

We believe in Time to Talk

Vision and Values

Communication matters in Walsall, it is at the heart of everything we do. Time to Talk is an early intervention language development strategy aimed to enhance the speaking and listening skills of pre school children from birth to starting in the Foundation Stage. In arriving at this Time to Talk framework, the following four key strands of Education Walsall's "Our Values" document have been taken into account.

Customers: "We believe that learners are at the centre of all we do, their needs are paramount".

Time to Talk aims to engage all those involved in the development of speaking and listening skills of pre school children. The strategy engages practitioners, extended family members and all volunteer carers of pre school children to develop the confidence to actively participate in the child's early language development. The strategy supports family learning as a part of life long learning by bringing together members of the extended family to talk and undertake activities with babies and toddlers.

People: "We recognise and value the ideas of all our people". "We share and promote best practice within and beyond our organisation".

It is recognised that there are a number of intervention strategies which are tackling low levels of literacy on entry to the early year's settings throughout Walsall. Time to Talk serves to recognise the contribution made by various partners by encapsulating this good practice under the Time to Talk theme.

There is a commitment amongst professional staff working with pre school children to provide a relevant and sustainable support facility that will enable "open access" for all learners to participate and achieve higher standards in language development. This exciting, uninhibited access to meaningful learning opportunities will focus upon young learners and their families across Walsall. Time to Talk is designed to break barriers in learning by identifying the cause and effect of low literacy and bring lasting change through appropriate and enjoyable solutions. It has the real benefit of sharing good practice and learning by enabling and empowering people within the communities of Walsall to achieve improvement for themselves.

Culture: "We develop a culture where people feel valued and supported". "We celebrate our successes".

The success of Time to Talk is reliant upon partnerships between child educational and family learning providers. The strategy is reliant upon good practice being shared between professionals, providers in family learning and volunteer deliverers in the home, such as mums and extended family members. The strategy will provide opportunities to celebrate success throughout Walsall.

Achievement: "We are an organisation where there is a real focus on quality and achievement". We believe "high quality education services are the right of all people in Walsall".

Through the joined up approach of the Time to Talk strategy, synergy across all the sectors will enhance the speaking and listening skills of children from the early years and through schooling.

Strategic Intent

Our basic intent is to engage all communities of Walsall in celebrating Time to Talk. The three year strategy has two strands, firstly the identification of good practice and promotion of materials to support early language development. Secondly a P.R/advertising campaign across Walsall to heighten the importance of speaking and listening for children from birth.

Through the practice and materials strand, a greater awareness of how personnel, experience and resources currently available could be accessed by practitioners in statutory or voluntary sectors and by individual or extended family members throughout the communities in Walsall. This strand of the strategy is reliant upon people sharing practice and resources across all early year's settings including Children's Centres and voluntary sector groups.

The P.R/advertising strand will enable the practice and materials component to reach a wide audience throughout Walsall. Several launch platforms including a Time to Talk celebration week across Walsall in the Summer of 2006, Local Neighbourhood Partnership meetings, magazine articles, local community venues including supermarkets, community centres and libraries would be utilised. Carl Chinn MBE Community Ambassador for radio W.M endorses Time to Talk.

Key Objectives

- To ensure collaborative working across all agencies and partners.
- To promote the value of communicating with children from birth.
- To enable and empower people within communities to share good practice around speaking and listening.
- To improve speaking and listening skills of young children.
- To implement the two strands of the strategy, We believe in Time to Talk.
- To identify funding streams for Time to Talk.
- To identify three geographical locations across Walsall to pilot the strategy.
- To launch a Time to Talk celebration week in June 2006.

Outcomes

- All strategic key objectives met here.
- An increased confidence and engagement of adults in talking to children and using activities developing their speaking and listening skills.
- To embed the language and purpose of Time to Talk in the culture of pre school learning in the communities of Walsall.

Time Scales

Year 1:

Autumn Term

- Time to Talk will be managed by a Project Officer who will report half termly directly to a steering group and a Director at Education Walsall.
- Three pilot project areas in Walsall will be identified to develop Time to Talk. These will include at least one Sure Start/Children's Centre.
- Canvassing the opinions of voluntary sector focus groups, community members and practitioners will commence as to the means and benefits of the two strands of Time to Talk.
- Development of promotional materials will commence.
- Bus poster campaign costs to be identified.
- Identification of suitable funding streams to commence.

Spring Term

- Planning for the Summer term launch of a Time to Talk celebration week which will engage all Walsall communities, statutory and voluntary sectors.
- Mapping exercise auditing provision throughout Walsall to be undertaken, for a possible directory of sources and resources for early language development support.

Summer Term

- We believe in a Time to Talk celebration week in June involving a series of show case opportunities throughout Walsall to share practice, resources and raise awareness of the importance of talking.