

USING 'CYCLES' TO IMPROVE OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN WITH SPEECH SOUND DIFFICULTIES

Key theme area: Support that makes an impact

Description – What is Cycles?

The cycles approach (Hodson and Paden, 1991) focuses on targeting specific processes (e.g. syllable structure, fronting, cluster reduction etc. rather than a single phoneme) with the target changing after an hour of practise has been completed for each cycle.

It was developed for use with children with severe phonological impairments, children with developmental verbal dyspraxia, repaired cleft palate, hearing impairment with and without cochlear implant and learning difficulties

(Info from: www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk)

Evidence of impact

- The positive impact has been seen within the children, families and schools have commented on the fast progress.
- It has allowed group work within the specialist provision which has enabled the therapists to see more children or, offer more sessions across the provision.
- In the community, parents and schools have commented on how easy the approach is to continue outside of speech and language therapy sessions.
- Data has been gathered from phonological assessments to indicate whether change has occurred or not.

Lessons learned and/or future plans

This was a therapy that could be easily carried out and progress assessed to collect clear outcomes. It is vital that speech and language therapy services are able to measure outcomes in this why to provide valuable information about the effectiveness of our services and the importance of intervention delivered by a speech and language therapist directly for this client group.

In the future we plan to gather formal feedback as part of the review process to measure the impact cycles has had on parents and the schools as it is different to other therapy currently offered.

We also plan to record outcomes pre and post therapy for all children offered this therapy approach to expand our evidence base.



Description – What we did

Within the service we had been running speech groups and we wanted a different way to make the group universal- targeting processes rather than specific sounds. In January 2019, cycles was used within the community teams and at the enhanced speech and language resource base within a school. This was used as 1:1 and for groups. The sessions were approximately 30 minutes long and each session followed a similar format.

Listen: the child listens to the therapist say the target words (typically around 10 targets)

Practise: the child practises the target words through various games aiming for a high number of production opportunities (the recommendation was 100 per cycle) It is important to note that the targets must be stimulable

Listen: the child listens to the target sounds again

Check: Probe for stimulability for the next session's targets.

In our enhanced language provision, the sessions were completed with a Speech and Language Therapist. In our community teams, sessions were completed weekly with the Speech and Language Therapist and follow up practise was given to Teaching Assistants and parents.

Data

During group sessions with 4 children in the enhanced language provision:

- 3/4 improved final consonant deletion errors. One child gained 9 new final sounds!
- 3/4 improved word initial stopping errors. One child gained phonemes [s, z, f] consistently in all positions.
- 2/4 improved backing errors in all positions.
- 2/4 gained improved error patterns that were not targeted.

Data from one school-aged child who had 1-1 sessions in the community:

| Process | Percentage Correct: Pre therapy | Percentage Correct : post therapy | Percentage Increase |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------|
| Syllable Reduction | 40% | 80% | 100% |
| Syllable Structure | 50% | 70% | 40% |
| Cluster Reduction | 0% | 10% | 10% |
| Final Consonant Deletion | 30% | 60% | 100% |

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