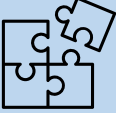









- Families
- Environment
- Workforce
- Identification
- Intervention
- Universal
- Targeted

An Early Language and Communication Improvement Story Board from East Ayrshire

 The issue	 The team	 Our idea
<p>An increasing Autistic population without any Autism-specific Targeted or Universal supports to offer them within Speech & Language Therapy</p>	<p>One Speech & Language Therapist and after 2 months of starting, Occupational Therapy joined the initiative.</p>	<p>Speech & Language Therapy had launched a general virtual drop-in 2021 to support parents/carers who had concerns about their child's speech, language and/or communication development. As this drop-in was well-attended, we felt it would be worthwhile to trial an Autism-specific drop-in since many queries we received were around social communication and Autism. It was agreed the drop-in would be for children/young people not open to our service.</p>
 Tools & resources we used.	 What we did	 The impact
<p>We adapted the original drop-in poster to advertise our new Autism-specific drop-in and shared this widely with Health and Education colleagues in East Ayrshire. We used the established virtual platform of Near Me to deliver the drop-ins.</p>	<p>It was decided that the drop-in's would run monthly. Initially, one Speech & Language Therapist (SLT) hosted the first two drop-ins. However, it was quickly apparent that a multi-disciplinary approach would be most helpful to families and Occupational Therapy were approached to join the drop-ins. A spreadsheet was created to keep a list of who is booked in, and to allow us to write a short summary of each drop-in. This way if a family return for a further drop-in, we have the previous advice given.</p>	<p>Since its launch in June 2022, 42 families have accessed the drop-in. It had also allowed the Speech & Language Therapy and Occupational Therapy (OT) services to have a first point of contact for families when there is a query over a Request for Assistance, i.e. families are now signposted to the drop-in and following the appointment, the SLT or OT can decide if it is appropriate to take a referral. However, in many cases, families can be supported at this targeted level without the need to go on a waiting list; therefore accessing the right support at the right time.</p>

 <p>Our learning & next steps</p>	<p>We updated the poster to include more information about Occupational Therapy, and since then, we have received many email requests from families to book a slot at the drop-in. This means that the drop-in is now booked 3 months in advance. Although this is a positive sign, we want to ensure that this support is offered at the right time. Therefore, we are looking into offering additional drop-in dates over the summer.</p> <p>In October 2023, Occupational Therapy decided to include 3 other members of their team in the drop-ins. Therefore, they now rotate who covers the drop-in each month. This is something that SLT are also looking into to allow for greater capacity and sustainability.</p>
 <p>Find out more</p>	<p>Christine Barr Speech & Language Therapist - 01563 545725</p>