

### **Background:**

Words Up Early is a programme which has been developed by the Highland Speech and Language Therapy team to equip adults with the knowledge and skills to improve children's early language development. Most early years staff across Highland have had opportunities to attend Words Up Early training and begin to take the messages forward in their settings.

The Words Up programme is also a key component of the oral language strand within the Emerging Literacy model in Highland. Emerging Literacy supports the delivery of a developmental approach to planning and assessing children's learning. Words Up Early focusses on developing quality adult-child interactions which are pitched at the correct developmental level for each learner.

There is a wealth of research which tells us that for children in the early years, literacy, language and communication skills, including their vocabulary level, is a key predictor of positive educational outcomes and future success.

Feedback from Education Scotland inspections has identified that within the learning, teaching and assessment quality indicator from How Good is Our Early Learning and Childcare?, quality of staff interactions was identified as an area for improvement across Scotland. As the Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) workforce expands settings should ensure that they are best placed to support and equip practitioners with the skills to engage in high quality interactions with our youngest children.

Both Building the Ambition (2014) and A Blueprint for 2020: The Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare in Scotland Quality Action Plan highlight the importance of quality adult-child interactions within the ELC learning environment. The Words Up Early monitoring tool has been developed to support managers and practitioners across early level to reflect on and develop their interactions with children. By embedding the Words Up Early key messages within staff teams, settings can maximise the quality of adult-child interactions which will support positive literacy, language and communication outcomes for children

### **How the Monitoring Tool works:**

- ✓ The document is divided into three sections: Post Training, Next Steps and Embedded. They illustrate how practitioners skills may develop following Words Up Early training
- ✓ After initial training it is expected that practitioners would be working within 'Post Training'
- ✓ After support from managers and/or SLT team, practitioners may be progressing onto 'Next Steps' and finally the 'Embedded' stage. The length of time to develop interactions will vary from setting to setting

### **Possible ways to use the Monitoring Tool:**

- ✓ Managers can use the document during a formal monitoring visit. E.g. highlighting where practitioners are on the document and then use this as the basis of a discussion with staff to plan further steps for development.
- ✓ Managers can use the document to monitor the progress of individual staff over time, looking at one key message at a time
- ✓ Managers can use the document to monitor the progress of how specific key messages are being implemented within the whole setting over time
- ✓ Practitioners can also use the document to reflect on their own personal progress within each of the key messages

The additional data gathering documents can be used to collect information on progress of embedding the key messages over time



### Links to National Frameworks

It is important for settings to reflect on the progress and the impact changes have made to children’s learning. All of the strategies above could link into your improvement planning priorities and self-evaluation evidence. Below is a grid which highlights possible links to national frameworks to support the development of your practice

<u>Words Up Early Key Messages</u>	<u>Building the Ambition (BTA)</u>	<u>How Good is Our Early Learning and Childcare? (HGIOELC?)</u>	<u>How Good is Our School? 4 (HGIOS?4)</u>
<p><b>Developing quality interactions using the key messages below links to many national frameworks:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Face to Face</b></li> <li>✓ <b>Play and Talk Together</b></li> <li>✓ <b>Quiet Time to Talk</b></li> <li>✓ <b>Pause and Wait</b></li> <li>✓ <b>Be Careful with Questions</b></li> <li>✓ <b>Copy and Add</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Click on the column headers to access resources to support your self-evaluation.</b></p>	<p>6.3.1 (Babies) 6.4.1 (Toddlers) 6.5.1 (Young Child) 7.3.1, 7.3.2, 7.3.3 (Babies) 7.4.1, 7.4.2, 7.4.3(Toddlers) (7.5.1, 7.5.2, 7.5.3 Young Child) 8.3 (Quality of Child/Adult Verbal Interaction)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• QI2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment</li> <li>• QI2.4 Personalised support</li> <li>• QI3.1 Ensuring equity, wellbeing and inclusion</li> <li>• QI3.2 Securing children’s progress</li> <li>• QI3.3 Developing creativity and skills for life and learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• QI2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment</li> <li>• QI2.4 Personalised support</li> <li>• QI3.1 Ensuring equity, wellbeing and inclusion</li> <li>• QI3.2 Raising attainment and achievement</li> <li>• QI3.3 Increasing creativity and employability</li> </ul>
<b>Health and Social Care Standards</b>			
<p><b>1.30</b> As a child, I have fun as I develop my skills in understanding, thinking, investigation and problem solving, including through imaginative play and storytelling.</p> <p><b>2.8</b> - I am supported to communicate in a way that is right for me, at my own pace, by people who are sensitive to me and my needs.</p> <p><b>2.15</b> I am enabled to resolve conflict, agree rules and build positive relationships with other people as much as I can.</p>	<p><b>3.1</b> I experience people speaking and listening to me in a way that is courteous and respectful, with my care and support being the main focus of people’s attention.</p> <p><b>3.5</b> As a child or young person, I am helped to develop a positive view of myself and to form and sustain trusting and secure relationships.</p> <p><b>3.6</b> I feel at ease because I am greeted warmly by people and they introduce themselves.</p>	<p><b>3.12</b> I can understand the people who support and care for me when they communicate with me.</p> <p><b>3.16</b> People have time to support and care for me and to speak with me.</p> <p><b>3.17</b> I am confident that people respond promptly, including when I ask for help.</p>	<p><b>4.11</b> I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice.</p> <p><b>4.27</b> I experience high quality care and support because people have the necessary information and resources.</p>