Shaping better early intervention for toddlers at risk of Developmental Language Disorder

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Aims

We know that early support is crucial in promoting language development in young children at risk for DLD. In Scotland, Health Visitors, Nursery Nurses and Family Partnership Nurses are the key professionals identifying developmental concerns and providing early targeted support.

This study will investigate the views and support experiences of caregivers who may themselves have language difficulties.

It will also investigate the experiences of Health Visiting professionals regarding early language development support.

Research Questions

- What can caregivers' views and experiences tell us about service delivery that offers equity of access to preschoolers at risk of DLD in Scotland?

- How do early intervention and partnership working experiences differ for caregivers who themselves experience symptoms of language difficulties?

- How can universal and targeted early intervention by healthcare services more effectively engage caregivers to meet the needs of children at risk for DLD?

What is Developmental Language Disorder?

Developmental Language Disorder, or DLD, is a lifelong difficulty with understanding and speaking one's native language, which creates barriers to communication, learning and attainment.

People with DLD are likely to experience poorer wellbeing and financial security in adulthood. Growing up in poverty increases the risk threefold for early language development concerns that can persist into DLD. Language disorders frequently run in families, creating a vicious cycle.

Systematic review of parent-mediated oral language interventions for late-talking toddlers

Caregiver focus groups to shape participation access and interview design

**Qualitative data from interviews with caregivers and professionals**

Analysis

1:1 semi-structured interviews will generate rich qualitative data. Thematic analysis will be used to investigate recurrent feelings and experiences shared by different interviewees.

Caregiver recruitment will target underserved groups in areas of higher socioeconomic deprivation.

Nonword repetition assessment will be used to group caregiver interview data, highlighting differences in experience of intervention.

**HV or FNP?
Take part here!**

Nonword → |ke:balu| → Vocal response
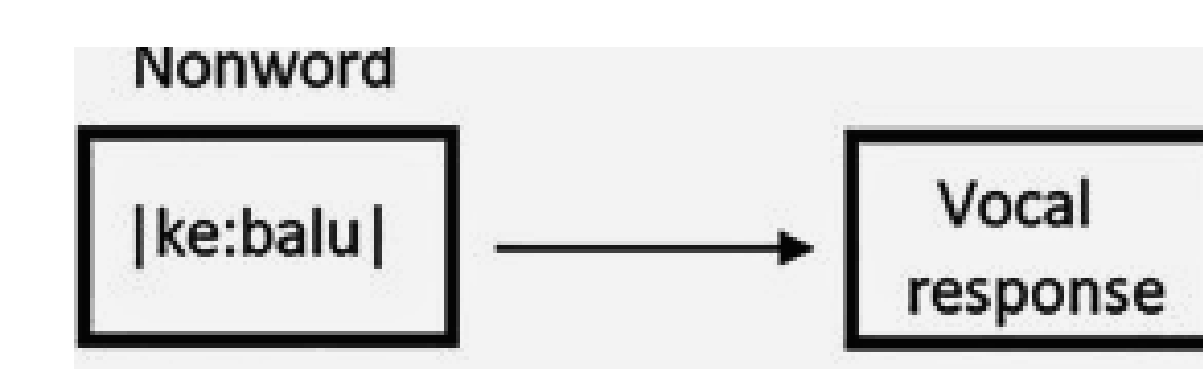
Participants will be asked to repeat back some nonsense words after the researcher, and asked about their own language and literacy skills.

Nonword Repetition ability is strongly predictive of both language difficulties in an individual and delayed expressive language in their biological child.

This will allow analysis of the differing experiences of caregivers with and without language difficulties.

Impact

Highlighting **training needs** within the NHS Scotland workforce

Improving access to early proactive intervention for all families, particularly those who currently experience barriers to effective partnership working

Improving **public health messages** regarding the promotion of early language development, awareness of DLD, and early signs of language difficulties in young children