



Helps Children Communicate
registered charity 210031

I CAN EARLY YEARS BRIEF

To give a brief overview, over the last 4 years I CAN has:

- **Information delivery** www.talkingpoint.org.uk is a new website for parents and professionals developed by I CAN in collaboration with the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists and Afasic and funded by BT and Lloyds TSB Foundation for England and Wales. The Talking Point website is now live and provides information to parents and professional about children's speech and language development and disabilities. The website receives around 8,000 visits per month, 50,000 from June 2003 to January 2004, and has around 2,500 of registrants. User satisfaction levels with the site are running above 85%. DoH funded the original feasibility study for this project via Section 64 funding.
- **Early Years Training:** *I CAN Talk video* (narrated by Michael Buerk) and resource pack for staff working in nursery and other Early Years settings, funded by Tesco Baby and Toddler Club and supported by DFES Sure Start Unit, distributed free to 10,000 nurseries across the UK via Early Years and Child Care Development Partnerships and several major private nursery chains. I CAN TALK is a training resource to help early years professionals support children's speech and language development, identify children with difficulties and access specialist advice and support. *Learning Together : Working Together* is a training cascade funded by the Department of Health (DoH) that was used to train 2,000 teachers and therapists in I CAN's approach in early years.
- **Early Years Professional Network:** a research and development project (funded by a major grant making trust) seeking to build accessible resources, information and training for staff working in Early Years throughout the UK. The training is based on the Joint Professional Development Framework developed by I CAN, in collaboration with DfES, DoH, the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists and the Teacher Training Agency, and funded by the DfES. This year is the research, development and pilot phase of the project.
- **Developed a National Network of new Early Years centres:** offering integrated pre-school education and speech and language therapy for children with severe and complex speech, language and communication difficulties (SLCD). Early Years Centres have been established in local mainstream schools in partnership with local education and health services through I CAN's unique formula of pump priming grant combined with a package of free specialist expertise (training, information and specialist advice and quality assurance). After the period of I CAN grant, the LEA/PCT joint fund/manage the provision. To date, 19 centres have been opened, with the last to be agreed in early 2004. All centres have a role not only in service delivery but also in disseminating the integrated service delivery approach within their region. DoH provided core funding in the early stages of this programme.
- **Developed an accreditation programme:** funded by the DfES to provide a quality assurance scheme which will:
 - (a) set standards for delivery to high quality Early Years provision for children with SLCD
 - (b) provide mechanisms for self-audit/independent inspection and kite-marking/identification of improvements required prior to kite marking
 - (c) provide the basis for development planning to enhance the provision.All I CAN Early Years Centres are accredited through this scheme as they come out of grant.
- **Roll out of Accreditation Scheme:** from 2003 a further 10 Early Years settings are being offered a package of support (funded via voluntary income) to enable them to develop their service to meet I CAN's quality standards over the next two years. This initiative has been funded by a major grant making trust.
- **Early Years Research:** independent research was commissioned by I CAN and funded by the Department of Health shows that I CAN's model of Early Years provision provides better outcomes for children with SLD, particularly for those with severe/complex needs, and is a cost effective model of provision, compared to services routinely available.
- **Awareness Raising/Fundraising:** *Chatterbox Campaign* has nearly raised the £3 million required to support I CAN's national network of Early Years Centres. *Chatterbox Challenge* is a major participation event supported by Tesco Baby and Toddler Club in its second year (details enclosed). Over 2,000 nurseries participated last year in participation rates expected to be exceeded this year. Media coverage has resulted in over 190 million opportunities to see/hear about the importance of early speech and language development /how to spot difficulties and access support.

Gill Edelman