

# Collaborate to Improve Children's Listening Skills in the Early Years

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Listening and attention skills are an essential prerequisite for the development of language and learning. Studies have shown that 70 to 80 percent of life is spent communicating. Of this time, 45 percent is spent listening. Without these foundation skills children will be unable to access the curriculum and to successfully develop literacy skills. Poor listeners are more likely to be distractible and their behaviours can make it more difficult to play and interact with others.

**Aim: 4 out of 6 of the \*targeted\* ante-preschool children within two Early Years classes in North Ayrshire will show a 3 point or more improvement in their baseline score in listening and attention skills in order to help develop communication skills by April 2019**

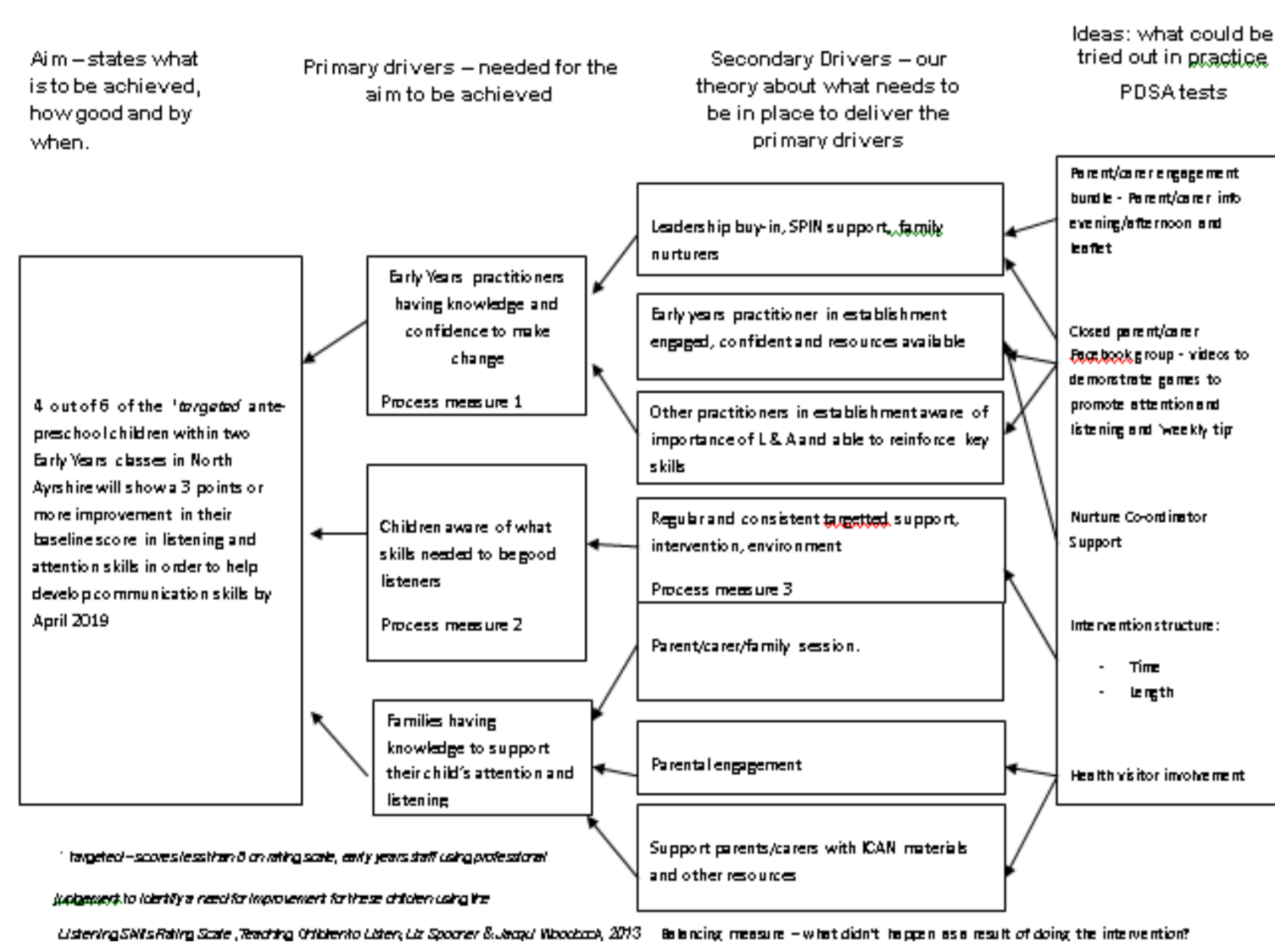


## Method

Our Practicum team consists of Educational Psychology, SLT, Health Visiting with input from education's Equity and Excellence Lead. The Early Years Practitioner (EYP) delivered small group activities for 3 ante-preschool children targeting 4 key skills to develop listening and attention, 3 times a week, for 10 minutes over a 6 week period. By working together with early years staff and parents to develop listening and attention skills in ante-preschool children the foundations for achieving future literacy skills are laid. To date two schools have completed the intervention: St John Ogilvie and Elderbank.

## Process Change

Our team developed a driver diagram to help us be clear about our 'overall vision' and steps needed to reach our goal. Systems were developed to capture data and track progress for each child. The use of PDSA cycles helped to test new ideas and make changes.



## Achievements

- Improved multiagency working
- Early Years Practitioners have more knowledge about how to support children in developing listening and attention skills
- Whole Early Years class involvement and enthusiasm for continuing approach
- Relationship building across disciplines
- 4 more ECCs are taking forward the intervention
- Improvements in children's confidence

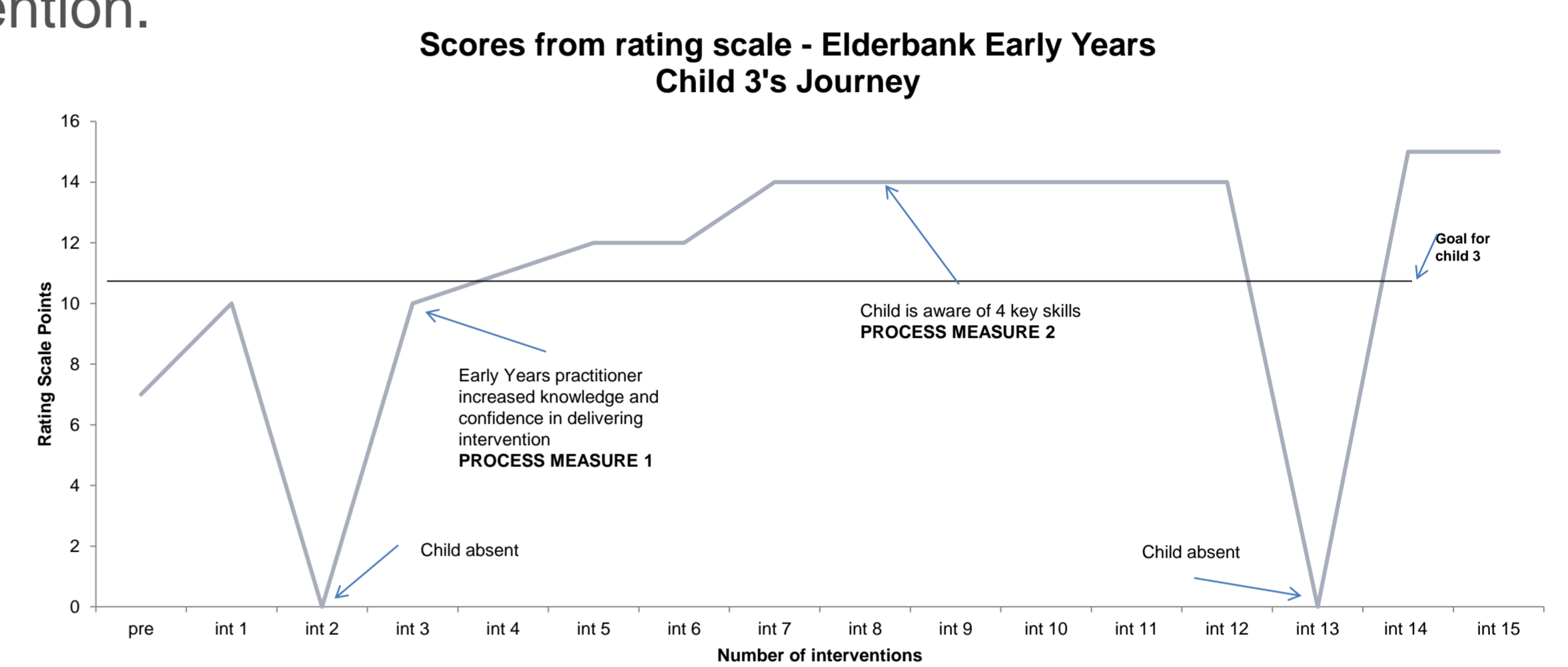
## Key Learning Points

- Keep the visuals of the 4 key skills in different areas in nursery for reinforcement
- Have 'grab bag' of toys for session
- Practicum supply list of ideas for focussing on specific key skill
- Use of an excel spreadsheet to record children's scores at end of each session
- Support from nurture coordinator was beneficial
- Role of Health Visitor in team is developing
- Children needed to settle in nursery before intervention could take place



## Results

All 3 ante-preschool children selected for the intervention in St John Ogilvie and Elderbank Early achieved the aim of a 3 point or more improvement in the baseline score in attention and listening after the intervention.



The Practitioner reported when carrying out the intervention:



The children found the experience:

- "I had fun!"
- "I like to play the games and I always remember I need to sit still like a statue like I am frozen".
- "Me and my gang play the games. I remember all the pictures. My favourite is sitting still like a statue too. I also to remember to look at the person who is talking to me."

## Conclusions

Both Early Years establishments who have completed the intervention have reported that they now embed these 4 key skills for listening into their every day practice. A new element introduced during Elderbank's intervention was the visit of the Health Visitor to the families at week 1 and week 5 of the intervention to reinforce the approach in the nursery. Catherine, the Health Visitor reported that on each occasion the children involved in the intervention at nursery were able to tell her about the 4 key skills.

## Scale / Spread

Both Elderbank and St John Ogilvie have completed the intervention with both meeting their goals with groups of 3 ante-preschool children. Elderbank is continuing with the groups increasing the number of children in the group to 5 to assess whether this impacts on results. Elderbank are using the 4 key skill visuals throughout their playroom and all practitioners are reinforcing the skills during different activities. There are 4 more establishments in North Ayrshire (to date) who have expressed an interest in using the approach.

