

## Smart Start Project Case Study

### Case Study Title

**'time to talk'**<sup>TM</sup> are recruiting volunteers to share positive messages relating to communication skills in the early years

### Background

What is the background to the case study?

The **'time to talk'**<sup>TM</sup> team are committed to ensuring that we understand and work closely with the communities that we aim to serve.

*'our vision is to create and celebrate opportunities for all children to achieve their potential in speech, language and communication, working together with and in response to the needs of local communities'.*

Part of this project has focussed on linking with our partners mainly in the children's centre teams, in the Rugby and Leamington areas. This has involved co-planning for the recruitment and engagement of parents & carers who will become **'chatter matters'**<sup>TM</sup> parent ambassadors.

### Activity

What was involved? Who? Where?

Throughout the summer term the **'time to talk'**<sup>TM</sup> team were looking for ways to recruit parents/carers to work in partnership with us as volunteers. We attended an existing **'chatter matters'**<sup>TM</sup> group in a Leamington Children's Centre with the aim to speak to parents/carers already attending, and to try to recruit volunteers for our project. We met Jenny who expressed an interest in volunteering with **'time to talk'**<sup>TM</sup>. We arranged to meet with Jenny in September so that we could explain the role further in terms of expectations, and also provide opportunity for further training should she be interested.

\*Jenny has a young baby (\*Luke) who has just turned 1 year old. Jenny is also a wheelchair user.

When we met with Jenny in September 2017, she expressed that the **'chatter matters'**<sup>TM</sup> group helped her to build her confidence within a small group of other parents/carers, and also allowed her to provide Luke with the same opportunities as other children.

Jenny was keen to volunteer with us as she had first-hand experience of the benefits of attending the '**chatter matters**'™ groups. Jenny attended a volunteer training session with us at Sydenham Children's Centre at the end of September. At the end of the training Jenny explained that although she would like to volunteer, she was not yet ready to run groups, approach large groups of parents etc. We reassured Jenny and explained that the volunteering role is flexible. Jenny is keen to volunteer in other ways, such as supporting us with developing our written material & resources and sharing our information within her rhyme time group. Jenny has also contributed in the production of the '**chatter matters**'™ videos.

## Outcomes

What were the outcomes or learning points?

Outcome:

- We have supported a Warwickshire mother to become a 'parent ambassador' and to also find out more about how babies and young children learn to talk.

Learning points:

- Attending groups can be daunting for some parents
- Volunteering with a baby is not easy/always possible, especially if they do not have child care
- '**chatter matters**'™ groups not only provide parents with important strategies to develop speech and language skills for their children, but also provide opportunity for parents to build friendships, build confidence and socialise with each other
- People who have attended groups generally feel more passionate about volunteering as they would like to 'give back' to the community
- Some volunteers may not wish to run groups or speak to large groups of people and it is important to respect these wishes. Therefore, having a tiered approach to our parent ambassador programme is beneficial for all.
- Through offering opportunities to meet with the team, we are able to develop a relationship with Jenny and offer her the opportunity to volunteer.

## Quote/Testimonial

Feedback given from the individual

About early communication skills, Jenny said "you might think it's common sense but this has taught me how important it is"

\*Names have been changed