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We all want our children to thrive in their early years, especially when it comes to communication and social skills. Staff at Worthington have recently completed the Speech and Language Support and the Communication Friendly Settings frameworks through ELKLAN, both courses are particularly designed for children aged 3 to 5 years.

What is ELKLAN?

ELKLAN is a well-established program that focuses on enhancing communication skills in children, particularly those with speech, language, and communication needs (SLCN). The goal of ELKLAN is to provide staff with the training and tools they need to create effective communication-friendly environments.

What is Speech and Language Support?

Your child's speech and language skills develop significantly between the ages of 3 and 5.

ELKLAN's Speech and Language Support for 3-5s is a training course that helps develop speech and language skills in children aged 3–5. The course is designed for staff working in Early Years (Nursery and Reception) and is especially helpful for children with speech, language, and communication needs.

The training has supported staff by:

1. Building on the information and strategies that we already have to help children develop our communication skills.
2. Helping us find ways to build our own confidence and skills so that we can continue to support parents and families.
3. Providing practical resources to develop children's language.
4. Providing time and space to share our newly gained knowledge and expertise with other staff in school.

What are Communication Friendly Settings?

Communication Friendly Settings are spaces where children feel safe and supported in expressing themselves. Here are some key components of these settings:

1. Staff are trained to recognize and understand the different communication needs of children. This includes being sensitive to how some children may communicate non-verbally or may require additional time and support to express their thoughts.
2. The environment encourages the use of various communication methods, such as visual aids, signs, symbols, and gestures. This diversity helps cater to children with different learning styles and communication preferences.
3. Staff engage with children in a way that promotes positive interactions. This includes using open-ended questions, actively listening, and providing appropriate feedback to encourage children to express themselves confidently.
4. The physical setup of the space is designed to facilitate communication. This may involve quiet areas for focused conversations or group settings that encourage collaboration and sharing among peers.
5. We believe that parents play a crucial role in their child's communication development.

Creating a Communication Friendly Setting has numerous benefits, including:

- **Enhanced Communication Skills:** Children develop their language and social skills more effectively in a supportive environment.
- **Increased Confidence:** Children are more likely to express themselves when they feel understood and valued.
- **Improved Learning Outcomes:** Enhanced communication skills lead to better engagement in learning activities, fostering academic success.

How Can You Help?

As parents, you can support the ELKLAN initiative by:

- Engaging in conversations with your child about their day-to-day experiences, encouraging them to express their thoughts and feelings.
- Using visual aids or communication tools at home that reinforce what they are learning in school.

We are committed to making our environment as inclusive and supportive as possible for all our children.