote or rural areas, accessibility to the centre's resources and support may be limited.

Most therapists have too many children enrolled in their programs and that makes it difficult to provide quality services. Families with financial resources have access to better intervention programs in private facilities. But the lack of accreditation methodology for the private centres makes it difficult for the families to have selection criteria.

#### **4 CONCLUSIONS**

Speech language therapy in Romania faces several challenges and limitations. Limited State Funding: Speech therapy services in Romania are primarily funded by families of beneficiaries, as state financing is limited.

**Limited Access:** The presence of Interschool Speech Therapy Centres mainly in big cities makes it challenging for families from isolated or rural communities to access these services. Additionally, the screening process for speech language disorders primarily takes place in kindergartens, leaving children who are not in preschool/kindergarten programs without regular screening. **Special Education System:** Romania has established a special education system to accommodate students with various disabilities, including those with language delays. Inclusive education is promoted, but there are resource constraints that affect the quality and reach of services.

**Professional Training:** Speech therapists in Romania undergo a structured training process, and they are regulated by the College of Psychologists. They progress through different levels of specialization based on their experience and continuous training.

**Speech Therapy Methodology:** The speech therapy process includes detecting the problem, complex evaluation, personalized intervention plans, and final evaluations to track progress. The methodology focuses on early intervention and prevention of language and communication disorders.

**Lack of Accreditation for Private Centers:** Families with

financial resources have access to private facilities for speech therapy, but there is a lack of accreditation methodology for these centers, making it challenging for families to make informed choices.

In summary, the report highlights the need for increased state funding and improved accessibility to speech therapy services, especially in rural areas. It also points out the importance of early intervention and the challenges faced in the private sector. The quality of speech therapy services and the training of professionals in the field are notable strengths.

The SL TOOLS project results will be a significant aid for the detection and intervention in speech language disorders. Nevertheless, there is a pressing need to bridge the gap that exists while children are waiting for speech and language therapy services. By employing assessment tools to identify the specific areas where children struggle with speech and language, teachers can effectively apply Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) to aid in their language development. This project offers a valuable opportunity to develop collaborative strategies, drawing from best practices in other European countries. The SL TOOLS project has the potential to foster the development of diverse methodologies and resources aimed at enhancing and supporting early childhood speech and language training.

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# NATIONAL DESK RESEARCH REPORT

WPI Benchmarks for speech and language support and educational report

Country: **Ireland**



Co-funded by  
the European Union

KA220-SCH - Cooperation  
partnerships in school education.

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# **1. INTRODUCTION**

This context analysis of speech and language supports seeks to outline the provision of assessment and therapeutic support for children who present with speech and language difficulties in Ireland. This report is focused on the speech and language provision in relation to early childhood settings and early intervention.

This report seeks to provide an overview of the current landscape of speech and language services in Ireland and identify the strengths and weaknesses present within the speech and language system in Ireland. This report seeks to identify how speech and language difficulties are identified and diagnosed from the earliest years, through to primary schooling. It will set out the various agencies and resources available to support speech and language development in early childhood. It will identify the pathways to becoming a speech and language therapist in Ireland, the regulatory bodies based in Ireland and legal framework in place in Ireland to ensure effective speech and language interventions for children presenting with speech and language difficulties in early childhood. In conclusion, this report will seek to identify whether the current provision of speech and language therapies are adequate and effective in

Ireland currently and seek to identify any ways that this provision could be improved upon to ensure best outcomes for young children with language difficulties.

## **2. OVERVIEW OF STATUS AND TRENDS OF NATIONAL LEGAL REGULATIONS ON SPEECH AND LANGUAGE SUPPORT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**

### ***2.1 Brief language development and therapy background***

The history of speech and language therapy in Ireland, like in many other countries, has evolved over the years to address the needs of individuals with communication and language disorders.

Here is an overview of the history and development of speech and language therapy in Ireland:

1. Early Years: Speech therapy services in Ireland began to take shape in the early to mid-20th century. Before this, speech disorders and language difficulties were often not addressed or were managed through informal methods.
2. Emergence of the Profession: The profession of speech and language therapy in Ireland gained recognition in the 1950s.

The need for these services became apparent as Ireland's healthcare system started to develop, and awareness of communication disorders increased.

3. Role of Educators: Initially, speech and language therapy services were primarily provided by teachers and educators who had a special interest or expertise in communication disorders. There was no formal training program available in Ireland at the time.

4. Growth of Educational Programs: Over time, educational programs and training opportunities in speech and language therapy were established. These programs allowed individuals to receive specialised training in the field and become certified speech and language therapists.

5. Public Health and Special Education: As the importance of early intervention for speech and language disorders became better understood, speech and language therapy services began to be integrated into the public health system and special education programs. This ensured that children with communication disorders had access to appropriate services.

6. Professional Associations: The establishment of professional organisations, such as the Irish Association of Speech and Language Therapists IASLT.

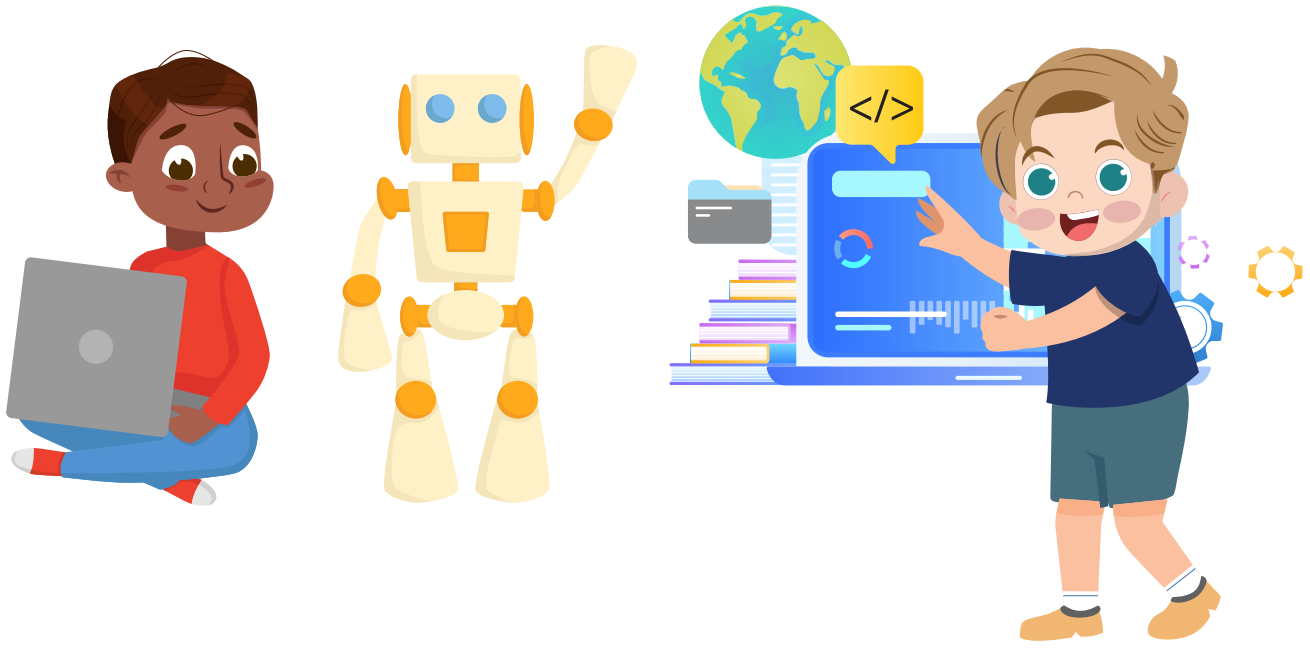
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played a significant role in advancing the profession. These organisations helped to set standards, provide support for professionals, and promote research in the field.

7. Legislative Changes: In recent decades, Ireland has introduced legislation to support the rights of individuals with disabilities, including those with communication disorders. The Equal Status Acts (2000-2018) and the Disability Act (2005) are examples of legal measures that promote access to speech and language therapy services.

8. Integration into Healthcare System: Speech and language therapy services are now an integral part of the healthcare system in Ireland, available in various settings, including hospitals, schools, clinics, and community centres. These services cater to individuals of all ages with communication, language and swallowing disorders.

9. Research and Professional Growth: Speech and language therapy in Ireland has seen substantial growth in research, specialisation, and clinical practice. Therapists continue to work on improving assessment and intervention methods, and they collaborate with other healthcare professionals to provide comprehensive care.



10. Ongoing Challenges: Despite the progress, challenges remain, including the need for increased access to services, reduced waiting times, and greater awareness of communication disorders and their impact on individuals' lives. The history of speech and language therapy in Ireland is marked by a transition from informal, uncoordinated services to a well-structured profession integrated into the healthcare and education systems. The field continues to evolve to meet the changing needs of the population it serves.

The largest struggle within the sector currently, which will be identified later in this report is availability of services.

## ***2.2. Educational background and special education system***

The history of special education in Ireland has evolved over time, reflecting changes in societal attitudes, legislation, and educational practices. Here is an overview of the key developments in the history of special education in Ireland:

### ● Early 19th Century:

○ Special education for individuals with disabilities in Ireland during this period was virtually non-existent.

○ Many children with disabilities were excluded from mainstream educational settings, and there was a lack of awareness and understanding about the needs of these students.

● Late 19th and Early 20th Century:

○ The first steps towards special education in Ireland were taken in the late 19th and early 20th centuries with the establishment of schools for the blind and deaf, such as St. Joseph's School for Deaf Boys in Dublin and St. Mary's School for Deaf Girls in Cabra.

● 1950s and 1960s:

○ The 1950s and 1960s saw a growing awareness of the need for special education services in Ireland. ○ The Commission on Education (1959) recommended the establishment of a system to support children with intellectual disabilities.

● 1970s:

○ The 1970s marked a significant turning point in the history of special education in Ireland. ○ The Report of the Commission on Mental Handicap (1972) laid the foundation for major changes in the provision of education for individuals with intellectual disabilities.

○ The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 (EPSEN) was a landmark piece of legislation that laid out a legal framework for special education in Ireland. It emphasised the importance of inclusive education and individualised support for students with special needs.

● 1990s:

○ In the 1990s, there was a shift toward greater inclusion of students with disabilities in mainstream schools.

○ The Special Education Support Service (SESS) was established to provide support and resources for schools and teachers working with students with special needs.

● 21st Century:

○ The EPSEN Act (2004) was a significant piece of legislation that defined the rights of students with special educational needs and disabilities.

○ In recent years, there has been an emphasis on providing individualised support and accommodations for students with special needs in mainstream classrooms.

## ● Recent Developments:

○ The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) plays a crucial role in the planning and provision of special education services in Ireland.

○ Inclusion, early intervention, and a focus on individualised education plans have become central to the philosophy of special education in Ireland.

○ All primary schools in Ireland currently are led by the Continuum of Support, which is a framework that stipulates that children with greatest need must be provided greatest support.

● Continuum of Support: The Continuum of Support in Ireland typically includes the following components:

○ Classroom Support: This is the foundation of the continuum and includes teaching strategies and resources that are used within the regular classroom to support the diverse needs of students.

○ Additional Teaching Support: For some students, classroom support may not be sufficient, and they may receive additional help from a learning support or resource teacher.

○ Specialised Support: If a student's needs are more

complex or severe, they may require specialised interventions or services. This could include access to speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, or other specialist support.

- Special Education: In some cases, students may have significant disabilities that necessitate more intensive special education placements, such as special classes or special schools.

- Individual Education Plan (IEP): Students with special educational needs often have Individual Education Plans that outline their specific needs, goals, and the support they will receive. These plans are developed in collaboration with teachers, parents, and other professionals.

The Continuum of Support is designed to ensure that students with special needs receive appropriate and individualised support to help them reach their full potential. It is a dynamic framework that allows for flexibility in addressing the unique needs of each student. Special education in Ireland has come a long way over the years, moving from a system of exclusion to one that promotes inclusion and equal educational opportunities for all students, regardless of their abilities or disabilities. Legislative frameworks and ongoing reforms continue to shape the landscape of special education in the country.

## ***2.3 The professions involved in diagnosis and therapy of language disorders***

In Ireland, developmental checks are a series of health and developmental assessments carried out for infants and young children at specific ages to monitor their growth, development, and overall well-being. These checks are typically provided by healthcare professionals, such as the local Public Health Nurse (PHN) to ensure that children are reaching important developmental milestones and to identify and address any potential health or developmental concerns early. Here's an overview of the developmental checks commonly conducted in Ireland: Newborn Check (within the first 72 hours of life):

- The newborn check is usually conducted by a midwife or healthcare provider shortly after birth. It includes a physical examination to ensure the baby is healthy, assess their vital signs, and screen for any immediate concerns. A hearing test is carried out at this point.

1-Week Check:

- Within the first week of life, the baby's weight, general health, and feeding patterns are assessed.

Parents can ask questions and discuss any concerns they may have. This check usually takes place within the baby's home.

### 2-Month Check:

- At approximately 2 months of age, infants have their first developmental checkup, often referred to as the 2-month check. This includes a physical examination, measurement of growth parameters (e.g., weight, length, head circumference), and discussions about feeding, sleep, and any issues related to infant care. It's also a time for vaccinations to be administered.

### 6-Month Check:

- The 6-month developmental check focuses on the baby's growth, motor development, and overall well-being. Healthcare providers evaluate the child's ability to sit, reach for objects, and make sounds. Parents can discuss solid food introduction and other developmental milestones.

### 9-Month Check:

- At 9 months, developmental checks focus on the child's motor skills, communication development, and behaviour.

Parents can receive guidance on age-appropriate activities to stimulate their child's development.

### 12-Month Check:

- This check typically marks the child's first birthday. It involves assessments of developmental milestones, growth, and general health. Parents can discuss speech and language development and receive guidance on nutrition.

### 18-Month Check:

- The 18-month check involves a comprehensive evaluation of a child's development, including motor skills, communication, social interaction, and behaviour. Any potential developmental delays or concerns are addressed during this visit.

### 2-Year Check:

- At the age of 2, children receive a developmental check that focuses on their speech and language development, social skills, and behaviour.

Parents can discuss any challenges or questions they may have regarding their child's development.

### Preschool and School Age Checks:



- Beyond the early developmental checks, children continue to have regular health and developmental assessments throughout their school years, often conducted by HSE nurses or healthcare providers. These checks may include vision and hearing tests, vaccinations, and assessments of overall well-being.

Developmental checks are an important opportunity to ensure that children are growing and developing as expected. They also provide a forum for parents to ask questions, seek advice, and address any concerns they may have about their child's health and development. Any concerns raised at this point may mean a child is referred for an Assessment of Need (AON).

In Ireland, the AON process is a crucial component of the health and social care system, particularly for individuals with disabilities. The process is governed by the Disability Act 2005 and the subsequent Disability (Assessment of Need) Regulations 2007. It aims to identify and address the needs of individuals with disabilities to improve their quality of life and ensure that they can fully participate in society. The AON process typically takes in the following steps:

- Application: The process begins when an individual or their representative applies for an assessment of need.

This application can be made to the Health Service Executive (HSE), which is the government body responsible for providing health and social care services.

● **Eligibility:** The HSE determines whether the applicant is eligible for an assessment of need. In general, the process is available to people with disabilities who are ordinarily resident in Ireland and whose disabilities are of such a nature that they require services and supports. Speech and language difficulties that are deemed to not require a full multidisciplinary assessment are dealt with in the process outlined below for SLT early intervention.

● **Assessment:** Once eligibility is established, a multi-disciplinary team, which includes professionals such as occupational therapists, speech and language therapists, and psychologists, conducts a comprehensive assessment. This assessment aims to identify the individual's needs and how they impact their daily life.

● **Assessment Report:** After the assessment is completed, the team generates an assessment report. This report outlines the individual's needs, their strengths, and any recommendations for services and supports that could improve their quality of life. The report should be provided within a specified timeframe.

● **Consultation and Agreement:** The individual or their representative has the opportunity to consult with the assessment team to discuss the report and its recommendations. They can also make their views and preferences known. Ultimately, an agreement is reached on the services and support that will be provided.

● **Service Statement:** A service statement is then prepared, which details the services and supports that will be provided to address the individual's needs. This statement should specify the services, the timeline for their delivery, and who will provide them.

● **Review:** The service statement is subject to regular review to ensure that the individual's needs are being adequately met. This is typically done on an annual basis, but it can be more frequent if circumstances change.

● **Complaints and Appeals:** Individuals have the right to raise complaints or appeals if they are dissatisfied with the assessment of need or the services provided.

The AON process in Ireland is designed to ensure that people with disabilities receive the necessary services and support to live full and independent lives. It aims to promote inclusion, dignity, and equality for all individuals, regardless of their abilities.

In Ireland, early intervention language support is crucial for children who are experiencing difficulties with speech and language development. Early intervention programs and services are designed to identify and address these challenges in young children to improve their communication skills. These services are often provided by speech and language therapists, educational professionals, and other specialists. Here's an overview of early intervention language support in Ireland:

#### Identification and Assessment:

- Early intervention services in Ireland often begin with the identification and assessment of children who may have speech and language difficulties. This can be done through screening in schools, healthcare settings, or by parents and caregivers who notice delays or challenges in their child's speech and language development.

#### Referral:

- Once a child is identified as needing support, they may be referred to a speech and language therapist, an educational psychologist, or another specialist.

#### Speech and Language Therapy:

- Speech and language therapists play a significant

role in providing support to children with communication difficulties. They work with children individually or in small groups to assess their specific needs and develop tailored intervention plans. These plans often involve activities and exercises to improve language comprehension, expression, articulation, and communication skills.

#### Parent and Caregiver Involvement:

- Parents and caregivers are encouraged to be actively involved in the early intervention process. They often receive guidance and training on how to support their child's language development at home. Consistency in communication strategies between the therapist, parents, and caregivers is essential for a child's progress.

#### Education and Schools:

- Early intervention services may extend into preschools and primary schools, where teachers are trained to provide additional support to children with speech and language difficulties. Special education teachers and speech and language therapists may collaborate to deliver services within the school setting.

#### Team Approach:



- Collaboration among professionals, including speech and language therapists, educational psychologists, teachers, and healthcare providers, is common to ensure that children receive comprehensive and holistic support.

#### Progress Monitoring:

- Children receiving early intervention language support are regularly assessed to track their progress. Adjustments are made to the intervention plan as needed to address changing needs and challenges.

#### Community and Public Services:

- Early intervention services in Ireland can be provided through various channels, including public health services, educational institutions, and community-based organisations. It's essential for parents to explore available options and access services that best suit their child's needs. Availability of services is a major barrier to provision currently in Ireland.

#### Advocacy and Awareness:

- Parent and advocacy groups often play a role in raising awareness about the importance of early

intervention for speech and language development. They may also advocate for improved access to services and resources.

## ***2.4. Speech and language therapy training programs at universities***

There are four Universities within the Republic of Ireland which offer courses to those wishing to become a Speech and Language Therapist. Across the four institutions, approximately 150 students graduate each year, meeting the standards of proficiency to register with CORU. Three of these courses are available to undergraduates. These are:

1. University College Cork, BSc (Hons) in Speech and Language Therapy
2. NUI Galway, BSc in Speech and Language Therapy
3. Trinity College Dublin, BSc Clinical Speech and Language Studies

There is one course that is open to postgraduate students. This is:

1. University of Limerick, Speech and Language Therapy (Professional Qualification) MSc There are pathways to qualify as a speech and language therapist outside of



the Republic of Ireland, however it is mandatory that all speech and language therapists are registered with CORU in order to work in Ireland.

CORU is the Health and Social Care Professionals Council in Ireland. It is the regulatory body responsible for the registration and regulation of health and social care professionals in Ireland. CORU was established under the Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005 and officially launched in 2011.

CORU's primary purpose is to protect the public by ensuring that health and social care professionals meet the required standards of education, training, and competence. It maintains a register of professionals, including professions such as physiotherapists, social workers, radiographers, speech and language therapists and many others, to ensure that they are qualified and competent to practise safely. The organisation sets and enforces standards for education and training in these professions, investigates complaints and concerns about registered professionals, and can take disciplinary actions when necessary to protect the public. In summary, CORU is the regulatory body that oversees the standards and registration of health and social care professionals in Ireland, ensuring that they provide safe and effective care to the public.

## ***2.5. Legal regulation on speech and language support in early childhood education***

The most significant piece of legislation in Ireland surrounding speech and language support in early childhood is the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act 2004. It was enacted to provide a legal framework for the education of individuals with special educational needs.

- Purpose: The primary purpose of the EPSEN Act is to ensure that all students, regardless of their special educational needs, have access to an appropriate education.

- Definition of Special Educational Needs: The act defines "special educational needs" broadly, encompassing a wide range of learning and physical disabilities that may require additional support in an educational setting.

- Individual Education Plan (IEP): The act mandates the development of Individual Education Plans (IEPs) for students with special educational needs. An IEP outlines the specific needs and educational goals of each student, as well as the supports and resources required to meet those needs

- Inclusion: The EPSEN Act promotes inclusive education, which means that children with special educational needs are to be educated alongside their peers to the greatest extent possible, unless it is not in their best interest or that of the other students.

- Assessment: The act establishes a framework for assessing the needs of students with special educational needs. This includes assessment of educational, psychological, and other needs to inform the development of appropriate support and accommodations.

- Complaints Procedure: The act provides a procedure for parents and guardians to make complaints if they believe their child's educational needs are not being adequately addressed.

- Appeals: The act also establishes an appeals process for parents who are dissatisfied with the provision made for their child's special educational needs.

- Role of National Council for Special Education (NCSE): The NCSE is a central body responsible for implementing the provisions of the EPSEN Act, including supporting the development and implementation of policies and guidelines.

The EPSEN Act 2004 is a significant piece of legislation that has had a substantial impact on special education in Ireland. It has been amended and updated over the years to reflect changes in educational practices and the needs of students with special educational needs.

### **3 MAIN FINDINGS**

#### ***3.1 Main strengths and weaknesses***

Speech and Language Therapy (SLT) in Ireland, as in many other countries, has its strengths and weaknesses. It's essential to consider these when evaluating the state of SLT in the country:

Strengths:

- **Qualified Professionals:** Ireland has a well-established system for training and accrediting speech and language therapists. Professionals in this field typically have a high level of education and training. The CORU regulatory body, outlined above, ensures quality of SLT provision.
- **Public Healthcare:** SLT services are available through the public healthcare system, providing access to a wide range of people regardless of their financial status.

- Focus on Multidisciplinary Approach: SLTs in Ireland often work in multidisciplinary teams with other healthcare professionals, such as occupational therapists, physiotherapists, and psychologists to provide comprehensive care for patients with complex needs.
- Early Intervention Services: Ireland places a strong emphasis on early intervention for speech and language issues in children, which can significantly improve outcomes.
- Research and Education: Ireland has a strong commitment to research and education in the field of SLT, which helps in staying updated with the latest developments and evidence-based practices.

#### Weaknesses:

- Waiting Times: Like many other countries, Ireland faces challenges with long waiting times for SLT services, particularly in the public healthcare system. This can delay timely intervention, which is crucial for speech and language development.
- Limited Access in Rural Areas: Accessibility to SLT services can be limited in rural areas, with a greater concentration of services in urban centres.

This can make it difficult for people in remote areas to access the care they need.

- **Funding and Resources:** Budget constraints and limited resources can affect the quality and availability of SLT services. This can lead to overworked therapists and less support for continuing education and professional development.

- **Lack of Awareness:** There may be a lack of public awareness about the importance of speech and language therapy, resulting in delays in seeking help for communication disorders.

- **Challenges in Adult Services:** While there is a strong focus on paediatric services, adult services can sometimes be lacking. This can be an issue as there is a growing population of adults with communication disorders.

- **Shortage of Specialists:** There is a shortage of specialised therapists for certain disorders and populations, such as those with complex needs or neurodegenerative conditions. In addition to a shortage of specialised therapists, there is also a shortage of general speech and language therapists, adding to waiting times and meaning parents can struggle to even access private therapies due to a lack of availability of therapists.

In summary, speech and language therapy in Ireland has its strengths, including a strong focus on early intervention, qualified professionals, and a multidisciplinary approach. However, it also faces challenges such as long waiting times, limited access in rural areas, resource constraints, and a lack of awareness. Addressing these weaknesses requires continued investment in healthcare infrastructure, professional development, and public education about the importance of speech and language therapy.

## **4 CONCLUSIONS**

As outlined in this report, Ireland has come a long way in the development of speech and language supports, particularly in early childhood. Early intervention is now championed as best practice to achieve best outcomes for children experiencing speech and language difficulties.

The identification of speech and language difficulties is addressed through the robust developmental checks carried out in early childhood. There is a framework in place for the assessment and provision of early intervention therapies but the most significant challenge currently experienced in Ireland is the lack of professionals available to carry out these assessments and provide these therapies

Without these therapists, the framework cannot be carried out effectively and children are regularly on waiting lists for in excess of 2 years. This means children often present with difficulties in primary school that have been identified in early years settings but the child may not yet have received a formal assessment or support by a registered speech and language therapist.

There is a need for supports for these children to be developed within the SL TOOLS project. It is important we recognise the value and importance of formal speech and language therapy, and identify that this therapy cannot be replicated by teachers who have not received formal SLT education and training, however there is a need to bridge the gap that exists while children are on waiting lists for speech and language therapy.

The identification of broad areas where children are experiencing challenges with speech and language through assessment tools would allow teachers to effectively develop an IEP that would support their language development. This project provides a wonderful opportunity to develop strategies through a collaboration approach, looking at best practices in other countries across Europe.



# NATIONAL DESK RESEARCH REPORT

WPI Benchmarks for speech and language support and educational report

Country: **Greece**



Co-funded by  
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KA220-SCH - Cooperation  
partnerships in school education.

# In this Chapter

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this study is to give a general overview of the educational system of pre-school education in Greece and in particular to focus on the development of speech and language in early childhood. More specifically, we present the stages of speech and language development of children from infancy to preschool age (6 year old) and the supportive teaching methods applied to children with language disorders.

However, in order to understand language teaching methods, we need to examine the Greek educational system with emphasis on Special Education. The educational system in Greece through the National School Curriculum - Kindergarten Teaching Guide is implemented by all teachers in the country and aims at the all-round development of the child. As far as language teaching is concerned, the framework in which the teacher must work in order to assist the development of the child's oral and written language is defined. Special education is inextricably linked to general education and aims at inclusion and differentiated education. Special education involves not only special educators but also a multidisciplinary team responsible for the diagnosis, educational guidance and assessment of children with learning difficulties.

Within the multidisciplinary team are speech and language therapists, who are university graduates and carry out innovative programmes related to the treatment of children with disabilities. Finally, the strengths and weaknesses of the educational system that are related to special education are highlighted.

## **2. OVERVIEW OF STATUS AND TRENDS OF NATIONAL LEGAL REGULATIONS ON SPEECH AND LANGUAGE SUPPORT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**

### ***2.1 Brief language development and therapy background***

The child's spoken language is a dynamic field, which is constantly changing. The language development of a child is linked to his or her cognitive development. Their speech starts as early as the first year of life, when they possess 10 words, and over the next four years they acquire about 6-7 words a day, reaching around 10,000 words by the age of 4. The greatest difficulties that children face growing up are in mastering grammar as they make mistakes in morphological and syntactic rules. The stages of language acquisition are the same for all children regardless their cultural, economic and political background.

The only difference is the duration of the stages, which depends on the child's pace of development. The stages of language acquisition are as follows:

- Phonological development stage (0-12 months). At this stage the child produces inarticulate loud sounds which gradually become a way of communicating with the adults. Towards the end of this stage, he produces sounds that resemble the spoken language of his environment.

- The one-word stage (12-20 months). At this stage the child produces single words, which represent whole sentences for the child.

- The two-word stage (20 months - 2 years). In this stage the child's speech is telegraphic as he produces two-word sentences.

- The stage of full syntactic and morphological development (3 - 6 years old). At this stage the child's language ability improves as well as their level of comprehension and production of spoken language. A child's language development is not a straightforward process as it has to go through four different stages. However, in children with language disorders the pace of language development is not the same.

The length of time spent in each stage and the transition from one stage to the next varies. After all, the acquisition of spoken language, accurate morphological and syntactic structuring requires solely individual effort.

(<https://www.skalatimes.com/2020/06/10/%CE%B7-%CE%B3%CE%BB%CF%89%CF%83%CF%83%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%AE-%CE%B1%CE%BD%CE%AC%CF%80%CF%84%CF%85%CE%BE%CE%B7-%CE%BA%CE%B1%CE%B9-%CF%84%CE%B1-%CF%83%CF%84%CE%AC%CE%B4%CE%B9%CE%AC-%CF%84%CE%B7%CF%82/>)

In kindergartens, the development of speech and language of the pupils is described in the national curriculum. In particular, in the Thematic Field -Speech and Communication, all the important changes in the ways in which people produce and convey meanings in modern society are taken into account, aiming at the creation of learning environments that familiarize children with the processing and the exchange of information. Preschool is the most critical period for speech development. The child learns during this period to use complex sentences and to talk about past events. They communicate using language in the adult way. The acquisition of language in early childhood is linked to later language and reading performance.

A possible disruption in speech during the preschool period may be the first indication of a permanent problem in learning. Children with speech disorders find it difficult to meet the demands of language learning. This difficulty can affect their psychosocial development and lead to behavioural problems. Early intervention can help to overcome these difficulties. In order to communicate properly, the child needs to learn and use the rules of the language system in the context of communication.

The rules of the language system are divided into three levels: phonological, morpho-syntactic and semantic. The child masters the ability to produce speech in a very short period of time. But children with developmental speech disorders may have problems with both comprehension and speech production. Detection and treatment is based on every child's profile, the severity and type of disorders they have. The special education teacher uses systematic observation to assess the problem, with daily recordings that are reflected in the child's initial diagnostic record.

The teacher also obtains information about the student from the student's family, and then records his/her school performance and the barriers that these learning difficulties create for the student.

Today's intervention programmes focus on the relationship between ability and achievement as well as school learning or social interaction. Storytelling is seen as the most appropriate intervention approach for children with developmental speech disorders in early childhood. In this way we help the child to organize his/her speech through storytelling.

1. Listening: listening and recognising sounds, distinguishing sounds, imitating sounds, repeating words or phrases in rhythm

2. Dialogue: saying names of classmates, naming objects, means of transport, announcing the news of the day, mentioning activities that have taken place or are about to take place

3. Expression:

- Saying words and sentences containing diphthong vowels and diphthong consonants
- Using verbs in the correct person and tense
- Using adjectives correctly
- Asking questions
- Using affirmative and negative sentences
- Expressing oneself in front of other people
- Describing and narrating orally



## ***2.2. Educational background and special education system***

Based on the new curriculum (Government Gazette 6415 10 February 2023, No. 687) the kindergarten introduces children to the first institutionalized level of education. Kindergarten provides a dynamic start to children's schooling with long-term benefits for them and society as it prepares them to face the challenges of modern social reality. The comprehensive and quality education it provides lays the foundations for children's development, socialisation and the cultivation of basic skills that determine their later school progress.

In the Greek educational system and especially in kindergarten there is no separation of students if they do not speak or understand the Greek language. Pre-school education in Greece is compulsory for children who have reached the age of 4. Oral communication is very important in kindergarten as language is the common channel of communication between people and a means of personal empowerment. This is why children are trained to be able to produce meaning and communicate their ideas about the world. For this reason, the kindergarten does not focus on writing, but simply refers to the written language as a means of communication. There are a variety of oral spelling activities that are carried out in a playful and fun way.

However, with suitable planning and the use of the appropriate methods, an effort is made to ensure that all children acquire the language, whether in its oral or written form.

Also, with a decision made by the Minister of Education and Religious Affairs, from 2021, English is compulsory in kindergartens. In addition to the development of the language skills of children, the aim is to form a positive attitude towards learning, as well as the enrichment of the kindergarten curriculum, both methodologically and thematically, for the all-round development of the children's skills, the acceptance of diversity and the formation of the identity of active citizenship in the modern multicultural environment.

As mentioned above, there is no segregation of pupils in the kindergarten, which is why pupils with learning difficulties also attend. In order to fully integrate pupils with learning difficulties, in recent years the educational system in Greece has adopted the inclusion of pupils with learning difficulties in general education schools. The aim of inclusive education is equality between students, the removal of stigma and discrimination, and an emphasis on the needs of each student. Inclusive education is achieved through differentiated teaching. Teachers, having understood each student's different ways of learning, adapt their

teaching, taking into account first and foremost the student's learning readiness, interests and learning profile. Teaching these students involves the use of different activities, which are carried out with a variety of teaching methods.

Special Education was developed out of the need for a social mechanism to help people with different needs in a classroom setting, outside the family context. The term "Special Needs Education" (SED) was established by Law 3699/2008.

The first definition of Special Education in our country comes from Rosa Imvrioti in 1939, when she used the term "Therapeutic Education" which aimed to cater for the education, teaching and welfare of all children whose physical and mental development was hindered by individual or social factors.

Special education and training (SED) is the totality of educational services provided to pupils with disabilities and identified SEN (special education needs).

It aims to:

1. the all-round and harmonious development of the students' personality.

2. the improvement and utilization of their potential and skills.

3. the integration into the educational system according to their potential.

4. their interdependence, their harmonious coexistence with the community and their equal social development. The educational system of Special Education consists of:

- Primary and Secondary Special Needs Education (SED) School Units
- Secondary Education and Vocational Training SED School Units
- Integration and Parallel Support Departments in General Primary and Secondary Education
- Home teaching
- One-to-one teaching

The role of the special educator is important and extremely helpful in improving the child's academic level. Some of the objectives set in the context of special education are to improve the following skills:

- reading
- reading and writing
- comprehension and/or memorisation of texts
- mathematics
- concentration span



- verbal and non-verbal communication  
- self-care - social skills. The special educator usually uses the following steps:

1. Conducts a thorough assessment of the child with standardized and non-standardized tools that examine all skills and sets the programme's goals.

2. Based on the assessment, the teacher prepares an individualized intervention programme to strengthen the child's weaknesses.

3. The goals set are of graded difficulty and continuously evolve throughout the programme according to the child's achievements.

### ***2.3 The professions involved in diagnosis and therapy of language disorders***

Early intervention is aimed at all children who are at risk or have developmental problems, particularly when they start school. The diagnosis of Specific Language Impairment is a complex process and requires a multidisciplinary assessment. In addition to the assessment of language abilities, the child's mental and motor ability, emotional state and the exclusion of disorders such as hearing impairment, mental retardation and neurological conditions must also be examined.

The speech and language therapy assessment starts by reviewing the child's background and collecting information from the child's developmental record. Diagnosis includes informal assessment, where play and observation are used, and formal assessment where standardized diagnostic tools are used. The speech and language therapist examines articulation, comprehension, vocabulary, grammar, syntax, correct use of language, figurative play, and psycholinguistic abilities such as memory (<https://paidiatriko.gr/el/asthenies/eidiki-glossiki-diatarahi>).

However, for a comprehensive intervention, the involvement of many other specialists in addition to the speech and language therapist is required. Each one takes their own scientific approach to enhance the individual skills of children with language difficulties. The specialists involved in the diagnosis, assessment and development of an individualised teaching programme are the special educator, the occupational therapist and the psychologist, while a number of other specialists may be involved in specific cases as well (for example a social worker). In many cases and depending on the results of the assessment, it may be necessary to start sessions with a speech and language therapist, occupational therapist and/or psychologist to address the problem in a holistic way.

## **2.4. Speech and language therapy training programs at universities**

Speech therapy is a science that has as its subject matter the study, research and application of scientific knowledge about human communication - voice, speech, language, non-verbal communication - and its disorders, as well as disorders of the swallowing movements of the oropharynx.

([https://www.alfavita.gr/ekpaideysi/345992\\_panellines-2021-pos-mporo-na-spoydaso-logotherapeia](https://www.alfavita.gr/ekpaideysi/345992_panellines-2021-pos-mporo-na-spoydaso-logotherapeia))

In Greece there are three Higher Educational Institutions offering four year degree in Speech Therapy in Patras, Ioannina and Kalamata. However, speech therapy degrees are also offered by private universities. The university departments of Speech and Language Therapy aim to achieve the following objectives:

- To train students in the biological cognitive, psychosocial and physical sciences and in the evaluation of human communication (speech, language and voice) as well as in the evaluation of the swallowing movements of the oropharynx, and in the prevention, treatment and scientific research of related disorders.



- To provide services for the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of disorders occurring in children and adults, in schools, kindergartens, hospitals and other institutions.
- To carry out scientific research on issues related to speech, language, voice, swallowing and related disorders. Emphasis is placed on the Greek language, but also on other languages with which we come into contact in the context of the modern multicultural and multilingual society.
- Upon completion of their studies, the graduates of the Department acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to work professionally in all the above-mentioned areas and populations related to their field of study.

The courses taught:

- Phonetics,
- Evolutionary Psychology,
- Anatomy- Physiology of Hearing,
- Speech and Language Anatomy,
- Linguistics,
- Neurolinguistics,
- Neuroanatomy
- Neurophysiology and many more.

(<https://www.neolaia.gr/2023/02/21/panelinies-2023-tmimata-logotherapeias-spoydes-kai-epagel-matiki-apokatastasi/>)

## **2.5. Legal regulation on speech and language support in early childhood education**

### I. Greek Language Teaching

Based on the new curriculum of the Kindergarten, there is the Thematic Field: Child and Communication, consisting of Language and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). They hold a key role in the Curriculum and form the basis for all the other thematic fields. The thematic field of Language focuses on the development of basic skills for oral, written and multilingual communication, which are considered important for children's effective participation in their various activities not only in the school and wider socio-cultural environment but also as a prerequisite for effective learning in relation to all other thematic fields. The ICT module places emphasis on the development of competences related to children's familiarisation with the use of digital environments and the development of information management skills to meet different communication needs.

(<https://www.alfavita.gr/sites/default/files/2021-12/%CF%80%CF%81%CE%BF%CF%83%CF%87%CE%BF%CE%BB%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%B7%20%CF%80%CF%83.pdf>)

The thematic field of Language integrates key components of the theoretical approach to emergent literacy, which determine the learning contents included in it. In addition, principles of the theoretical approaches of functional literacy, digital literacy, visual literacy and critical literacy are incorporated, enriching the content of the unit.

In this context, children develop skills related to the four (4) key roles that shape their literacy level. According to the first role, children learn to recognize the different ways of producing meaning and the conventions that permeate the structure of different texts.

According to the second role, children are trained to understand texts by using and developing their own mental models as they are shaped by prior experiences and knowledge. According to the third role, children use and produce texts to meet their personal needs, taking into account the social and cultural functions that different texts perform.

Regarding the fourth role, children act as critical analysts of texts, as they interpret them through different perspectives and decide which of the emerging meanings are important to them, and may express disagreements or challenges, as well as understand the reasons that led to their writing.

The thematic field of language is divided into three sub-units, which interact and complement each other:

A. Oral Communication. It aims:

- i. to develop the skills involved in children's comprehension and production of oral texts;
- ii. to develop their meta-linguistic awareness (ability to consciously control the structures of language).

B. Written Communication. It aims:

- i. at developing the skills involved in understanding written texts and engaging children in reading practices;
- ii. at engaging children in acts of writing;
- iii. at children's acquisition of the concepts and conventions of written texts.

C. Multilingual Communication. It aims:

- i. to encourage the use of languages in the comprehension and production of oral texts;
- ii. to encourage the use of languages in the comprehension and production of written texts.

The thematic field of language provides children with the tools to meet their communicative needs, both in terms of comprehension and production of texts, taking into account their differentiated needs in the context of intercultural communication in a multicultural society.

Particular emphasis is placed on awareness of the situation of pupils with disabilities or special educational needs and the use of alternative communication systems.

Evaluation: Assessment in kindergarten is an integral part of the learning process.

The purpose is to strengthen learning, promote the all-round development of each child, as well as to enhance the quality and effectiveness of the educational programme. As for the assessment in kindergarten, the descriptive approach and the observation is used as a complement to the Individual progress record, recording the child's learning and development progress in the light of appropriate pedagogical evidence.

Kindergarten teachers, through observation, collect feedback on each child's engagement and progression in learning process and on their interaction with each other. This material is analysed and interpreted in relation to their learning progress, while extracting useful information about the effectiveness of the educational programme.

(<https://www.alfavita.gr/sites/default/files/2021-12/%CF%80%CF%81%CE%BF%CF%83%CF%87%CE%BF%CE%BB%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%B7%20%CF%80%CF%83.pdf>).

II. Learning English in Kindergarten From the school year 2021-2022 onwards, English language is introduced in the school curriculum of the kindergartens through creative activities of an experiential nature. English is introduced for two teaching hours per week in the compulsory programme of the kindergartens, in cooperation with the kindergarten teacher of the school. During the English lesson the kindergarten teacher remains in the classroom and takes an active role in the teaching process, based on the needs and the planning of the activities, as decided by the two teachers.

The purpose of the integration of English language in Kindergarten is to enrich the curriculum in the linguistic and all-round development of the children in order to enhance multilingual awareness, intercultural communication and the formation of the identity of an active citizen in today's multicultural society.

Prerequisites for the child's effective first contact with a foreign language are:

- specialised teacher training for teaching pre-school children
- support of the learning process by means of teaching/learning materials adapted to the specific age group
- the cooperation of English language teachers with the kindergarten teachers in order to create an

appropriate educational and pedagogical climate, which will be the basis for the organisation and planning of educational activities in kindergarten, with emphasis on the evaluation of the needs, aptitudes and special interests of the children (IEP, Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, Institute for Educational Policy).

### **3 MAIN FINDINGS**

#### ***3.1 Main strengths and weaknesses***

In general education and in particular in kindergarten there are several problems for pupils with special educational needs. For example, the educational community is not prepared for the inclusion of these pupils. The lack of a proper special educational framework, inadequate staffing of special educational staff in schools, lack of teaching and learning materials, large numbers of pupils in one classroom, poor government and parental support, poor working conditions and difficulties in supporting pupils with different disabilities, sometimes poor relationships between teachers are some of the factors inhibiting the development of special education in Greece. However, in recent years in Greece, a significant effort has been made to modernise special education and its legal framework and to harmonise it with the European policy.

The aim is to eliminate social exclusion and to integrate pupils with learning difficulties into mainstream schools. The establishment of integration classes, the provision of parallel support for pupils with learning difficulties, the implementation of awareness-raising programmes, the training and specialisation of teachers, the establishment of postgraduate courses in special education and the allocation of resources for the development of research in special education are also important steps. In general, the proper pedagogical training of teachers, the innovative teaching techniques and training are some steps to the right direction.

A key step is the adaptation of the Curriculum, which focuses on co-education. The aim of co-education is to create a school for all students regardless of their particular characteristics, who will be provided with equal opportunities, respect for diversity, equality and the elimination of stereotypes and prejudices (Kyriazi, 2020).

Another important positive step in special education is the establishment of the KEDASY (centres for interdisciplinary assessment and counselling). They were first established by the Ministry of Education in 2000. This is a service of the Ministry of Education, to which the parents of children with learning or adaptation difficulties at school can address to.



KEDASYs are staffed and operate according to the principle of multidisciplinary, which means that a committee of scientists (psychologists, social workers, teachers, speech and language therapists, occupational therapists) work together to diagnose, assess and support the educational needs of pupils.

#### **4 CONCLUSIONS**

- Presentation of the main results from the benchmarking activity 1 (A1). The purpose of the kindergarten is to help toddlers to develop their speech in such a way that they can communicate with the environment in which they find themselves. For this reason, kindergarten teachers provide students with a stimulus-rich environment (pictures, books, etc.). Through the stimuli they are given the opportunity to use their past experiences and knowledge to build on the next (<https://www.eduportal.gr/nhp-glossa/>).

The means to achieve the objectives of Pre-school education is through the Curriculum for the Kindergarten. Through the thematic field Children and Communication, language intends to make children adept and active participants in the learning process, so that they can produce meaning and communicate their ideas about the world.

However, while the Greek educational system emphasizes the development of speech and language of pre-school students by integrating it into all educational areas, it does not provide a specific tool for the detection of early language difficulties. In order to "cover" the gap of early detection, the School Curriculum refers to and promotes inclusive education in kindergartens. Inclusive education constitutes a practical approach that embraces diversity as an element that unifies and enriches the learning experience. For this purpose, kindergarten teachers combine and use the principles, methods and practices of differentiated teaching that is also culturally aware, as well as the framework of special needs education in a targeted and complementary way. (<https://www.alfavita.gr/sites/default/files/2021-12/%CF%80%CF%81%CE%BF%CF%83%CF%87%CE%BF%CE%BB%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%B7%20%CF%80%CF%83.pdf>).

Pupils with language disorders are provided with early intervention. The way, duration and techniques applied to these pupils are determined by the evaluation of the interdisciplinary team (KEDASY). In particular, the kindergarten teachers provide individualised intervention, offering appropriate opportunities for children to communicate in a variety of ways what they think, what they know and what they can do, while evaluating and giving feedback on

their actions in order to promote learning and reshape the curriculum.

([https://www.alfavita.gr/ekpaideysi/366178\\_nipiagogeia-programma-spoydon-stin-prosholiki-ekpaideysi-fek](https://www.alfavita.gr/ekpaideysi/366178_nipiagogeia-programma-spoydon-stin-prosholiki-ekpaideysi-fek))

All of the above is carried out in cooperation with the teachers of general and special education and the KEDASY (Centres for Interdisciplinary Assessment, Counselling and Support), which investigates and evaluates the educational and psychosocial needs of students and recommends to the school teacher individualised educational programmes.

([https://www.alfavita.gr/ekpaideysi/352774\\_nomoshe-dio-yp-paideias-ti-einai-ta-kedasy-apo-poiou-s-stelehonontai](https://www.alfavita.gr/ekpaideysi/352774_nomoshe-dio-yp-paideias-ti-einai-ta-kedasy-apo-poiou-s-stelehonontai))

However, in Greek public schools of general education there are no speech and language therapists who can contribute to a comprehensive education for students with language disorders. For this reason, parents of these students mainly turn to private speech and language therapists rather than to speech and language therapy units in public hospitals. Speech and language therapists are available only in special schools where special education is fully implemented.

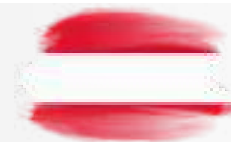
- Summary of suggested methodologies and tools to be developed within the SL TOOLS project.

As mentioned above, there are no early detection tools for language disorders in kindergartens. Therefore, the tool produced by the research will be extremely useful in the teachers' quiver. Some suggested methodologies are: interviews with parents/guardians of students to explore the family-social-economic background; interviews with teachers, which will provide information on the cognitive level of students and also the KEDASY assessments. In addition, comparative surveys between Greeks, Roma and immigrants can be conducted as the city of Drama has several economic immigrants from Albania, Bulgaria and Georgia. The comparative studies will investigate the language proficiency of Roma and immigrant students, their rate of language development and any difficulties they may have while learning Greek. Finally, the Good Practices developed by the partners can be an important tool as they can be modified and adapted to the educational programme of each country.

# NATIONAL DESK RESEARCH REPORT

WPI Benchmarks for speech and language support and educational report

Country: **Austria**



Co-funded by  
the European Union

KA220-SCH - Cooperation  
partnerships in school education.

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

This context analysis of speech and language support in primary education is a comprehensive examination of the current status of speech and language development in early childhood educational settings in Austria. The main objectives of this national report are to provide a comprehensive overview of the existing landscape, assess policies and programs, and understand what resources are available to support young children's speech and language development. The main objective of this report is to investigate the availability and use of speech and language services in the given context.

This requires an understanding of the extent to which speech and language support services are readily available to children in primary grades. It seeks to identify any gaps or weaknesses in access to these services and determine whether they can be implemented more beneficially. Another important objective is to assess the effectiveness of current intervention strategies and programmes. It critically examines methods and techniques used in early childhood education to improve speech and language development. The aim of the review is to determine to what extent these strategies are achieving the desired results and whether there is room for improvement or innovation.

In addition, the review seeks to identify areas where existing policies and procedures for supporting speech and language in early childhood education may need improvement or change. This includes ensuring that current systems meet the diverse needs of children, especially those whose development in language is slower or other language speakers.

## **2. OVERVIEW OF STATUS AND TRENDS OF NATIONAL LEGAL REGULATIONS ON SPEECH AND LANGUAGE SUPPORT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**

In Austria, a wide range of tools and resources have been created to support teachers in fostering the speech and language development of young children. The Austrian Ministry of Education, Science, and Research has taken up various initiatives to improve language proficiency indicators for kindergarten instructors.

A unique preschool screening method has also been developed to efficiently detect language impairments in bilingual children for whom German is a second language. Non-governmental groups in Austria's several provinces have become important contributors, providing extra training programs specifically designed for early intervention teachers.



The Council of Europe provides a thorough Language Education Policy Profile for Austria, offering an array of information regarding the nation's language education policies, to situate these resources within the larger educational landscape. In the next chapters of this report those initiatives, policies and programs will be examined and presented in more detail.

## **2.1 Brief language development and therapy background**

In this first section, a brief overview of language development of children in general is introduced. "How children manage to acquire the complex system of language has been intensively researched in the meantime, but probably still represents the greatest and most intriguing mystery in psychology." (Braine 1963, quoted after Quaiser-Pohl and Rindermann 2010, S. 150 ff.)

Human language is broken down into various components in linguistics. The proper development of each of these language components or levels places certain demands on the language-learning kid, but they are also interrelated and have an impact on one another. At every stage of development, language perception and comprehension come before language production.

Regarding the name and classification of these components, many methods are used. When describing language, a distinction can be drawn between form, content, and use

Phonology, morphology (word formation and word form theory), and syntax (sentence structure theory) all address the formal characteristics of language (form). Language's intended meaning or content is the focus of pragmatics, the study of linguistic activity, as well as semantics, the study of linguistic meanings, which can be further divided into sentence semantics and word semantics (vocabulary or lexicon). Many linguistic treatises define prosody as a higher level of language and the study of speech's melodic structure, which includes both formal and content-related elements.

Children whose first language is "only" German may grow up in a region where dialect is spoken and learn it as well. Loan words that have found their way into the German language from other languages (e.g. Anglicisms or Gallicisms) support the argument that children in Germany do not grow up in "pure" monolingualism. In general, the levels of language comprehension can be distinguished as the word level, the sentence level, the text level, and the discourse level.

When understanding words, we distinguish content words such as nouns, verbs, and adjectives from function words (e.g., prepositions and conjunctions).

Language comprehension or understanding plays a key role in language development. On the one hand, children must infer the meaning and significance of others' utterances (semantic), but on the other hand, they must also grasp the communicative intention (communicative-pragmatic). In contrast to speech production, comprehension of speech requires many skills (including non-linguistic skills) and is not directly observable, which makes it less assessable for caregivers. Parents facilitate children's understanding of language by emphasizing or repeating particularly relevant words and automatically providing cues for understanding. Also, especially with younger children, what is said is emphasized with facial expressions and it relates to the immediate context. The exact relationship between language comprehension and production is unclear and dynamic - depending on age and linguistic aspects - due to the varying pace of development and varying linguistic demands. Long before children speak their first word, they are capable of perceiving language. Even in the womb, children hear and process language and are able to differentiate between speech sounds and other sounds or noises from birth.

Their ability to hear develops from the 26th to 28th week of pregnancy, and acoustic impressions play a crucial role in the further development of hearing and language development.

In monolingual first language acquisition, so-called "milestones" of language development can be described, although it should be noted that these are reached with high individual variability. Infants are already equipped with special speech perception skills before birth, which enable the development of basic communicative skills such as turn-taking and triangulated eye contact as a prerequisite for further speech development from the age of 10 months. As early as 1 year of age, children use specific language comprehension strategies to decode utterances from the environment, which are relevant for both speech perception and speech production. Before entering school, the major milestones of language development have been reached.

In the further course, the linguistic abilities differentiate further receptively and expressively (especially with regard to the semantic and pragmatic level), whereby the pace of development is reduced in comparison to preschool age in the sense of systematic development and stabilization of word and sentence formation rules.

Furthermore, there are large individual differences. (Bockmann, A. K., Sachse, S., & Buschmann, A. (2020). Sprachentwicklung im Überblick. Sprachentwicklung: Entwicklung–Diagnostik–Förderung im Kleinkind-und Vorschulalter, 3-44.)

Language therapists define various language-related disorders and conditions in early childhood speech and language development. According to Michael Graeven (2002; [chrome-extension://efaidnbnmnnibpcajpcgicfindmkaj/](https://efaidnbnmnnibpcajpcgicfindmkaj/) [https://www.sprachheilpaedagogik.at/Fachbeitraege/Sprachstoerungen\\_Ueberblick.pdf](https://www.sprachheilpaedagogik.at/Fachbeitraege/Sprachstoerungen_Ueberblick.pdf)), there are four categories of language impairments that are differentiated:

- Speech disorders
  - developmental
- Speech flow disorders, speech disorders
  - communicative, reactive
- Speech sound disorder
- Speech disorders
  - organically caused

Those impairments can include stuttering, stammering, remaining silent, disturbance of storage and/or retrieval of verbal information and many more, which are individually to be assessed and appropriate therapy tools to be used.

## **2.2. Educational background and special education system**

Language proficiency is essential for effective educational routes and engagement in society. In this way, language assistance is a crucial component of what elementary educational institutions do, and it occurs throughout all of our everyday lives and educational possibilities. The development of language abilities should best support the children's potential and set them up for success in school.

In Austria, the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research defines that the focus in early childhood education is on promoting German as an educational language. The promotion of children with a lack of knowledge of German as an educational language should be targeted and individualized from the beginning of their attendance at an elementary educational institution, but especially in the last two years before the start of compulsory schooling, so that they have mastered the language skills as far as possible by the time they enter school.

The Federal Ministry developed a comprehensive guidebook for educators and people working in early childhood education on speech and language

support which serves as a source among others for the information provided in this national report [https://www.oesz.at/OESZNEU/document2.php?Submit=&pub\\_ID=266](https://www.oesz.at/OESZNEU/document2.php?Submit=&pub_ID=266))

The primary target group for the implementation are educators and language support staff in elementary and primary education. Interactions, everyday routines, pedagogical impulses and learning arrangements in elementary educational institutions as well as lessons in all subjects in elementary school are basically opportunities for linguistic education and support. All participants in the elementary and primary school system are to be included in this continuous language support process. The management of educational institutions plays a central role in raising awareness for language awareness of language education and support as a cross-sectional domain. Well-developed linguistic and communicative competencies are of central importance for a successful educational biography. Depending on the stage of development, the children's linguistic environment, and their independent engagement with the real world, the language-related requirements that must be met in the course of an educational biography change and become more differentiated. An essential task of elementary and primary education.

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An essential task of elementary educational institutions is to accompany children in their language acquisition. Language and communication shape everyday life, interactions, and educational processes in elementary educational institutions. The basis of all language learning is trusting, relaxed relationships with caregivers, such as educators, and with other children, as well as time and attentive attention.



The appreciation and promotion of the individuality of each child is particularly evident in the respectful treatment of their first language(s) and dialects.

The starting point for the children's language education and support is, among other things, the language assessment in the third to last, second to last and last year in an elementary educational institution.

The observation procedures developed for this purpose are the "BESK KOMPAKT13" and the "BESK-DaZ KOMPAKT 14", which will be explained in section 2.5 of this report. Based on this, targeted language education and support programs are planned and reflected upon. Already in elementary educational institutions, children acquire and expand their educational language competencies and learn to use them according to the situation.

While language in everyday communication usually refers to a currently given context of action, in the school context language is increasingly used detached from the current situation. Especially the comprehension and production of written texts are strongly bound to the ability to use language in its written or educational form, i.e. detached from the descriptive context. However, the oral language of

instruction is also tied to written language and differs significantly from the informal, communicative everyday language used primarily in elementary education.

Educational language is generally more precise, abstract, and complex. The educational variety of German is characterized by impersonal expressions, passive formations, subjunctives, nouns, and a large number of attributes, i.e., adjuncts.

Pupils who, because of their lack of knowledge of the language of instruction in German are not yet able to follow the lessons of the respective school level and are admitted as exceptional pupils, are to be placed in German support programs in accordance with §8h SchOG in German support classes and German support courses.

The allocation to a German language support class or a German language support course is based on the so-called MIKA-D (Measuring Instrument for Competence Analysis - German), a standardized test procedure that is uniform throughout Austria. The test takes place during school enrollment. It is determined whether the student is assigned an extraordinary status and whether an assignment to a German support course is made due to insufficient German skills.

(<https://www.bmbwf.gv.at/Themen/schule/schulpraxis/ba/sprabi/dfk.html>)

Further reviews of exceptionally classified students with MIKA-D then take place at the end of each semester. This determines which form of German language support the student will need in the following semester.

Therefore, after the winter semester, depending on the MIKA-D test result, it is possible for the student to transfer to regular classes with a German support course or already as a regular student. Repeating school grades and the associated loss of career opportunities should be avoided as far as possible. The German Support Class and the German Support Course are usually designed for one semester and can be attended for a maximum of four semesters.

Afterwards, the student must be transferred to regular status. The Federal Ministry of Education and Research recommends and makes available USB DaZ (“Unterrichtsbegleitende Sprachstandsbeobachtung Deutsch als Zweitsprache”), a diagnostic tool developed on behalf of the University of Vienna, for use in German classes and courses, but also in regular classes. USB-DaZ is a scientifically based diagnostic instrument for determining the language skills of students with German as a second language.

## ***2.3 The professions involved in the diagnosis and therapy of language disorders***

In Austria, various professions are involved in the diagnosis and therapy of speech disorders. These include, in particular, speech and language therapists, as well as pediatricians, psychologists, and educators working in early intervention and special education. Together, these professionals work to identify and diagnose speech disorders in children and develop appropriate treatment plans to promote and support the language development of affected children. It is important to determine the root of the children's difficulties in speech and language.

Language disorders and problems with another native language other than German are two different language challenges that have different causes and characteristics: A language disorder refers to difficulties in acquiring or using a language beyond what is considered typical for the child's age or developmental stage. These difficulties can manifest in several areas of language, including comprehension (receptive language) and speech (expressive language).

There may also be problems with articulation, vocabulary, grammar, or communication. Language disorders may have organic causes, such as hearing

problems or neurological disorders, or they may be environmental and result from a lack of language stimulation.

On the other hand, problems with another native language refer to difficulties that can occur when someone learns or speaks a language that is not their first or dominant language.

These difficulties may be due to cultural differences, differences in grammar or sentence structure between languages, or lack of sufficient exposure to the target language. It is important to note that these problems usually occur in the context of learning a second or foreign language and are not necessarily considered a language disorder.

The main difference is that a language disorder is a persistent impairment of the language system, whereas problems with another native language are usually due to adaptation to a new language and can often be improved with additional language support and practice.

When a language disorder is suspected, a thorough evaluation by a professional is necessary to make an accurate diagnosis and initiate appropriate interventions.

## ***2.4. Speech and language therapy training programs at universities***

In Austria there are several educational programs to get into the profession of speech and language therapy ("Logopädie"). Speech therapy has a lot to do with psychology. In the educational degree in "Speech and Language Therapy" (Bachelor or Master), psychology and pedagogy are just as important subjects as the medical basics for speech or voice disorders. The learning content in the speech therapy degree program is composed of the fundamentals of the subjects of medicine, linguistics, psychology and special education, as well as subject-specific competencies.

Speech therapists develop therapy plans and treatment concepts for patients according to a doctor's orders and carry out speech therapy diagnoses on their own responsibility. The profession of speech therapists encompasses a wide range of tasks and aspects in the field of speech therapy and communication disorders. A central role is the diagnosis and treatment of speech, language, voice and swallowing disorders as well as hearing impairments. Speech therapists work closely with physicians and develop individual therapy plans and treatment concepts based on medical orders.

They are qualified to carry out independent logopedic diagnoses.

Another important area of work is the examination, diagnosis and therapy of communication disorders, both verbal and non-verbal. Prevention, counselling and support play a decisive role in this, as does scientific research in this field. In their work, speech therapists also conduct intensive discussions with patients in order to establish comprehensive speech therapy findings. In addition, they use a variety of exercise methods to build, improve and restore their patients' ability to speak. This can be done through role-playing, rhythmic exercises, and specific training in sound and word formation, including aspects such as breathing, swallowing, and chewing. In Austria, individuals aspiring to pursue a career in logopedics have several training programs at their disposal.

One prominent option is the "Fachhochschulstudium Logopädie," which is a degree program offered at various universities of applied sciences (Fachhochschulen) across the country. This comprehensive program typically spans six semesters and culminates in the attainment of a Bachelor's degree in Logopädie. Additionally, for those situated in Vienna, the "Ausbildung im Wiener Gesundheitsverbund" offers a specialized training program in collaboration with the Fachhochschule

Campus Wien. These diverse training programs provide aspiring logopedists with the educational foundation and practical skills necessary to excel in the field of speech and language therapy in Austria.

These diverse training programs provide aspiring logopedists with the educational foundation and practical skills necessary to excel in the field of speech and language therapy in Austria. Some institutions where this degree program is offered in Austria are:

- Fachhochschule Joanneum, Graz
- Fachhochschule Kärnten
- Fachhochschule Wiener Neustadt
- Fachhochschule Gesundheitsberufe Oberösterreich
- Fachhochschule Gesundheit Tirol
- Fachhochschule Campus Wien

(<https://www.studieren.at/studien/logopaedie/>)

Moreover, there are a variety of training and educational programs for teachers, educators and people working with young children that are offered. Educators are sensitized to the language diversity of children in Austria. Language as an essential dimension of the educational biography is of particular importance in early childhood education due to the development potential at this age.



Educators should assess, support and document the language development of all children (not only those with a migration background), especially with regard to the educational language German, taking into account bilingualism and multilingualism. Those university courses offer scientifically oriented examinations of monolingual and bilingual language acquisition in early education and the assessment of individual language development processes of children as well as to the expansion of didactic-methodical competencies for language support and education.

### ***2.5. Legal regulation on speech and language support in early childhood education***

In order to determine the language competencies in the educational language German, a nationwide standardized instrument for recording the language competencies in the educational language German of children will be used in suitable elementary educational institutions throughout Austria from the kindergarten year 2019/20. This implies two variants and bears the titles "BESK KOMPAKT" and "BESK-DaZ KOMPAKT" and was developed by the Federal Institute for Educational Research, Innovation and Development of the Austrian School System (BIFIE) together with a subject matter expert. The language

level assessments are to be carried out by specialists using this nationwide observation instrument, which is to be used to determine the language competence in German of children with German as their first language (BESK KOMPAKT) on the one hand, and the language competence in German of children with German as their second language (BESK-DaZ KOMPAKT) on the other.

This compact instrument is intended to be an improvement for elementary educators, as it includes a streamlining of the meaningful language level indicators. This allows for a resource-saving use while at the same time increasing the informative value of a child's concrete language support needs. In order to ensure a uniform approach throughout Germany, uniform observation periods and thresholds were defined for identifying any need for language support.

At the same time, a mandatory handover sheet from the early childhood educational institution to the elementary school is used, which, based on the results of the language status instrument "BESK (DaZ) kompakt", provides information regarding a child's strengths and areas that can be supported in the area of language and offers a concrete starting point for further support planning. This must be sent to the elementary schools by the beginning of September at the latest after the end of the state-legislated school

vacations and maps the child's development in the last year of kindergarten during the observation period with May or June.

Since the language level assessment is to be carried out at least once for all children from the age of three, a handover sheet is also prepared for each child with regard to the language level assessment carried out and against the background of continuous observation by the elementary educators, thus also in the case of a non-existent specific need for support in the educational language German.

The foundation for tracking and recording each student's language-related educational processes is provided by the Guidelines for Language Support at the Transition from Kindergarten to Primary School. With an emphasis on the school entry phase, they offer insight into the most crucial elements of language support for kids who speak German as their first or second language. The Charlotte Bühler Institute for Practice-Oriented Early Childhood Research created the guidelines in 2016 on behalf of the Federal Ministry of Education, Science, and Research.

(<https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-education-systems/austria/educational-guidelines>)

Moreover, the Federal Ministry provides a practical

guide that offers insight into concepts and methods for teaching an age-appropriate culture of books, storytelling, and writing in work with two- to six-year-olds. It contains practical suggestions and addresses aspects of multilingualism such as the use of digital media and literacy promotion in families.

([https://www.oesz.at/OESZNEU/document2.php?Submit=&pub\\_ID=266](https://www.oesz.at/OESZNEU/document2.php?Submit=&pub_ID=266)).

Furthermore, in order to determine the linguistic competence of all primary school children in elementary level 1 in the language of instruction German in a playful atmosphere and to implement targeted support based on this, the diagnostic instrument USB Plus (Unterrichtsbegleitende Sprachstandsbeobachtung, Profilanalysen und Sprachförderung) was developed by IQS (formerly BIFIE) on behalf of the Ministry until November 2018. Based on computer-generated competency profiles, it offers concrete recommendations and materials for language education and support. In the medium term, the department plans to use USB Plus nationwide (cf. the USB Plus decree); therefore, teachers at elementary schools need to be qualified step by step.

([https://www.bmbwf.gv.at/Themen/schule/schulpraxis/ba/sprabi/usb\\_plus.html](https://www.bmbwf.gv.at/Themen/schule/schulpraxis/ba/sprabi/usb_plus.html))

The framework conditions of early language support in particular differ from state to state and from municipality to municipality, as do the different arrangements of child education and care facilities in general.

The BM:BWF as well as the Education Advisory Council, newly established by the federal government, are responsible for the design.

Diverging requirements for kindergarten staff, varying levels of quality in terms of staffing ratios, group sizes, space availability, opening hours, etc., as well as different funding - for example, the inconsistent subsidy payments to private providers - further exacerbate these differences and make uniform initiatives for the whole of Austria difficult.

(<https://www.hilfswerk.at/oesterreich/artikel-detail/news/enorme-schieflagen-bei-sprachfoerderungim-kindergarten/> )

### **3 MAIN FINDINGS**

Austria has several programs for the development of children's language, especially in German language skills. The goal is to support children's abilities and give them a good foundation for the transition from kindergarten into the school system.

### **3.1 Main strengths and weaknesses**

As described in the sections above, a main strength of the Austrian system is the nationwide standardized instrument for assessing language proficiency in German which has been introduced in kindergartens since the 2019/20 school year throughout Austria, the so-called „BESK KOMPAKT“ and „BESK-DaZ KOMPAKT“.

(<https://www.bmbwf.gv.at/Themen/ep/sf.html>)

Moreover, the implementation of (playful) approaches to determine the linguistic competence of all primary school children at the elementary level in the language of instruction German and the targeted support, is beneficial for the development of children's language skills. Those instruments focus on early language development for children of all first languages.

With a playful approach, teachers learn about the language level of their students. Teachers can identify strengths and weaknesses at an early stage and support the children individually. In Austria, language development is an integral part of the responsibilities of early childhood education institutions, with language development taking place throughout the day across all activities and educational programs.

Despite the presence of valuable tools and policies dedicated to early childhood education's language and speech development, the Austrian system grapples with certain challenges in this regard. One of the main obstacles is the decentralised policy approach of the federal states of Austria. The framework conditions for early language support exhibit variations from one state to another and even within municipalities, mirroring the broader diversity seen in the arrangements of child education and care facilities.

The responsibility for shaping these conditions lies with the BM:BWF (Federal Ministry for Education, Science, and Research), alongside the newly established Education Advisory Council under the federal government. These variations encompass distinct requirements for kindergarten staff, disparities in staffing ratios, group sizes, available space, operating hours, and various funding mechanisms, including inconsistent subsidy payments to private providers.

What is more, is that there is a shortage of kindergarten and elementary school staff which shifts the childcare ratio in a non-beneficial way. An appropriate specialist-child ratio, however, and manageable group sizes form the basis for high-quality, elementary educational processes.

They have a beneficial effect on the cognitive and linguistic development as well as the well-being of children in institutions.

Currently, the educator-child ratio for toddler groups in the two- to three-year-old age group varies from 1:3 to 1:15, depending on the federal state. The recommendations of experts and scientific studies, on the other hand, are for a ratio of 1:3 to a maximum of 1:8.

The German support classes are organized heterogeneously with regard to age and linguistic abilities in German. The teachers are faced with the challenge of offering adequate support means and methods for each age group and for each language level, which entails very time-consuming preparation. (<https://eplus.uni-salzburg.at/obvusbhs/content/titleinfo/5043279/full.pdf>)

The linguistic landscape in Austria is unquestionably complex, marked by a wide range of autochthonous linguistic minorities and a sizable proportion of students for whom German is their second language. However, there hasn't been much done to promote fluency in other languages outside German, like Czech, Hungarian, and Slovak.



Urban middle schools, particularly those with a substantial enrollment of pupils from poorer socioeconomic origins and for whom German is a second language, clearly have a concentration of lower learning outcomes. While fostering experiences that create an appreciation for many peoples, languages, and cultures has the potential to encourage intercultural sensitivity and tolerance in Austrian schools, the major focus still remains on improving German language competency. Austria's linguistic complexity contrasts with the country's modest emphasis on encouraging fluency in languages other than German, potentially limiting students' possibilities to advance their linguistic abilities in more varied contexts.

All in all, while the Austrian language support system for early childhood education has some commendable qualities, such as a comprehensive framework and inclusive policies, it also has a few major shortcomings that must be addressed in order to ensure fair opportunities for all young learners, such as inconsistent quality standards and accessibility disparities.

## **4 CONCLUSIONS**

Austria has implemented various initiatives to support teachers in promoting the speech and language



Non-governmental groups in Austria's provinces have also provided training programs for early intervention teachers. The Council of Europe provides a comprehensive Language Education Policy Profile for Austria, providing information on the nation's language education policies. Language proficiency is essential for effective educational routes and engagement in society.

In Austria, the focus is on promoting German as an educational language in early childhood education. The Federal Ministry developed a comprehensive guidebook for educators and language support staff in elementary and primary education, targeting educators and language support staff. Interactions, everyday routines, pedagogical impulses, and learning arrangements in elementary educational institutions provide opportunities for linguistic education and support. The management of educational institutions plays a central role in raising awareness for language awareness and language education and support.

From the kindergarten year 2019/20, a nationwide standardized instrument for recording language competencies in the educational language German of children will be used in suitable elementary educational institutions throughout Austria. The instrument, titled "BESK KOMPAKT" and "BESK-DaZ

KOMPAKT," aims to improve elementary educators by streamlining language level assessments and increasing the informative value of a child's concrete language support needs. Uniform observation periods and thresholds have been defined for identifying any need for language support throughout Germany. A mandatory handover sheet from early childhood educational institutions to elementary schools is used, providing information on a child's strengths and areas that can be supported in the area of language.

The ECEC service is required to give the primary school a transfer sheet detailing a child's language-related strengths and support needs, serving as a practical starting point for further support planning. The Guidelines for Language Support at the Transition from Kindergarten to Primary School offer insight into the most crucial elements of language support for kids who speak German as their first or second language.

The diagnostic instrument USB Plus was developed by IQS (formerly BIFIE) to determine the linguistic competence of all primary school children in elementary level 1 in the language of instruction German in a playful atmosphere and implement targeted support based on this.

Austria has several programs for children's language

development, particularly in German, to support their abilities and provide a solid foundation for the transition from kindergarten to the school system. The main strength of the Austrian system is the nationwide standardized instrument for assessing language proficiency in German.

Additionally, playful approaches to determining linguistic competence in elementary-level German are beneficial for children of all first languages. Language development is an integral part of early childhood education institutions, but the system faces challenges such as decentralised policy, variations in early language support conditions, and a shortage of kindergarten and elementary school staff.

The linguistic landscape in Austria is complex, with a wide range of linguistic minorities and a significant proportion of students with German as their second language.

However, there is limited emphasis on promoting fluency in other languages outside German. The country's linguistic complexity contrasts with the country's modest emphasis on encouraging fluency in languages other than German, potentially limiting students' opportunities to advance their linguistic abilities in more varied contexts.

- Summary of suggested methodologies and tools to be developed within the SL TOOLS project.

The SL TOOLS project could be helpful in developing different methodologies and tools to improve and support speech and language training in early childhood education.

This could be done by for example conducting surveys and interviews with educators, parents, and stakeholders to identify specific needs, challenges, and priorities in different regions of Austria, which will provide valuable insights into the unique requirements of various communities.

The collection of Best Practices from other countries to extract best practices that can be adapted to the Austrian context is also beneficial. Furthermore, collaborative workshops with educators, speech therapists, and parents to share knowledge, exchange ideas, and co-create strategies for language development could be conducted.

# NATIONAL DESK RESEARCH REPORT

WPI Benchmarks for speech and language support and educational report

Country: **FRANCE**



Co-funded by  
the European Union

KA220-SCH - Cooperation  
partnerships in school education.

# COLLECTION OF GOOD PRACTICES

WPI Benchmarks for speech and language support and educational report

Country: **SPAIN**



Co-funded by  
the European Union

KA220-SCH - Cooperation  
partnerships in school education.



# GOOD PRACTICE TITLE:

## Sounding Wheel



### Brief description

In class, we have several wheels, similar to those in the picture below.

The game consists of looking for different phonemes proposed by the teacher.

For students in the lower grades, we would suggest looking for the vowel sounds, for the following levels we would suggest the syllables or the syllables for the older ones. It is a game that we can adapt to the level of each child.

When the child recognises the sound, he/she has to put a pincer on the drawing or some kind of mark that the teacher indicates, thus working on the pincer and eye-hand coordination.

### Aims and objectives

- Recognise phonemes.
- Match the sound of the phonemes with the graphic representation of the letter.
- To practice the pincer grasp.
- Encourage hand-eye coordination.

### Implemented activities and final outcomes

#### ACTIVITY 1:

The children will have to look for the syllables or sounds indicated by the teacher. Only in words that begin with them.

#### ACTIVITY 2:

The children have to look for the syllable or sound indicated by the teacher, in the words that contain this syllable even if it is not at the beginning.

s

ts



# GOOD PRACTICE TITLE:

## Sounding Wheel

<b>Implemented activities and final outcomes</b>	<p>ACTIVITY 3:</p> <p>The children will have to mark the syllables that each word has, with as many tweezers as the syllables that contain it, or the teacher will indicate the number of syllables they have to look for.</p>
<b>Approach and methodologies</b>	<p>Work will start in small groups, with 4 or 5 children until they know the rules of the game.</p> <p>Active and participative methodology, all the children have to get involved in the game and build their learning.</p> <p>An individualized methodology is used, in which each child works at their own level and progresses at their own pace.</p> <p>Gamification is used so that children enjoy learning and do not lose concentration.</p>
<b>Target groups</b>	<p>The main feature of this activity is that it can be adapted to children of different ages, simply by increasing the difficulty of the phonemes worked on or the place where they appear.</p> <p>Children from the age of 3 can look for the sound of any vowel that begins a word.</p> <p>Pupils aged 4 and 5 can look for the vowel sound in any syllable of the word and can also begin to look for syllable sounds.</p> <p>Children aged 5 and up can play at recognising direct syllable sounds.</p>

## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE:

### Sounding WHeel

<b>Target groups</b>	<p>Children from 6 years old will work with inverse syllables and locked syllables.</p> <p>These ages are approximate, as each child will adapt the pace of play to their learning. This activity can be carried out in both infant and primary education and can also be very useful for children with difficulties in learning to read and write.</p>
<b>Duration</b>	<p>Thanks to the versatility of this activity, it can be carried out throughout the whole process of learning to read.</p>
<b>Main strength and weaknesses</b>	<p><b>The main strengths are the following:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- You can use this game throughout the whole process of reading acquisition, working on the phonemes you are most interested in at any given moment.</li><li>- The same wheels can be used for different phonemes.</li><li>- Children can play at the pace of their reading acquisition.</li><li>- Children who are at an advanced level can help or correct children who are working on simpler phonemes.</li></ul>

## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE:

### Sounding WHeel

<b>Main strength and weaknesses</b>	<b>The weakest points are:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Until the children are able to correct their play, a teacher will have to supervise the activity, so they will have to start playing in small groups.</li><li>- The game requires the teacher to prepare the wheels beforehand.</li><li>- The game does not differentiate between letters with different spellings, but which sound the same, for example: B and V.</li></ul>
<b>Lead organisation</b>	Name of organization: School Santa Elena Type of organisation: Charter school Mission: Education of students between 3 and 16 years of age

## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE:

### The Secret Keys

<b>Brief description</b>	<p>This activity is designed to work on syllabic awareness in a playful way.</p> <p>The first thing we will do is to present the pupils with a series of keys, each of which has an image related to their everyday environment.</p> <p>In addition, we will have placed in the classroom images of doors on which there is a number from one to five.</p> <p>The students will take a key and will have to tell the rest of their classmates what is on the key.</p> <p>After saying the word, they will separate it into syllables and depending on the number of syllables it has, they will take it to the correct door.</p>
<b>Aims and objectives</b>	<p>The objectives of this practice are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To understand the relationship between the sounds that make up words and their letters.</li><li>• To understand that words are made up of syllables.</li><li>• To properly segment words into syllables.</li><li>• Identify the initial and final syllable in words.</li><li>• Classify words according to their number of syllables.</li></ul>
<b>Implemented activities and final outcomes</b>	<p>Activity 1.</p> <p>What we want to work on with this first activity is syllable segmentation. To do this, we will offer the students a series of keys on which, as mentioned above, there are images related to the students' environment.</p>



# GOOD PRACTICE TITLE:

## The Secret Keys

### Implemented activities and final outcomes

The students will approach the place where the keys are and pick one at random. First they have to say what they are looking at and then, with the help of their clapping, separate the word into syllables and say how many syllables it has. Once they have said it and checked it all together, the pupil will "open" the door of the syllables with their key.

#### Activity 2.

With this activity we will also work on the segmentation of words into syllables and we will do it using the robots.

On the robot panel we will place the different keys and doors and the students will have to lead the robot from a key to the correct door.

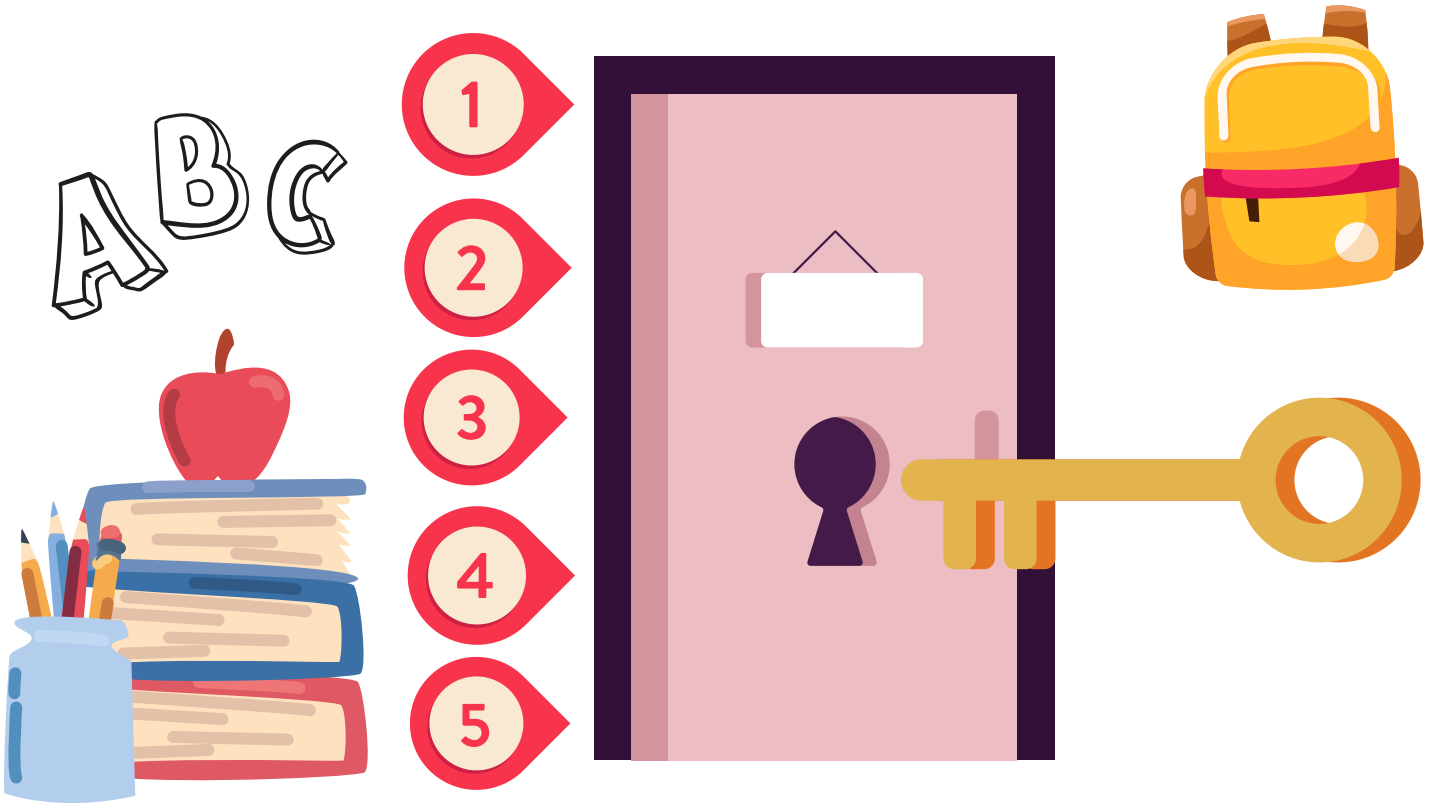


# GOOD PRACTICE TITLE:

## The Secret Keys

<b>Implemented activities and final outcomes</b>	<p>ACTIVITY 3:</p> <p>The children will have to mark the syllables that each word has, with as many tweezers as the syllables that contain it, or the teacher will indicate the number of syllables they have to look for.</p>
<b>Approach and methodologies</b>	<p>Work will start in small groups, with 4 or 5 children until they know the rules of the game.</p> <p>Active and participative methodology, all the children have to get involved in the game and build their learning.</p> <p>An individualized methodology is used, in which each child works at their own level and progresses at their own pace.</p> <p>Gamification is used so that children enjoy learning and do not lose concentration.</p>
<b>Target groups</b>	<p>The main feature of this activity is that it can be adapted to children of different ages, simply by increasing the difficulty of the phonemes worked on or the place where they appear.</p> <p>Children from the age of 3 can look for the sound of any vowel that begins a word.</p> <p>Pupils aged 4 and 5 can look for the vowel sound in any syllable of the word and can also begin to look for syllable sounds.</p> <p>Children aged 5 and up can play at recognising direct syllable sounds.</p>





## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE:

### The Secret Keys

#### **Implemented activities and final outcomes**

First they have to say what they are looking at and then, with the help of their clapping, separate the word into syllables and say how many syllables it has.

Once they have said it and checked it all together, the pupil will "open" the door of the syllables with their key.

#### Activity 2.

With this activity we will also work on the segmentation of words into syllables and we will do it using the robots.

On the robot panel we will place the different keys and doors and the students will have to lead the robot from a key to the correct door.

#### Activity 3.

In this third activity, once we have already worked on the segmentation of words, we are going to focus on the recognition of the initial or final syllable.

To do this, we will place the keys on a bedside table and a student will come up to take one of them.

Once they have said what appears on the key and separated it into syllables, all the students will have to identify which is the initial or final syllable (as indicated by the teacher) and they will have to look for another word on the light table that has the same initial or final syllable.

#### Activity 4.

The last activity proposed aims to work on syllable manipulation so that the pupils acquire the skills to be able to remove, add or join syllables and form new words.

## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE:

### The Secret Keys

<p><b>Implemented activities and final outcomes</b></p>	<p>In this way, we will offer the pupils the magic keys again and they will take one of them.</p> <p>When they have said what they are looking at, the teacher will tell them which syllable they have to remove, change etc.</p> <p>"What happens if we take syllables away from this word?"</p> <p>In this way, we are inviting the pupils to play with the words in order to discover new ones.</p>
<p><b>Approach and methodologies</b></p>	<p>In order for our students to feel motivated, we use different strategies and methodologies:</p> <p>We must adjust to the development of the student using an individualised methodology and trying to achieve significant learning adapted to each one of them. To do this, we adapt the level of the activity according to the objectives of each student.</p> <p>We use gamification to maintain interest in learning and motivation at all times. Given the age at which learning begins, assimilating knowledge through play becomes a vitally important task, which is why the child will play a game guided by the teacher that will help them to acquire the different objectives. It is also very necessary to use active methodologies, that is to say, the pupil must be the one who constructs his own learning. They will set their own pace and will be the main protagonist of the story, in order to keep their attention on the task at all times.</p>

## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE:

### The Secret Keys

<b>Approach and methodologies</b>	<p>We will also use the motivation provided by new technologies in the acquisition of reading. For this, the game through the robots provides an additional value that will make the students interested in the proposed activity at all times and therefore their results will be much better.</p> <p>Finally, we will make use of the pedagogy of light, through which the possibilities of play and learning are multiplied. It invites them to explore, to investigate and to invent a thousand stories where their curiosity and amazement will be the protagonists. The pupils focus their attention, draw their own conclusions and alert their senses so that learning takes place individually.</p>
<b>Target groups</b>	<p>The target group for this activity is pupils from the third year of Infant Education up to the second year of Primary Education; in other words, this practice can be carried out with pupils aged between 5 and 7 years old.</p> <p>This does not mean that the dynamics proposed cannot be carried out with other pupils who, either because of their specific needs or their more specific interests, cannot be worked on, as these activities can be adapted to the needs of the group or the pupil at any given time.</p>
<b>Duration</b>	<p>Due to the many variants of this activity, it can be carried out throughout the whole course.</p>

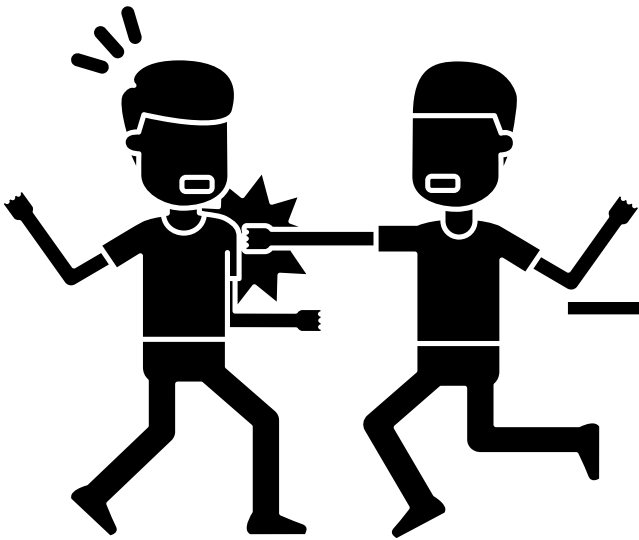
## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE:

### The Secret Keys

<b>Main strength and weaknesses</b>	<p>One of the main strengths of this resource is its versatility, as it offers us the opportunity to create very different activities with the same materials. In addition, it is also a resource that allows us to make modifications that will allow us to adjust it to the different levels that we can find in a classroom.</p> <p>To continue, we believe that the playful approach of the activity will help students to feel motivated to learn.</p> <p>Finally, a weakness of "The Secret Keys" is that in order to get the most out of the proposed activity, it would be ideal to work in small groups, but the dynamics of the classroom mean that this is not always possible.</p>
<b>Lead organisation</b>	<p>The target group for this activity is pupils from the third year of Infant Education up to the second year of Primary Education; in other words, this practice can be carried out with pupils aged between 5 and 7 years old.</p> <p>This does not mean that the dynamics proposed cannot be carried out with other pupils who, either because of their specific needs or their more specific interests, cannot be worked on, as these activities can be adapted to the needs of the group or the pupil at any given time.</p>
<b>Duration</b>	<p>Name of organization: Santa Elena School</p> <p>Type of organisation: Charter school</p> <p>Mission: Education of students between 3 and 16 years of age</p>

## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: **Pictograms**

<b>Brief description</b>	<p>Pictograms are schematic images used to represent an idea or message. They are often used so that children with communication difficulties can communicate visually.</p> <p>In this practice we will use pictograms to:</p> <p>Detail action sequences, e.g. Today we go for a walk, after lunch. Then we take a nap and then we go shopping.</p> <p>Offer alternatives, e.g.: We can stay at home and read for a while or we can go out and go to the swimming pool.</p> <p>Explain consequences of certain actions, for example: if we take a nap, we can go to the park afterwards. Also emotional consequences such as: if you hit me, I get sad.</p>
<b>Aims and objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-To work on the construction of sentences and acquire new concepts.</li><li>-To enhance communication both in expression and comprehension.</li><li>-To anticipate changes in the daily routine.</li><li>-To develop memory and the capacity of abstraction.</li><li>-To order and understand time and space.</li></ul>



*january*

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MON	TUE	WED
THU	FRI	SAT
	SUN	

## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: **Pictograms**

<p><b>Implemented activities and final outcomes</b></p>	<p>Activity 1. Visual calendar with pictograms. We work on contents and activities about the day, the weather, the season and our own emotions.</p> <p>Activity 2. Seasonal plates. We encourage oral expression: "it's cold in winter", "we wear a scarf", "we get sick and have snot", "the trees have no leaves"...</p> <p>Activity 3. The following activity is a manipulative task in which the student must cut out each pictogram and paste it under the corresponding sentence.</p> <p>Activity 4. Stories with pictograms. Show the pictogram of the story "The Three Little Pigs". The activity consists of the teacher asking questions to the group so that the children can describe the images and thus narrate the story. Once the teacher finishes narrating the story, he should show the children the images of the story in disorder so that they can describe them, keeping an organized sequence.</p> <p>Activity 5. It should serve as a beginning and introduction to the world of emotions. In this case, it is a simple activity, in which the student must be able to reason and reflect on what he feels at that moment and must show it through an interactive game in which he must place the corresponding expression. The activity will also be carried out thanks to drawings of expressions as realistic as possible and pictograms.</p> <p>Activity 6. Emotional memory. Prior to this activity, there will be an explanation through pictograms, to make it easier for the students to understand.</p>
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## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: **Pictograms**

<b>Implemented activities and final outcomes</b>	<p>These pictograms show the student the instructions to follow in the game. First he must click on a card and then think and look for the card that is the same. The game will be played gradually, first with 4 emotions, in which he will have to find the pairs of emotions and finally, when he controls the game with 4 emotions, it will be played with 5 emotions.</p>
<b>Approach and methodologies</b>	<p>In this practice, we will use methods based on experiences, activities and games that encourage students to acquire work habits in a progressive manner. These methods will be carried out in an environment of trust, promoting the social integration and self-esteem of the students.</p> <p>In the methodology we will take into account the following principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Individualization: It is based on the idea that each student is unique and different and the relationship that is established between each of the children. It is important to adapt the contents and activities to the development of the children and to attend to each one of them in an individualized way.</li><li>- Flexibility: each child has different needs, having flexibility when it comes to organizing time, space, etc. Being flexible implies empathy and understanding on the part of the teacher.</li></ul>

## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: **Pictograms**

<p><b>Approach and methodologies</b></p>	<p>In this practice, we will use methods based on experiences, activities and games that encourage students to acquire work habits in a progressive manner. These methods will be carried out in an environment of trust, promoting the social integration and self-esteem of the students.</p> <p>In the methodology we will take into account the following principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Individualization: It is based on the idea that each student is unique and different and the relationship that is established between each of the children. It is important to adapt the contents and activities to the development of the children and to attend to each one of them in an individualized way.</li><li>- Flexibility: each child has different needs, having flexibility when it comes to organizing time, space, etc. Being flexible implies empathy and understanding on the part of the teacher.</li></ul>
<p><b>Target groups</b></p>	<p>This practice is intended for students who are in the 2nd cycle of early childhood education, i.e., from 3 to 6 years old. In addition, it is often used in centers for children with special educational needs, who need specific attention and specific resources and materials, mainly children with autism spectrum disorder.</p>

## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: **Pictograms**

<b>Duration</b>	It can be carried out during the entire childhood education and the first years of Primary Education.
<b>Main strength and weaknesses</b>	<p>One of the main strengths of this good practice is that pictograms are easy to interpret, increasing communication and language in students, favoring social relationships and integration.</p> <p>In addition, they help to develop a sense of unity among people from different cultures, because they offer a common visual language for most people.</p> <p>Another main strength is that they are not ephemeral, like spoken or signed messages, but are tangible and remain in time and space, allowing anyone to access them at any time.</p> <p>The weaknesses of pictograms and symbols compared to written texts are: less effectiveness in indicating detailed information, greater risk of misinterpretation, for abstract symbols a certain amount of prior learning is required to understand them correctly.</p>
<b>Lead organisation</b>	<p><i>Name of organization: School Santa Elena</i></p> <p><i>Type of organisation: Charter school</i></p> <p><i>Mission: Education of students between 3 and 16 years of age</i></p>

# GOOD PRACTICE TITLE:

## Letter puzzles

<b>Brief description</b>	<p>This practice is based on the game through a box that contains all the syllables that form the letters that have been learnt in class. This makes it very versatile and it can be adapted to the level of the pupil and can add difficulty, so we can say that it is a living game that will accompany the pupil throughout his or her learning.</p> <p>The game consists of presenting the student with drawings whose words are made up only of syllables that have been worked on in the classroom. For example, if we have worked on the letter P and the letter L, we will present drawings of objects such as: magnifying glass, stick, pipe, etc. We will also provide them with the written words, which they will have to read and link to these images. Next, we will offer them a box with all the syllables that can be formed by joining the vowels to the letters they have learnt (Pa, pe, pi, po, pu, pu, la, le, li, lo, lu, if we continue with the previous example). The child will have to form the words that he/she joined to the pictures before using the syllables in the box.</p>
<b>Aims and objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Encourage pleasure in reading by working on it in a playful way and encouraging learning through trial and error.</li><li>- Improve observation skills and stimulate attention by comparing symbols.</li><li>- To develop creativity through the formation of new words.</li><li>- To create the need to read in order to develop in the pupil the necessary motivation to start the mechanical phase of reading.</li></ul>



# GOOD PRACTICE TITLE:

## Letter puzzles

<b>Aims and objectives</b>	<p>- To develop fine motor skills and hand-eye control through writing their own creations</p>
<b>Implemented activities and final outcomes</b>	<p><b>Activity 1:</b> In the first activity and as a first contact, they will only have to match the images presented to the corresponding words. It is very beneficial to do this activity in pairs or in small groups so that the children who are more advanced in the reading and writing process can help and guide the more immature pupils to match the different phonemes with their graphemes.</p> <p><b>Activity 2:</b> This activity is an extension of the previous one, since it consists of, once the images have been joined with their respective written words, we are going to look for the syllables that form each of the words and we are going to join them together to form these words.</p> <p><b>Activity 3:</b> Another variant that we can find when the students are already somewhat more familiar with reading is to dispense with the model that guides us to write the word we are looking for. To do this, we will offer the students the drawings and the syllable box, and they will have to join the syllables to form the words determined by each image.</p>

# GOOD PRACTICE TITLE:

## Letter puzzles

<p><b>Implemented activities and final outcomes</b></p>	<p>Activity 4: The next activity that we can develop with the syllable box is the free formation of words. In a small group, we can offer the box with the syllables learned so that they can develop their creativity and join the syllables to form different words.</p> <p>Activity 5: Another variation of the activity is to build the words using the robots. To do this, we will use the syllables in the box to form the words that correspond to the drawings, leaving the syllables in different squares of the grid. We will offer the students the drawing and they will have to form the word by programming the robot to move around the grid passing through the places where the syllables are.</p> <p>Activity 6: Another activity we can do to develop motivation is to work with the light table. To do this, we will offer the drawings and the syllables on the light table, and after forming the corresponding words, the student will have to write on the light table with the appropriate markers the words he/she has formed with the syllables.</p>
<p><b>Approach and methodologies</b></p>	<p>When we do this practice, we try above all to create in our pupils the need to learn to read. In itself, it is a very mechanical learning process, since, at the beginning, our brain has to use its -</p>

## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE:

### Letter puzzles

#### **Approach and methodologies**

memory capacity to associate the sound to each of the letters and thus develop reading.

For this reason, it is a learning process that in principle can be demotivating for the pupil, since, if their memory fails, they lose their sense of meaning. Furthermore, it is a learning process that takes time, which means that not all children are ready at the same time. So that this is not a problem for them, our job is to motivate them and offer them the necessary tools so that they create the need to learn on their own.

In order for our students to feel motivated, we use different strategies and methodologies:

We must adjust to the development of the student using an individualised methodology and trying to achieve significant learning adapted to each one of them. To do this, we adapt the level of the activity according to the objectives of each student.

We use gamification to maintain interest in learning and motivation at all times. Given the age at which learning begins, assimilating knowledge through play becomes a vitally important task, which is why the child will play a game guided by the teacher that will help them to acquire the different objectives.

It is also very necessary to use active methodologies, that is to say, the pupil must be the one who constructs his own learning. They will set their own pace and will be the main protagonist of the story, in order to keep their attention on the task at all times.

We will also use the motivation provided by new technologies in the acquisition of reading. For this, the game through the robots provides an -



## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE:

### Letter puzzles

<b>Approach and methodologies</b>	<p>additional value that will make the students interested in the proposed activity at all times and therefore their results will be much better.</p> <p>Finally, we will make use of the pedagogy of light, through which the possibilities of play and learning are multiplied. It invites them to explore, to investigate and to invent a thousand stories where their curiosity and amazement will be the protagonists. The pupils focus their attention, draw their own conclusions and alert their senses so that learning takes place individually.</p>
<b>Target groups</b>	<p>The main target group for this activity will be all pupils who are at the stage of acquiring reading and writing skills. This circumstance may change according to the different educational systems used in different European countries.</p> <p>If we base ourselves on our own Spanish educational system, we could introduce the syllabic box from the second year of infant education (4-5 years) and up to the first years of primary education (6-7 years).</p> <p>It is also a highly recommendable activity for pupils who, for one reason or another, have had or are having difficulties in learning syllabication. Therefore, it is a practice that can be used in the classroom with students with special educational needs or simply students who have different learning difficulties such as dyslexia, dyslalia, attention deficit...</p>

## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE:

### Letter puzzles

<b>Duration</b>	Thanks to the versatility of the activity, it can be carried out throughout the learning process.
<b>Main strength and weaknesses</b>	<p>One of the main strengths of this practice, as we have already mentioned throughout the document, is the capacity of the activity to adapt to the student, ensuring that, through it, the student will advance in his or her learning based on the knowledge previously acquired.</p> <p>We can consider that this good practice will be very motivating for the child, which will ensure that his or her attention and concentration will make learning more meaningful.</p> <p>Through the game, the pupil will not only develop a taste for reading, but will also create the need to learn this language skill, and this is the only way to achieve our objectives.</p> <p>The weakest point of the activity is that it should ideally be carried out in a small group, and classroom circumstances do not always allow us to have the space and personal resources to do so.</p>
<b>Lead organisation</b>	<p><i>Name of organization: School Santa Elena</i></p> <p><i>Type of organisation: Charter school</i></p> <p><i>Mission: Education of students between 3 and 16 years of age</i></p>

## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE:

### Drawing and new vocabulary acquisition

<p><b>Brief description</b></p>	<p>We are going to explain a good practice that consists in the use of images, drawings... so that the students acquire new vocabulary.</p> <p>Vocabulary is a factor that has a great influence on comprehension. Vocabulary teaching must be carefully planned.</p> <p>The words that we want the students to learn, must be foreseen.</p> <p>To help in the selection of words, a three-level classification may be useful:</p> <p>Class I words: these are very common and frequent. They do not need to be the subject of instruction because learners are likely to learn them incidentally.</p> <p>Class II words: the learner has some knowledge of them and they are useful in different contexts. Vocabulary instruction should focus on words of this type.</p> <p>Class III words: they are rare and very specific. An explanation of their meaning could be given, but they should not be taught systematically.</p>
<p><b>Aims and objectives</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Acquisition of vocabulary through drawings, photographs...</li><li>• Increase the vocabulary level of our students</li></ul>

## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE:

### Drawing and new vocabulary acquisition

#### Implemented activities and final outcomes

**Activity 1.** We are going to show the students different images with vocabulary they may know: family and school.

The idea is that the students identify the image and work on the pronunciation of the word. Even if we have students who have not acquired this vocabulary, even if it is very elementary, this activity will help them to acquire it.

**Activity 2.** We are going to play songs related to the basic vocabulary that we have been practicing previously. The idea is to practice this vocabulary in a playful way and consolidate it.

**Activity 3.** Let's go deeper into the vocabulary. We are going to add new words to the base vocabulary. That is to say, if it is the vocabulary of the family we will work on the vocabulary of cousin, aunt... It is no longer a vocabulary so close to the child, but we will still continue with terminology that the child may know.

**Activity 4.** We are going to go with the help of the digital whiteboard of the class showing different images skipped on the vocabulary that we have been learning. The students should say the word when the image appears.

**Activity 5.** We are going to work not only on single words, but also on sentences. For this we are also going to use images. For this we are going to use the pictotraductor website, which is a website that allows us to write sentences and show them in pictures.

This way we will be able to practice the sentence by looking at the image at the same time.

## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE:

### Drawing and new vocabulary acquisition

#### **Approach and methodologies**

When we do this good practice, we ask ourselves two questions: Why do we do the activity and how does the student perform the task?

With these two questions we ask ourselves the motivation and the strategies that we are going to carry out when carrying out the good practice.

On the one hand, the student's motivation is to develop the language. We are going to teach the students that language is a tool that will allow them to communicate freely with their classmates, teachers...

In this way we manage to involve and motivate the student in the whole process.

The strategies used with this good practice is to put into practice on the one hand what the student already knows and thus start from his or her closest reality. From there, we will advance and deepen in a more specialized language.

The approaches we are going to use to carry out this good practice would be:

Traditional approach. We are going to work in a traditional class, where the teacher presents the vocabulary we want to work on to the students through images. In this approach the teacher takes a leading role in the transmission of knowledge.

Active approach. This approach is considered a "spontaneous" approach. This approach places the learner at the center of learning. We start by assessing the student's interests and needs and from there we work and expand our knowledge. The teacher only accompanies in this process.

## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE:

### Drawing and new vocabulary acquisition

<b>Approach and methodologies</b>	<p>This is when the student will begin to make sentences and be able to see them in the application through drawings. The student is the one who creates the need for communication.</p>
<b>Target groups</b>	<p>The target age group for this good practice would be students between 5 and 7 years old.</p> <p>The main objective of the good practice that we have developed is to increase and consolidate vocabulary, so the age range would be between 5 and 7 years old, which is in principle when students increase and consolidate vocabulary.</p> <p>We would also like to point out that this good practice could be implemented with older students who have some kind of difficulty in language acquisition.</p> <p>We should also point out that by using pictograms to acquire vocabulary, we could use this good practice with students with autism spectrum disorder, since these students use pictograms to communicate on multiple occasions.</p>
<b>Duration</b>	<p>The duration of this good practice would be designed to be implemented over the course of a school term.</p> <p>In the same way, as it is vocabulary acquisition and we start from a base vocabulary and we go widening and deepening this vocabulary, this good practice could be used throughout a -</p>

## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE:

### Drawing and new vocabulary acquisition

<b>Duration</b>	<p>-whole school year.</p> <p>If we stick only to perform the four activities that we have developed, without repeating or reinforcing them, the good practice could be done in two weeks.</p> <p>With this we would like to point out that this is a good practice that is very flexible in terms of use and duration of the activities.</p>
<b>Main strength and weaknesses</b>	<p>The strength of this good practice would be the acquisition of vocabulary through images. In this way, students can understand the context or maintain communication even if they cannot or do not know how to articulate all the words.</p> <p>This good practice helps and strengthens the confidence of those students who have not yet acquired the language well or who find it difficult to communicate.</p> <p>Another strong point would be the flexibility in using this good practice. That is to say, we can stick to using it for only two weeks or, if we find a real language problem, we can use it throughout the school year.</p> <p>We would also like to point out as a strong point the possibility of using this good practice with students with any type of communication problem, whether they are students who have not yet acquired the language or students with ASD.</p> <p>And finally, as a strength, the possibility of incorporating new technologies when implementing this good practice.</p>

## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE:

### Drawing and new vocabulary acquisition

<b>Main strength and weaknesses</b>	<p>The use of technology is always a motivational addition for students.</p> <p>As weaknesses we would like to point out that good practice only refers to the increase or use of the language, but does not perfect the pronunciation or intonation of the vocabulary.</p>
<b>Lead organisation</b>	<p>Name of organization: School Santa Elena</p> <p>Type of organisation: Charter school</p> <p>Mission: Education of students between 3 and 16 years of age</p>
<b>Link</b>	<p><a href="https://www.pictotraductor.com/">https://www.pictotraductor.com/</a><a href="https://www.pictotraductor.com">://www.pictotraductor.com</a> <a href="https://arasaac.org/">https://arasaac.org/</a></p>





## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: **Workshops**

<b>Brief description</b>	<p>These workshops are different games that stimulate phonological, syllabic, and semantic consciousness. These games are manipulative and the children can relate them to learning through experiences and their quotidianity. Also, it promotes the internalization of this different consciousness.</p>
<b>Aims and objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To help the children to learn how to read, doing emphasis on learning the different consciousness.</li><li>• To motivate the students by playing.</li><li>• To know that we can work on the same topic by playing through different types of games.</li></ul>
<b>Implemented activities and final outcomes</b>	<p>We do this workshop twice a week for 1 hour each session.</p>
<b>Approach and methodologies</b>	<p>The language and mathematics workshops are held on a weekly basis.</p> <p>In the workshops, it is intended to work on more specific aspects in a manipulative way and/or through the game and accompanied by the teachers.</p> <p>The class is divided into 4 groups, two groups stay in the classroom with the tutor and the other 2 groups go to another classroom with the support teacher. Each group carries out a different workshop to work on the different contents.</p>

## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: **Workshops**

<b>Approach and methodologies</b>	<p>Language: Graphics, phonological awareness, writing-reading and vocabulary.</p> <p>Mathematics: Numbering, geometry, logic and measurement.</p> <p>The workshops are held 4 days a week, each day a group goes through a different workshop and its duration is 30-45 minutes.</p> <p>At each table the material is prepared, the teacher explains how the activity works, first to one group and then to the other. Once the explanations are done, they can start enjoying the workshop.</p> <p>The role of the teacher is to help, accompany, observe, motivate, guide, hypothesize... to see if the objectives are being achieved. It is not a purely free game or activity, but behind it there is a schedule and a reason.</p>
<b>Target groups</b>	<p>For all the students.</p> <p>The advantage of doing this kind of workshop is that you have a lot of resources, which means that you can adapt them depending on the level of the students.</p>

## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: Workshops

<b>Duration</b>	All the course.
<b>Main strength and weaknesses</b>	<p>Strengths: You can adapt the games to all the levels that you have in your class.</p> <p>Weaknesses: You need more than one teacher per class to attend to the different children.</p>





## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: Leeduca

<b>Brief description</b>	<p>Leeduca is a Project carried out by the University of Malaga to stimulate language in the first years of children's life. The main characteristic of this method is that in addition to helping children's brains to acquire the first basic structures of their language, it prevents and detects language difficulties.</p> <p>Although it has a clear impact on reading, Preleo is not a reading program, but a program of oral language stimulation that insists on the aspects that science determines should be worked on prior to learning to read. Its function is to guide from the oral language to the previous language with theoretically based activities and timing according to what is scientifically determined. scientifically determined.</p>
<b>Aims and objectives</b>	<p>The objectives of this project are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ Apply reading programs based on scientific evidence.</li><li>→ To prevent possible reading and writing problems and difficulties.</li><li>→ To access reading on a scientifically proven basis, following the new trends in research, from a practical perspective of research, from a practical perspective.</li><li>→ To develop metalinguistic skills in students before and during the learning of reading.</li><li>→ To work on reading and writing as part of linguistic competence, starting with the development of oral language, understanding this as the centre and basis of this learning.</li></ul>

## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: Leeduca

<b>Aims and objectives</b>	<p>→ To stimulate early on the critical components that intervene in the best possible development of learning to read: phonological awareness, vocabulary, comprehension, alphabetic principle, and fluency.</p> <p>→ To guide and assist teachers in systematically scheduling and timing the work that helps to develop the process of teaching and learning to read and write in the second cycle of infant education.</p>
<b>Implemented activities and final outcomes</b>	<p>→ Some activities to work on oral language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Start the journey with songs,</li><li>• The children who took the pet with him/her at the weekend show the photos and explain what he/she did. Whoever also wants to explain what he/she did at the weekend.</li><li>• Day of the week, month, day...</li><li>• Write the menu on a piece of paper and go to the I3 and I4 classes to say it.</li></ul> <p>→ Oral presentations about the topic that they are working on.</p> <p>→ Language workshops: handwriting, phonological awareness, reading, writing. By groups.</p> <p>→ Work on popular songs...</p>
<b>Approach and methodologies</b>	<p>This programme focuses on a tool that facilitates the implementation of a programme for the prevention of reading difficulties through work focused on oral language. Throughout 100 group activities, a methodology is suggested, which should not be the only one. Each teacher should adapt the activities in the way he/she likes or works best -</p>

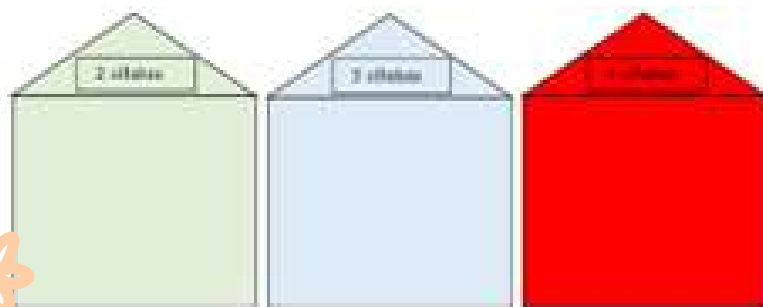
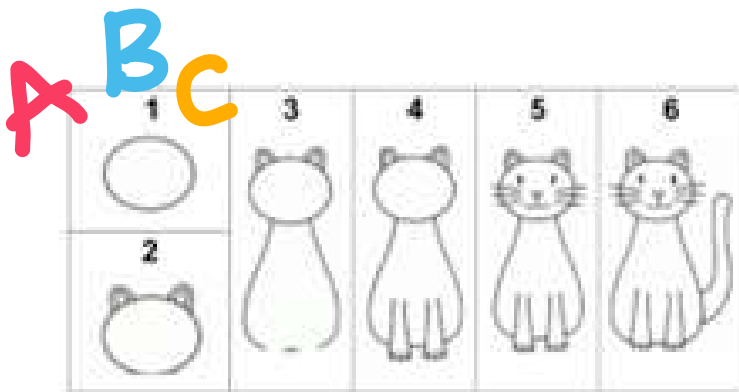


## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: **Leeduca**

<b>Approach and methodologies</b>	<p>without losing sight of the objectives of the activities. You can make the activities more manipulative or experiential, do them in small groups, with a digital whiteboard, with cards...</p> <p>Nevertheless, there are a few things to bear in mind:</p> <p>→ The program should take place every day, lasting between 10 and 30 minutes, depending on the age of the students. We suggest 10 minutes in 3 years, 15-20 in 4 years, and 25-30 in 5 years.</p> <p>→ It is not necessary to do all the activities every day.</p> <p>→ We recommend starting with the Phonological Awareness activities as they are the most complicated, so you have more time throughout the week to repeat or reinforce them if necessary.</p>
<b>Target groups</b>	<p>Each level, from the age of 3, does a few minutes a day of Leeduca. The activities are divided into four large blocks: phonological awareness, vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency. To the class of 5 years is also added the block of alphabetical beginning. The activities are specially designed for the kids and are motivating and dynamic for them.</p>
<b>Duration</b>	<p>All the course.</p>
<b>Main strength and weaknesses</b>	<p>Main strengths: Based on scientific evidence. Prevention of reading and writing difficulties. Focus on oral language. Specific for different age groups. Flexibility to adapt activities.</p>

# GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: Leeduca

<b>Main strength and weaknesses</b>	Main weaknesses: Requires daily dedicated time. Not all activities need to be done every day. Potential complexity in some activities.
<b>Project area intervention</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• International: Romania, Austria, France, Ireland and Greece.</li><li>• National: Colegio Santa Elena</li><li>• Local: Escola Sant Josep</li></ul>
<b>Link</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="https://leeduca.es/">https://leeduca.es/</a></li></ul>





## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: **READ-PLAY**

<b>Brief description</b>	<p>In general, the objective of working on phonological awareness is to develop the listening and linguistic skills necessary to acquire and use language effectively, which has a positive impact on the development of literacy and oral communication. This material is designed so that at home, each of those students with phonological problems, dyslexia or any other, can reinforce the phonological weaknesses they present.</p>
<b>Aims and objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Awareness of sound units: For students to be able to recognize and differentiate the individual sounds or phonemes that make up words. This includes the ability to identify and segment sounds into syllables, as well as recognize rhymes and alliteration.</li><li>• Auditory discrimination: Students are expected to be able to discriminate between similar sounds and differentiate them.</li><li>• Sound manipulation: The aim is to develop the ability to add, delete or change phonemes to form new words.</li><li>• Awareness of the syllabic structure: Students are expected to understand the syllabic structure of words, identifying how many syllables they have and where the stress is located.</li><li>• Reading and Writing Readiness: Helps students understand the relationship between sounds and letters, facilitating the process of decoding and understanding written words.</li></ul>

## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: **READ-PLAY**

### **Implemented activities and final outcomes**

It consists on the development of four activities.

1.The aim is to work on the semantic fields by naming what appears in each image and finding similarities and differences between the images that appear. Finally, those images that are related to each other are grouped and a title is given.

1.The aim is to work on syllabic, semantic and phonetic awareness. The student has to observe his immediate environment and name what he sees. It is important to divide the word into syllables by touching the head for the first syllable, the shoulders for the second, the belly for the third, and the legs for the fourth. Then you have to count them. You can also clap each syllable.

2.The aim is to work on syllabic, semantic and phonetic awareness. The student has to identify what appears in the image and separate it by syllables by touching the head for the first syllable, the shoulders for the second, the belly for the third and the legs for the fourth. Then they will clap the syllables with their hands and place the image in the corresponding little house. They will form the word with the manipulative letters, they will write on the board saying how the letters sound. They will divide the word into syllables and put each element below (the big one for tonic and the small one for unstressed) or each color token.

## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: READ-PLAY

<p><b>Implemented activities and final outcomes</b></p>	<p>4. It is intended to work on phonetic awareness. The student must think of a word and write it on a piece of paper, without the other person seeing it. You must count the letters you have and make as many lines as letters you have on the board. He will dictate the word and the couple will fill in the gaps. Each correct word will draw a part of the cat. The game ends when two people manage to create the whole cat.</p>
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## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: **READ-PLAY**

<b>Approach and methodologies</b>	The methodological perspective is based on the game to engage players in reading activities. It is intended to motivate the student to stimulate their language through play. In addition, this method offers immediate feedback on the player's performance, which allows us to correct errors and improve their reading skills on the spot. This can include hints or explanations when they make mistakes.
<b>Target groups</b>	It is designed for students with dyslexia, although it can help stimulate their learning to read for any student. The material is designed to play at home.
<b>Duration</b>	It does not have a predetermined duration. The student can play the game for as long as needed.
<b>Project area intervention</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• International (specify the countries involved in the project)</li><li>• National</li><li>• Local</li></ul>
<b>Main strength and weaknesses</b>	Main strengths: Based on scientific evidence. Prevention of reading and writing difficulties. Focus on oral language. Specific for different age groups. Flexibility to adapt activities.

## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: **Guide to reinforce oral language at home**

<b>Brief description</b>	<p>The provided document offers comprehensive guidance and recommendations for parents and families on how to actively participate in fostering the oral language development of children in a home-based setting. It outlines a set of practical strategies and activities to create a language-rich environment, encouraging the natural progression of language acquisition in young learners. By emphasizing the pivotal role of the family, this document aims to empower parents to engage in meaningful interactions, games, and exercises that promote effective communication skills and linguistic proficiency in their children. Through playful and stimulating approaches, it seeks to enhance the linguistic competence of children while underlining the importance of maintaining an enjoyable and supportive atmosphere for language growth within the home.</p>
<b>Aims and objectives</b>	<p>The aims and objectives of this document are to empower parents and families with practical guidance for facilitating the oral language development of their children within a home environment. These include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Empowerment: To empower parents and caregivers with the knowledge and tools needed to actively participate in their child's language development.</li></ol>

# GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: **Guide to reinforce oral language at home**

<p><b>Aims and objectives</b></p>	<p>2. Improved Articulation: By encouraging children to communicate and express themselves verbally, these activities can contribute to better articulation and pronunciation skills.</p> <p>3. Enhanced Sentence Structure: Engaging in conversations and storytelling can help children grasp the nuances of sentence structure, leading to more complex and coherent speech.</p> <p>4. Increased Confidence: As children become more comfortable expressing themselves verbally, their confidence in their communication abilities is likely to grow.</p> <p>5. Stronger Parent-Child Bonds: Participating in language-focused activities can strengthen the emotional connection between parents and children, fostering a positive and supportive family environment.</p> <p>Promotion of Language as Play: These activities aim to show that language development can be integrated into play and daily routines, making learning enjoyable and natural.</p>
<p><b>Implemented activities and final outcomes</b></p>	<p>The approach and methodologies outlined in this guidance document emphasize a child-centered, interactive, and play-based approach to language development in a home environment. Here's an expanded explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Child-Centered Approach: The approach places the child at the center of the learning process. It acknowledges that each child has their own unique pace of language development, and activities are tailored to suit their individual needs and interests.</li></ul>

## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: **Guide to reinforce oral language at home**

<p><b>Implemented activities and final outcomes</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Improved Articulation: By encouraging children to communicate and express themselves verbally, these activities can contribute to better articulation and pronunciation skills.</li><li>• Enhanced Sentence Structure: Engaging in conversations and storytelling can help children grasp the nuances of sentence structure, leading to more complex and coherent speech.</li><li>• Increased Confidence: As children become more comfortable expressing themselves verbally, their confidence in their communication abilities is likely to grow.</li><li>• Stronger Parent-Child Bonds: Participating in language-focused activities can strengthen the emotional connection between parents and children, fostering a positive and supportive family environment.</li><li>• Promotion of Language as Play: These activities aim to show that language development can be integrated into play and daily routines, making learning enjoyable and natural.</li><li>•</li></ul>
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## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: **Guide to reinforce oral language at home**

<p><b>Approach and methodologies</b></p>	<p>The approach and methodologies outlined in this guidance document emphasize a child-centered, interactive, and play-based approach to language development in a home environment. Here's an expanded explanation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>1. Child-Centered Approach:</b> The approach places the child at the center of the learning process. It acknowledges that each child has their own unique pace of language development, and activities are tailored to suit their individual needs and interests.</li><li><b>2. Interactive Learning:</b> The methodologies prioritize interactive learning experiences between parents and children. Through conversations, storytelling, and shared activities, children actively engage in language development while enjoying quality time with their caregivers.</li><li><b>3. Play-Based Learning:</b> Language development is integrated into playtime, making it enjoyable and natural for children. Games, puzzles, and creative activities are used as tools for fostering language skills.</li><li><b>4. Real-Life Application:</b> The approach encourages parents to relate language development to real-life situations and experiences. Children are encouraged to describe their daily activities, share stories about school or friends, and engage in conversations about their surroundings.</li></ol> <p><b>Promotion of Positive Communication:</b> Parents are advised to maintain a positive and patient attitude during language development activities. They should listen attentively, provide feedback, and create a safe space for children to express themselves without fear of criticism.</p>
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## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: **Guide to reinforce oral language at home**

<b>Target groups</b>	<p>The target groups for these language development guidelines are primarily parents and caregivers of young children, typically preschool-aged. These guidelines are designed to provide support and guidance to parents who want to actively engage in fostering their child's oral language skills. Additionally, educators and professionals in the field of speech-language pathology may find these guidelines useful for sharing with parents and incorporating into their practices.</p>
<b>Duration</b>	<p>It suggests that families work on these activities at least twice a week to see effective results.</p>
<b>Main strength and weaknesses</b>	<p><b>Main Strengths:</b> One of the main strengths of these language development guidelines is their accessibility to a wide audience. They are designed to be user-friendly and applicable for parents and caregivers from various backgrounds and levels of familiarity with language development concepts. Another strength is the emphasis on the importance of early and frequent communication with children, promoting a positive and nurturing environment for language growth. Additionally, the inclusion of practical activities and examples makes it easier for parents to implement these strategies in their daily routines.</p>

## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: **Guide to reinforce oral language at home**

<b>Main strength and weaknesses</b>	<b>Main Weaknesses:</b> One potential weakness of these guidelines is that they are not personalized to the specific needs of individual children, as they provide general recommendations. They may not address more complex language development issues or speech disorders that some children may experience. Another weakness could be the reliance on parental involvement; it assumes a supportive and engaged caregiver, which may not be the case for all children. Additionally, the effectiveness of these guidelines may vary depending on cultural and socio-economic factors.
<b>Project area intervention</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• International (specify the countries involved in the project)</li><li>• National</li><li>• Local</li></ul>

## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: **Gliffing**

<b>Brief description</b>	<p>Glifing is a reading training method that improves reading speed and comprehension in a very short time, through video games.</p> <p>In addition, it contributes to the emotional development of boys and girls, one of the most important factors for them to achieve academic success. Thanks to its playful format, learning to read becomes pure fun. The Glifing method consists of a large number of training sessions that are adjusted to the needs of each child.</p>
<b>Aims and objectives</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Offer the best experience in learning and reading re-education from a playful and personalized training, leading each user to achieve their maximum potential.</li><li>2. Facilitate school success and equal opportunities through reading improvement.</li></ol>
<b>Implemented activities and final outcomes</b>	<p>It is evaluated by means of a Glifing test (designed by specialists and used in universities, hospitals, neurological institutes and by thousands of psychopedagogy professionals) we evaluate the speed, precision and comprehension, obtaining the reading profile of our student.</p> <p>Reading speed and accuracy are indicators of the level of reading automation. Automation is necessary for good understanding. The program communicates with the online platform automatically.</p>

## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: **Giiffing**

<b>Implemented activities and final outcomes</b>	<p>The platform processes the data from the evaluation and contrasts it with the Glifing scales depending on the grade and age of the child (the scales are made with a large and local sample, and are analyzed by a work team from the Faculty of Psychology of the University of Barcelona). Thanks to this, we immediately obtain accurate information on the child's reading level. The Glifing method consists of a large number of training sessions that are adjusted to the needs of each child. With the data collected and processed on the platform, an individualized training plan is designed that affects where the child needs it. The platform also automatically records the progress of the training so that the professional can adapt it at all times.</p>
<b>Approach and methodologies</b>	<p>Students must play at home with an adult who acts as a coach and writes down the correct answers and mistakes they make so that the program adapts the level necessary for the next session. It is recommended to do two or three sessions a week.</p>
<b>Target groups</b>	<p>The ideal is to work with children from 5 to 7 years old, when they are learning to read.</p>
<b>Duration</b>	<p>During all the school year</p>

## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: **Glifing**

<b>Main strength and weaknesses</b>	<p>Main strengths of Glifing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Improves reading speed and comprehension.</li><li>• Contributes to children's emotional development.</li><li>• Fun and engaging format that makes learning enjoyable.</li><li>• Customized to individual children's needs.</li><li>• Detailed assessment and tracking platform.</li><li>• Potential to enhance academic success and equal opportunities.</li></ul> <p>Main weaknesses of Glifing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Requires adult supervision.</li><li>• Primarily targeted at children aged 5 to 7.</li><li>• Requires access to electronic devices and the internet.</li></ul>
<b>Project area intervention</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• International (specify the countries involved in the project)</li><li>• National</li><li>• Local</li></ul>
<b>Link</b>	<a href="https://www.glifing.com/">https://www.glifing.com/</a>

# GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: **UDL (Universal Design for Learning)**

<b>Brief description</b>	<p>It is a set of principles for curriculum development that give all individuals equal opportunities to learn. The term <b>UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING</b> means a scientifically valid framework for guiding educational practice that: <b>provides flexibility</b> in the ways information is presented, in the ways students respond or demonstrate knowledge and skills, and in the ways students are engaged; and <b>reduces</b> barriers in instruction, <b>provides</b> appropriate accommodations, supports, challenges, and maintains high achievement expectations for all students, including students with disabilities.</p>
<b>Aims and objectives</b>	<p>Three basic principles based on the neuroscientific investigation guide the UDL and provide the framework of the guidelines.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Provide multiple means of engagement:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• provide options for recruiting interest.</li><li>• sustaining effort and persistence.</li><li>• self-regulation.</li></ul></li><li>2. Provide multiple means of representation:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• provide options for perception.</li><li>• provide options for language and symbols.</li><li>• provide options for comprehension.</li></ul></li><li>3. Provide multiple means of action and expression:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• provide options for physical action.</li><li>• provide options for expression and communication</li><li>• provide options for executive functions.</li></ul></li></ol>



## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: UDL (Universal Design for Learning)

<p><b>Implemented activities and final outcomes</b></p>	<p>Activities for multiple means of engagement: Offering learners choices can develop self-determination, pride in accomplishment, and increase the degree to which they feel connected to their learning. Some activities could give them rewards or recognition available, allow the students to participate in the design of classroom activities and academic tasks. Also, the creation of class routines, alerts, and previews can help learners anticipate and prepare for changes in activities, schedules, and events. Furthermore, it is important to provide feedback to them that encourages perseverance, focuses on the development of efficacy and self-awareness, and encourages the use of specific supports and strategies in the face of challenges.</p> <p>Activities for multiple means of representation: Visual information can be quite dense to some learners, so we have to be sure that all learners have equal access to information, it is essential to provide non-visual alternatives. We have to provide descriptions (text or spoken) for all images, graphics, videos, or animations. Also, we have to pre-teach vocabulary and symbols, especially in ways that promote connection to the learners' experience and prior knowledge.</p> <p>Activities for multiple means of action and expression: It is important to provide materials with which all learners can interact. One activity could be to provide alternate keyboard commands for mouse action, customize overlays for touch screens and keyboards, and use physical manipulatives (e.g., blocks, 3D models, base-ten blocks).</p>
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## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: **UDL (Universal Design for Learning)**

<p><b>Approach and methodologies</b></p>	<p>By using UDL, as a teacher, you can enhance an inclusive learning environment. However, before you start a course, you should have to accommodate a wider variety of needs may eliminate potential learning barriers or unnecessary learning obstacles. Furthermore, providing students with multiple means of perceiving, comprehending, and expressing their learning allows students to engage the material in a way that most benefit them, and also encourages students to engage with material to improve in areas in which their skills are not as strong.</p>
<p><b>Target groups</b></p>	<p>For all the students. The universal aspect of the UDL does not mean a solution for everyone, but rather the need to design, from the outset, activities, tasks and contents that are flexible and personalised according to the reality of each classroom. People are different in the way we manage, contextualise and express ourselves and for this reason, we need a model that allows us a multiplicity of options so that everyone can find their own way of learning.</p>
<p><b>Duration and link</b></p>	<p>All the course. <a href="#">DUA - Generalitat de Catalunya</a></p>
<p><b>Project area intervention</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International: Romania, Austria, Fance, Ireland and Greece.</li> <li>• National: Colegio Santa Elena</li> <li>• Local: Escola Sant Josep</li> </ul>

# COLLECTION OF GOOD PRACTICES

WP1 Benchmarks for speech and language support and educational report

Country: **ROMANIA**



Co-funded by  
the European Union

KA220-SCH - Cooperation  
partnerships in school education.

# GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: **Private cabinet A.R., Clinical Psychologist Specialist**

<b>Brief description</b>	<p>SUPERVISOR: Certified by the Romanian College of Psychologists in clinical psychology.</p> <p>Trainings: More than 15 training courses supported in the field of parental education, alternative communication methods and verbal and cognitive stimulation techniques.</p> <p>OVER 20 YEARS OF PEDIATRIC CLINICAL EXPERIENCE: Specialized practical experience in the field of psychology of the typically developed child as well as the child at risk.</p> <p>CONTINUOUS TRAINING: Over 40 training courses in the field of pediatric neuropsychology (psychotherapy, speech therapy, psychological counseling, emotional development, sensory integration, cognitive-behavioral therapy, ASD, Down Syndrome, ADHD, Learning Disorders).</p> <p>INTERNATIONAL EXPERTISE: Exchange of experience and participation in conferences on child neuropsychic development in Sweden, England, Hungary.</p>
<b>Aims and objectives</b>	<p><b>Speech therapy, Language stimulation for children</b></p> <p>Infants and young children generally develop communication skills in a predictable way.</p>

# GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: **Private cabinet A.R., Clinical Psychologist Specialist**

<p><b>Aims and objectives</b></p>	<p>If there are delays in the acquisition of expressive language (the child still does not speak or has great difficulties with pronunciation) or there are difficulties in understanding or decoding language (the child does not seem to understand what we say) then it is important to consult a psychologist specialized in speech problems language.</p> <p>Early language stimulation refers to a range of techniques used to encourage the child to speak.</p> <p>In the clinic, through the program of speech therapy and stimulation of expressive-receptive language, young children are helped to overcome the barriers that stand in the way of their development.</p>
<p><b>Implemented activities and final outcomes</b></p>	<p><b>Language stimulation</b></p> <p>At first, the child learns the pronunciation of sounds through imitation and play, then formulates words, sentences and phrases. Until the age of 3, these difficulties in pronouncing sounds and words correctly are not problematic because they are due to the particularities of the central nervous system and the immaturity of the phonoarticulatory apparatus. After this age, the child has the necessary tools to speak correctly. If there are delays in the acquisition of expressive language (the child still does not speak) or -</p>

# GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: **Private cabinet A.R., Clinical Psychologist Specialist**

<p><b>Implemented activities and final outcomes</b></p>	<p>difficulties in understanding or decoding language (the child does not seem to understand what we say) then it is important to consult a psychologist specialized in language problems.</p> <p>Sensory stimulation provides opportunities for children to actively use their senses as they explore the world through sensory play which is essential for brain development as it helps create neural connections. Sensory stimulation drives a child's ability to complete complex learning tasks and supports cognitive growth, language development, motor skills, social interaction, and problem-solving skills. Sensory stimulation refers to activities designed to stimulate one or more of the 5 classic senses. It is often used in the therapy of children with sensory impairments or neurological problems, with perceptual difficulties, sensory integration dysfunctions, but also with typically developed children.</p> <p>Therapeutic Programs for adaptation in Kindergarten</p> <p>The start of kindergarten is one of the first important examinations of children's lives because, very often, only after integration into the community do the deficiencies in the child's education become visible, especially the possible delays in neuro-psycho-motor development.</p> <p>For children who have not sufficiently developed their language and communication skills, self-control, distributed attention, working memory, social relations and compliance with group rules, starting kindergarten is a real challenge.</p>
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# GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: **Private cabinet A.R., Clinical Psychologist Specialist**

<p><b>Implemented activities and final outcomes</b></p>	<p>Emotional development The first years of life represent a unique opportunity to lay the foundations for healthy development. It is a time of great growth and vulnerability. Early childhood research has highlighted the impact of the first five years of a child's life on their social-emotional development. Negative early experiences can affect children's mental health and affect their cognitive, behavioral, social-emotional development. Emotional well-being in the early years has a strong impact on social relationships. Emotionally healthy children are better able to establish and maintain positive relationships with both adults and peers. Social-emotional development is essential to a young child's sense of well-being. Their first relationships help shape who they are, who they become, and their understanding of the world and life.</p>
<p><b>Approach and methodologies</b></p>	<p>Cognitive stimulation is a therapy dedicated to children who experience learning difficulties. Language stimulation Emotional development Social-emotional development is essential to a young child's sense of well-being. Sensory stimulation provides opportunities for children to actively use their senses as they explore the world through sensory play which is essential for brain development as it helps create neural connections.</p>

# GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: **Private cabinet A.R., Clinical Psychologist Specialist**

<p><b>Approach and methodologies</b></p>	<p><b>Therapeutic Programs for adaptation in Kindergarten</b></p> <p><b>Developing schooling skills</b></p> <p>The aptitude for schooling implies the existence of a set of qualities, attributes in plan: sensory-motor, cognitive, affective-motivational and volitional, which allow the child to face the requirements formulated by the school, ensuring the successful development of the school's activity.</p> <p><b>Informational counseling</b> is intended to advise parents on various topics of the child's psychological development, as well as the development of co-therapeutic skills, to continue the therapeutic program at home.</p> <p><b>PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTS applied</b></p> <p><b>Psychological Assessment for Children</b></p> <p>Any psychological consultation is based on an initial psychological assessment.</p> <p>Through the program of specialized evaluations, any child who has not been evaluated in the past can take the first step towards a development of the maximum potential by first knowing the current level of development.</p> <p>Psychological tests for children are very attractive. They are applied in the form of a game and involve interesting activities (symbolic play, free and structured play, verbal interaction), specific to the age and level of development.</p>
<p><b>Target groups</b></p>	<p>Children with speech disorders, emotional struggles, special educational needs and their families</p>

# GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: **Private cabinet A.R., Clinical Psychologist Specialist**

<b>Duration</b>	Over 20 years of practice
<b>Main strength and weaknesses</b>	<p><b>Main Strengths:</b></p> <p><b>Specialized expertise:</b> The private practice focuses specifically on speech therapy and language stimulation for children. This specialization allows the therapists to have a deep understanding of the subject matter and stay updated with the latest research and techniques in the field. This expertise lead to more effective and targeted interventions for the children.</p> <p><b>Early intervention focus:</b> The practice emphasizes the importance of early intervention for children with speech and language delays. By identifying and addressing these difficulties at an early stage, the practice prevents or minimize long-term communication difficulties. Early intervention has been shown to have a positive impact on children's language development and overall communication skills.</p> <p><b>Quality therapeutic services:</b> The private practice strives to provide high-quality therapeutic services. The focus on quality ensures that the children receive effective interventions that can facilitate their language growth.</p> <p><b>Main Weaknesses:</b></p> <p><b>Cost considerations:</b> Private practices charge for their services, and this can be a potential barrier for some families. This could limit the accessibility of the practice to a certain socioeconomic group.</p>



## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: **Private cabinet A.R., Clinical Psychologist Specialist**

<p><b>Main strength and weaknesses</b></p>	<p>Main Weaknesses:</p> <p>Cost considerations: Private practices charge for their services, and this can be a potential barrier for some families. This could limit the accessibility of the practice to a certain socioeconomic group.</p> <p>Limited interdisciplinary collaboration: In a private practice setting, there might be limited opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration with other professionals, such as pediatricians, psychologists, or occupational therapists. The absence of such collaborations could limit the practice's ability to offer a broader range of services or access additional expertise.</p> <p>Limited geographical reach: A private practice is localized to a specific area or region. This can restrict access for families living outside the practice's vicinity.</p>
<p><b>Lead organisation</b></p>	<p>Name of organization: Not applicable Type of organisation: private organization</p>
<p><b>Financing Body and Programme</b></p>	<p>If not applicable, indicate the means of financing private funds The sessions are paid by the families, there is no public co-funding or programs.</p>
<p><b>Project area intervention WEB LINK</b></p>	<p>Local <a href="https://www.alinaromaniuc.ro/">https://www.alinaromaniuc.ro/</a></p>

## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE:

# EARLY INTERVENTION CENTER (part of "Vasile Pavelcu" Special Technological Highschool, Iași)

<b>Brief description</b>	<p>Early intervention support center for children with hearing disabilities, visual disabilities, multiple sensory disabilities or at risk, pre-school level.</p> <p>Early intervention is a medical, psychological, psychopedagogical, educational and psychosocial intervention that takes place between the ages of 0 and 3 years old , targeting children with either different disabilities or developmental and/or learning difficulties.</p> <p>It covers 3 categories: Children with certain congenital or early acquired pathologies, which can cause the appearance of disabilities. Children born prematurely or with very low birth weight, in whom there may be a risk of neuropsychological dysfunctions or disabilities. Vulnerable children in terms of mental development, being born and raised in families with a very low socioeconomic and sociocultural level.</p>
<b>Aims and objectives</b>	<p>Detecting from the first days of life children who are at risk of having a sensory deficiency (universal neonatal screening)</p> <p>Establishing the functional sensory level of the child with DSM-priority in the development of an effective early polysensory stimulation program.</p>

## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE:

# EARLY INTERVENTION CENTER (part of "Vasile Pavelcu" Special Technological Highschool, Iași)

<b>Aims and objectives</b>	<p>Even if a child has a medical diagnosis of blindness or profound sensorineural hearing loss, this child may still have a visual or auditory deficit.</p> <p>Running the family-centered intervention program: stimulation of early communication, polysensory stimulation, functional visual training, perceptual-auditory education, physical therapy, parental counseling, coaching.</p> <p>STAGES OF THE INTERVENTION:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- functional assessment</li><li>- establishing priorities in the intervention</li><li>- personalized intervention program</li></ul>
<b>Implemented activities and final outcomes</b>	<p>Functional evaluation by development areas Personalized intervention plan Audio-verbal rehabilitation Multisensory stimulation Communication activities Sensory and cognitive development activities Motor stimulation activities Emotional and social development activities Physical Therapy Parental counseling</p>
<b>Approach and methodologies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- early intervention services through the Early Intervention Support Center (multisensory stimulation, hearing education, family counseling, physical therapy, etc.);</li></ul>

## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE:

# EARLY INTERVENTION CENTER (part of "Vasile Pavelcu" Special Technological Highschool, Iași)

<b>Approach and methodologies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- It ensures newborns and young children with vision and/or hearing impairments the chance to benefit from early diagnosis, (re)habilitation and early intervention with the support of a multidisciplinary team made up of doctors (family doctor, pediatrician, ENT, ophthalmologist, neurologist), psychopedagogue, physiotherapist, social worker and, of course, parents.</li><li>- Supporting families of children with sensory impairments, multiple sensory impairments/deafblindness.</li><li>- Providing specific therapeutic services for children with sensory impairments, DSM/deafblindness between 0 and 3 years of age</li></ul> <p>The van Dijk approach to the assessment of children with multiple sensory impairments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-child-centred assessment</li><li>-the child takes the lead in the evaluation, which means that each evaluation is unique</li><li>-observe the movements, interests, emotions of the child</li><li>-uses movements in resonance, imitates the child's movements,</li><li>- interacts and establishes routines with the child</li><li>-does not use standard protocols and materials</li></ul>
<b>Target groups</b>	<p>Children from 0 to 3 years old.</p> <p>From 2013, each school year the Center offered services for 9 up to 11 children/year.</p>

## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE:

# EARLY INTERVENTION CENTER (part of "Vasile Pavelcu" Special Technological Highschool, Iași)

<b>Duration</b>	Since 2013 to present and will continue
<b>Main strength and weaknesses</b>	<p>Main Strengths of Early Intervention Center: The center collaborates with many public institutions that can orient the children and families in need directly to the center. All services are free, funded by the state through the Ministry of Education. Children benefit from intervention even from birth. The employees are trained periodically by public institutions and NGOs.</p> <p>The center benefits from funding through many programs and donations.</p> <p>Main Weaknesses of Early intervention Center: Geographic: The families which are not from Iași must travel to the city to benefit from the program.</p> <p>The rate of the therapy is once a week for each child, even if the individual need of each case requires more than 1 session per week. The center only benefits from 1 room so even though there are several therapists available the space doesn't allow more than one session at a time.</p>

## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE:

### EARLY INTERVENTION CENTER (part of "Vasile Pavelcu" Special Technological Highschool, Iași)

<b>Lead organisation</b>	Name of organization: "Vasile Pavelcu" Special Technological Highschool  Type of organisation: Public Education Institution
<b>Partner organisation</b>	Name of organization: Sense International Romania Foundation, Type of organisation: NGO  Name of organization: Obstetrics and Gynecology Clinical Hospital "Cuza Voda" Iasi, Iasi Clinical Recovery Hospital, D.G.A.S.P.C. Iasi, ISJ Iasi, Type of organisation: Public institutions
<b>Financing Body and Programme</b>	The state budget through the Romanian Ministry of Education
<b>Project area intervention</b>	Local

## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: **Centrul Logopedic Interșcolar (Interschool Speech Therapy Center (CLI))**

<b>Brief description</b>	<p>Iași Interschool Logopedic Center is a related unit of pre-university education, coordinated by CJRAE Iași.</p> <p>Iași Interschool Speech Therapy Center enrollment in speech therapy is made according to the following criteria, considered simultaneously:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Øseverity of the language disorder</li><li>ØThe age of the child/student, in the following order:<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>I. students from preparatory classes - IV</li><li>II. preschoolers from the large group</li><li>III. preschoolers from the middle group, within the limits of available places.</li></ol></li><li>Øcollaboration with the family:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- receptivity and active involvement in the therapeutic process,</li><li>- the possibility of responding to the proposed programming.</li></ul></li></ul> <p>Enrollment takes place strictly during the period included on the invitation received from the teacher and in the first week of the second semester of the current school year, within the limits of available places (40 places/school year/speech teacher).</p> <p>Children found to exceed the number of available places will be placed on the waiting list, in the order of presentation at the speech therapy clinic and will be included in speech therapy when a place becomes available.</p>
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## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: **Centrul Logopedic Interșcolar (Interschool Speech Therapy Center (CLI))**

<p><b>Aims and objectives</b></p>	<p>The activity carried out in speech therapy clinics consists in the therapy of language and communication disorders, as well as in the development and realization of specific programs, corresponding to the main dysfunctions of language and communication.</p>
<p><b>Implemented activities and final outcomes</b></p>	<p>Working with children and their parents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) <b>the identification, detection and registration of children in the speech therapy intervention area, the examination by each speech therapy teacher</b>, at the beginning of each school year, of all preschool children from large groups in kindergartens and students from preparatory and I classes;</li> <li>b) registration of children with <b>language disorders</b> in the detection tables approved by the director of the unit where the detection was done;</li> <li>c) summoning children with medium and severe disorders to the speech therapy clinics based on written invitations addressed to the parents;</li> <li>d) the complex speech therapy and psychopedagogical examination of the children taken into correction, in collaboration with the family and the teaching staff, in order to identify all the factors that have negatively influenced the evolution of the child's language and communication;</li> <li>e) formulating the diagnosis and prognosis for each evaluated child/pupil;</li> <li>f) <b>designing the therapy activity of the identified language and communication disorders;</b></li> </ul>



## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: **Centrul Logopedic Interșcolar (Interschool Speech Therapy Center (CLI))**

<p><b>Implemented activities and final outcomes</b></p>	<p>g) therapeutic-recovery intervention in accordance with the speech therapy diagnosis of the evaluated children/students;</p> <p>h) periodic evaluation of the progress achieved by the students and the redesign of the intervention activity.</p> <p>Working with parents and teachers in schools and kindergartens</p> <p>i) participation/organization of speech therapy information and counseling actions in school and pre-school units;</p> <p>j) carrying out methodical guidance/speech counseling for teachers in schools and kindergartens, in order to correct mild language disorders;</p> <p>participation/organization of thematic debates regarding the importance of language consolidation in the process of the child's general development, an essential condition for his optimal school and social integration.</p>
<p><b>Approach and methodologies</b></p>	<p><b>The language and communication disorders that fall under the competence of speech therapists are:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- pronunciation/articulation disorders;</li> <li>- disorders of rhythm and fluency of speech;</li> <li>- disorders of written-reading language;</li> <li>- language development disorders;</li> <li>- voice disorders;</li> </ul>

## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: **Centrul Logopedic Interșcolar (Interschool Speech Therapy Center (CLI))**

<p><b>Approach and methodologies</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- other language disorders that negatively influence the school and social adaptation of children.</li> </ul> <p>Methodology:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the detection, complex evaluation and identification of language and communication disorders in preschool children included or not in kindergartens and in small schools;</li> <li>- ensuring the preventive nature of the speech therapy activity, by giving priority attention to preschool children with LBJ disorders, in order to prevent the installation of difficulties in learning to read and write at school age;</li> <li>- orientation of speech therapy towards correction, recovery, compensation, adaptation and school and social integration;</li> </ul> <p>d. correcting language and communication disorders in order to reduce the risk of school failure.</p>
<p><b>Target groups</b></p>	<p>CLII provides recuperative therapy services to children with language and communication disorders, aged between 4 and 12, from mainstream education.</p>
<p><b>Duration</b></p>	<p><b>Each school year</b> speech therapists examine at least 500 schoolchildren and preschoolers, who are part of the speech therapy intervention area, during the detection period.</p>

## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: **Centrul Logopedic Interșcolar (Interschool Speech Therapy Center (CLI))**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Duration</b></p>	<p>Each speech therapist works annually with a number of 15 - 40 preschoolers and schoolchildren.</p> <p>The duration of a speech therapy activity is, as a rule, 45 minutes.</p> <p>The number of language disorder therapy activities performed with a child or student varies depending on the nature and degree of the language disorder.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Main strength and weaknesses</b></p>	<p><b>Main Strengths of CLI:</b></p> <p>Comprehensive Support: CLI's strength lies in its ability to provide comprehensive support to various stakeholders in the educational ecosystem.</p> <p>Interdisciplinary Collaboration: The center's emphasis on interdisciplinary collaboration is a significant strength.</p> <p>Networking and Partnerships: CLI works with most of the state educational institutions in the city (kindergartens and primary schools) and has a large addressability.</p> <p><b>Main Weaknesses of CLI:</b></p> <p>Resource Constraints: Like many educational institutions, CLI faces resource constraints, including funding limitations, staff challenges, or limited access to specialized tools and technologies.</p>

## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: **Centrul Logopedic Interșcolar (Interschool Speech Therapy Center (CLI))**

<p><b>Main strength and weaknesses</b></p>	<p>These limitations can impact the center's ability to fully meet the demands of the target group.</p> <p>Geographic Reach: Depending on the geographical location, the coverage and reach of CLI's services may vary. In more remote or rural areas, accessibility to the center's resources and support may be limited. Most therapists have too many children enrolled in their programs and that makes it difficult to provide quality services.</p> <p>It's important to note that the strengths and weaknesses outlined here are based on the public online information and general understanding. A more applied assessment would require current information and insights from relevant stakeholders, made through a relevant and comprehensive study.</p>
<p><b>Lead organisation</b></p>	<p>Name of organization: Iași County Resource and Educational Assistance Center</p> <p>Type of organisation: Public Institution</p>
<p><b>Partner organisation</b></p>	<p><i>Name of organization: all kindergartens and schools in the locality</i></p> <p><i>Type of organisation: public institutions</i></p>

## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: **Centrul Logopedic Interșcolar (Interschool Speech Therapy Center (CLI))**

<b>Financing Body and Programme</b>	The state budget through the Romanian Ministry of Education
<b>Project area intervention</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Local</li><li>• National (each county from Romania has own CLI under CJRAE)</li></ul>
<b>Link</b>	<a href="http://www.cjrae-iasi.ro/info/cli/despre-noi-1">http://www.cjrae-iasi.ro/info/cli/despre-noi-1</a>

## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: **Sense International Romania**

<b>Brief description</b>	<p>Founded in 2001, Sense International Romania is the most important organization in Romania that campaigns for the rights of people with blind-deafness.</p> <p>Sense International Romania supports deafblind people in Romania to have a voice, to be seen and heard and, through advocacy actions, to acquire the ability to ensure the social inclusion of deafblind people in Romania.</p> <p>With over 20 years of experience in this field, Sense International Romania also hosts online courses in the field of deafblindness for psychopedagogical teachers, psychologists, social workers, physiotherapists, parents and students. SIR supports the early detection of the risk of language and communication disorders and early complex therapeutic intervention.</p>
<b>Aims and objectives</b>	<p>Sense International Romania is a Romanian organization with the aim of improving the lives of people with deafblindness and multiple sensory impairments in our country.</p> <p>Through nationwide programs that promote early intervention for newborns with sensory impairments including audio-verbal rehabilitation, educating children with deafblindness/DSM and offering vocational and pre-professional services, SIR successfully manages to bring a change for the better in the lives of hundreds of people with this type of disability.</p>

# GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: **Sense International** **Romania**

<p><b>Aims and objectives</b></p>	<p>The area of interest as an organization is represented by four major strategic directions: promoting the rights of people with deafblindness, health, education and social inclusion.</p>
<p><b>Implemented activities and final outcomes</b></p>	<p>Early intervention: In partnership with schools, maternity hospitals and authorities, four early intervention support centers have been established to provide specific therapies for babies and newborns with sensory impairments including audio-verbal rehabilitation and speech therapy.</p> <p>Key achievements include: 234 children in 4 early intervention support centers 103,581 newborns tested for hearing impairment 17,049 children tested for visual impairment 424 parents and family members informed and advised 25 specialists trained in education, health and social services and involved in the project Curriculum for early intervention approved by Romanian legislation Early intervention services continue to be delivered in all four centers. According to the specialists involved in this program, there are currently 90 children who benefit from therapies in Bucharest, Oradea, Timișoara and Iași.</p> <p>Educational services: The educational program is implemented on the basis of a partnership agreement with the Ministry of National Education,</p>

## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: **Sense International** **Romania**

<p><b>Implemented activities and final outcomes</b></p>	<p>with over 20 schools and universities throughout the country, with the aim of providing deafblind children with access to high-quality educational services.</p> <p>Key achievements include:</p> <p>High quality education for over 500 deafblind children in Romania.</p> <p>21 special schools in 11 Romanian cities offer educational services for children with deafblindness and multisensory impairments.</p> <p>Over 250 special education teachers trained in deafblindness.</p> <p>A team of 10 national trainers in the field of deafness.</p> <p>Children learn on the basis of a National Curriculum for Deafblindness/Multiple Sensory Deficiencies (DSM)</p> <p>In 2009, the educational project received the ERSTE award for social integration and the award for practitioners.</p> <p>SIR continues to run activities for deafblind children in all 21 partner schools. Every year, hundreds of children, parents and teachers participate and organize various activities involving sports, drama, arts and crafts, hikes and trips in June for the International Helen Keller celebration and in December for the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. Currently, there are over 350 children with deafblindness in special classes, equipped by SIR over the years and where teachers trained by SIR also work over the years. Every year, children and young people go to orientation and mobility camps where they acquire knowledge and skills for an independent life.</p>
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## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: **Sense International Romania**

<p><b>Approach and methodologies</b></p>	<p>Approach:</p> <p>Respect for diversity – SIR embraces diversity and promote fairness and respect for all.</p> <p>Individual value – recognize the intrinsic value and potential of each individual.</p> <p>Participation and inclusion –promote opportunities so that the most marginalized groups can make their voices heard.</p> <p>Equality –actively promote respect for human rights and challenge prejudice and discrimination.</p> <p>Sustainability –work with others to ensure that support for people with deafblindness and their families can continue into the future.</p> <p>Principles:</p> <p>People with deafblindness/DSM and their families are at the center of the activities and vision of Sense International Romania.</p> <p>Rights-based approach – our work is based on the premise that all people with deafblindness/DSM should have their rights respected.</p> <p>Partnerships – we work with non-governmental organizations, local, national and international government institutions to ensure that the rights of people with deafblindness/DSM and their families are respected. Our partnerships are based on mutual benefits and building collaborative relationships.</p>
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## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: **Sense International Romania**

<b>Target groups</b>	People with deafblindness, their families, care staff and specialists to ensure that they all have access to advice, opportunities and support.
<b>Duration</b>	From 2001 until present. SIR will carry out its activity in the future as well, without a defined period.
<b>Main strength and weaknesses</b>	<p><b>Main Strengths of SIR.</b></p> <p>The foundation has private funds and many financial resources from an international linked consortium that helps them offer quality services and programs.</p> <p>They cover all areas in the life of a deafblind person and their families. They offer online, free resources for professionals who work with deafblind and a dedicated site: <a href="http://www.sensabilitate.ro">www.sensabilitate.ro</a></p> <p>(The platform <a href="http://www.sensabilitate.ro">www.sensabilitate.ro</a> is an accessible, interactive and dynamic online platform, a communication tool and a source of relevant and up-to-date information in the field of deafblindness. The platform contains information about deafblindness, an interactive map of existing services, profiles of specialists in the field, an online library, a magazine, a blog and online courses in the field of deafblindness). They work closely with special schools from all over the country supporting deafblind children and the specialists working with them.</p>

## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: **Sense International Romania**

<p><b>Main strength and weaknesses</b></p>	<p>They offer support for deafblind persons from birth through early intervention until they enter the work market (responding to the concerns coming from parents and teachers regarding the future of children after graduating school, SIR implemented the vocational project, setting up vocational workshops where young people learn a trade that allows them to find employment after graduation and live an independent life.</p> <p>Until now, the main accomplishments include:        8 vocational centers (6 typographies, 1 greenhouse and 1 marzipan laboratory) 243 young people with deafblindness and multisensory impairments learn a marketable trade</p> <p><b>63 vocational teachers trained in the field of deafblindness</b></p> <p>2 partner schools provide state authorized courses in the field of digital typography</p> <p>In 2019, seven years after the project started, the very first group of 15 young graduates finished their authorized typography courses and are certified typographers. In present 7 of them are already employed as typographers.)</p> <p><b>Main Weaknesses of SIR:</b>        Geographic Reach: Their services cover the main cities in Romania and the special schools and educational centers. Deafblind people from rural areas have difficulties in reaching their services.</p>
<p><b>Lead organisation</b></p>	<p>Name of organization: Sense Internațional România        Type of organisation: Private Institution</p>

## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: **Sense International Romania**

<b>Partner organisation</b>	<p>Name of organization: Sense International</p> <p>Type of organisation: NGO</p> <p>Mission: Sense International is the only international non-governmental organisation dedicated to supporting people with deafblindness and their families around the world.</p> <p>Sense International's work began in 1994 with the aim of sharing the knowledge and expertise of our parent organisation, Sense UK. Since this time, they have set-up locally-registered organisations in India, Kenya, Peru, Romania, Tanzania and Uganda.</p> <p>They have also established programmes of work in partnership with national organisations in Bangladesh and Nepal.</p>
<b>Financing Body and Programme</b>	Private funds, donations
<b>Project area intervention</b>	National
<b>Link</b>	<a href="https://surdocecitate.ro/">https://surdocecitate.ro/</a>

## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: **County Center for Resources and Educational Assistance (CJRAE)**

<b>Brief description</b>	<p>The CJRAE is an institution that provides support for children with special needs in each county from Romania. It serves as a resource center for students, teachers, parents and offers a range of services, including assessment and evaluation of children's educational needs, counseling and guidance for parents and educators, and the development of individualized education plans. It also collaborates closely with schools and other professionals to facilitate the inclusion and integration of students with special needs into mainstream educational settings.</p> <p>One of the key functions of the CJRAE is to provide specialized intervention and therapy services. This includes, early identification of difficulties in language development, speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, and psychological support, tailored to the unique needs of each child.</p> <p>Furthermore, the CJRAE organizes training sessions, workshops, and seminars for teachers and parents.</p>
<b>Aims and objectives</b>	<p>The main objectives of the CJRAE are:</p> <p>a) to include and maintain in the compulsory education system all children/young people, regardless of their psycho-individual and social particularities;</p>

# GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: **County Center for Resources and Educational Assistance (CJRAE)**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Aims and objectives</b></p>	<p>b) to provide the necessary additional supports according to the bio-psycho-social potential of each child/young person (e.g. language therapy, other specific therapies);</p> <p>c) informing and advising teachers in order to optimise their teaching activity;</p> <p>d) collaboration with the educational actors involved in the education of pupils/young people with the aim of their optimal integration into school, social and professional life;</p> <p>e) involving parents in activities specific to an effective school-family-community relationship;</p> <p>f) organising the development of studies on school drop-out, juvenile deviant behaviour, negative environment, extracurricular activities/leisure time;</p> <p>g) organising anti-violence programmes and projects (e.g. bullying prevention programmes).</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Implemented activities and final outcomes</b></p>	<p>Implemented activities:</p> <p>Psychological and Pedagogical Counseling: CJRAE offers counseling services for students, providing guidance and support for their educational and career choices through counseling offices.</p> <p>Speech Therapy: The center provides therapy services for language disorders through inter-school speech therapy centers.</p>

# GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: **County Center for Resources and Educational Assistance (CJRAE)**

<p><b>Implemented activities and final outcomes</b></p>	<p>Special Educational Guidance: CJRAE offers guidance and support for children, students, and young individuals with special educational needs in terms of school and career orientation.</p> <p>Information and Counseling: The center provides information and counseling services for teachers, children, parents, and other community members.</p> <p>Teacher Training: CJRAE collaborates with accredited institutions to provide initial and continuous training.</p> <p>Coordination and Monitoring: The center coordinates, monitors, and evaluates educational services throughout the county.</p> <p>Collaboration and Networking: CJRAE collaborates with social partners within the community.</p> <p>Final outcomes:</p> <p>Improved Educational Services: The CJRAE's coordination, monitoring, and evaluation efforts contribute to enhancing the quality of educational services in the county.</p> <p>Personalized Support: Through counseling, guidance, and therapy services, the center assists students with their educational and psychological needs (for example language difficulties therapy).</p> <p>Inclusive Education: CJRAE provides information, support, and training related to inclusive education. Teacher Empowerment: By offering teacher training and support, CJRAE strengthens the professional capacity of educators.</p>
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# GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: **County Center for Resources and Educational Assistance (CJRAE)**

<p><b>Implemented activities and final outcomes</b></p>	<p>Community Engagement: The center's activities promote collaboration with various stakeholders, fostering community engagement and ensuring a holistic approach to education.</p> <p>These outcomes contribute to an educational ecosystem that supports students' well-being, academic achievement, and future prospects (for example by removing or improving difficulties in language development).</p>
<p><b>Approach and methodologies</b></p>	<p>Holistic Approach: CJRAE takes a comprehensive and holistic approach to education, considering the diverse needs and aspirations of students.</p> <p><b>Individualized Support: The center emphasizes individualized support for students: psycho-pedagogical counseling and specific therapies (for example speech therapy).</b></p> <p><b>Interdisciplinary Collaboration: CJRAE encourages collaboration among different professionals, including psychologists, counselors, speech therapists, and educators.</b></p> <p>Evidence-Based Practices: CJRAE employs evidence-based practices in its service delivery.</p> <p>Continuous Professional Development: The center recognizes the importance of continuous professional development for educators and professionals working in the field of education. CJRAE facilitates teacher training programs and workshops.</p>



# GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: **County Center for Resources and Educational Assistance (CJRAE)**

<p><b>Approach and methodologies</b></p>	<p>Data Collection and Evaluation: CJRAE places importance on data collection, monitoring, and evaluation. By gathering information on the effectiveness of their services, they can make informed decisions, identify areas for improvement.</p> <p>Partnerships and Networking: CJRAE actively collaborates with various stakeholders. These partnerships facilitate the exchange of knowledge, resources, and best practices, ultimately benefiting the students and the community at large.</p> <p>Information Dissemination: CJRAE plays an important role in disseminating relevant information and resources to different stakeholders. This includes providing guidance materials, organizing workshops and seminars, and maintaining a database of educational services, ensuring access to valuable information for teachers, students, parents, and the community.</p>
<p><b>Target groups</b></p>	<p>Children, Students, and Young Individuals: CJRAE's services are directly aimed at children, students, and young individuals. The center provides counseling, guidance, and support to help them with their educational and career choices, address psychological and developmental needs (including early intervention and speech therapy).</p>

# GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: **County Center for Resources and Educational Assistance (CJRAE)**

<p><b>Target groups</b></p>	<p>Parents or Legal Guardians: The center offers information, counseling, and guidance to parents.</p> <p>Educational Professionals: CJRAE works closely with educational professionals, including teachers and school staff. The center provides training, resources, and support to enhance their skills, knowledge, and practices.</p> <p>Community Members: CJRAE extends its services to community members interested in educational matters. This may include local authorities, organizations, associations, and individuals working in fields related to children's well-being and education.</p>
<p><b>Duration</b></p>	<p>From 2006 to now, it's already been 17 years. CJRAE will carry out its activity in the future as well, without a defined period.</p>
<p><b>Main strength and weaknesses</b></p>	<p><b>Main Strengths of CJRAE:</b></p> <p>Comprehensive Support: CJRAE's strength lies in its ability to provide comprehensive support to various stakeholders in the educational ecosystem.</p> <p>Interdisciplinary Collaboration: The center's emphasis on interdisciplinary collaboration is a significant strength.</p> <p>Evidence-Based Practices: CJRAE's commitment to employing evidence-based practices ensures that the services provided are grounded in research and proven methodologies.</p>

# GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: **County Center for Resources and Educational Assistance (CJRAE)**

<p><b>Main strength and weaknesses</b></p>	<p>This approach enhances the effectiveness and outcomes of the educational assistance offered, promoting positive results for students and other beneficiaries.</p> <p>Networking and Partnerships: CJRAE's collaboration with various stakeholders, including local authorities, educational institutions, and community organizations, strengthens its capacity to deliver impactful services.</p> <p><b>Main Weaknesses of CJRAE:</b></p> <p>Resource Constraints: Like many educational institutions, CJRAE faces resource constraints, including funding limitations, staffing challenges, or limited access to specialized tools and technologies. These limitations can impact the center's ability to scale up services or fully meet the demands of the target groups.</p> <p>Geographic Reach: Depending on the geographical location, the coverage and reach of CJRAE's services may vary. In more remote or rural areas, accessibility to the center's resources and support may be limited.</p> <p>It's important to note that the strengths and weaknesses outlined here are based on the public online information and general understanding. A more applied assessment would require current information and insights from relevant stakeholders, made through a relevant and comprehensive study.</p>
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# GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: **County Center for Resources and Educational Assistance (CJRAE)**

<p><b>Lead organisation</b></p>	<p>Name of organization: County Center for Resources and Educational Assistance (CJRAE)</p> <p>Type of organisation: Public Institution</p> <p>Mission: The mission of the County Centre for Educational Resources and Assistance is to support students, parents, teachers and other members of the community in building a quality life, based on education, leading to the enhancement and stimulation of each person so that they can develop their own potential. CJRAE also promotes the development of intercultural competences of children and adults, educational partnership, inter-institutional communication and community involvement in education.</p>
<p><b>Partner organisation</b></p>	<p><i>Type of organisation: Public institution</i></p> <p><i>Mission:</i>  <i>Iasi County School Inspectorate is a public institution, which provides guidance, coordination and control activities at the highest professional standards for education and training institutions, in order to contribute to increasing the quality of educational services, improving and making the national / Iasi educational system more efficient and compatible with European systems.</i></p>

## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: **County Center for Resources and Educational Assistance (CJRAE)**

<p><b>Partner organisation</b></p>	<p>Name of organization: General Directorate of Social Assistance and Child Protection</p> <p>Type of organisation: Public institution</p> <p>Mission: The mission of the Directorate General for Social Assistance and Child Protection is to provide people living in its area with a social assistance system that responds to identified needs and provides comprehensive social security. (There are many other partners such as schools and various NGOs)</p>
<p><b>Financing Body and Programme</b></p>	<p>The state budget through the Romanian Ministry of Education</p>
<p><b>Project area intervention</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International (specify the countries involved in the project)</li> <li>• National (each county from Romania has own CJRAE)</li> <li>• Local and Regional (about GJRAE Iasi)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Link</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="http://www.cjrae-iasi.ro/">http://www.cjrae-iasi.ro/</a></li> </ul>

# COLLECTION OF GOOD PRACTICES

WP1 Benchmarks for speech and language support and educational report

Country: **GREECE**



Co-funded by  
the European Union

KA220-SCH - Cooperation  
partnerships in school education.

## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: **Tools for understanding and producing oral speech - Use of theatrical conventions**

<p><b>Brief description</b></p>	<p>The understanding and production of spoken texts is based on practices, which contribute to the formation of a culture that can support language development and education and, more broadly, literacy. Practices that contribute to the development of auditory memory and strengthen the intake, storage and recall of oral information have a positive role in the understanding, mainly, of oral texts.</p>
<p><b>Aims and objectives</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purpose: Comprehension and production of spoken language.</li> <li>• Objectives:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Understanding and producing oral texts.</li> <li>2. Implementation of practices, which will contribute to the formation of a culture that can support language development and education and, more broadly, literacy.</li> <li>3. Enriching vocabulary and clarifying concepts</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Implemented activities and final outcomes</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Educational - children in role</b>              The teacher adopts a role (e.g., plays the president of a company) and presents corresponding roles to the children (who play, e.g., the office staff, the residents of a community, etc.). etc.), involving them in problematic situations that need to be resolved (eg, "We came here today to decide on the problem that arose...").</li> </ul>





# GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: **Tools for understanding and producing oral speech - Use of theatrical conventions**

<p><b>Implemented activities and final outcomes</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Group sculpture</b> A group or an individual from a group takes on the role of the sculptor and transforms the actors into statues that have a specific posture or shape. This figure, realistic or abstract, expresses one specific aspect of a topic or idea discussed. The collective creation of the statue encourages group members to give their own interpretation of the events unfolding in the drama.</li> <li>• <b>Roll on the wall - on the floor</b> A role is represented by a figure we draw into which children can write key phrases, ideas or feelings about the character. Information may be added as the drama progresses and develops.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Approach and methodologies</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Approach:</b> Creating a 'classroom environment or culture' aimed at contributing to language development, communication and literacy training.</li> <li>• <b>Methodology:</b> Role play, dialogue, discussion, based on children's personal and social experiences, exchange of views between "student-student", "student-teacher", "student-student", "student-student" can have a such purposeful character.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Target groups</b></p>	<p>For preschool and school age students</p>

**GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: Tools for understanding and producing oral speech - Use of theatrical conventions**

<p><b>Duration</b></p>	<p>For the whole school year</p>
<p><b>Main strength and weaknesses</b></p>	<p>The advantage of the program is that the student is given the opportunity to express himself freely. The disadvantage of the program is that the appropriate supportive environment will have to be created beforehand in order to "unlock" the students to express themselves freely without inhibitions.</p>
<p><b>Target groups</b></p>	<p>For preschool and school age students</p>
<p><b>Partner organisation</b></p>	<p><i>Name of organization: 16th Kindergarten of Drama</i></p> <p><i>Type of organisation: Public School (Non-Profit)</i></p>
<p><b>Project area intervention</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>International (Spain, Romania, Austria, France, Ireland, Greece)</i></li> <li>• <i>National</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Local 16th Kindergarten of Drama</i></p>

# GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: **Tools for comprehension and production of spoken language**

<b>Brief description</b>	<p>The understanding and production of spoken texts is based on practices, which contribute to the formation of a culture that can support language development and education and, more broadly, literacy. Practices that contribute to the development of auditory memory and strengthen the intake, storage and recall of oral information have a positive role in the understanding, mainly, of oral texts.</p>
<b>Aims and objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Purpose: Comprehension and production of spoken language.</li><li>• Objectives:<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Implementation of practices, which will contribute to the formation of a culture that can support language development and education and, more broadly, literacy.</li><li>2. Enriching vocabulary and clarifying concepts.</li></ol></li></ul>
<b>Implemented activities and final outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>The oral speech of Monday / Friday</b><p>At the beginning or end of the week, each student is given time to tell, for example, how he/she spent his/her weekend or to mention an incident he/she experienced, to comment on a news item that concerned him/her, saddened him/her or please etc.</p></li></ul>

## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: **Tools for comprehension and production of spoken language**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Implemented activities and final outcomes</b></p>	<p>In this way, a "special" culture is developed among the students, so that they learn to pre-plan their oral speech, depending on the communication occasion or the wider context. The content of such discussions can be used to produce and improve the spoken word, by identifying topics and experiences of the children that they themselves would like to explore further, to enrich the learning process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>I show and tell</b> The teacher asks the children to bring an object (a souvenir, a photo, etc.) from home, related to the topic, the problem, etc., which the respective language teaching deals with. Children describe this object, narrate their experiences, express related feelings, etc. Children, passing through the phase of non-continuous speech (eg, by taking notes), are pre-prepared so that they speak in continuous speech. Discussion and questions follow.</li><li>• <b>Map of the narrative</b> The children sit in a circle and retell the story, forming the story map with a ball of thread. In more detail, the ball is given to a child and the retelling of the story begins. After he finishes, he throws the ball to another child, holding the thread. The same procedure is repeated with all the children. The teacher can give linguistic supports to the children (same words/phrases from the text, time markers, adverbs, etc.).</li></ul>
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How are you



Solventis



# GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: **Tools for comprehension and production of spoken language**

<p><b>Approach and methodologies</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approach: Creating a 'classroom environment or culture' aimed at contributing to language development, communication and literacy training.</li> <li>• Methodology: Role play, dialogue, discussion, based on children's personal and social experiences, exchange of views between "student-student", "student-teacher", "student-student", "student-student" can have a such purposeful character.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Target groups</b></p>	<p>For preschool and school age students</p>
<p><b>Duration</b></p>	<p>For the whole school year</p>
<p><b>Main strength and weaknesses</b></p>	<p>The advantage of the program is that the student is given the opportunity to express himself freely and start the discussion on any topic that concerns him/her. The disadvantage of the program is that the appropriate supportive environment will have to be created beforehand in order to "unlock" the students to express themselves freely without inhibitions.</p>
<p><b>Partner organisation</b></p>	<p><i>Name of organization: 16th Kindergarten of Drama</i></p> <p><i>Type of organisation: Public School (Non - Profit)</i></p>

# GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: **Tools for comprehension and production of spoken language**

<b>Project area intervention</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• International (Spain, Romania, Austria, France, Ireland, Greece)</li><li>• National</li><li>• Local 16th Kindergarten of Drama</li></ul>
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## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE:

# Phonological disorder - Strengthening phonological awareness

<b>Brief description</b>	<p>A phonological disorder is a disorder of speech, rather than primarily articulation, that describes an unusual and age-appropriate phonological stage in which the child makes phoneme/syllable simplifications, substitutions, and drops. For example, the child says "piti" instead of "house", "drink" instead of "door", "doni" instead of "belt", "kopi" instead of "topi", "nana", or "bana", instead of banana. That is, he chooses the wrong phoneme, which is caused by incorrect mental organization of the phonemes. Thus, articulatory and phonological disorders affect spoken language.</p>
<b>Aims and objectives</b>	<p>The indicative activities of the intervention aim to improve phonological deficits.</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Auditory training - attention, discrimination, memory of sounds</li><li>• Identifying similar parts of words and finding words with a common rhyme</li><li>• Understanding the composition of words from syllables</li><li>• Discrimination of phonemes (initial and final phoneme) in simple words and gradually increasing level of difficulty</li><li>• The understanding of syllable and word structure in phonemes. Phoneme comparison and analysis</li><li>• The acquisition of graphophonemic correspondence and decoding. The child adds and replaces letters to make new words.</li></ul>

## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE:

# Phonological disorder - Strengthening phonological awareness

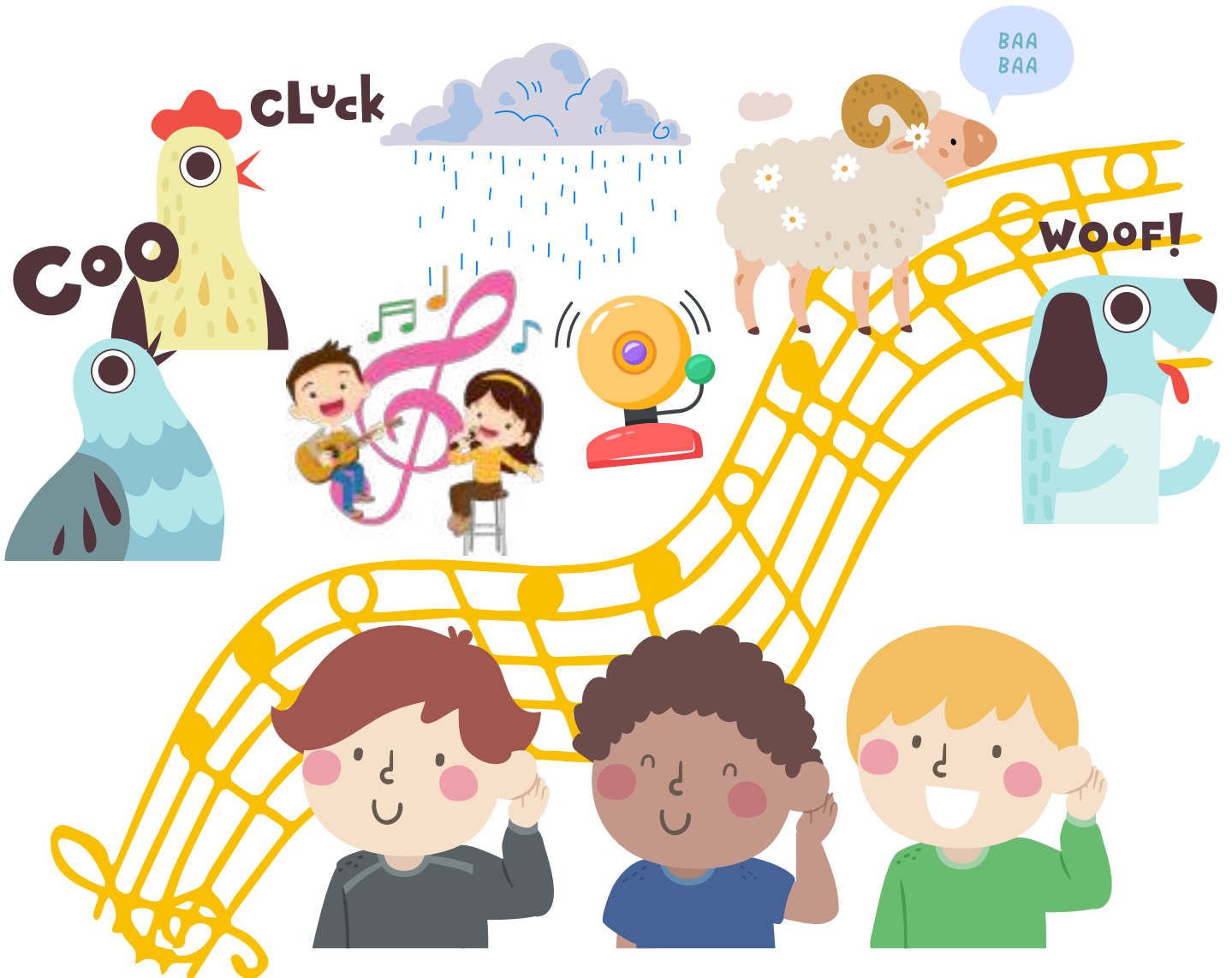
### Implemented activities and final outcomes

- Acoustic toys: To awaken children's interest in sounds, sounds of animals, musical instruments, sounds of nature (wind-rain-lightning-rustling of leaves on trees), road sounds (horns-train-braking), school/yard sounds (voices-laughter-children crying-road projects-recess bell), sounds produced with the body and mouth (cough- sneezing-whistling-snoring-clapping-rubbing hands-the voice of the teacher, a protagonist, dad), sounds of means of transport (plane, motorbike, bus).

The sound activities are done first with eyes open, then with closed eyes or with a handkerchief, alternately for each child. Activities: We listen with the child to the sounds outside the open window or in the yard. Listen carefully ....what do you hear? ... If you want you can close your eyes! We listen with the child to the sounds of our class or the room. Listen carefully ....what do you hear? ... If you want you can close your eyes!

We make and guess our classroom sounds, such as tearing and crumpling paper, the sound of scissors, scratching a pencil, turning pages, zipping a case, footsteps in the classroom, keys, dragging a desk or chair.

- Poems and rhymes: "Find what matches" - I present the child with 3 images that I name and an additional one with which the child is invited to find which of the above matches sonically. E.g. / milo- psari- xali / and I give it /filo/, to match it with /milo/.



## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE:

# Phonological disorder - Strengthening phonological awareness

### Implemented activities and final outcomes

- Dividing words into syllables: "Frogs in water lilies or lame in squares". A pond of green water lilies is drawn, into which the child is asked to jump each time he says the syllables of the word aloud. The child starts with monosyllabic words and gradually increases the phonotactic structure of the words. Yes, water, water, water, poly
- Parsing sentences into words: The child is presented with empty wagons that he must load with large bricks. On them are written words that make up a sentence that has been presented to the child. This is required to correctly place all the bricks in the correct order so that the wagon suggestions go to the land of letters.
- Initial/final consonant recognition. Isolation and Reconnection: I'm going to say some words to you and I want you to tell me which voice begins with One... o, Light... l, Star... s. I will tell you a few words and you will tell me which voice you hear at the end Basket.... t, Statue..... e, Elephant..... t
- Analysis and composition of phonemes: We play the phonemes of each word on the xylophone! Children press each key for each phoneme of the word. Eye... E... y... e. Eye! Papi... p... a... p... i. Papi! Hand... h...a...n...d. Hand!
- Substituting/representing phonemes with letters: this can be done using plastic letters or plasticine letters or writing in foam or sand. See what happens if I change one letter to another? Cat - cut

## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE:

# Phonological disorder - Strengthening phonological awareness

<b>Approach and methodologies</b>	<p>The activities are carried out independently of the main teaching program or methodology followed in the school. It is suggested that their duration does not exceed 15-20 minutes and that the order of the modules (1-7) is followed, but not necessarily of their activities. Also, the choice of phonemes and words from the second to the seventh unit depends on the speech therapy evaluation of the child with a phonological disorder. However, there is no limit to the imagination nor to the repetitions of each activity especially when a child presents significant difficulties.</p>
<b>Target groups</b>	For preschool and first school age students
<b>Duration</b>	Depending on the students' difficulties
<b>Partner organisation</b>	<p><i>Name of organization: 16th Kindergarten of Drama</i></p> <p><i>Type of organisation: Public school (Non – Profit)</i></p>
<b>Project area intervention</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• International (Spain, Romania, Austria, Ireland, France, Greece)</li><li>• National</li><li>• Local 16th Kindergarten of Drama</li></ul>

## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: **Pragmatics**

<b>Brief description</b>	Pragmatics means that the student can perceive and understand not only what the speaker means by her/his words but also the reason for the change of style and the way she/he speaks in different situations.
<b>Aims and objectives</b>	<p>The purpose is to expand the vocabulary in every way (literature, synonyms, word roots, etc.) for a better understanding of the other person's words and therefore in turn for better and more meaningful communication. According to the pragmatic "rules", in order to be able to communicate, the person must first organize her/his speech, in order to succeed in conveying the desired message correctly, but also to understand the communicative intention of his interlocutors and especially when it differs.</p> <p>The aim is prevention, not only to try not to show the problem, but also to reduce its frequency, as well as the effects it brings about in all areas of the child's life</p>
<b>Implemented activities and final outcomes</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Finding appropriate words in texts with gaps and completing incomplete sentences</li><li>2. Constructing a ready-made narrative or their imagination</li><li>3. Expanding vocabulary (use of synonyms, antonyms, homonyms, etc.)</li><li>4. Comprehension of text: open and closed type exercises, oral and written</li><li>5. Comprehension of complexly structured sentences: creation of such sentences and comprehension questions on them</li><li>6. Correction of sentences with grammatical errors.</li></ol>

## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: **Pragmatics**

<p><b>Approach and methodologies</b></p>	<p>A basic condition for the above exercises is the use of words already known to the children in order to avoid the possibility of discouragement, frustration and giving up on their part if they fail because they do not understand. Also, students should develop social interaction and communication, which is achieved through games, mainly role-playing, and dialogues. In addition, the computer is a basic tool for dealing with factual difficulties due to the presentation of non-real communicative situations, so the child eliminates the fear of failure by having the time he needs to prepare. With the right vocal programs he can also learn and improve his articulation. Finally, for a proper intervention, cooperation and a common framework of action between the family - the child - the school - the specialist is considered important. Everyone together must work for the child and with the child.</p>
<p><b>Target groups</b></p>	<p>Infants to preschoolers</p>
<p><b>Duration</b></p>	<p>All school year</p>
<p><b>Partner organisation</b></p>	<p><i>Name of organization: 16th Kindergarten of Drama</i></p> <p><i>Type of organisation: Public School (Non – Profit)</i></p>
<p><b>Project area intervention</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>International (Spain, Romania, Greece, France, Austria, Ireland)</i></li> <li>• <i>National</i></li> <li>• <i>Local 16th Kindergarten of Drama</i></li> </ul>



# GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: “Rainbow” – Phonology Intervention

<p><b>Brief description</b></p>	<p>Fairytale story of cultivating phonological awareness for preschool and school age children.</p>
<p><b>Aims and objectives</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The purpose of the fairy tale is to achieve interaction between text, activities and child.</li> <li>• The goal is, through the development of the story, for the child to approach the areas of phonological awareness in an experiential way and through active learning.</li> </ul> <p>The areas of phonological awareness are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognizing that sentences are made up of words, e.g. / Here /is / my / class /.</li> <li>• Recognizing that words can rhyme, e.g. mountain-narrow.</li> <li>• Recognize that words can start with the same sound, e.g. angel-love.</li> <li>• Recognizing that words can end with the same sound, e.g. sailor-stones.</li> <li>• Recognize that words can have the same middle sound, e.g. pass-age.</li> <li>• Recognize that words can be divided into syllables, e.g. I am waiting.</li> <li>• Recognizing that words can be split into arctic phonemes and rhymes, e.g. pupil.</li> <li>• Recognize that words can be broken down into individual phonemes, e.g. I stayed.</li> <li>• Recognizing that some sounds can be deleted from words and new words created, e.g. now-time.</li> <li>• Ability to synthesize sounds to create new words, e.g. water WATER.</li> <li>• Ability to segment words into constituent sounds, e.g. water WATER</li> </ul>



## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: “Rainbow” – Phonology Intervention

<p><b>Implemented activities and final outcomes</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activity: Recognition of initial phoneme, Pronunciation: In the following words, circle the initial phoneme.</li> <li>• Activity: Identifying final phoneme, Pronunciation: Color in the same color the words that end in the same letter.</li> <li>• Activity: Initial syllable recognition Pronunciation: Cross out the words that start with the same syllable.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Approach and methodologies</b></p>	<p>The teacher slowly reads the story to the student and each time he/she is given the required time to complete the phonological activities such as breaking words into syllables, adding an initial or final syllable, adding an initial phoneme, removing an initial or final syllable. The fairy tale is rich in images, which arouses the student's interest.</p>
<p><b>Target groups</b></p>	<p>It is aimed at children of preschool and first school age. It can be a particularly helpful tool for students with: • Learning difficulties • Dyslexia • Reading difficulties</p>
<p><b>Duration</b></p>	<p><i>4 teaching hours</i></p>

# GOOD PRACTICE TITLE: “Rainbow” – Phonology Intervention

<b>Project area intervention</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• International (Spain, Romania, Austria, Ireland, France, Greece)</li><li>• National</li><li>• Local 16th Kindergarten of Drama</li></ul>
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# NATIONAL REPORT ON GOOD PRACTICES

WPI Benchmarks for speech and language support and educational report

Country: **IRELAND**



Co-funded by  
the European Union

KA220-SCH - Cooperation  
partnerships in school education.

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

In Ireland, speech and language therapy services are provided through the Health Service Executive (HSE), which is a publicly funded healthcare system. The HSE employs speech and language therapists who work in various settings, including hospitals, clinics and schools.

The primary goal of speech and language therapy in Ireland is to help individuals improve their communication skills and overcome any barriers that may be affecting their ability to express themselves or understand others. Some common conditions and disorders that speech and language therapists in Ireland work with include:

1. **Articulation and phonological disorders:** These involve difficulties in producing speech sounds correctly.
2. **Language disorders:** These include difficulties with understanding and using language, such as vocabulary, grammar, and comprehension.
3. **Fluency disorders:** This category includes stuttering or stammering, which affects the flow and rhythm of speech.
4. **Voice disorders:** These involve problems with vocal quality, pitch, loudness, or resonance.

5. Swallowing disorders: Speech and language therapists also assess and treat swallowing difficulties, known as dysphagia, which can occur as a result of various medical conditions.

For this project, we are focused on good practices that are specific to primary-age children as this relates to children within our specific setting. We have selected five good practices based on the following criteria:

- Suitability of the practice for children aged 4-12
- Training and experience of teachers and support staff in our setting

In Ireland, there is currently a shortage of Speech and Language Therapists (SLTs). This has meant that many of the children in our school currently do not have access to these therapies or are on long wait-lists. This shortage has also meant that the input we were able to obtain from Speech and Language Therapists for the purpose of this project was extremely limited.

## 2. OVERVIEW OF SELECTED GOOD PRACTICES

The practices we have selected for this project are as follows:

1. Gestalt Language Processing (GLP)
2. Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Devices
3. Lámh
4. PECS
5. Irish Sign Language (ISL)

### GOOD PRACTICE TITLE 1: Gestalt Language Processing (GLP)

<p><b>Brief description</b></p>	<p>Gestalt language processing (GLP) refers to a theoretical framework that incorporates principles from Gestalt psychology into the understanding of language and its comprehension. Gestalt psychology emphasises the importance of perceiving and understanding whole units or patterns rather than individual components.</p> <p>In the context of language, the gestalt approach suggests that people do not process language solely by analysing individual words or sentences but by perceiving and interpreting the overall meaning and structure of the language they encounter. It focuses on how individuals organise and make sense of language at a higher level.</p> <p>Research suggests between 75 and 90% of autistic people are Gestalt language processors.</p>
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<p><b>Brief description</b></p>	<p>Despite initial research into this way of learning taking place in the mid 20th century, it is only in the past decade that it has become more deeply understood. This means that it is a new area of research and as such many SLTs are not trained to support these language learners as it will not have been part of their initial training.</p>
<p><b>Aims and objectives</b></p>	<p>Our aim was to evaluate GLP intervention strategies, benchmarking it against other SLT interventions in place in Ireland.</p>
<p><b>Implemented activities and final outcomes</b></p>	<p>Teachers in our school undertook CPD in GLP to analyse and review the suitability of this practice for the purpose of this project and feedback was positive that, as a new and innovative way of looking at language development, it would be extremely suitable.</p>
<p><b>Approach and methodologies</b></p>	<p>Teachers and support staff in our school undertook CPD and created a focus group to discuss their learning. We collaborated with an SLT who recommended GLP as one of the most prevalent developments within SLT in recent years.</p>
<p><b>Target groups</b></p>	<p>The target group for this framework is children who are experiencing delayed speech or those children who communicate through echolalia. There is a high prevalence of GLP within the Autistic community.</p>
<p><b>Duration</b></p>	<p>3 month information gathering and review process</p>



## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE 2: **Augmentative and Alternative Communication Device (AAC)**

<b>Brief description</b>	<p>Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) devices are tools or systems designed to assist individuals with communication difficulties. AAC devices are used by people who have difficulty speaking or producing speech, either temporarily or permanently, due to conditions such as developmental disabilities, motor impairments, or neurological disorders. AAC devices can range from simple low-tech solutions to complex high-tech systems, depending on the individual's needs and abilities. Here are some types of AAC devices:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <b>Picture-based Communication Boards:</b> These are low-tech devices that use pictures, symbols, or words on a board or a sheet of paper. Users can point to or indicate the desired pictures or symbols to convey their message.</li><li>2. <b>Communication Books:</b> These are portable binders or books containing a collection of pictures, symbols, or words that the user can flip through to construct sentences or phrases.</li><li>3. <b>Dedicated Speech Generating Devices (SGDs):</b> These are electronic devices specifically designed for communication. They have a screen or display that shows symbols or text, and often include synthesized speech output. Users can select or type messages using buttons, touchscreens, or switches.</li><li>4. <b>Tablet or Smartphone Apps:</b> AAC apps are software applications that can be installed on tablets or smartphones. They offer a range of communication tools, such as symbol libra-</li></ol>
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## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE 2: **Augmentative and Alternative Communication Device (AAC)**

<b>Brief description</b>	<p>libraries, text-to-speech capabilities, and customizable layouts.</p> <p>5. Eye Gaze Systems: These high-tech AAC devices use eye-tracking technology to detect and interpret eye movements. Users can control a computer or communication device by looking at specific areas on a screen.</p> <p>AAC devices are typically personalised to meet the individual's specific needs, and the selection of the appropriate device depends on factors such as the person's communication abilities, motor skills, cognitive abilities, and preferences.</p> <p>The ultimate goal of AAC devices is to facilitate effective communication and promote independence. They can empower individuals with communication difficulties to express themselves, interact with others, and participate more fully in various aspects of life, including education, work, and social interactions. AAC devices are often used in conjunction with training and support from speech-language pathologists, educators, and other professionals to maximise their benefits.</p>
<b>Aims and objectives</b>	<p>Our aim was to evaluate the use of AAC devices, benchmarking it against other SLT interventions in place in Ireland.</p>

## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE 2: **Augmentative and Alternative Communication Device (AAC)**

<b>Implemented activities and final outcomes</b>	<p>We met with an SLT and an AAC provider who outlined the range of low-tech to high-tech options that are available to children who would benefit from an AAC device. We reviewed a wide array of AAC options and looked at the individual profiles of some children in our setting, finding that there were AAC options suitable for all identified pupils. Pupils identified undertook 6 week trials with different devices and meetings were held with teacher, parent and SLT to assess future suitability and training.</p>
<b>Approach and methodologies</b>	<p>We took a collaborative approach between parent, teacher, child and SLT to assess AAC use for individual children in our school. These children undertook a 6 week trial of a variety of AAC devices and each was assessed for suitability.</p>
<b>Target groups</b>	<p>Children in our school with communication difficulties. These children have a diagnosis of ASD.</p>
<b>Duration</b>	<p>3 month information gathering and review process</p>

## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE 3: Lámh

<p><b>Brief description</b></p>	<p>Lámh is a manual sign system used in Ireland to support communication for individuals with speech and language difficulties, particularly those with developmental disabilities. It is a unique sign language system that incorporates Irish Sign Language (ISL) signs and modified gestures.</p> <p>The word "lámh" means "hand" in the Irish language, reflecting the emphasis on using manual gestures for communication. Lámh was developed in the 1980s and has since become widely used in various settings, including schools, homes, and therapy centres.</p> <p>Lámh is designed to complement spoken language rather than replace it. It aims to enhance communication by providing individuals with a visual means to express their wants, needs, and thoughts. It is often used in conjunction with speech and other communication methods to support comprehension and expression. The Lámh sign system consists of a core vocabulary of approximately 500 signs, which cover essential concepts and words commonly used in daily communication. These signs are based on Irish Sign Language but have been adapted to be more accessible and easier to learn for individuals with communication difficulties.</p> <p>Lámh promotes consistent signing and encourages individuals to use signs alongside speech to reinforce understanding and enhance communication.</p>
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## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE 3: Lámh

<b>Brief description</b>	<p>It is typically introduced and taught through structured training programs by Lámh-trained professionals, such as speech and language therapists, teachers, or parents.</p> <p>The use of Lámh can provide individuals with a means to express themselves, improve their comprehension of spoken language, and enhance their overall communication skills. It promotes inclusion and enables individuals to participate more actively in social interactions, educational settings, and everyday life.</p>
<b>Aims and objectives</b>	Our aim was to evaluate Lámh, benchmarking it against other SLT interventions in place in Ireland.
<b>Implemented activities and final outcomes</b>	We identified staff members who have been trained in the use of Lámh. Despite having a small number of our staff trained in Lámh assisted communication, we identified that there were no children in our school who currently use Lámh to support their communication, therefore the potential of investigating this methodology was limited.
<b>Approach and methodologies</b>	We reviewed literature about the use of Lámh and interviewed staff members trained in Lámh.

## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE 3: **Lámh**

<b>Target groups</b>	The target group for Lámh is anyone with intellectual disabilities or communication difficulties. Lámh is frequently used by children diagnosed with ASD and Down Syndrome.
<b>Duration</b>	3 month information gathering and review process



## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE4 : **Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)**

<b>Brief description</b>	<p>PECS stands for Picture Exchange Communication System. It is a widely used and evidence-based method of communication for individuals with limited verbal language skills, including those with autism spectrum disorder and other developmental disabilities.</p> <p>PECS is based on the principle of using visual supports to facilitate communication. It involves teaching individuals to exchange pictures or symbols to express their needs, wants, and ideas. Here is a brief overview of the key components of PECS:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <b>Picture-Based Communication:</b> PECS uses a set of pictures or symbols, typically printed on cards, to represent desired items, activities, or requests. These pictures can be easily manipulated and exchanged.</li><li>2. <b>Communication Initiation:</b> The individual is taught how to initiate communication by selecting a specific picture card and giving it to a communication partner, such as a caregiver or therapist.</li><li>3. <b>Reinforcement:</b> When the individual successfully exchanges a picture card, they receive immediate reinforcement, usually in the form of the requested item or activity. This reinforcement helps motivate and reinforce the use of the PECS system.</li><li>4. <b>Gradual Expansion:</b> The PECS process progresses through different stages, starting with simple requests and gradually expanding to more complex and varied communication, including commenting, asking questions, and initiating social interactions.</li></ol>
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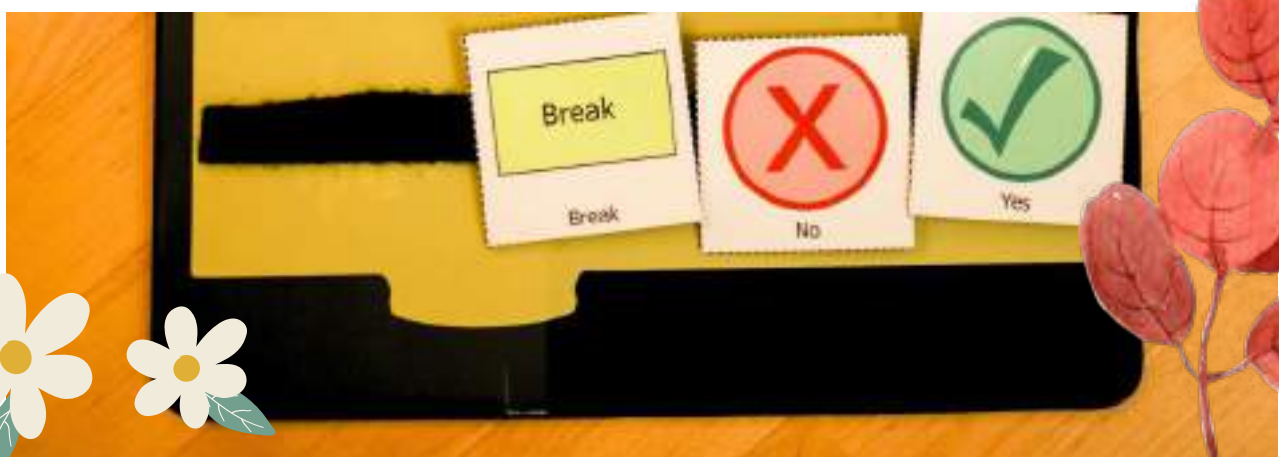
## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE4 : **Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)**

<b>Brief description</b>	<p>5. Systematic Training: PECS typically involves structured training sessions conducted by trained professionals. These sessions focus on teaching the individual the necessary skills to use the PECS system effectively, such as selecting the appropriate picture, making the exchange, and developing sentence structure.</p> <p>It is important to note that PECS is typically introduced and implemented by professionals trained in the method. They can tailor the system to the individual's specific needs and provide ongoing support and guidance throughout the learning process.</p>
<b>Aims and objectives</b>	<p>Our aim was to evaluate PECS, benchmarking it against other SLT interventions in place in Ireland.</p>
<b>Implemented activities and final outcomes</b>	<p>We interviewed an SLT and two teachers who are trained in the implementation of PECS. From these interviews it became clear that while PECS is evidence-based, its use as an SLT intervention is becoming widely discouraged by those in the autistic community as it is viewed as a 'compliance-based' intervention and does not support a neuro-affirmative approach.</p>
<b>Approach and methodologies</b>	<p>Interviews were used to assess the suitability of PECS as a strategy for this project. We interviewed parents and a speech and language therapist.</p>



# GOOD PRACTICE TITLE4 : **Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)**

<b>Target groups</b>	The target group for this methodology is children aged 4-12 with language and communication challenges. This methodology is widely associated with people with a diagnosis of ASD.
<b>Duration</b>	3 month information gathering and review process

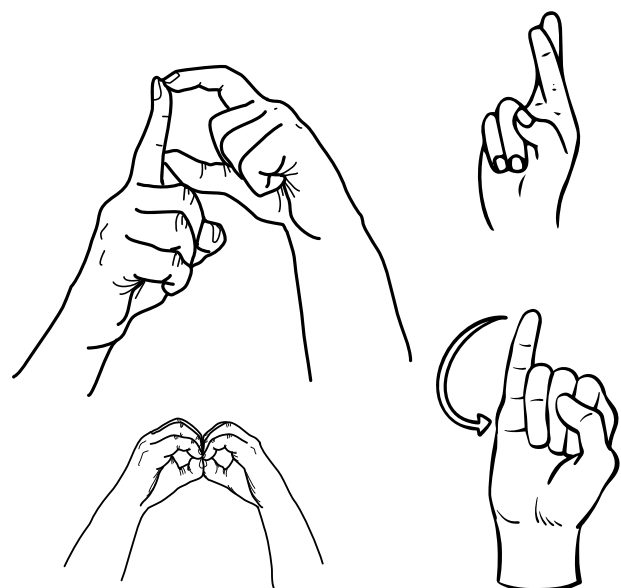


## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE 5: Irish Sign Language (ISL)

<b>Brief description</b>	<p>ISL stands for Irish Sign Language. It is the sign language used by the deaf community in Ireland and is recognized as the primary language of deaf people in the country. ISL has its own unique grammar, vocabulary, and cultural expressions, distinct from spoken languages like English or Irish.</p> <p>ISL is a visual-spatial language that uses a combination of handshapes, movements, facial expressions, and body language to convey meaning. Signs in ISL can represent words, phrases, or concepts, and the language is capable of expressing a wide range of information, including communication, storytelling, and emotional expression.</p> <p>ISL is not simply a direct translation of spoken languages into sign form. It has its own linguistic structure and grammatical rules, including word order and inflections. For example, verbs are often placed at the beginning of a sentence in ISL.</p> <p>ISL plays a vital role in the deaf community in Ireland, providing a means of communication and fostering cultural identity and connections. It is used in various settings, including educational institutions, social gatherings, and deaf community events.</p>
<b>Aims and objectives</b>	Our aim was to evaluate ISL, benchmarking it against other SLT interventions in place in Ireland.

# GOOD PRACTICE TITLE 5: Irish Sign Language (ISL)

<b>Implemented activities and final outcomes</b>	We interviewed an SNA in our school who is fluent in ISL. Given the specific nature of ISL (as an Irish language, therefore only relevant to people in Ireland) and it's specificity to the deaf community) we felt it would not be a suitable methodology for the focus of this project
<b>Aims and objectives</b>	Our information gathering was limited as, despite having children with hearing difficulties in our school community, they do not use ISL. We had one staff member who is trained in ISL, so we decided an interview would be the best method of information gathering.
<b>Target groups</b>	The target group of this intervention is children from Ireland who are members of the deaf community.
<b>Duration</b>	3 month information gathering and review process



### 3. MAIN FINDINGS

#### 3.1 Main strengths and weaknesses

<b>Good practice</b>	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<b>Gestalt Language Processing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Neuro-affirmative approach</li> <li>-Supports children's natural language acquisition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Relatively new approach so not many SLTs familiar with it, meaning many children have not been identified as a GLP</li> <li>-Newly developing body of research which is not yet widespread</li> </ul>
<b>AAC Devices</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Wide range of devices/ programmes available</li> <li>-Develop skills for life-long communication</li> <li>-Portable and highly customisable for the needs of the individual</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-High tech devices can be expensive</li> <li>-High tech devices must be kept charged/easily accessible</li> </ul>
<b>Lámh</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Useful if device for AAC is unavailable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Ireland specific</li> <li>-Training is not wide-spread</li> </ul>
<b>PECS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Evidence based</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Child is limited to make requests, does not support wider communication, such as commenting</li> <li>-Child is restricted to pictures available on PECS book</li> <li>-Compliance based</li> </ul>

### 3. MAIN FINDINGS

#### 3.1 Main strengths and weaknesses

Good practice	Strengths	Weaknesses
ISL	-Provides means of communication to deaf community	-Ireland specific -Requires communication partner to be trained/fluent in ISL

#### 3.2 The innovative approaches connected with speech and language support systems

Following benchmarking, we have identified AAC device use and Gestalt Language Process as innovative approaches connected with speech and language support systems. There is an increasing body of evidence that suggests that GLP is the most common form of language development among children diagnosed with ASD. This research is new and developing all the time, which means that many SLTs are not trained to recognise if a child is a GLP and as such, children are often supported as though they are Analytical Language Processors (ALP) and frequently they do not experience success with SLT interventions, as the basis of how they process language has not been identified and approaches have not been tailored to account for this.

It is imperative that if a child is a GLP that they be identified as early as possible and that SLT interventions are implemented that take this difference into account. One such intervention might be the use of an AAC. AACs can range from printed boards with pictures or letters that a child points at to communicate their ideas to higher technology systems that have buttons that produce speech. Children who are GLPs can utilize AACs to produce strings of speech that communicate their ideas. AACs are seen as a neuro-affirmative approach to developing language and communication as children have a more open-ended system that affords them freedom of expression.

For the SL TOOLS project, we suggest that a study of GLP and the use of AAC devices reflect the most up-to-date and innovative approaches to speech and language development, within both Irish and international contexts.

#### **4. CONCLUSIONS**

This benchmarking activity involved the identification of five examples of good practice within Speech and Language from an Irish context. We identified Gestalt Language Processing, AAC devices, Lámh, ISL and PECS. Following extensive review, we felt that both Lámh and ISL are forms of language support that are used exclusively within -

the Irish context. They are modified versions of Makaton and BSL (British Sign Language) used in the UK. PECS as identified, is a widely researched evidence-based approach to communication, however, its continued use is becoming increasingly controversial. A large proportion of the autistic community does not support the use of PECS or ABA as operant conditioning models. They suggest that language is controlled in PECS and its use does not enable freedom of expression.

In conclusion, we suggest the use of AAC devices and Gestalt Language Processing for the SL TOOLS project. We feel the use of these approaches reflects the most up-to-date research within Speech and Language, are neuro-affirmative approaches that support life-long language and communication development.

# NATIONAL REPORT ON GOOD PRACTICES

WPI Benchmarks for speech and language support and educational report

Country: **AUSTRIA**



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

To assist teachers in promoting young children's speech and language development, a variety of aids and resources have been developed in Austria. A number of initiatives have been launched by the Austrian Ministry of Education, Science, and Research to enhance language proficiency measures for educators. Additionally, a novel preschool screening technique has been created to effectively identify language disorders in bilingual kids for whom German is a second language. Non-governmental organizations in Austria's many regions have grown to be significant donors, offering additional training programs especially made for early intervention instructors. To place these materials within the broader educational environment, the Council of Europe offers a comprehensive Language Education Policy Profile for Austria, including a wealth of information regarding the country's language education policies.

This report wants to explore some examples of good practices including exercises and activities to support children in their speech and language development. The collection of good practices was carried out to introduce different approaches to language and speech therapy and teaching that involve different levels of impairments and learning needs.

The selection of good practices was done using online resources from therapists and educators and were carefully selected to paint a picture of what is possible. We made sure that our selection criteria align (partly) with the goals and objectives of the project.

Nevertheless, we encountered some challenges when collecting the good practices. There is a lack of centralized information or databases regarding good practices in speech and language support systems. This requires thorough research and data collection from various sources. Moreover, the heterogeneity of practices poses an obstacle as speech and language support systems encompass a wide range of practices and approaches, and what works well in one context may not be suitable for another. Finding practices that are universally applicable can be challenging. What is more is that some good practices may require significant resources, such as funding, specialized staff, or technology, making them less accessible or replicable in resource-constrained settings.

## 2. OVERVIEW OF SELECTED GOOD PRACTICES

Below are the five good practices which target the support of children with language and speech impairments:

1. Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)
2. "I Spy" Game
3. Broken Telephone Game
4. Expressive Language Activities
5. Breathing Exercises for Stammerers

### GOOD PRACTICE TITLE : **Augmentative and Alternative communication (AAC)**

<b>Brief description</b>	AAC refers to a set of tools and strategies designed to support individuals with speech and language impairments in expressing themselves. It is used when traditional speech may be limited or nonfunctional. AAC can take various forms, including communication boards, speech-generating devices (SGDs), sign language, and picture exchange systems (PECS).
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# GOOD PRACTICE TITLE : **Augmentative and Alternative communication (AAC)**

<b>Brief description</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Communication Assessment:</b> AAC begins with a comprehensive assessment of the individual's communication needs, preferences, and abilities.</li><li>• <b>AAC Selection:</b> Based on the assessment, an appropriate AAC system is selected. This may include low-tech systems (e.g., communication boards with pictures and symbols) or high-tech systems (e.g., tablet-based communication apps or dedicated speech-generating devices).</li><li>• <b>Vocabulary Programming:</b> Vocabulary and phrases are programmed into the chosen AAC system to match the user's language and communication goals.</li><li>• <b>Training and Implementation:</b> The individual and their communication partners (e.g., parents, teachers, therapists) receive training on how to use the selected AAC system effectively.</li><li>• <b>Communication Practice:</b> Regular practice and use of the AAC system in various contexts, including school, home, and social settings, are crucial.</li><li>• <b>Outcome:</b> The final outcome is improved communication and greater independence for the individual. They can express their needs, thoughts, and feelings, leading to better participation in daily activities and social interactions.</li></ul>
<b>Approaches and methodologies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Person-Centered Approach:</b> AAC is tailored to the individual's specific needs, preferences, and abilities.</li></ul>

# GOOD PRACTICE TITLE : **Augmentative and Alternative communication (AAC)**

<b>Approaches and methodologies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Total Communication Approach:</b> A multimodal approach is often used, combining speech with AAC methods (e.g., sign language alongside a speech-generating device).</li><li>• <b>Visual Supports:</b> Visual supports like visual schedules, social stories, and visual cues are commonly used to enhance understanding and communication.</li><li>• <b>Modeling:</b> Communication partners (e.g., parents and teachers) model language and communication using the AAC system to encourage its use.</li><li>• <b>Language Development:</b> AAC interventions focus on language development and may include activities such as vocabulary expansion and syntax development.</li></ul>
<b>Target group</b>	<p>AAC is designed for individuals with a wide range of communication difficulties, including those with speech and language disorders, non-verbal autism, cerebral palsy, developmental disabilities, and acquired communication impairments (e.g., due to stroke).</p> <p>AAC can be used with children, adolescents, and adults.</p>
<b>Duration</b>	<p>The duration of AAC implementation varies depending on the individual's needs and progress. AAC intervention is typically ongoing, with regular assessment and adjustments to -</p>

# GOOD PRACTICE TITLE : **Augmentative and Alternative communication (AAC)**

<b>Duration</b>	accommodate the individual's evolving communication abilities and goals. Training for communication partners, such as parents and educators, may occur over several sessions and continue as needed.
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## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE : “I Spy” - Game

<b>Brief description</b>	<p>"I Spy" is a popular word and visual perception game that encourages players, often children, to use their observational and descriptive skills to identify objects in their surroundings. It's commonly used for entertainment and to promote language development.</p>
<b>Approaches and methodologies</b>	<p>In the game, one player selects an object within their field of vision and provides a verbal clue in the form of "I spy with my little eye, something that is..." followed by a descriptive characteristic (e.g., color, shape, starting letter). Other players take turns guessing which object the "spy" is referring to.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Language Development:</b> "I Spy" promotes vocabulary building as players describe objects and guess their names. It also enhances listening skills as participants listen to clues and respond with their guesses.</li><li>• <b>Observational Skills:</b> The game encourages children to pay attention to their surroundings and become more observant.</li><li>• <b>Social Interaction:</b> Players take turns and engage in a social and interactive setting, fostering communication and social skills.</li></ul>
<b>Approaches and methodologies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Descriptive Language:</b> The game encourages players to use descriptive language to provide clues and make guesses, promoting the use of adjectives and adverbs.</li><li>• <b>Visual Cues:</b> The game relies on visual perception, as players must identify objects based on visual clues.</li></ul>



## GOOD PRACTICE TITLE : “I Spy” - Game

<b>Approaches and methodologies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Turn-Taking:</b> "I Spy" teaches turn-taking and patience as players wait for their opportunity to guess.</li><li>• <b>Cooperative Play:</b> The game can be adapted to be cooperative, where players work together to find objects, enhancing teamwork and communication.</li></ul>
<b>Target group</b>	<p>"I Spy" is generally suitable for children and can be adapted to different age groups and skill levels.</p> <p>It is often used in early childhood education and at home to support language development, observational skills, and social interaction.</p> <p>The game can be adapted to different cognitive and developmental levels, making it versatile for various age groups.</p>
<b>Duration</b>	<p>The game's duration can vary based on the number of players and the complexity of the objects being described.</p> <p>"I Spy" can be played as a short, spontaneous activity lasting a few minutes or as a more extended game during which multiple rounds are played.</p> <p>The duration is flexible and can be adjusted to suit the participants' attention spans and interests.</p>

# GOOD PRACTICE TITLE :

## Broken Telephone Game

<b>Brief description</b>	<p>The "Broken Telephone" game, also known as "Chinese Whispers" or "DIY Telephone," is a classic communication game in which a message or phrase is passed in a whispered chain from one participant to the next. The final participant reveals the message, which often undergoes humorous transformations as it moves through the chain. It's a fun and engaging way to illustrate the challenges of communication and the effects of miscommunication.</p>
<b>Implemented activities and final outcomes</b>	<p>Participants sit in a circle or line. The first person thinks of a message or phrase and whispers it to the person next to them. This message is then whispered down the line from person to person. The last participant states what they heard, and the group compares it to the original message.</p> <p><b>Communication Awareness:</b> The game demonstrates how messages can be altered or misunderstood when relayed through multiple people. It encourages participants to reflect on the importance of clear and effective communication.</p> <p><b>Listening Skills:</b> Players must listen carefully to the whispered message, emphasizing the value of active listening.</p> <p><b>Social Interaction:</b> The game encourages social interaction, teamwork, and laughter as participants share their experiences of the message's transformation.</p>
<b>Approaches and methodologies</b>	<p><b>Experiential Learning:</b> The telephone game is a hands-on, experiential learning activity that helps participants understand the challenges of communication.</p>

# GOOD PRACTICE TITLE :

## Broken Telephone Game

<b>Approaches and methodologies</b>	<p><b>Reflection:</b> After the game, participants can discuss how messages change, why it happens, and how to improve communication. This reflection fosters understanding and critical thinking.</p> <p><b>Metacognition:</b> Encourage participants to consider their own communication habits and how they can be more effective in conveying messages.</p>
<b>Target group</b>	The DIY Telephone game can be adapted for a wide range of age groups, from children to adults. The game can be used in educational, team-building, or social settings.
<b>Duration</b>	The duration of the game can vary based on the number of participants and the complexity of the message. It typically takes 15-30 minutes.



# GOOD PRACTICE TITLE :

## Expressive Language Activities

<b>Brief description</b>	<p>Expressive language practice refers to a set of activities and exercises designed to help individuals, particularly children, improve their ability to express themselves effectively through spoken or written language. This practice targets various aspects of language, such as vocabulary, sentence structure, and articulation, to enhance a person's communication skills.</p>
<b>Implemented activities and final outcomes</b>	<p>Expressive language practice encompasses a wide range of activities, including storytelling, role-playing, journaling, and articulation exercises.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Vocabulary Expansion:</b> Participants are encouraged to learn and use new words in their conversations and written expression.</li><li>• <b>Sentence Building:</b> Activities focus on constructing clear and grammatically correct sentences, which help improve the clarity of communication.</li><li>• <b>Narrative Development:</b> Storytelling and journaling exercises encourage individuals to express thoughts, ideas, and experiences coherently and creatively.</li><li>• <b>Articulation Practice:</b> For those with speech sound disorders, articulation exercises target specific sounds or phonemes to improve pronunciation.</li></ul>
<b>Approaches and methodologies</b>	<p><b>Differentiated Instruction:</b> Expressive language practice can be tailored to the individual's specific needs and goals, ensuring that the activities address their areas of weakness.</p>

# GOOD PRACTICE TITLE :

## Expressive Language Activities

<b>Approaches and methodologies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Imitative and Creative Practice:</b> Participants are encouraged to both imitate correct language patterns and creatively use language through storytelling, role-playing, or other expressive activities.</li><li>• <b>Feedback and Reinforcement:</b> Regular feedback and reinforcement are important components to ensure progress and motivation.</li></ul>
<b>Target group</b>	Children with speech and language disorders, language delays, or communication difficulties can benefit significantly.
<b>Duration</b>	<p>The duration of expressive language practice can vary widely based on the specific activities and the individual's needs and goals.</p> <p>Sessions may range from short, daily language practice exercises lasting 15-20 minutes to longer, more structured sessions that last 30-60 minutes or more.</p> <p>The duration is flexible and can be adjusted to accommodate the participant's attention span and learning objectives.</p>



# GOOD PRACTICE TITLE :

## Breathing Exercises for Stammerers

<b>Brief description</b>	Breathing exercises for stammering are techniques designed to help individuals who stutter manage their breath control, reduce speech-related tension, and promote fluent and relaxed speech. These exercises aim to encourage the use of diaphragmatic breathing and controlled exhalation during speech.
<b>Implemented activities and final outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Diaphragmatic Breathing:</b> Activities involve practising diaphragmatic or belly breathing, where the individual uses their diaphragm, a muscle located below the lungs, for breathing. The final outcome is the development of a more efficient and relaxed breathing pattern.</li><li>• <b>Prolonged Exhalation:</b> Exercises emphasize slow and controlled exhalation, which leads to reduced tension during speech. The outcome is enhanced control over exhalation and increased fluency.</li><li>• <b>Visualization and Relaxation:</b> Incorporating visualization techniques can help reduce anxiety and tension associated with stammering, resulting in more relaxed speech.</li><li>• <b>Breath Awareness:</b> Activities focus on developing awareness of breathing patterns and how they relate to speech. The outcome is a heightened awareness of the breath-speech connection and improved breath management during speech.</li></ul>
<b>Approaches and methodologies</b>	<b>Individualized Approaches:</b> Breathing exercises are tailored to the specific needs of the individual who stutters. A speech-language pathologist or therapist typically assesses the individual and designs a personalized program.

# GOOD PRACTICE TITLE :

## Breathing Exercises for Stammerers

<b>Approaches and methodologies</b>	<p><b>Progressive Training:</b> Breathing exercises often start with foundational techniques, such as diaphragmatic breathing, and gradually progress to more complex strategies, promoting increased control over speech.</p> <p><b>Integration into Speech:</b> These exercises are integrated into speech by encouraging individuals to use the techniques while speaking. Pausing, controlled breathing, and prolonged exhalation are applied during speech to enhance fluency.</p>
<b>Target group</b>	Breathing exercises for stammering are suitable for individuals of all ages, from children to adults, and can be tailored to address the specific developmental and cognitive needs of each person seeking to improve speech fluency.
<b>Duration</b>	Regular practice is essential for lasting improvement. The exercises can be incorporated into speech therapy sessions, which may range from weekly sessions to more frequent visits. Home practice should be maintained as part of a long-term strategy for managing stammering.



### 3. MAIN FINDINGS

#### 3.1 Main strengths and weaknesses

Good practice	Strengths	Weaknesses
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Augmentative and Alternative</b></p>	<p><b>Enhanced Communication:</b> AAC systems provide a means for individuals with communication impairments, such as non-verbal individuals or those with severe speech disorders, to express themselves and communicate effectively.</p> <p><b>Increased Independence:</b> AAC empowers individuals to convey their needs, preferences, and thoughts independently, reducing their reliance on others for communication.</p> <p><b>Early Intervention:</b> AAC can be introduced at a young age to support language development, even before a child acquires speech, which can potentially improve future communication skills.</p>	<p><b>Learning Curve:</b> Using AAC effectively often requires training and practice, both for the individual and their communication partners, which can be time-consuming and may discourage some users.</p> <p><b>Stigmatization:</b> Some individuals using AAC may face stigmatization or misconceptions about their capabilities, which can affect their social interactions.</p> <p><b>Communication Partner Training:</b> Effective use of AAC depends on the ability of communication partners (e.g., caregivers, educators) to facilitate communication, which may require training and support.</p>



### 3. MAIN FINDINGS

#### 3.1 Main strengths and weaknesses

<b>Good practice</b>	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<b>Augmentative and Alternative</b>	<p><b>Early Intervention:</b> AAC can be introduced at a young age to support language development, even before a child acquires speech, which can potentially improve future communication skills.</p> <p><b>Diverse Modalities:</b> AAC encompasses a wide range of communication methods, including speech-generating devices, communication boards, sign language, and communication apps, allowing for customization to suit individual preferences.</p> <p><b>Improved Social Interaction:</b> AAC systems facilitate interaction with peers, family members, and the broader community, promoting social inclusion.</p>	<p><b>Technology Limitations:</b> High-tech AAC devices can be expensive, and there may be limitations in terms of accessibility and maintenance, especially for individuals with limited financial resources.</p> <p><b>Reduced Speed:</b> AAC communication may be slower than natural speech, which can be a limitation in fast-paced conversations or emergency situations.</p> <p><b>Loss of Speech Opportunities:</b> Overreliance on AAC systems may result in less motivation to develop speech skills, particularly in children, if not used in conjunction with speech therapy.</p>

### 3. MAIN FINDINGS

#### 3.1 Main strengths and weaknesses

<b>Good practice</b>	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<b>Augmentative and Alternative</b>	<p><b>Versatility:</b> AAC can be used in various settings, including schools, homes, workplaces, and social environments, making it versatile for different life contexts.</p>	<p><b>Maintenance and Upkeep:</b> High-tech AAC devices can require frequent updates and maintenance, which may be cumbersome for users and their families.</p>
<b>"I Spy" Game</b>	<p><b>Promotes Observation Skills:</b> One of the most significant strengths of the "I Spy" game is its ability to enhance participants' observation and attention to detail. Players learn to notice and identify objects based on specific characteristics, which is a valuable skill in various contexts.</p> <p><b>Vocabulary Development:</b> The game is effective at expanding players' vocabularies by encouraging them to describe objects using descriptive terms like -</p>	<p><b>Limited Educational Value:</b> While "I Spy" is a fun and interactive game, it may not have significant educational value compared to more structured learning activities. It primarily focuses on observation and vocabulary skills.</p> <p><b>Potential for Frustration:</b> Some players, especially younger children, may become frustrated when they have difficulty finding objects, which can affect their enjoyment of the game.</p>

### 3. MAIN FINDINGS

#### 3.1 Main strengths and weaknesses

Good practice	Strengths	Weaknesses
<p><b>“I Spy” Game</b></p>	<p>color, shape, and initial letters. This can be particularly beneficial for language development, especially in children.</p> <p><b>Social Interaction and Communication:</b> "I Spy" is inherently interactive and social. It encourages communication, cooperation, and social interaction among players, making it an excellent group activity for bonding and engagement.</p>	<p><b>Lack of Progress Tracking:</b> The game lacks a clear way to track progress or measure improvements in specific skills. It may not be suitable for structured educational assessment, and its outcomes can be challenging to measure</p>
<p><b>Broken Telephone Game</b></p>	<p><b>Communication Awareness:</b> The game effectively demonstrates how messages can be altered or misunderstood as they are relayed through a chain of participants. It raises awareness of the importance of clear and effective communication.</p>	<p><b>Potential for Miscommunication:</b> The game is designed to illustrate miscommunication, which can be seen as a limitation if the goal is to convey a message accurately. It might inadvertently reinforce the idea that communication is inherently unreliable.</p>

### 3. MAIN FINDINGS

#### 3.1 Main strengths and weaknesses

Good practice	Strengths	Weaknesses
<p align="center"><b>Broken Telephone Game</b></p>	<p><b>Enhances Listening Skills:</b> "Broken Telephone" encourages active listening as participants must pay close attention to the whispered message and try to repeat it accurately. This improves listening skills and focus.</p> <p><b>Social Interaction and Teamwork:</b> The game is highly interactive and promotes social interaction. It encourages teamwork and cooperation as players share their experiences of the message's transformation and have fun together.</p>	<p><b>Limited Educational Value:</b> While "Broken Telephone" is an enjoyable activity, it may not have significant educational value beyond demonstrating the challenges of communication. It doesn't directly teach communication skills or strategies.</p> <p><b>Possible Frustration:</b> Participants may experience frustration if they perceive that the game is causing their message to be misinterpreted or if they find it challenging to whisper the message accurately.</p>
<p align="center"><b>Expressive Language Activities</b></p>	<p><b>Language Development:</b> Expressive language activities promote vocabulary expansion, sentence structure improvement, and overall language development.</p>	<p><b>Individualized Approach Required:</b> Expressive language activities need to be tailored to the specific needs of participants, which can be resource-intensive -</p>

### 3. MAIN FINDINGS

#### 3.1 Main strengths and weaknesses

Good practice	Strengths	Weaknesses
<b>Expressive Language Activities</b>	<p>They encourage participants to use more words, phrases, and express themselves more coherently.</p> <p><b>Enhanced Communication Skills:</b> These activities help individuals develop the ability to express thoughts, feelings, and ideas more clearly and confidently, which is essential for effective communication in personal, academic, and social settings.</p> <p><b>Creativity and Self-Expression:</b> Expressive language activities often involve creative components like storytelling, role-playing, and journaling. They provide a platform for individuals to express themselves and their imagination, fostering self-expression and creativity.</p>	<p>and may require personalized instruction and attention.</p> <p><b>Time-Consuming:</b> Achieving significant improvements in language development and expression can be time-consuming, as it typically involves regular practice and may not yield immediate results.</p> <p><b>Potential Frustration:</b> Some individuals may find it frustrating, particularly if they struggle with language skills. Frustration can hinder participation and motivation in these activities.</p>

### 3. MAIN FINDINGS

#### 3.1 Main strengths and weaknesses

Good practice	Strengths	Weaknesses
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Breathing Exercises for Stammerers</b></p>	<p><b>Improved Speech Fluency:</b> One of the most significant strengths of breathing exercises for stammering is their potential to enhance speech fluency. These exercises promote controlled exhalation and can reduce tension in the speech muscles, leading to smoother and more fluent speech.</p> <p><b>Empowerment and Independence:</b> Breathing exercises empower individuals who stutter to take control of their speech. By learning these techniques, they gain a greater sense of independence and self-confidence in their communication.</p> <p><b>Early Intervention:</b> These exercises can be introduced at a young age, allowing children with stammering issues to develop better breath -</p>	<p><b>Learning Curve:</b> Using breathing exercises effectively often requires training and practice, both for the individual who stutters and their communication partners. This learning curve can be time-consuming and may discourage some users.</p> <p><b>Potential Frustration:</b> Individuals may become frustrated if they have difficulty mastering these techniques or if they don't experience immediate improvements in speech fluency.</p> <p><b>Not a Standalone Solution:</b> While breathing exercises can be valuable, they may not provide a complete solution for stammering. A comprehensive approach that includes-</p>

### 3. MAIN FINDINGS

#### 3.1 Main strengths and weaknesses

<b>Good practice</b>	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<b>Breathing Exercises for Stammerers</b>	-control and speech fluency early in their lives. This early intervention can have a long-lasting positive impact.	speech therapy and other strategies is often necessary for significant and sustained improvement.

#### 3.2 The innovative approaches connected with speech and language support systems

Therapists and educators take a multifaceted approach to speech and language training, with an emphasis on tailoring interventions to each individual's needs. The process begins with a comprehensive assessment to identify an individual's specific strengths and challenges in the area of communication. Following this assessment, therapists and educators work together to establish clear, measurable goals that serve as the basis for creating an individualized treatment plan. These plans take into account a variety of factors, including a person's age, cognitive ability, and underlying medical conditions or disabilities.

Practitioners draw on a wealth of evidence-based practice to develop strategies ranging from speech therapy techniques such as articulation exercises and language improvement strategies to language development activities such as reading aloud, storytelling, and conversation practice. For individuals with more severe communication disorders, augmentative and alternative communication systems (AAC), which include advanced communication devices and software, are incorporated into treatment. In addition, therapists and educators leverage technology to enhance the learning experience using voice recognition software, or voice apps as appropriate. Collaboration with families and caregivers is paramount, as they play an important role in strengthening and generalizing skills beyond treatment and education. Continuous progress monitoring is the basis of the process and allows therapists and educators to make necessary adjustments to the treatment plan as the individual achieves their goals. This comprehensive approach not only addresses speech and language skills, but also considers the complex interactions between communication and broader developmental domains, including cognitive, social, and emotional aspects. The overall aim is to help individuals communicate effectively and develop language skills as well as confidence and independence,



enabling them to reach their full potential in all aspects of life.

#### **4. CONCLUSIONS**

This report has highlighted five valuable practices that can effectively support childhood speech and language development. However, the applicability of these exercises and activities depends significantly on the child's individual developmental stage and the extent of their speech and language impairments. Educators and therapists skillfully employ a combination of assessment and therapeutic tools, carefully customized to address the unique requirements of each child's speech and language training. It is important to acknowledge that all these tools possess their inherent strengths and weaknesses, which must be thoughtfully considered when evaluating their suitability for a given context. The success of these practices hinges on their thoughtful adaptation and alignment with the specific needs of the child, ultimately contributing to more effective speech and language development.

Through the SL TOOLS project, the development of various techniques and tools to enhance and assist speech and language training in early childhood education may be implemented.

This might be accomplished, for instance, by conducting surveys and interviews with educators, parents, and other stakeholders to determine the precise needs, difficulties, and priorities in various Austrian regions. This would give important insights into the particular needs of diverse communities. It is also advantageous to compile Best Practices from other nations in order to identify Best Practices that can be modified for the Austrian environment. Additionally, collaborative workshops with teachers, speech therapists, and parents could be held in order to share knowledge, swap ideas, and co-create language development strategies.

# COLLECTION OF GOOD PRACTICES

WPI Benchmarks for speech and language support and educational report

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