Early Investment: The Role of Educational Psychologists in Supporting an Early Years Setting

A Thesis submitted to The University of Manchester for the Degree of Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology in the School of Environment, Education and Development

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List of Acronyms

CAF = Common Assessment Framework
CAMHS = Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
CDC = Child Development Centre
DfE = Department of Education
DfEE = Department of Education and Employment
DfES = Department of Education and Skills
DoH = Department of Health
ECEC = Early Childhood Education and Care
EHC Plan = Education, Health and Care Plan
EP = Educational Psychologist
EPPE = Effective Provision of Pre-school Education
EPS = Educational Psychology Service
EY = Early Years
EYFS = Early Years Foundation Stage
IPPA = Irish Pre-school Playgroup Association
LA = Local Authority
NACCRRA = National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies
NESS = National Evaluation of Sure Start
OECD = Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OFSTED = Office for Standards in Education
PEEP = Peers Early Education Partnership
PEP = Personal Education Plan
RADIO = Research and Development in Organisations
REAL = Raising Early Achievement in Literacy
SEN = Special Educational Needs
SEND = Special Educational Needs and Disability
SENCo = Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
SLT = Senior Leadership Team
TA = Teaching Assistant
VIG = Video Interaction Guidance
Abstract

Background: Present literature highlights early years as an important phase of child development. Whilst Educational Psychologists have a role within early years, there is little research to state what this looks like and how it is conducted in practice. Therefore, this research considers the role an Educational Psychologist could take within an early years setting and explores the variety of work they could conduct.

Participants: One early years setting from the researcher’s current Local Authority was used for this research. A total of 33 participants were involved including 11 early years staff, eight Educational Psychologists, 13 parents/carers and a Health Visitor.

Methods: This study describes an academic year long Action Research (Tripp, 2003) project with the use of a Research and Development in Organisations framework (Timmins, Shepherd & Kelly, 2003). This included pre-model questionnaires, interviews with early years staff, a focus group with Educational Psychologists and a further focus group with early years staff in order to develop an initial model of educational psychology practice. Work was then completed by the researcher as part of the model of practice. Discrete pieces of work were evaluated via questionnaires, while the project as a whole was evaluated via post-model questionnaires, focus group, interview and researcher diary.

Analysis / Findings: Quantitative data were summarised using descriptive statistics and qualitative data were transcribed and a thematic analysis applied. Within this study, the researcher developed a model of practice based on the needs of the setting that included being more frequently involved with casework and conducting work specifically aimed at supporting staff and parents/carers. Additionally, there were discrepancies found in the value placed by participants upon the different pieces of the work as well as the overall approach taken.

Conclusion / Implications: This research suggests that there is a greater role for Educational Psychologists within early years, involving more than conducting casework but through providing a more holistic and intensive approach to supporting staff and parents/carers. This supports the existing limited literature as well as advocating a more extensive role for them within early intervention services.
Declaration

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Chapter Outline

In this chapter, the rationale for this study will be provided. The current research setting and context as well as a summary of the study will then be presented. Information about the researcher will be given and then the remainder of the chapters will be outlined.

1.2 Rationale

This research investigates the role of an Educational Psychologist (EP) in supporting an early years (EY) setting. Literature is evermore highlighting the importance and impact of EY settings. Such settings can be crucial for those at an early disadvantage, either due to social deprivation or special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) (Sylva, Melhuish, Sammons, Siraj-Blatchford & Taggart, 2004). Although research has identified key practices that promote intellectual, social and behavioural development for children within these settings (Nutbrown, 1998), there is little focus on the role external professionals have in supporting this, in particular the role of the EP. Currently, legislation and government documents support the need for early intervention, not only in terms of supporting the child, but also the family as a whole (Tickell, 2011). Nevertheless, there appears to be little funding and few services available to support these families and, in turn, the settings they attend.

The present research is designed to address, in part, some of these issues, both in terms of the gap in literature and support services available for EY setting. It intends to do this through developing a model of practice for a trainee EP/researcher working within one EY setting.

1.3 Research Setting and Context

This research study took place within a LA in the North West of England where the researcher was employed as a trainee EP. Within the LA there are over 100 private day nurseries, 17 pre-schools, over 200 registered child minders and one LA nursery. In order to support these settings and the families within this LA, there are 14 Children Centres and a number of smaller community outreach venues. LA EY services also include: a Portage service, which supports families with young children with SEND; the Reaching Children & Families Service, which supports EY settings through assessments, training and funding; the Sensory Needs team, which supports children and families where there is a child with a visual or hearing impairment; and an EP service, where there is a Senior EY EP, specialist EY EP and a trainee EP with an interest in EY who is also the present researcher.
Currently, the EP service in the Local Authority is funded for one full time EP to conduct EY work within the private day nurseries. This is not a time allocation model (i.e. a specific amount of EP time designated to a school per time), but is based on the needs of the private day nurseries. Schools receive EP input within this LA based on a time allocation model. This includes eight hours per term. If any of these schools has an attached pre-school, then any EP support these pre-schools receive must come out of the school’s eight hours allocation per term and is therefore funded through the school.

The one LA nursery also receives EP input based on a time allocation model. The funding for this support is separate from that provided for the private day nurseries. The LA nursery used within this research receives 16 hours of EP time per term. It receives increased time compared to the schools, as it is a specialist provision for children with social communication difficulties. Prior to this study, this setting has used these 16 hours to have an EY EP conduct two pieces of casework per term. These pieces of casework have included consultations with staff and parents/carers, an assessment of the child’s strengths and needs and a report. This LA nursery is the EY setting used for this study.

It is important to note that the present LA EP service has recently moved towards a partially traded model. Therefore, if any educational setting would like more EP time than it currently receives, it is able to ‘buy in’ more EP input.

It is apparent that the support received for children, families and EY practitioners within the LA can be dependent upon the setting they attend or work within, as different settings provide and receive different levels of support. Additionally, as attending EY settings and receiving support from other services, such as Children Centres, is not compulsory, some families receive little support apart from that of their Health Visitor. It could be suggested that much of the support that LA services provide can be sporadic and based upon the remit of the services, therefore not the needs of the setting and subsequent child.

1.4 Research Summary

This research aims to investigate the role of the EP within an EY setting. It examines how the setting would like to use EP time and the amount they would like to be supported through the co-creation of an academic year long model of EP practice.

This is a piece of Action Research (Tripp, 2003) using a RADIO (Research and Development in Organisations) framework (Timmins et al., 2003), which supports the model of practice being developed and adapted to meet the needs of the setting and the children it supports. These frameworks highlight a collaborative cyclical way of working that is in line with the aims of this
research. This model was developed through a series of steps, which incorporated the views of the staff at the EY setting and the EP service within the LA. There are three main phases to this study:

- Phase 1: The Development of the Initial Model of Practice
- Phase 2: Work Delivered within the Model of Practice
- Phase 3: Evaluation of the Model as a Whole

After the initial model had been developed (phase 1), the next phase, the work delivered within the model of practice (phase 2), included: shadowing staff; attending SEND planning meetings; conducting assessments with children, as well as being involved long-term with these children by attending relevant meetings; conducting parent workshops; solution circles; outreach work and language interventions.

These pieces of work were evaluated along with the general support from the researcher overall (phase 3). Data were gathered through the use of a research diary and a collection of staff, parents/carers, EPs and other professional’s views acquired via interviews, focus groups and questionnaires (evaluating the model of practice). The data analysis was conducted by using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and some descriptive statistics.

1.4.1 Research Questions

The research questions for this project are outlined below:

1. What is the role of Educational Psychologists in supporting an Early Years setting?

2. How can a pilot model of Educational Psychology practice using an Action Research approach support an Early Years setting?

1.5 About the Researcher

The researcher’s interest in EY developed when she worked in a Parent Infant Mental Health Team for the National Health Service. It became apparent, from this work, that there were very few services that supported children and families within EY, particularly when families require more than the universal services available. This work showed the researcher the importance of such work and value of early intervention.

During this time, the researcher was trained within the Solihull Approach (2006), an approach that emphasises the importance of reciprocal relationships and emotional containment when working with both professionals and families. The researcher also undertook training in Brazelton’s Newborn Baby Observations (Bartram, Barlow & Wolke, 2015) and saw how professionals can
support families as soon as a baby is born when things have not gone as expected. The philosophies behind both these training programmes, along with family therapy work, play therapy, psychodynamic supervision and further psychological training has shaped the researcher into developing certain core beliefs within her practice.

These beliefs include the importance of supporting families, children and other professionals as soon as that support is needed, the value of emotional containment and lastly, the importance of the subjective experience. The researcher feels that it is the interpretations of a situation that can affect a person or child; therefore, it is that interpretation which must be worked with first, before the objective reality. It is with these beliefs and training gained on placement and at university that the researcher hoped to further support those within EY, in particular the setting used for this research.

The researcher believes that there should be more services and support available to families and EY settings with young children. She believes there is a clear role for EPs within this support, which may be more diverse than previously thought. It is the consideration of this researcher that this role needs to be further explored and researched in order to evidence its value, particularly in terms of supporting early intervention.

1.6 Outline of Research Chapters

The remaining chapters will contain the following information:

Chapter 2

Chapter 2 starts by outlining how the literature search for this research was conducted. The current socio-political context, which surrounds EY work, is then described. Research surrounding early brain development, EY education (including its importance), specific EY projects, work relating to EY practitioners and the role of external professionals within this area are discussed. The role of the EP is then considered with reference to EY work or work that can be applied to EY including working with the statutory assessment process, consultations, systems working, relevant interventions, solution circles, parenting programmes, video work, working within a traded model and working within a setting. This chapter will also examine the limited research around the role of EPs in EY. Finally, a summary of the literature and the research questions are presented.

Chapter 3

This chapter describes the research design used within this study. It starts with an exploration of the axiological, ontological and epistemological approaches and positions. The design and explanation of the Action Research approach and RADIO model are then provided. The process of participant
selection will be described, the data gathering methods, contextual information about the EY setting and analysis explained. Finally, a critique of the method and the ethical issues are provided.

Chapter 4

This chapter can be broken down into three phases. The first phase describes the development of the initial model of practice. This includes three separate parts leading to the creation of the model and subsequent service level agreement between the researcher and the EY setting: part 1: initial ideas about the model of practice, part 2: making the model of practice tangible and feasible and part 3: finalising the proposed model of practice. The second phase presents findings from the work delivered within the model of practice. This includes information relating to supporting staff (shadowing, solution circles and language interventions), casework involvement (planning meetings, attendance at additional meetings and casework) and supporting parents/carers (attendance at new parent’s meeting, parent workshops and outreach work). The final phase presents findings from the model as a whole. This includes five sections: quantitative data from the pre/post questionnaires, the overall themes, comparisons between the initial model and the actual model produced, traded services and the future use of EP time within an EY setting. The end of this chapter includes a summary of these findings.

Chapter 5

The final chapter includes the research’s contribution to original knowledge based on the findings of this study. The implications of these findings and future directions for research are described. The limitations of this research are explained along with considerations of the ethical issues. Overall reflections of this research are then provided as well as the conclusion.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Chapter Introduction

This literature review aims to critically evaluate the relevant literature surrounding EY settings and the role EPs have in supporting these. This review will draw on theory, research and policy from a variety of sources: journals, books and government publications. The most relevant articles will be examined and the ‘knowledge gap’ identified.

This chapter will start by explaining how the literature search was conducted. The current socio-political context, which surrounds EY work, is then described. Research surrounding early brain development, EY education, including its importance, specific EY projects, work relating to EY practitioners and the role of external professionals within this area are discussed. The role of the EP is then considered with reference to EY work or work that can be applied to EY, including working with the statutory assessment process, consultations, systems working, relevant interventions, solution circles, parenting programmes, video work, working within a traded model and working within a setting. Finally, this chapter examines the limited research around the role of EPs in EY settings.

The following academic databases were searched for relevant literature:

- **ERIC**
- **Australian/British Education Index**
- **Sage Full Text Index**
- **Psych Info**

Other specific and relevant journals (e.g. *Educational Psychology in Practice*) and websites relating to EY settings were also utilised (e.g. [www.pengreen.org](http://www.pengreen.org) (an EY research, development and training base) and [www.education.gov.uk](http://www.education.gov.uk) (the Department for Education)). The relevant papers from these searches were also harvested for further references.

The key words used for the searches included ‘early years setting’ OR ‘nursery’ OR ‘pre-school’. The term ‘kindergarten’ was also used in order to access any appropriate international research. The literature search was initially broad and considered research around EY settings in general. This search produced extensive research and government guidance, specifically about the EY curriculum and guidance around practices within EY settings.
The search then became more specific in order to find literature surrounding the role of EPs in EY. Therefore, key terms included ‘educational psychology’ OR ‘Educational Psychologist’. Initially, articles were searched from 2010 in order to gain the most up-to-date research. However, due to the limited amount of research within the specific areas searched, the researcher did not always use dates as part of the search criteria in order to make sure that the most relevant articles were found. Once articles and reports were located, the researcher was informed by Gough (2007) by considering his evaluative criteria. This included (1) checking the articles for the quality of their methodology, (2) the appropriateness of the methodology and then (3) the focus and relevance of the study. The researcher also used articles from recognised journals in order to make sure the research examined had high academic standards. However, two articles used within this review were not published within journals. They were, however, used due to their high focus and relevance to the research (Lightfoot, 2013 and Douglas-Osborn, 2013). Nevertheless, when these articles are later discussed and evaluated, caution is highlighted due to their possible lack of scientific rigour.

When the term EY setting is used within this study, it refers to EY education providers that receive government funding or are funded privately. They include pre-schools, maintained nursery schools, playgroups, daycare provision in Children’s Centres and schools with nursery classes. They must all adhere to the SEND Code of Practice and have a written SEND policy (DfE/DoH, 2014). This should outline how the setting will ensure that support is put in place for each child and that each child’s needs are communicated to everyone who is likely to support them. All EY settings will have an identified member of staff to act as the EY Setting Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo), whose specific role it is to support children with SEND (DfE/DoH, 2014). However, it is a duty of all staff to support children with SEND (DfE/DoH, 2014). All children will have a nominated Key Person within an EY setting (DfE/DoH, 2014).

2.2 Current Socio-Political Context of Early Years

Over the last 20 years, young children and families within the UK have gone through a variety of significant changes to the quality and organisation of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services offered to them (Faulkner & Coates, 2013). Throughout this period, governments have produced various strategic initiatives and policy developments that have improved the accessibility and quality of such services, particularly for those who live in areas of social deprivation (Faulkner & Coates, 2013).

More recent changes to EY provision have occurred since the Coalition Government formed in 2010. Additionally, in 2010 The Child Poverty Act (DfE, 2010) came about, which commits current and future governments to reduce the rate of child poverty within the UK by 10% by 2020. Strategies to reduce this rate were then published within Frank Field’s report in 2010. The Allen
Report, “Early Intervention: The Next Steps” (2011), was produced a year later and focuses on disadvantaged children, recommending that identification and intervention should occur as early as possible within the Foundation Stage in order to reduce any potential difficulties that a child may encounter before starting primary school. This report states:

“Early intervention... (refers to) ...general approaches, and the specific policies and programmes, which help to give children aged 0-3 the social and emotional bedrock they need to reach their full potential, and to those which help older children become the good parents of tomorrow.” (The Allen Report, “Early Intervention: The Next Steps”, 2011, p.xi)

This report defines early intervention as an approach which:

“...offers our country a real opportunity to make lasting improvements in the lives of our children and forestall any persistent social problems and end their transmission from one generation to the next and make long term savings in public spending.” (The Allen Report, “Early Intervention: The Next Steps”, 2011, p.vii)

Since the Allen and Field reports, both authors have called upon the government to use the term ‘foundation years’ in order to highlight how important the early years are in a child’s life in terms of later achievement and well-being. The Munro Review (2011) examines child protection issues and produced recommendations for how EY settings, schools and social services should safeguard their children.

In 2010, Clare Tickell was commissioned to review the latest information regarding child development and what is needed to provide them with the best start at school. In 2011, her review, “The Early Years: Foundations for Life, Health and Learning”, was published, stating that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) (DfES. 2008) had had a positive impact overall for children in the EY. Specifically, this report highlights how the EYFS encourages the active participation of EY practitioners, good reflective practice and the inclusion of parents/carers in their child’s development. Nevertheless, Tickell (2011) says there were still improvements to be made, making 46 recommendations overall.

These recommendations led to reforms to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which were introduced in September 2012. Changes to the EYFS include: reduced paperwork and bureaucracy; strengthened partnerships between parents/carers and professionals; focus on the three prime areas (physical development / personal, social and emotional development / communication and language) that are most essential for child development; simplified assessment at five and to
provide early intervention where necessary. Additionally, this includes changes to the welfare requirement: staff qualifications, training, support and skills, whereby there were changes in relation to staff supervision, as providers must give staff the opportunities for coaching and training, mutual support, teamwork, continuous improvement, and confidential discussion of sensitive issues. It also includes a new developmental check for two year olds in order to detect any possible difficulties so these can be addressed accordingly. The fundamental aim of the revised EYFS, therefore, is to best prepare children for later schooling.

These reviews have informed the Coalition Government’s plan, *Supporting Families in the Foundation Years* (DfE/DoH, 2012), which has “early intervention as a priority” (p.86) when providing services for young children. This includes the retainment of the national network of Sure Start Children’s Centres and free nursery education to be extended to the most disadvantaged two year olds. However, it is important to note that despite these statements, changes in the funding for local authorities has led to the closure of many Sure Start Centres, and the £1.5bn allocated to councils to spend on these early years projects has now been diverted to fund the additional education for two year olds (Butler, 2013).

The above information highlights the review and subsequent changes that have taken place recently within EY. These have not only led to present transformations, but illustrate that there are further changes to come. The present socio-political context informs us that EY for children is important in shaping the rest of a child’s life and how EY settings can affect not only a child’s development but can support the family as a whole (Tickell, 2011). Furthermore it suggests how the right support early on can make more economic sense (Allen, 2011). However, there are discrepancies between the findings of reviews, legislation, funding provided and subsequent actions taken by LAs when supporting EY.

### 2.3 Early Brain Development

Before the significance of EY education and the role of the professional in child development are explored, the importance of early childhood experiences and the impact these can have upon early brain development will be described.

According to the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRA) (1996), research shows that how a person develops and learns is dependent upon a person’s nature and the environment they are placed within. Indeed, this publication states that the impact of these environmental factors on a very young child’s brain development is specific, dramatic and affects how the human brain is “wired”. Bruer (1999) also states that a child’s earliest experiences can determine how their brains are wired; claiming that the first three years are
important determinates for the rest of a person’s life. During this early development period, the brain connections form at a rate much faster than they are being lost, the rate that which brain connections form then slows with age (Bruer, 1999). More recently, Walters (2013) states that a child’s early experiences affect the architecture of the maturing brain. This includes the social, emotional and intellectual aspects of the brain, which are all intertwined and interconnected. Thus, a negative impact on one of these aspects will in turn affect the other aspect, thus shaping the foundation of a child’s development and subsequent life.

Similarly, Tierney and Nelson (2009) examined research surrounding early brain development concluding that the first few years of a child’s life are particularly important. They state that those who have difficult early experiences (e.g. grow up in an institution) can develop miswiring of brain circuits and thus experience delayed cognitive development. The NACCRRA research (1996) suggests that early exposure to nicotine, alcohol and drugs may also impact on a young child’s brain development. Moreover, other factors including the food available within the home, access to medical care and the safety and predictability of the environment, level of family stress and the quality and continuity of care can influence the brain’s ability to develop. Additionally, Walters (2013) suggests that a toxic stress response can occur when a child experiences strong, frequent, and/or prolonged adversity—including physical or emotional abuse, chronic neglect, mental illness of their caregiver, exposure to violence, and/or chronic family economic hardship (when without adequate adult support). The prolonged activation of this stress response system can then lead to disrupting the development of brain architecture and other organ systems, thus increasing the risk for stress-related disease and cognitive difficulties into adulthood. Walters (2013) concludes that there is a clear role for services in reducing the exposure that children may have to these types of environment by acting as a “buffer” through supporting relationships and developing services.

The NACCRRA research (1996) states that well designed early learning programs, which are created to support healthy emotional, social and intellectual development can therefore improve the quality of life for many children. Bruer (1999) also suggests that now we understand the importance of the early stages of life, we should invest in better EY services, including high-quality child care. Consequently, the literature not only highlights the importance of intervention but the role professionals and EY settings have in reducing some of the adverse experiences some children may experience in the early stages of life.

2.4 Early Years Education

This literature review will now discuss research investigating EY education and its role in supporting early child development.
2.4.1 The Importance of Early Years Education

EY settings are found to have a positive effect on all areas of a child’s development (Melhuish, 2004a and 2004b). Indeed, the Effective Provision of Pre-school Education (EPPE) project (Sylva et al., 2004) is a large-scale multi-level modelling study that shows how individual pre-school centres have lasting effects on children’s development. They found that the numbers of children who were ‘at risk’ of developing a learning difficulty dropped from one in three to one in five, after attending an EY provision.

Ramey and Ramey (2004) reviewed evidence from randomised control trials and found that preschools that emphasised particular types of experiences could effectively improve school readiness for children. These experiences include: encouraging exploration; mentoring in basic skills; celebrating developmental advances; rehearsing and extending new skills; protection from inappropriate disapproval, teasing, and punishment; communicating richly and responsively and guiding and limiting behaviour (Ramey & Ramey, 2004). These results show how high-quality preschool programmes could reduce the cumulative developmental toll found in some children from economically poor and undereducated families who were at higher risk of lack of school readiness due to less knowledge and skills. A long-term follow up of the original study found improved reading and maths ability in elementary and secondary school children as well as a reduction in special education placements (Ramey & Ramey, 2004). Burger (2010) investigated the effects of childhood education and care on cognitive development. Through reviewing several studies, he found pre-school experiences had considerable positive effects, particularly for those from socio-economically disadvantaged families, more so than for their more advantaged peers. He concludes that pre-schools could develop a number of children’s capabilities that would then help them in future schooling, thereby reducing adverse affects such as school failure, grade retention as well as Special Educational Needs (SEN).

In 2014, Blanden, Del Bono, Hansen, McNally and Rabe examined the impact of the 3 year funding brought in place in the 2000s, which aimed to increase children’s attainment and reduce early socio-economic differences in outcomes. They found that free part-time EY education had small effects for children aged 5 and no statistical significance upon reading, writing and mathematics at age 7, based on teachers evaluations (EYFS scores). Furthermore negative effects were found for both boys and girls from disadvantaged backgrounds. This research does contradict the previous literature; however it does acknowledge that there may be differences within the quality of childcare provision which may arguably account for these findings. Gambaro, Stewart and Waldfogel (2013) suggest that although children from poorer backgrounds may have access to staff who are more qualified, the nurseries themselves actually gain lower scores within OFSTED
(Office for Standards in Education) inspections and children tend to be more isolated within that nursery.

Despite discrepancies in some of the evidence supporting the role for EY settings, there is literature that suggests settings can provide effective interventions for children who are more vulnerable, by reducing SEN and in decreasing the effects of social disadvantage. This research also suggests that the quality of provision may be a factor in supporting children in gaining better educational outcomes.

2.4.2 High-Quality Provision

According to Nutbrown (1998), early education is at its best when it is inclusive. He argues that this might be due to the emphasis it places upon individual needs, developmentally appropriate practice and the intrinsic involvement of parents/carers. Indeed, Nurse (2001) observed that pre-schools in Northern Italy minimised the effects of disability and slower learning rates through matching the learning environment to the social and developmental needs of the child. Furthermore, Siraj-Blatchford, Sylva, Muttock, Gilben, and Bell (2002) were commissioned to produce a report for the Department for Education and Skills in order to identify specific factors that have been found to affect the quality of support. They examined 12 settings that they deemed as ‘effective’ foundation stage settings based upon child social, behavioural and cognitive outcomes. They conclude that the organisational structure, differentiating support for pupils, curriculum, staff perceptions, parental involvement, training and qualifications of staff were the factors that enabled them to be effective. However, it is important to highlight that although this research investigated 12 settings, it was still a case study design. Many of the participants within the setting were child minders; therefore, these factors may be more relevant to child minders than to nursery or pre-school settings.

Similarly, high quality EY education has also been linked to staff education level (Jowett & Sylva, 1986), developmentally appropriate curriculum, staff selection and training, staff-child ratios, partnership with parents/carers and community, support services and the use of outcome measures (Schweinhart, 1987). In addition, Sylva et al. (2004) also identify a significant relationship between the quality of a pre-school centre and improved child outcomes. Results indicate that children made more progress in EY settings in terms of better outcomes in pre-reading and social development at age five when staff had higher qualifications; such as having trained teachers and that settings, which combined education with care, with a high proportion of teachers, promoted better intellectual outcomes for children.
More recently, Hay (2014) produced ‘Early Years Education: New Issues for Practice from Research’, a book which examines up-to-date research exploring important features of EY education. This book also highlights the importance of staff qualifications, training and good leadership. It emphasises the need for nurturing and responsive social environments that promote consistent and reliable attachments to staff, the need to recognise and respond to the individual personalities of children and the promotion of play and use of outdoor environments. Additionally, the role of observations is discussed in informing practice as well as involvement with parents. Consequently literature clearly illustrates that it is not just about whether a child attends an EY provision that can affect their development, but it is the quality of that provision and the practices that occur within that are important.

2.4.3 Specific Early Years Projects

Similar to the findings from the above research, the National Evaluations of the Sure Start (NESS) initiative found that active parental involvement within children’s education and a strong home environment, along with a child-centred, structured approach to the curriculum, are important determinants of quality in EY settings (NESS 2005; Siraj-Blatchford & Woodhead, 2009). Two interventions that had influenced the Sure Start initiative included Raising Early Achievement in Literacy (REAL; Nutbrown, Hannon, & Morgan 2005) and the Peers Early Education Partnership (PEEP, Evangelou & Sylva 2003) (a project different to the previously mentioned EPPE project). REAL focused on raising standards of attainment in literacy for three to four year olds in pre-schools. It offered both parents/carers and children the opportunity to develop their literacy and learning and was particularly beneficial in supporting children whose mothers had few educational qualifications. PEEP was aimed at literacy, numeracy, pro-social behaviour and self-esteem in three year old children.

Both interventions provided a structured pre-school curriculum as well an additional parental programme based upon Hannon’s 1995 framework of providing children with ‘Opportunities, Recognition, Interactions and Modelling’. This framework supports parents/carers in providing opportunities for their children to learn, value and support what they are capable of and model potential learning. Such projects influenced government thinking about the Foundation Stage, specifically the EY curriculum and parental involvement within that curriculum. It is important to note how both these interventions clearly recognise the role parents/carers have and have supported them to be a vital aspect of the intervention. Although the previous research discussed does recognise the role of parents/carers, it does not seem to include them and provide a role for them in the way these interventions do. This research suggests the importance of supporting the family as a whole rather than just the individual child.
Despite these interventions having positive outcomes, they are both still temporary interventions, therefore reducing the sustainability of their work and consequently their impact. Additionally, it would be difficult for other settings to work in the same way without the supporting guidance of the implicated interventions, thus also reducing the ecological validity of the research.

The EPPE research project (Sylva et al., 2004), which is the largest of its kind in Europe, compared educational outcomes of 2,800 children within existing EY settings. This project was designed to investigate how a child’s nursery environment helped to shape their individual characteristics. Seven specific areas were identified as being particularly important when working with three to seven year olds: quality of adult-child verbal interactions; initiations of activities; knowledge and understanding of curriculum; knowledge about how young children learn; adult skills to support children; high levels of parent engagement in children’s learning and discipline/behaviour policies which staff use to support children in rationalising and talking through conflicts. They found these to be the important areas in providing high quality provision for children’s intellectual, social and behavioural development. They also found disadvantaged children, (measured via background factors such as birth weight, gender, parental qualification/occupations and the home learning environment) benefited significantly from a good quality pre-school, particularly if they attended a setting that supported children from a variety of different social backgrounds. They found that the quality of pre-school centres is directly related to better intellectual, social and behavioural development in children.

The EPPE project found that a higher quality of EY support was found within integrated settings, nursery schools and nursery classes. Such settings had a high proportion of trained teachers and social development was equally important to educational development. The effective pedagogy found included teaching, the provision of instructive learning environments and the use of sustained shared thinking to extend children’s learning. However, this project did highlight that despite good quality EY education, it was the quality of the home environment that had most influence over child outcomes. Again, this further illustrates the importance of not supporting a child in isolation of their surroundings.

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2001) also states the importance of parental involvement when working with young children. They suggest parental involvement includes building upon parent’s unique knowledge of their child, stating that professionals should take an approach whereby they share responsibility for children with parents/carers and learn from the knowledge that this brings whilst not attempting to teach parents/carers or hold them responsible. This, again, highlights effective EY practice being more than direct work with a child. Such research illustrates the importance of seeing a child within their context and working with the context as well as the child.
2.4.4 Early Years Practitioners

Nutbrown and Clough (2004) investigated perspectives on a variety of issues relating to working with young children with learning difficulties. They took a multinational approach by investigating practice in four European countries (Denmark, Greece, Italy and the UK), finding there are four key structures to such practice. These include the importance of previous personal/professional experiences, the use of continuing professional development, inclusive practices and supporting the role of the parent and home in children’s early learning and development. This suggests that early education is more than the practices displayed and as such, research emphasises the importance of other factors, such as attitudes, ethos as well as parental involvement.

An important aspect of this research was that they examined the views of those who work on the ground level within EY. A criticism of some of the previously discussed research may be that they did not investigate the views of EY practitioners and the evaluations were based solely on child-based outcomes. Although it is of the utmost importance to measure these outcomes, it could be suggested that the actual voice of EY practitioners may become lost. The research by Nutbrown and Clough (2004) asked EY practitioners on the ground level specifically what they thought was most important when supporting children and what supports them to be a good practitioner, thus giving value to their thoughts and opinions and thus to the research as a whole. Additionally, it is important to note that this research is multinational thus enabling the findings to be applicable across nationalities.

Brown and Rogers (2014) investigated evidence based practice in an attempt to support the development and practice of EY practitioners. They established a professional learning community for practitioners who were keen to develop their skills. This included an initial workshop where researchers shared research and facilitated discussions, supported practitioners to share their practice and create individual aims of what they would like to achieve. Practitioners were then split into groups in order to observe each other’s practice and reflect upon each other’s success. This project then ended with a final group session. Through interviews they found this collaborative knowledge creation was successful in improving the expertise of the practitioners. Therefore, this highlights how such a collaborative, strengths and evidence-based approach can support the practice of EY practitioners.

However, it is important to point of that these practitioners wanted to be involved in this project and therefore may have been more open to improving and building upon their practice. Nevertheless, these findings and previous research does highlight the quality of EY settings can be dependent upon more than the basic practices within them, but the higher level processes that occur
within their practitioners, such as their openness to learn, development, overall attitudes, ethos as well as level of understanding.

Similar to Brown and Rogers (2014), Howard (2010) also examined EY practitioner perceptions. She considered the perceptions of 26 practitioners in relation to the theoretical understanding, confidence, play practice and perceived barriers to play. It was concluded that those who are provided with a strong knowledge base, time and space to reflect upon it in action gained a sense of empowerment, thus supporting their practice. This article goes on to suggest that there is a role for EPs in providing a theoretical underpinning of play in both a congruent and supportive approach.

2.4.5 The Role of External Professionals

Although research highlights key areas that can lead to better quality provision, little appears to focus on how external professionals may support these settings and subsequently the practitioners within them. It could be suggested that EY practitioners may receive support within their setting and through Continuing Professional Development (CPD). Therefore, it could be suggested that there may be a role for external professionals in supporting EY practitioners through training and CPD.

There is a large body of research that highlights the importance training has in improving staff practices and competencies (Horm-Wingerd, Carso, Gomes-Atwood & Golas, 1997; Haupt, Larsen, Robinson & Hart, 1995; Rhodes & Hennessy, 2000). Bredekamp (1990) states it is the quality and competencies of staff are the most important determinants of the quality of early childhood programmes and subsequent child outcomes. According to Cassidy, Buell, Pugh-Hoese and Russell (1995) training has been found to significantly improve developmentally appropriate beliefs and practices. It is also found to lead to significant gains in providing physical child-care and improve the physical condition of the classroom and materials available (Kaplan & Conn, 1984). Rhodes and Hennessy (2000) suggest that training improves participants’ knowledge, skills and expertise when they were rated by their supervisor and themselves (Horn-Wingerd et al., 1997) and led to significant changes in beliefs about appropriate practices (Haupt et al., 1995).

Rhodes and Hennessy (2000) found a 120-hour training programme (90 hours tuition and 30 hours observation) resulted in higher levels of sensitivity in EY practitioners and significant gains in social and cognitive play over a 6 month period in the children they cared for. This project was conducted by a voluntary group, the Irish Pre-school Playgroup Association (IPPA), and supports a role for external professionals in supporting EY Practitioners. Although this project did find positive effects, it is important to note that it was a very intense programme and it would be difficult for EY settings to release staff for this period of time, thus making it unrealistic to be
funded and maintained within an EY setting. Therefore, although such research highlights the importance and benefits of such programmes, it could be suggested that they need to be more realistic and feasible in order to be conducted within settings.

Nevertheless, the Department for Education and Skills (2001) states that training can be used to highlight successful practice, experiences of inclusion and raise awareness of special educational needs. Therefore, there is clearly a strong evidence base to support the impact of training on staff practices and subsequent child outcomes, including a role for external professionals in providing such training.

With a move towards offering training to EY practitioners, Hordern (2013) expresses some concerns with providing a prescriptive approach to supporting EY settings. His article reviews research surrounding EY CPD in light of the push for EY practitioners to become more skilled. He suggests that due to the diversity of EY settings, a range of approaches may be needed in order to meet the CPD needs of each practitioner. Additionally, he states that CPD opportunities, such as training, need to be accessible and have an impact on practice for children and families. He recommends providing practitioners with greater ownership of the design and delivery of CPD in order to allow them to participate more fully and offer more control. This is in line with Siraj-Blatchford et al.’s (2002) research with childminders. They found that childminders welcomed the opportunity to learn and develop professionally, but stated that they preferred to exercise a degree of autonomy in this process. This suggests there is a need to tailor training and support in order to meet the needs of those one is working with.

The role of a setting is to ensure a challenging but supportive learning environment, which needs to be more widely recognised and addressed (Hordern, 2013). It could be argued that this is a difficult role for settings to take on and its success may be dependent upon a variety of different factors. For example, Hordern (2013) states that much of the CPD recommended for settings is policy-driven rather than practice-driven, thus making it difficult to implement. He further argues that there is a lack of professional identity within EY practitioners, thus less value is placed on learning and there is a variety of needs found across settings, thus a ‘one size fits all’ approach can be unhelpful. Despite these barriers, there could be a role for external professionals in supporting settings and navigating these needs, which in turn would benefit the children these practitioners support.

However, despite research advocating an individualised approach, it is important to highlight the difficulties with this. If staff are more involved in the creation of training and their own learning, then professionals who deliver that support must then be able to react accordingly and flexibly. This could be a difficult task for trainers as may have to cover a variety of different training needs, which could be unrealistic expectation in practice. However, as previously mentioned, Brown and
Rogers (2014) professional learning community was a way for practitioners to be supported in a needs based and autonomous approach, as the group recognised the previous knowledge and skills within the groups while supporting each other’s learning. Thus, it provided all the positive aspects wanted from a ‘training’ session without the impractical expectations placed upon the trainer.

Elfer (2012) highlights the need for attachment interactions within EY settings, but suggests that not enough attention and support is provided to the emotional experiences of the EY practitioners themselves. Elfer and Dearnley (2007) conducted a piece of Action Research whereby they offered a professional development programme to nursery heads specifically designed to explore emotional experiences in professional work. Within this model, they allowed staff to reflect and process their feelings, enabling them to become more thoughtful about themselves and the children they support. The evaluations of this work show evidence of experiential learning (learning from their experiences) and a positive shift in their interactions with children and parents/carers. This research emphasises the intensity and emotional complexity of the work within EY, as well as illustrating the effectiveness of providing a reflective space for staff. Such a space could then be used to help staff organise their thoughts, feelings and practice in order to move to a more inclusive, supportive orientation. This may allow staff members to reflect on their own professional development through thinking about areas of their own practice and how they would like to develop. This would give them subsequent ownership over their professional development whilst being in an environment whereby they feel emotionally contained. It could be argued that this programme is similar to a model of supervision, a role that EPs can also offer directly to settings (Lightfoot, 2013).

2.5 The Role of the Educational Psychologist

At present, this literature review has discussed many of the important factors regarding early child development and the role of EY education. It will now discuss the role of EPs in supporting educational settings, predominately in schools. The research and themes that will be discussed have been chosen due to their relevance to EY settings and the present study. Indeed, Robinson and Dunsmuir (2010) suggest that there is a growing consensus that the operationalisation of psychological research and theory should be at the heart of educational psychology practice. The overarching framework for investigating the EP role is taken from Farrell et al. (2006) review of the EP role suggesting it predominately includes individual assessment, consultancy, intervention and training. Other literature was also included that examines the role of EPs within early years more specifically, such as Shannon and Posada’s (2007) paper. The literature discussed also reflects the work that was conducted as part of this project. Consequently, this section will discuss the role of EPs in relation to: statutory assessment; consultation; working with systems; language
interventions; solution circles; parenting programmes; video work; traded work; supporting a setting and finally, the role of the EPs in EY.

There is a lack of research investigating the role of EPs within EY. Nevertheless, the role of an EP generally, regardless of setting, has been defined, albeit in a variety of ways. According to MacKay and Greig (2011), the core functions of an EP’s role are defined as: consultation, assessment, intervention, training and research, which are carried out at an individual, group, or systemic level. Within this role, EPs can use a variety of models, frameworks and interventions to inform their practice (MacKay & Greig, 2011).

According to the Department for Education (2013a):

“EPs work in a variety of different ways to address the problems experienced by children and young people in education. They have a central role in the statutory assessment and statementing procedures for children with SEN. They work directly with children and young people individually or in groups and with a wide range of other professionals to deliver their work.

Part of the EP role is to work at strategic level, carrying out research and advising on educational policy development. Other areas of work include delivering training such as behaviour and stress management.

Direct work with children and young people includes assessing their learning and emotional needs using methods such as interviews, observations and test materials. Interventions are then developed to support the child or young person with the problems they are experiencing.” (Paragraph 1-3)

Farrell et al (2006) found within their review of the EP’s role that it also includes being clear about the EP’s role, the ability to form good working relationships and communication skills between all agencies involved, along with parents/carers and children. It is also important to note that the most commonly mentioned barrier to practice within this review was the limited contact time with EPs. Additionally, respondents to the review would have welcomed more EP time, particular in relation to therapy and interventions. The rest of this chapter will now discuss the ways in which the role of EPs can be utilised, including in EY settings.

2.5.1 Statutory Assessment

According to Thomson (1996), due to the LA statutory SEN process, a large proportion of an EP’s time consists of psychological assessments. Furthermore, the Farrell et al. (2006) review of the functions and contributions of the EP’s role highlights a role in the assessment of a child, including
as part of the statutory process. This review states that EPs feel that they have been too heavily involved in statutory assessment, which has kept them from expanding their role. Evidence was also found to suggest that a reduction in work relating to the statutory assessment allowed EPs to conduct a greater variety of valuable SEN work. Fallon, Woods and Rooney (2010) again suggest this aspect of the EP’s role constrained the range and development of the EP’s role. Indeed, they suggest that having EPs at the centre of the LA statutory assessment process actually distorted their role making them appear as a “gatekeeper” of resources rather than the focus being upon the psychological assessment. Despite the research highlighting a negative aspect of the EP’s role within this process, the Farrell et al. review (2006) did find that respondents identified an important role for EPs in this process. Therefore, although EPs may feel they are too involved within the statutory process, there is still a clear, significant role for EPs within this system.

It is important to mention that since September 2014, the new Code of Practice superseded the previous statutory assessment process described above. The implications of this new Code of Practice (DfE/DoH, 2014) in relation to this research will be discussed within the discussion chapter.

2.5.2 Consultation

Research describes consultation as a key means of service delivery within many Educational Psychology Services (EPS) (Booker, 2005; Leadbetter, 2006). It has been highlighted by Farrell et al. (2006) as a positive example of the practice of EPs in reviews from the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE, 2000). According to Anderson and Gerhart (2007), it can be described as a “conversation that makes a difference” (p.1). Nolan and Moreland (2014) state that consultation is a means of being able to consider and apply psychological theory and understanding alongside with parents/carers and teachers where there are concerns regarding a child or young person. The aim of consultation is to reach a better understanding of a child and their situation, and then develop an agreed plan, which hopes to improve the situation and therefore outcomes for that child (Nolan & Moreland, 2014).

It can also be defined as supporting a problem holder to bring about positive change (Wagner, 1995). Wagner (2000) emphasises the need to work collaboratively through a consultative approach. Although her work concerns schools, most aspects can be applied to working within EY settings. She states that a consultation based approach can be used at individual, class or whole school level, where concerns are raised and a collaborative, recursive process occurs that combines joint exploration, assessment, intervention and review. Wagner (2008) suggests that such collaborative working supports the problem holder in being more likely to commence agreed actions if co-created.
Nolan and Moreland (2014) conducted a small scale qualitative study whereby EPs held consultations with parents/carers and teachers. Within these consultations, EPs employed a range of discursive strategies, including directed collaboration, empathy, summation and reformulation. Their findings suggest positive outcomes for the teachers and parents/carers involved in terms of social, cognitive and emotional change. In addition, Nolan & Moreland (2014) state that consultation brings together home and school systems in an ecological approach, whereby EPs are able to bring their psychological skills and knowledge to support parents/carers and teachers, in turn supporting a more beneficial environment for the child. However, due to the many aspects of a consultation it could be argued that it is difficult to know which particular aspect of consultation brings about benefits. Nevertheless, Farrell et al. (2006) state that this approach has become a key aspect of an EP’s practice and is a way of valuing the contribution the consultee has in bringing about change. Therefore, it is clear that conducting consultations is an important part of the EP’s role and one which may be helpful in supporting EY settings.

2.5.3 Working with Systems

Lightfoot (2013) reviewed literature around EPs working in systems and concluded that much of an EP’s role involves considering a variety of systems and how these systems can then be influenced to bring about change. Therefore, it is important to think about how EPs use systems theory to influence their practice. Hurford (1983) suggests that thinking about the different systems around a child as well as a child’s strengths and difficulties would better affect change than thinking about a difficulty as solely ‘within child’. In 1979, Bronfenbrenner developed his Ecological Systems Theory as a way of thinking about the contextually relevant factors that surround a child. He suggests that there are four main systems we need to consider when thinking about child development: the Microsystem (family, school, peers); the Mesosystem (the interactions between the Microsystem and Mesosystem); the Exosystem (educational system, economic system, political system, government system and religious system) and the Macrosystem (overarching beliefs and values). Bronfenbrenner later added a fifth system, the Chronosystem (dimension of time).

More recently, the American Psychological Association Task Force on Evidence-Based Practice for Children and Adolescents (2008) produced a framework, A Systems Ecological Framework to Guide Conceptualisation of Evidence-Based Practice with Children and Young People. This framework addresses a variety of interacting and systemic challenges when practicing in current contexts. It includes different levels of involvement within different systems, whereby children, their family, professionals, support and setting are at the centre. It then includes the external environment, involving the political context, evidence of support, and the evaluation and dissemination of knowledge. Dunsmuir and Kratochwill (2013) used this framework when
considering the role of the EP as agents of change. They suggest that EPs have a role in supporting and bringing about change through transferring knowledge. They state that research needs to demonstrate particular qualities in order for it to bring about change. This includes understanding relevant literature, importance of understanding the process of research as well as understanding the practices at the ground level, and finally, the importance of personal attributes – how receptive individuals are to change. Although this article focused mainly on change within higher level systems, such as policies, this framework could also be applied to working within any system.

According to Ashton (2009), EPs have increasingly considered how they can adopt systems work and use their facilitation skills and ability to work with others to support change. Therefore, from the literature considered, it is clearly an important aspect of the role of the EP, especially when supporting a system as a whole.

### 2.5.4 Language Interventions

Part of the EP’s role may include conducting specific interventions with individual or groups of children (MacKay & Greig, 2011). These interventions can address a variety of different issues and be developed from different theories and approaches. An area of importance in EY is language and communication development. Indeed, Locke, Ginsborg and Peers (2002) found according to staff perceptions in EY settings, there are increasing numbers of children with poorly developed linguistic skills. There is a wealth of research that has found a relationship between families of low socio-economic status and language delay (Ramey & Ramey, 1990; Whitehurst & Fischel, 1994; Toppelberg and Shapiro, 2000). According to Stothard (2005), such research suggests that many children, particularly those who live within economic and social deprivation, may arrive at school with language experience that does not adequately prepare them for the classroom. Therefore, it could be argued that there may be a role for EPs in supporting children with difficulties with their language.

The Heywood Language Project (Stothard, 2005) is a training package that supports teachers in supporting language within the classroom. It emphasises assessment, the developmental continuum of language, appropriate activities, strategies and techniques to support language in school. This project, initially developed by an EP, has been found to improve teacher knowledge about language, brought about changes in teacher practice regarding language development and also lead to improved language outcomes for pupils.

In 2009, the Department for Education released ‘Every Child A Talker’ as part of EY National Strategy. The documents published provide various materials aimed at supporting early language in the EY. Additionally, Fricke, Bowyer-Crane, Haley, Hulme and Snowling (2012) highlight how
effective language interventions can be. They conducted a randomised control trial providing an oral language intervention for children in nursery for 30 weeks compared to a waiting control group. They found those in the intervention group performed significantly better for their oral language and spoken narrative skills. These gains were also maintained 6 months later. Thus, this highlights the importance of early language interventions within EY, particularly in terms of preparing children for later schooling. However, it is important to highlight validity difficulties with such interventions. Although, the Fricke et al. (2012) intervention and Heywood Language Project setting may support children for a particular period of time, they are not sustainable, long term projects that address the national need for support around language development in the EY.

King and Saxton (2010) investigated a more feasible method of supporting language within nursery settings, through the use of small group discussions. They examined data on the interaction patterns of different children relating to the topics they talked about and overheard, their individual initiations, response rates and feedback. They concluded that small group conversations could create a shared context for communication through routine activities and class-based topics leading to adult-child sustained thinking. All the children involved in this study did show progress within their language development, thus highlighting the importance of such small group discussions in providing opportunities for supporting language development.

Fleur Griffiths, an EP, created a specific approach aimed at supporting early language development called Talking Tables (2010) which can be a consistent aspect of an EY setting, such as water play or the dress-up area. This approach is based on the idea that children learn best if they are within their comfort zone, but when challenged carefully by a sensitive adult their language development can advance. Griffiths (2010) writes about this approach within her book “Supporting Children’s Creativity through Music, Dance, Drama and Art”, however she provides no psychological basis or evaluation of her approach. It could be argued that this approach has been drawn from Vygotsky’s theory of Zone of Proximal Development (1978) which also illustrates the need to support a learner between what they can safely do and what they could do when appropriately supported. Despite no formal evaluations of this intervention, Griffiths’ work does highlight the role of an EP in supporting early language development, particularly through the use of applying psychological theories and knowledge.

2.5.5 Solution Circles

An approach that can be used to support staff in schools includes the use of Solution Circles (Brown & Henderson, 2012). A Solution Circle approach is a flexible, positive and creative way of problem solving which encourages participation from all involved (Brown & Henderson, 2012).
Norwich and Daniels (1997) found that many teachers report that they felt they did not have sufficient training and support in order to meet the challenges of supporting children with SEN. It could be argued that similar difficulties may occur within other educational settings, such as EY. Wilson (2004) emphasises the importance of informal peer support in schools, but highlights that these opportunities are decreasing. According to Brown and Henderson (2012) a Solution Circle approach is a way of providing some peer support that fits within time constraints placed in schools and supports the school’s own capacity to problem solve without the need for outside agencies.

Forrest and Pearpoint (1996) developed the Solution Circle approach in order to bring a group of people together and generate ideas for solutions to a problem. It assumes that any person involved with a child or situation has the capacity to help and is based on the premise that we are better together. There appears to be little research surrounding the use of a Solution Circle approach and none regarding its use within EY. However, two studies have been conducted, the first by Stephenson (2008). This study reported that a Solution Circle approach used within a junior school was collaborative and supportive leading to sustained developments, greater cohesion and coherence in practice, and gave teaching assistants (TA) status within a team.

Brown and Henderson (2012) then facilitated Solution Circles within a primary and secondary school and staff from both reported positively about the process and its potential to promote inclusion. They conclude that it allowed for more opportunities for formal discussions and problem solving between staff. However, caution does need to be taken when interpreting these results due to the limited literature. Additionally, although Brown and Henderson (2012) highlight the solution circles ability to fit within the time constraints of schools, they still had difficulties with fitting them into the school day. Nevertheless, as EPs work at a variety of different levels and on different issues, this approach does appear to provide a collaborative and supportive approach, which could be used in a variety of different settings. Indeed, Brown and Henderson (2012) comment at the end of their research how useful it may be to conduct Solution Circles within other settings.

### 2.5.6 Parenting Programmes

There appears to be very little literature that actually examines the general role EPs may take in supporting parents/carers as part of their work. Nevertheless, one method that some EPs use in supporting parents/carers, particularly in the EY, includes parenting programmes. One parenting programme which is well researched for such a programme and used by EPs includes the Triple P-Positive Parenting programme (Sanders, 2008).

Nowak and Heinrichs (2008) conducted a meta-analysis of studies evaluating the impact of the Triple P-Positive Parenting programme. They found that this parenting programme causes positive
changes in parenting skills, child problem behaviour and parental well-being. However, it is important to note that the degree to which these positive effects were found varied between studies. Nevertheless, the most salient findings were the parental report of their child. This research not only highlights the positive effect supporting parents/carers with their children can have, but also illustrates the role professionals may have in influencing the perceptions parents/carers may have about their child and how this itself can also be a method of support.

Another parenting programme (though one less researched), which can be conducted by EPs, is the Solihull Approach (Douglas, 2006). This approach includes the importance of supporting parents/carers and helping them to feel contained in order for them to support and contain their own children (Bateson, Delaney & Pybus, 2008). This programme highlights the importance of the quality of parent-child relationships, through using containment and reciprocity, suggesting that these values themselves can lead to effective behaviour management (Bateson et al., 2008). According to Hutchings and Lane (2006), effective parenting groups are those that teach principles rather than specific behavioural techniques. Bateson et al. (2008) conducted a large-scale pilot evaluation of the Solihull Approach Parenting Group finding that after 10 weekly 2 hour sessions, the children of 72 parents/carers involved had reduced external behaviours and decreased parental anxiety. Similar to the above research, these studies do not include randomised control trials, so it is unclear whether it is the approach itself that has the impact or the support and time provided within a parenting group. Nevertheless, positive results were found, highlighting a role of professionals in providing such support.

A major difficulty with such programmes is that they involve a significant amount of parental involvement and engagement. For those families who are difficult to engage, there could be difficulties with the initial access to the programme thus not making it an easy method of support for all parents/carers. Sanders, Prior and Ralph (2009) conducted three brief seminars for parents/carers based on the Triple P-Parenting programme, including supporting behavioural and emotional problems in pre-adolescent children, inter-parental conflict, parenting style, relationship quality, parental adjustment and parental confidence. This study had three conditions: attendance to one seminar, attendance to all three seminars and a waitlist control group. Data was gathered from 245 participants. A significant reduction in the parent reports of problem child behaviour and dysfunctional parenting styles was found for those who had attended a single seminar. Attendance to all three seminars had the most significant effect, with significant improvements in dysfunctional parenting styles and level of inter-parental conflict. The findings of this study provide support for the effectiveness of brief universal parenting support that requires minimal time commitment and demands from parents/carers. Similar to the above research, these findings support a professional
role in supporting parents/carers, but offers methods which may require less commitment and participation from parents/carers.

However, it is important to highlight that data from questionnaires was collected prior to the seminars and again after their attendance. No follow-up of the study was completed; therefore, it is not known whether the parenting improvements found were sustained. Asking the participants to complete questionnaires after a significant period of time would have made these findings more generalisable and further support the use of brief interventions. Therefore, it is difficult to conclude how great the impact these seminars were upon parenting long term.

2.5.7 Video Work

Another method in which professionals can support parents/carers, which has also been effective within EY, includes video work. Although the research is limited, these attachment-based video interventions, when used to support the parent-infant dyad, have been found to effectively improve attachment relationships within the home (Bakermans-Kranenburg, Ijzendoorn & Juffer, 2003).

Bakermans-Kranenburg et al. (2003) conducted a meta-analysis of the effectiveness of attachment-based interventions which used video-feedback in the Netherlands. They found these to be more effective than parent-based interventions that did not include the use of video-work. In 2010, the Department for Children, Schools and Families (Barlow & Schrader-MacMillan) released a review of studies that suggests that targeted early interventions that were aimed at parental sensitivity and promoting attachment are effective in preventing emotional maltreatment. Within this review, they cited evidence from studies using video-work, specifically Video Interaction Guidance (VIG).

According to Landor (2014), VIG is a strengths-based intervention where clients are skillfully supported in reflecting on video clips of successful interactions in supporting change to occur. A brief video of an interaction takes place and the VIG Guider (person who is supporting the client) selects a few short clips that show the client being attuned with their child (or child they are supporting). These clips aim to show ‘better than usual’ moments which are then discussed within a shared review. This aims to actively empower the client by supporting them in modelling their practices on the positive aspects of their own practices and create new self-narratives, thus bringing about positive change (Landor, 2014). This particular intervention is selected as one of the European evidence-based interventions (DataPrev, 2011) and one of the recommended programmes in the NSPCC’s evidence to England’s review of the delivery of early interventions (NSPCC, 2010).

Fukkink (2008) conducted a meta-analysis of studies, which used video feedback and concluded that parents/carers became more skilled in their interactions with children, had a more positive
perception of their ability to parent and reduced parental stress which in turn helped the development of their children. Furthermore, the video work also increased parental sensitivity and led to behavioural and attitudinal changes towards their children (Fukkink, 2008). In addition, Robertson and Kennedy (2009) investigated the effect of using VIG with parents/carers where there were child protection concerns and so were considered hard to engage. Pre and post data used the CARE-index (Crittenden, 2005), which is a tool used to measure maternal sensitivity in terms of ‘seriously comprised’, ‘of concern’ and ‘good enough’, found that at the start of the study 25% of parents/carers were measured as ‘good enough’, which rose to 87.5% by the end of the intervention. However, it is important to note that this was only based on 8 parent-infant dyads and there were no longitudinal measures conducted, thus this questions the generalizability and sustainability of these research findings.

A case study by Satariano (2014), an EP, highlighted the use of VIG in: investigating what works well in different situations, working collaboratively with those involved and producing shared goals whilst looking at video clips. The author found this approach had a positive impact on the young person and felt its creative, positive psychology and strengths-based framework supported the work. According to Forsyth (2014), VIG can enhance the empowerment of those we support and the assessment process we may conduct. She also states that it can be a highly valuable addition to multi-agency working at both client and practitioner level.

However, it is important to highlight that such interventions are relatively new as is the research around them. Researchers have yet to conduct a randomised control trial that compares the use of VIG to other high intensity interventions. Therefore, it is difficult to pinpoint what it is about a VIG intervention that supports parents/carers and whether the same support can be provided through alternative means. Nevertheless, the above research does illustrate the significance of such interventions with parents/carers and the role professionals can play within this.

### 2.5.8 Traded Work

It is also important to touch upon the role of traded work within an EP’s practice. According to Fallon et al. (2010), the move towards traded models of service delivery has offered the opportunity to expand the EP’s role beyond their previous limits. This paper also presents anecdotal evidence that when an EP undertook traded work, the demand for the work surpassed the availability to supply the service, suggesting that there is a need for traded EPS with LAs. Kirven and Oland (2013) suggest that in order for EPS to make the most of the opportunities traded work can provide, they must also add to their marketing and use of advertising. Indeed, Fallon et al. (2010) states that within a traded model we must now think about how the EP profession is marketed rather than
about what the profession does. Therefore, in order to ‘sell’ the EP’s services, commissioners must see these services as worthwhile and value for money.

As previously mentioned, the EPS in which the researcher is on placement in, works on a partially traded model and therefore settings are able to buy in additional EP work. Presently, the EPS ‘sells’ additional EP services to a variety of primary and secondary schools and, similar to the stated anecdotal evidence, struggles to meet these demands. However, it is important to note that at present no EP services have been ‘bought’ in by an EY setting.

Research suggests that the EP’s role is expanding and it is no longer about just providing services within a LA. It appears that it is also about ‘selling’ services to commissioners and, arguably, proving their worth.

### 2.5.9 Role of the Educational Psychologist in Supporting a Setting

Morewood and Rumble (2013) wrote about the use of a trainee EP being based within a secondary school for a second and third year placement of the EP doctorate. According to the authors this is a novel approach to trainee placements and one which they felt would support the existing statutory provision within the schools involved as well as enhancing availability of support to those within the wider school. Although the trainee was based within a secondary school he also supported six feeder primary schools, for a total of three days per week. The work conducted included: direct work with students for academic, social and emotional needs both using assessments and therapeutic approaches; eliciting the voice of the child; supporting children’s transitions; observations; consultation with SENCos, teachers, other school staff and parents/carers; individual, tailored support and guidance for a new Learning Support Assistant; attendance at review meetings; administration – including preparation for direct work, scoring assessments and report writing; multiagency meetings and liaison and training and development.

After the first term of the trainee’s involvement, the evaluation of the work was reported to be positive from the stakeholders involved and there was encouraging anecdotal feedback. Although, a more formal evaluation of the support was not conducted that investigated the impact of the trainee, such research does highlight the different contexts EP’s can work within and the potential positive effects increased EP provision may have upon settings.

The most relevant research study to this literature review is a piece of Action Research conducted by Lightfoot (2013). This research focused on the role of EPs in supporting Looked After Children in a residential home and evaluated a pilot model of EP service delivery. This model was informed by interviews with EPs. An EPS then created of a menu of services that could be offered to staff within the residential home. For a one term period, three EPs conducted a variety of proactive
(planned) and reactive (unplanned) work based on their model of service delivery. This included workshops around particular issues, consultations with individuals or groups, liaisons with schools, attachment training, debriefing, weekly drop-ins and attendance at staff meetings.

This research highlights the role EPs can take in a variety of different work settings, and the importance of providing regular and accessible support when needed. Through the use of pre/post questionnaires and an evaluation focus group, Lightfoot (2013) found that the residential staff involved highly valued the input from the EP. In particular, they appeared to value each piece of work received in terms of meeting their needs rather than focusing on the model of service delivery as a whole. They also valued how they were able to regularly access support and appreciated being asked what support they would like and in turn felt heard. Lightfoot (2013) suggests that although this model could be applied to other settings it would need to take into account the individual needs of that setting and how they would like the input from the EP in supporting these needs. Additionally, this research illustrates the role settings can have in shaping the EP’s service delivery and how much value they can place on having this choice.

However, it is important to highlight the limitations of this study. Firstly, this piece of research is not an article published within an academic journal, it is an unpublished thesis, therefore may have not gone through the same academic rigour as other articles may have been in order to be published. Additionally, as there were three EPs, a researcher and a variety of supporting EPs involved, this research demanded a lot of time and support in order to be conducted, which brings into question how sustainable this model may be. It was also run for a short period of time thereby making it difficult to develop relationships and evaluate the impact of this. Indeed, the recommendations from this research included running a model of service delivery for a longer period of time and to involve participants initially in the formation of the service delivery model in order to give them more ownership and awareness of the process. This research demonstrates vital aspects within the role of the EP. This includes drawing from a variety of different methods to inform practice, encouraging staff to influence how we work and finally recognising that not only children have differing needs but so do the settings they are placed within. Therefore, EPs have a role in meeting these needs and adapting their practices accordingly. This study also highlights a gap in the literature, where the present research can follow in these footsteps and further explore the role of the EP and how this may be shaped within a variety of settings.

2.5.10 Role of the Educational Psychologist in Early Years

According to Robinson and Dunsmuir (2010) there is a lack of clarity about the EP role within EYs. Indeed, there appears to be little research which examines and investigates the role of the EP within
EY. This further illustrates the need for research within this area in order to build upon this limited research base.

Wolfendale and Robinson (2001) developed a framework: ‘Educational psychologists working within the early years: A framework for practice’. This framework suggests that EPs work in EYs at both a ‘macro’ level, including planning and reviewing EY services and also at a ‘micro’ level including involvement with individual children, families and EY settings. Furthermore, they advocated an EY Development Plan within the EPS in order to outline how an EP may work within EY. Dennis (2003) suggests that in order to support some of the changes to EY policy and increased provisions for children there should be a role for Senior Specialist EPs within every EPS. This role is to maintain an overview of developments within the field, thus ensuring that the skills and experiences of EP within this area are not overlooked and opportunities for development are identified and built upon.

Later, Dennis (2004) explored how EPs may respond to EY work by examining service delivery in schools and basing it upon her experiences and EY literature. She identifies five key areas needed to improve service development: avoiding individualisation; empowering staff; training; systemic work and monitoring evaluation, which could then be applied to EY settings. Although these elements may not be directly under control of the EP, this research suggested EPs can be used to support and develop these areas.

Specifically, Dennis (2004) outlines a role for EPs in providing frequent access and support to staff. She suggests this may avoid the individualisation of children, as regular discussions with an EP, taking a more socially dynamic approach, may reduce a ‘within child culture’. This paper also states EPs have a role in helping staff to recognise and maintain responsibility for children, through supporting them in understanding the value and potential of their roles. Finally, Dennis (2004) proposes that EPs have a role in being involved at a systemic level, allowing them to be more influential in how children with SEN are supported and by taking a role in service development. This research highlights the role an EP could take in supporting an EY setting. However, it is important to note that this paper came from an EP’s point of view not that of a setting, thus this subjective view may have discrepancies with those who work within EY settings. Additionally, it would have been interesting for someone to evaluate Dennis’ reflections and whether it in fact was a feasible and supportive way of supporting EY settings.

Shannon and Posada (2007) examined current and future EP practices in EY, from questionnaires and interviews with EPs. Interestingly, this paper highlights current practices that are not entirely in agreement with Dennis’ outlined role, but suggest high levels of individual casework. These results were also not found to be in line with the EPs’ perception of priorities, but rather a reflection of
how time is allocated to EY settings, and thus reported to be leading to dissatisfaction with current EP working models. At an organisational level, EPs were conducting training, strategic level planning and policy formation within the LA. Additionally, EPs had less involvement with research, project work and EY initiatives. When investigating future developments for EPs in EY the need for change was highlighted by participants. This paper suggests that EPs’ wish to see an increase in the amount of time allocated for EY to demonstrate preventative work, early intervention, including evidencing organisational work and working more closely with other agencies and families.

Although there is some literature regarding the EP role in EY it appears to stem from the perceptions of the EP, not those of the EY practitioners which arguably may bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to this area. Douglas-Osborn (2013) asked EY practitioners in four focus groups how they currently utilise their EP’s support. Similar to the evidence above, EPs were found to use the similar model of practice conducting a significant amount of casework. However, one setting had received one-to-one training to staff members from an EP concerning a child with behavioural difficulties. Staff stated that this individualised and regular contact with an EP was beneficial. This paper not only provides evidence for how EPs currently work, but suggests that EPs are offering a variety of different ways in which they are supporting EY settings.

Douglas-Osborn (2013) also asked staff how they would like to be supported by an EP. It was clear that staff felt there was a much larger role for EPs, which is in line with Shannon and Posada’s paper (2007). This role includes: offering regular support and advice; more direct support for parents/carers; greater information sharing about their role; feeding back to staff about how recommendations have been implemented and having a greater involvement with a child following a written report, such as reviewing progress and attendance at relevant meetings. Interestingly, this research found differences between the EP support settings would like to receive. The author concludes, similarly to Lightfoot (2013), that the EP’s support should be tailored in order to meet the needs of the setting, staff and children. This research suggests a multi-level, wider and individualistic approach to supporting EY settings is needed.

However, caution must be taken when applying these findings. This piece of work is not a published article, nor part of an accepted doctorate thesis. It was submitted as part of a doctorate programme written within the researchers 1st year of study. Thus, this work was not subjected to the same academic high standards as the other research discussed within this literature review. Therefore, it is important to bear this mind when interpreting results. Nevertheless, this research does highlight a tailored role for EPs within EY.
Indeed, although Dunsmuir and Kratochwill (2013) highlight the importance of evidence-based practice, they also state that there will be situations where intervention and approaches are ineffective and it is not possible to always find a ‘universal solution’. This therefore supports the use of a tailored, individualised approach, which one could argue may be particular to each individual setting.

Overall, the literature highlights the role EPs have within EY settings. Arguably, there appears to be a greater role for the EP than settings may receive at present, which has been identified by both settings and EPs. This role may be more varied than EPs may currently be able to provide, including more regular support, feedback, supporting parents/carers, service development, training, systemic work and supporting evaluation outcomes. In addition, it appears the support EY settings would like reflects the needs of the children and communities they serve. Therefore, EPs may need to tailor their support in order to focus upon those individual needs.

### 2.6 Summary

Currently it appears that the role of EPs within EY is somewhat limited. The little research that has been discussed advocates for a wider role for EPs in supporting this area than presently appears to be available. This lack of research surrounding identifying and evaluating different models of EP service delivery identifies an extensive gap which, given the importance of EY development and the EP contribution to that development, seems an important area to address. The role of the EP is vast and varied; there is a wealth of evidence-based literature which outlines how EPs can support staff, parents/carers and children, models and theories which enable these processes and research which surrounds the vital role within EY. Robinson and Dunsmuir (2010) highlight how psychological theory and research should be at the heart of EP practice. They suggest that working in EY presents potential for EPs in supporting parents and children and EY settings where there are difficulties. Further suggesting that EPs are well placed with some of the most vulnerable children in order to draw on and interpret research evidence to inform organisational development and policy generation.

Therefore, EPs must take what it is already known and use this information to apply it to supporting the EY. It could be proposed that this needs to be feasible, realistic and measurable in order to add to the limited literature surrounding this field. Such research would then be in line with existing government legalisation and documents, which highlights the importance of support and early interventions for young children and their families (DfE/DoH 2012). The gap in the literature for research considering the EP’s role in supporting EY settings has been highlighted and the rationale for this study has been justified. This research aims to build on these findings and investigate this gap by developing a pilot model of practice for a trainee EP working within an EY
setting. This work will be based upon the needs of the EY setting and how they would like to be supported. This study is therefore designed to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the role of Educational Psychologists in supporting an Early Years setting?

2. How can a pilot model of Educational Psychology practice using an Action Research approach support an Early Years setting?
Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Chapter Outline

This chapter describes the research design and methods used within this study. In order for this to be fully understood, it is important to explain initially what occurred within this research. An academic year long piece of Action Research was conducted whereby the researcher developed a model of EP practice with an EY setting and an EP service. This model was all about meeting the needs of the EY setting; consequently, it developed as the research study progressed. Over the academic year this research was concerned with developing a model of practice with involvement from the EY setting and EP service. This included three main phases:

- Phase 1: The Development of the Initial Model of Practice
- Phase 2: Work Delivered within the Model of Practice
- Phase 3: Evaluation of the Model as a Whole

The chapter will start with exploration of the axiological, ontological and epistemological positions. The design and explanation of the Action Research approach and RADIO model will be provided. The process of participant selection will be described, the data gathering methods, contextual information about the EY setting and analysis explained. Finally, a critique of the method and the ethical issues will be provided.

3.2 Axiological Position

According to Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) ontological assumptions, (i.e. those which give assumptions regarding the nature of reality and the nature of things), in turn lead to our epistemological assumptions, how we conduct research and enquire about the nature of reality/things. Consequently, these assumptions produce methodological considerations, affecting how we conduct research, collect data, analyse it and then report it. Therefore, before the methodology of this research is explained, the stance of the researcher and her axiological position must be identified.

The researcher believes that young children who are nought to five years old are vulnerable, particularly when they may be subjected to social and economic difficulties within the family home. She believes that professionals may be able to support these children by working directly with them in order to provide information about them and inform practice; she also believes that there is a role for professionals in supporting those who also directly support these children. This support may also be extended to families and any other professionals involved. The researcher believes that the type of support being described is varied and particularly distinct to the skill set
developed within the field of child and educational psychology. At present, the researcher believes that there is not enough professional support for this vulnerable group and those who surround it. The researcher believes that if more support and knowledge about this area were available some of the future difficulties that our most vulnerable nought to five year olds encounter may be reduced. Therefore, this researcher believes that any research which investigates how to support this group of young children will be beneficial.

It is also important to state the value the researcher places upon the subjective experience. The researcher believes that when working with adults or children, it is the subjective experience and understanding that holds more value and meaning to a person than the actual events which have occurred. For example, when having a conversation, the researcher believes it is the receiver’s perception of the conversation which will impact on their thoughts and beliefs rather than the specific conversation that took place. Although the importance of actual experiences are realised, there is less value placed upon them and more upon their interpretation by the researcher within this project.

3.2.1 The Subjective-Objective Dimension

Burrell and Morgan (1979) produced a scheme for analysing assumptions about the nature of social science known as the subjective-objective dimension. This is illustrated in Table 1.

**Table 1: The Subjective-Objective Dimension**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The subjectivist approach to social science</th>
<th>The objective approach to social science</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nominalism</td>
<td>Ontology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-positivism</td>
<td>Epistemology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntarism</td>
<td>Human Nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idiographic</td>
<td>Methodology</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table highlights the two extremes that social research can adopt. From one point of view, this table suggests that reality can be seen as purely subjective and everything can be interpreted. At the other side of the spectrum, reality is objective, and can be measured tangibly.

Ontology can be described as the study of reality and the nature of being. This may include a spectrum from realism to nominalism. Nominalism assumes that everything exists and is interdependent, including our interaction with the environment. Therefore, nothing is independent. Realism, on the other hand, assumes that things can be independent and can exist and be measured separately (Burrell & Morgan, 1979).
Epistemology is concerned with the bases of knowledge: its nature; form; how it is gathered and how it is communicated to others (Cohen et al., 2013). This includes a spectrum of positivism to anti-positivism (also known as relativism). According to Robson (2002), positivism can be seen as the ‘standard view’ of science (Robson, 2002), as it assumes that objective knowledge can be elicited from direct experience or observation. This view assumes that the only knowledge available is that which can be observed, therefore, science is based on data gathered through quantitative methods, which can be used to test hypotheses and establish cause and effect relationships (Robson, 2002). On the other hand, relativism considers knowledge as far more personal, subjective and unique (Cohen et al., 2013). It assumes that reality cannot be separated from the interaction it may have with people (Trigg, 1989, as cited in Robson, 2002) and there is no external reality that can exist outside of human consciousness (Robson, 2002). Relativism is based upon subjective experiences, therefore assuming that there is no objective reality. This perspective values qualitative methods and views the research process as a means of generating working hypotheses (Robson, 2002).

Human nature is the relationship between humans and their environment. There are two assumptions here: determinism and voluntarism. Determinism suggests humans are mechanical and deterministic to their environment. Therefore, they are products of their environment and behave due to a learnt response. Voluntarism assumes that humans are initiators of their own environment and have creativity and free will (Burrell & Morgan, 1979).

These different approaches highlight a need for different research methods in order to be consistent with the chosen ontology and epistemology. Therefore, if a researcher approaches his/her study in a more objective way, treating the world of natural phenomena as real and external to the individual, their research will be predominately quantitative. He/she may aim to identify particular elements and examine relationships, in order to discover broad laws. This type of methodology is known as nomothetic (Cohen et al., 2013). However, if a researcher values the subjective experience more, appreciating the social world and all its interconnecting factors, the research will take a qualitative as well as quantitative aspect. Within this research project, emphasis is placed on the understanding of the particular and individual in a relativistic social world rather than an absolute, external reality. This is known as an idiographic methodology (Cohen et al., 2013).

3.2.2 Research Assumptions

Although the researcher recognises the spectrum of approaches and values both subjective and objective assumptions, this research has taken a subjective approach in order to fulfil the aims of the research project and reflect the axiological position of the researcher.
The research assumes that everything is interconnected, thus the ontology is nominalism. It values the subjective experience whilst disregarding the objective reality, thus the epistemology is relativism; it believes human nature can include creativity and free will, thus this research includes voluntarism. Therefore, the methodology is idiographic.

These assumptions support those which are relevant to the researcher as well as placing heavy value on the subjective experiences of those who have taken place within the research. However, the type of approach has been heavily criticised for its lack of tangibility and critics warn that accounts obtained from a relativist perspective can be false or not falsifiable (Robson, 2002). Nevertheless, this research is less about the recorded tangible work that has taken part but more about how those involved experienced it, including the researcher herself.

3.3 Design of the Study

In line with these research questions and axiological position of the research, mainly qualitative research methods were used. Overall, this research was designed to produce a model of practice, then deliver that model to an EY setting and evaluate it over an academic year period, from September 2012 to July 2013.

Given the aims of this research, it was felt appropriate that it followed an Action Research framework (Tripp, 2003) within a larger RADIO Model (Timmins et al., 2003). The design of this study is described in five sections:

1. Identifying the Setting
2. Developing the Model of Practice
3. Conducting the Model of Practice
4. Evaluating the Model of Practice
5. Feeding back the Research

The links between these different sections and the frameworks are provided in Table 4 (section 3.3.3, p.54).

This study builds on the work of Lightfoot (2013). In this study, Lightfoot used both an Action Research and RADIO Model together to develop a model of EP practice within a children’s home. Although the context of the work is different, the aim and nature of the work is very similar to the present study. Lightfoot’s (2013) research developed a model of practice in collaboration with an EPS which was then presented to staff to choose the support they would like to receive. The project took place over the period of one term, involving three qualified EPs, who undertook the work. It used RADIO as a framework for working within an Action Research approach. The present
research does however differ from Lightfoot’s (2013) model in that, in the current study, the researcher carries out the work within the chosen setting in addition to undertaking the evaluation of the project. The research lasts for a full academic year. Moreover, the research design also needed to be more flexible in order to meet the needs of the EY setting. More detail regarding the design and frameworks that surround this study will now be provided.

3.3.1 Action Research

Action Research is an interactive inquiry process that is used within a collaborative context, thus a preferred future may come about through the research process (Reason & Bradbury, 2001). McNiff and Whitehead (2006) state that Action Research is not a closed process where specific questions will find answers; instead, it is about finding next steps and moving forward. According to Lewin (1952), Action Research involves three steps:

- Unfreezing, where the client and ‘change agent’ work together.
- Changing, whereby planning and subsequent changes come about.
- Refreezing, where change is evaluated, reflected upon and adjusted.

This method, therefore, is cyclical and based on a collaborative model of change. From the aims of this research, it was clear that such a collaborative way of working provides an ideal framework for this project. Additionally, the cyclical nature of the research meant that the researcher and setting could constantly reflect on the work conducted together and re-adjust it according to the needs of the setting.

However, it is important to note that the role of the researcher within this type of research, in particular in relation to collaborative working, could easily lead to conflicting views, for example, the aims of the research compared to the needs of the setting. According to Weiskopf and Laske (1996), the researcher can act as a facilitator, guide, formulator, summariser of knowledge and a raiser of issues. It can become difficult for the researcher to navigate between undertaking these roles whilst remaining collaborative. Indeed, this was recognised by Kemmis and McTaggart (2005) who cautioned the researcher against overshadowing their participants, but yet in taking a strong enough role in order to support change. Therefore, the role of the researcher is reflected upon throughout this research as part of the Action Research framework.

Tripp’s (2003) cycle of Action Research was felt most appropriate to use within this study, due to its cyclical nature and emphasis on reflection within research. In Table 2, a full Action Research cycle of reconnaissance, planning, acting, researching action and then evaluating action is set out.
Table 2: The Full Action Research Cycle (Tripp, 2003)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cycle</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Plan action</td>
<td>1a. First action plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1b. Then plan research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Act thoughtfully</td>
<td>2a. Implement action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2b. Monitor action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Research action</td>
<td>3a. First produce data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3b. Then analyse data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Evaluate action</td>
<td>4a. Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4b. Reflect</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Therefore, within this research, cycles of this model were continually occurring. When the initial model was created, steps were taken to create a model with as much input from the EY setting as possible. It was planned, actioned, and then as soon as data were collected, it was reflected upon and fed directly into what was happening within the setting. These cycles occurred constantly throughout the research. Additionally, a larger over-arching cycle also occurred when considering the research as a whole (this will be illustrated later in the Summary of Design section, page 50, Table 4).

The steps undertaken within the Action Research were also informed by Zuber-Skerritt (1996), who state that the key features of Action Research include: to work on and try and solve real, practitioner-identified problems; to collaborate and build teacher involvement; to seek causes and attempt to work on those causes; for solutions to be suggested by practitioners involved; to include a divergent and convergent phase; for the intervention to be planned by the practitioners; to implement the intervention and to evaluate the success of that intervention through a problem solving process. These features were then used within the framework of Tripp’s (2003) cycle of Action Research.

However, the cycles of Action Research described above were not sufficient, on their own, to guide this research. The researcher needed a more prescriptive structure that provided an overarching framework, within which cycles of Action Research could be taken.

It could be suggested that there may be other research designs that may also be appropriate to this research, such as a case study or evaluation design. However, Action Research was felt most appropriate due to its cyclical nature, flexible approach and most importantly the value it placed upon the participants. For example, it was the participants who were in charge of the work conducted as part of the model of practice not the researcher. Therefore this research design gave the researcher the framework to support the setting in the ownership of this research in a way other designs would not have done so.
3.3.2 RADIO Model

Timmins et al. (2003) RADIO Model was chosen in order to provide a structure and organisational tool for the research from the initial stages of development up until the ending of the project. This model is illustrated in Table 3. RADIO is a 12 step model that allows the Action Researcher to take account of complex factors in their work and allows them to re-visit different stages where appropriate (Timmins et al., 2003). According to Ashton, (2009) RADIO provides a clear systemic framework, which emphasises collaboration in order to bring about positive change.

Table 3: Steps of RADIO Model: Research and Development in Organisations (Timmins et al., 2003)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps of Model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Awareness of need</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Invitation to act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Clarifying organisational and cultural issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Identifying stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Agreeing the focus of concern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Negotiating the framework for the data gathering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Gathering information using agreed method</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Processing information with stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Agreeing areas for future action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Action planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Implementation / action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Evaluating action</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The researcher used this model flexibly and adapted it to meet the needs of the research. In the initial steps of the model, it was the researcher who developed the idea for the project; therefore, the ‘awareness of need’ (step 1) was not collaborative. When identifying a setting as part of the research, steps 2 (invitation to act), 3 (clarifying organisational and cultural issues) and 4 (identifying stakeholders) were used.

Step 5 (agreeing the focus of concern) and 6 (negotiating the framework for the data gathering) occurred when developing the model of practice. Step 7 (gathering information using agreed method) occurred when the model of practice was being conducted and also when evaluating the model. Finally, step 8 (processing information with stakeholders), 9 (agreeing areas for future action) and 10 (action planning) occurred during the write up of the research and feedback of the
project. Steps 11 (implementation / action) and 12 (evaluating action) were not used during this research.

3.3.3 Summary of Design

This research has used both an Action Research framework, specifically Tripp’s (2003) cycle of Action Research, within an overarching RADIO framework (Timmins et al., 2003), in order to investigate the role of an EP in supporting an EY setting and to create a model of practice aiming to support an EY setting over an academic year period. It was felt that both these frameworks individually would not be sufficient in supporting the research, but together they complemented each other in their use. The RADIO model provided specific steps to follow through the research, while the cycles of Action Research gave a framework for reflective thinking within those steps.

In order to clarify how both RADIO and Action Research were used within this research, the table below illustrates the different stages of the research and how the stages of both frameworks were used. This includes the steps of RADIO that were used at particular stages of research along with the main stage of Action Research. Additionally, the right hand column demonstrates how small cycles of Action Research were constantly used throughout the project.

It is important to mention the use of ‘Stages of Research’ and the previously mentioned ‘Phases of Research’ in order to prevent confusion. ‘Stages’ directly correlate to the different stages the researcher conducted whilst the use of ‘Phases’ relates more appropriately to the write up of this project. Phase 1, the development of the initial model of practice, includes research stage 1 = identifying setting and stage 2 = developing the model of practice; Phase 2, the work delivered within the model of practice, includes research stage 3 = conducting the model of practice and Phase 3, the evaluation of the model as a whole, includes research stage 4 = evaluating model of practice. Research stage 5 includes the feeding back of the research, which is not an aspect of this thesis.
### Table 4: Stages of RADIO and Action Research Used

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stages of Research</th>
<th>Steps of RADIO</th>
<th>Overall use of Action Research</th>
<th>Cycles of Action Research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.4 Sampling and Participant Recruitment

The sampling and participant recruitment occurred within two distinct parts. This included the initial development of the model of practice, which involved recruiting the EY setting, nursery staff and EP. The second part included the delivery of the model of practice, which involved the nursery staff and as the project progressed, parents/carers and an additional outside professional.

All participants were provided with the Participant Information Sheet (Appendix 1 for staff or Appendix 2 for parents) two weeks prior to providing informed consent (Appendix 3). For the participants whom the researcher supported on one occasion, the Participant Information sheet and a cover letter explaining about their possible involvement in the research were sent via post prior to the work commencing. Once informed consent was received, data were collected from the participants. It is important to note that it was made clear that participants had the right to withdraw at any point from the study. Within this project, all participants asked gave their consent; additionally, no participant withdrew consent throughout the research.

3.4.1 Phase 1 – The Development of the Initial Model of Practice

3.4.1.1 Identifying an EY Setting

The EY setting used for this research was recruited through an EPS in a North West LA. EPs in this LA who work with a variety of EY settings were informed about the study and asked to meet with the researcher in order to discuss whether there was a setting that they felt may be suitable to participate in the research. This led to a meeting between the researcher and a Senior EY EP who was able to identify a possible EY setting.

The criteria for the EY setting included staff at the setting being open to the pilot model of EP practice as well as being open to developing their own practice, by suggesting that they were interested in and had already undertaken offered opportunities such as training provided by the LA. They also needed to identify that more support from outside agencies would be of benefit to them as well as the Senior EY EP thinking that they would also benefit from greater EP input. After some discussion with the Senior EY EP relating to different settings, an EY setting was identified. The EP then met with the prospective setting to introduce the research and arrange a further meeting between the setting and the researcher. Within this meeting, the research was discussed in full and they were asked if they would like to participate.
3.4.1.2 Recruiting Participants from the EY Setting

After the EY setting had agreed to take part in the research, the researcher was asked to attend a staff meeting in order to introduce the research to the staff. At this meeting the research was described and the Participant Information Sheet (Appendix 1/2) provided and explained. After a 2 week period consent was then gained from eleven staff members.

3.4.1.3 Recruiting Participants from the Educational Psychology Service

During the development of the model of practice, eight EPs were involved in order to support the development of the model. EPs who worked within the same service as the researcher were handed Participant Information Sheets, Consent Forms and were provided with information about the research and their possible role. All eight EPs, having given consent, took part in a focus group to discuss the initial development of the project.

3.4.2 Phase 2 – Work Delivered within the Model of Practice

3.4.2.1 Continuous Involvement of EY Practitioners

The EY practitioners involved at the start of the project were involved for its full duration. Their involvement varied depending on their want/need to be involved with different work within the project.

3.4.2.2 Recruiting Participants during the Research

As the research developed throughout the year, it was considered appropriate to gather data from parents/carers who had been supported by the researcher in the course of the work undertaken as part of the project. These parents/carers were asked for their consent with regards to the researcher collecting data concerning their involvement. Overall, thirteen parents/carers consented to be involved in the research.

Additionally, a professional external to the research, who was a Health Visitor, became involved in some joint working. They also consented to provide data for the research.

3.4.5 Summary of Sampling and Participant Recruitment

The process of sampling and participant recruitment took place throughout this research. Those involved were those who happened to work in the corresponding EP service, EY setting or had involvement with the chosen EY setting in some way and were happy to take part in the research. Thirty-three participants in total were involved in this project.
The table below illustrates the number of participants and their defining roles within the research.

### Table 5: Number of Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of EY practitioners</th>
<th>No. of EPs</th>
<th>No. of Parents/Carers</th>
<th>No. of Outside Professionals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total participants = 33

#### 3.5 Contextual Information Regarding the EY Setting

It may be helpful to provide some contextual information regarding the EY setting used within this research. The information in this section was gathered from the setting and their most recent OFSTED report, conducted in 2012.

The EY setting is a LA average-sized Nursery School, which operates as a fully integrated provision. It runs during term time, but has a child care provision during school holidays. It has two classrooms, one for three – four year olds (known as Nursery 2) and one for nought – three year olds, including an area for babies (known as Nursery 1). Within Nursery 2, there are six resource provision placements for children with social communication difficulties.

During the study, there were over one hundred children within the nursery. Most children are of White British heritage. A small number are from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. A small minority of children speak English as an additional language. The number of disabled children and those with special educational needs is above average. The number of children known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. Teaching staff include a Head Teacher, SENCo, Class Teacher and 12 EY practitioners. It is important to note that the Head Teacher did not feel the need to be involved in the research due to work commitments, two EY practitioners were not present over the period of time consent was gained and the Class Teacher was on maternity leave for the start of the research, therefore 11 out of 15 members of staff participated.

#### 3.6 Data Gathering Methods

This section will describe the different methods in which data were collected throughout the research. In order to structure this section the data gathering methods will be described in three parts relating to the three phases of the study. The first part will consist of data gathering methods relating to the development of the initial model; this includes eleven pre-model questionnaires, three semi-structured interviews and two focus groups. The next part will consist of data gathering methods relating to the work within the model of practice; including twenty-three evaluation
questionnaires relating to specific pieces of work. The final part will consist of data gathering methods relating to the evaluation of the whole model; this includes a research diary, seven post-model questionnaires, an evaluation interview and an evaluation focus group. These parts also correspond to the parts outlined within the findings section (chapter 4).

3.6.1 Data Gathering Methods Relating to the Development of Initial Model of Practice

Initially, eleven pre-model questionnaires were conducted with members of the EY practitioners (Appendix 4). This questionnaire included closed and open questions that asked about whether they felt the current EP support they received was able to meet their needs as practitioners and the children they subsequently supported. As well as feeding into the development of the initial model of practice, these questionnaires also created a baseline for evaluation.

Next three semi-structured interviews took place. These semi-structured interviews were carried out with three members of staff from the EY setting (Appendix 5). These interviews included questions regarding their current use of EP support, what they found most useful about such support and if given greater accessibility to an EP, what input they would like to receive in the future. The staff members in these interviews were identified by the management team and the researcher and included a member of management, a long-standing staff member and a relatively new member of staff, in order to gain broad and systemic information regarding the current EP role and a possible future role. The themes and ideas developed within these interviews were then discussed within a focus group with EPs from the LA.

Within this focus group, eight EPs were presented with the findings from the EY interviews and applied their knowledge of what they thought was feasible and realistic when working within an EY setting (Script in Appendix 6). From this information, a Service Level Agreement was created which included the boundaries of the research and an outlined proposed model of practice that would take place over the year. This documentation was subsequently presented to a focus group with four staff members from the EY setting. These staff members included two higher level TAs and two TAs; two of these participants were also involved in the initial interviews in the EY setting. The information was then discussed in terms of what they thought would work or not work, in order to adapt it to meet the needs of their roles and the setting (Script in Appendix 7). This information was then added into a final copy of the Service Level Agreement and is presented in Appendix 8.

Information gathered from the pre-model questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and focus groups all fed into the development of the initial model of practice as well as creating a baseline for the project.
3.6.2 Data Gathering Methods Relating to the Work Delivered within the Model of Practice

Throughout the model of practice, pieces of work included: shadowing staff at the start of the research; attending SEN planning meetings; conducting assessments with children; linking with consultations with parents/carers and staff as well as being involved long-term with these children by attending relevant meetings (casework continuity); conducting workshops for parents/carers; solution circles with EY practitioners; outreach work with a family from the setting and a language intervention. It is important to note that this work was finalised and planned for each term within the SEN planning meetings. Thus, data from these meetings as well as impromptu discussions throughout the project directly influenced the work conducted within the setting. Data were also gathered throughout by the researcher keeping a research diary.

Some of the specific pieces of work were evaluated by questionnaires relating to that work. In total, twenty-three evaluation questionnaires were completed. This included EY practitioners completing thirteen solution circle group evaluation forms (Appendix 9) and two language intervention evaluation forms (Appendix 10). Parents/carers completed six parent workshop evaluation forms (Appendix 11) and two parenting support evaluation forms (relating to the outreach work) (Appendix 12). One more questionnaire was completed by an outside professional, the Health Visitor, who completed a joint-working evaluation form (part of the outreach work) (Appendix 13). These evaluation forms fed into the final evaluation of the project but also led to adjustments in how future work within the setting was conducted, thus influencing the model of practice over time.

3.6.3 Data Gathering Methods Relating to the Evaluation of the Model as a Whole

The research diary, which was kept throughout this study, included evidence of the project as a whole. This included how and why the pilot model of practice developed. It also included notes from meetings, conversations with staff and observations in order to provide qualitative data for the models development and its evaluation.

At the end of the model of practice, the data gathering methods were specifically about evaluating the project. This was conducted in three steps. The first involved repeating the pre-model questionnaire with staff; this was named the post-model questionnaire and was completed by seven members of EY practitioners (Appendix 14). It is important to note, due to the time pressures at the end of the term, only seven members of staff were able to complete the post-model questionnaire. The next step in the evaluation involved an interview with the SENCo. Unlike the previous semi-structured interviews and focus groups, this semi-structured interview was not conducted by the researcher but by an EP who was not directly involved with the setting. This was done in order to
reduce bias as researcher bias may have occurred whereby the present researcher may have unintentionally influenced participants’ responses. Additionally, participants may have modified their responses in order to please the present researcher. Having an unrelated EP involved for the post focus group and interview was an attempt to reduce these biases. This interview included questions relating to whether they felt the work conducted by the researcher had benefited the setting, questions regarding individual pieces of work, the model of practice as a whole, value for money, how they might use EP time in the future and whether the setting would consider buying in additional EP time. (See Appendix 15 for a copy of the semi-structured interview script used).

The final step of the evaluation included a focus group with five members of EY practitioners. Again this focus group was conducted by an EP who was not directly involved with the setting. This focus group included questions relating to whether they felt the work conducted by the researcher had benefited the setting, questions regarding individual pieces of work and the model of practice as a whole. Appendix 16 is a copy of the semi-structured focus group used.

It is important to explain why both a focus group and a separate semi-structured interview were conducted. The focus group was conducted in order to gain a variety of views from the setting. However, due to the high involvement of one member of staff within the project, it was felt important that the SENCo had an opportunity to express her views individually about the research. Additionally, it was the SENCo who mainly decided how EP time had been used previously, during the research and who was to continue this role after the project. Therefore, there were questions that could have been asked within this interview that would not be appropriate to ask within the focus group. (For example, how do you plan to use your EP time next term?)

The data collected from these methods, along with information gathered throughout the project, were combined and analysed as a whole. This allowed for methodological triangulation to take place, as the same method of analysis (thematic analysis, Braun & Clarke, 2006) was used for all the different types data collected. This supported the evaluation of the model of practice as a whole by making use of all available data.

### 3.6.4 Data Gathering Tools

This section will include a brief description of the methods used and how the tools were constructed.

#### 3.6.4.1 Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were used for the creation of the initial model of practice (Semi-Structured Interview Script - Appendix 5) and at the end of its evaluation (Post-Model Interview
This method was chosen as a way to gain participants’ views and their perceptions of a situation through a conversation (Kvale, 1996). Although there are a variety of different formats for interviews, it was felt that semi-structured interviews were most appropriate. Such interviews allow the interviewer to be flexible and adapt to the responses of the interviewee (Smith, 2008). Therefore, they clearly value the perspective of the participants and supports them in providing information that is most salient to them, thus fitting within the social constructionist stance of this research. However, despite this point, it was still felt important to impose some form of structure upon the interview in order to meet the needs of the research project itself. Additionally, according to Yin (2011) such structures could also support the interviewees if they have difficulties in answering questions and enable the interviewer to foresee any possible difficulties. It is also important to include that these interviews were conducted, by both the original researcher and additional researcher (for the final interview), in a casual and relaxed style in order to support the interviewees.

3.6.4.2 Focus Groups

Focus groups were also used at the start of the project (Initial Educational Psychology Focus Group - Script Appendix 6 and Initial Early Years Focus Group Script - Appendix 7) and at the end (Post-Model Early Years Focus Group Script - Appendix 16). Similarly to the interviews, the researcher wanted to gain information regarding participants’ subjective experiences. According to Yin (2011) focus groups provide a method for gaining a variety of participant views. As the initial model of practice was developed with the use of focus groups, it was important to empower participants to be a part of this process. Indeed, Kitzinger (1995) states that focus group work well within action research as they can support stakeholders in being more actively involved in the process of the research. Therefore focus groups were a way of eliciting a number of views which could be shared and discussed in order to produce a collective consensus of what the initial model of practice may include as well as in its evaluation. This worked well in conjunction with the individual interviews for when the researcher also felt it appropriate to gain individual responses (initial ideas about the model of practice and the SENCo’s evaluation of the work).

3.6.4.3 Questionnaires

Within this research a variety of questionnaires were employed. This included the pre-model questionnaire (Appendix 4) and post-model questionnaire (Appendix 14), in order to create a baseline and subsequent evaluation. Questionnaires also included the solution circle evaluation form (Appendix 9), language intervention evaluation form (Appendix 10), parent workshop evaluation form (Appendix 11), parenting support evaluation form (Appendix 12) and joint working evaluation form (Appendix 13). According to Wilson and McLean (1994) questionnaires
are useful instruments for collecting a large amount of structured and numerical data that can be collected without a researcher and can be easier than other methods to analyse. As the researcher wanted to collect as many views as possible regarding the project, particularly in terms of its evaluation, questionnaires appeared to be the most appropriate data collection tool.

All questionnaires were adapted from Lightfoot’s (2013) research, as these had already been trialled within previous research. Once they were modified they discussed within supervision. They all included both closed questions, including likert scales and opened questions. Yin (2011) suggests that closed items within questionnaires can be useful in producing quantitative data, supporting correlations to be made. However, it was important that open questions were also included in order to capture the additional information and allows participants to explain their responses. It was hoped that both types of questions increased the depth of the information collected. Thus data were collected through questionnaires relating to individual pieces of work as well as the project as a whole.

3.6.4.4 Research Diary

The research diary was also an important tool for data gathering within this research. According to Robson (2002) a researcher’s reflections and thoughts regarding their research should be well documented. Indeed, the researcher made entries into her diary after each involvement with the setting, such as an email, phone call or visit. Altrichter and Holly (2005) suggest that a research diary should contain a description of what has taken place, an interpretation of this, notes and reflections upon the methodology and information on future planning. The researcher’s diary for the present study included a description of the event, always followed by any reflections and thoughts of this event and ended with a possible action plan.

3.6.5 Summary of Data Gathering Methods

This section describes the data gathering methods used within this study. The table below illustrates which of the data sources will answer the research questions of this study.
Table 6: Research Questions and Data Source

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Data Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the role of Educational Psychologists in supporting an Early Years setting?</td>
<td>- Pre questionnaires</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Semi-structured interviews with EY practitioners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Focus group with LA EP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Focus group with EY practitioners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Evaluation questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How can a pilot model of Educational Psychology practice using an Action Research</td>
<td>- Pre and post questionnaires</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>approach support an Early Years setting?</td>
<td>- Evaluation questionnaires</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Research diary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Evaluation focus group with EY practitioners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Semi-structured interview with SENCo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following table identifies the different components of the research project and links the different aspects of the project with the phases and stages of the research as well as the corresponding research frameworks.
### Table 7: Phases/Stages of Research, RADIO and Action Research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phases/ Stages of Research</th>
<th>Stages of RADIO</th>
<th>Action Research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phase 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Identifying setting</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Met with EYEP; possible setting identified.</td>
<td>4. Identifying stakeholders.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EYEP met with identified setting.</td>
<td>3. Clarifying organisational &amp; cultural issues.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher met with identified setting.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identified setting agrees to take part.</td>
<td>2. Invitation to act / 3. Clarifying organisational &amp; cultural issues. / 4. Identifying stakeholders.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant information given out</td>
<td>Consent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Phase 1**                |                 |                |
| **Stage 2**                | Pre-model questionnaire | 1. Plan action: 1b. Then plan research |
| **Developing model of practice** | 1. EY interviews | 2. Act thoughtfully: 2a. Implement action |
|                            | 3. EY focus group |                |
|                            | Initial pilot model of practice |                |

| **Phase 2**                | Model of practice | Research diary |
|                            | Questionnaires | 2. Gathering information using agreed method. |
|                            |                 |                |
|                            | Evaluations | 2. Gather information using agreed method. |
|                            | 5. Solution Circles |                |
|                            | 6. Outreach Work |                |
|                            | 7. Language Intervention |                |

| **Phase 3**                | EY focus group | Post-model questionnaire |
|                            |                 | 7. Gathering information using agreed method. |
| **Stage 4**                |                 |                |
| **Evaluating model of practice** |                 |                |
|                            | Research evaluation |                |

| **Phase 3**                |                 |                |
| **Stage 5**                | Thesis write up, | Creation of relevant information |
| **Thesis write-up, feedback** | Dispersing information |                |
|                            | Further work? | 8. Processing information with Stakeholders. |
|                            |                 | 9. Agreeing areas for future action. |
|                            |                 | 10. Action planning. |

4. Evaluate action: 4a. Review
4b. Reflect.
### 3.7 Chronology of Work

The table below gives an overview of work conducted during the research project.

**Table 8: Chronology of work with Model of Practice – Phases of Research**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase of Research</th>
<th>Type of Work</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Work Included</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phase 1</strong></td>
<td>Thesis meeting</td>
<td>14.08.13</td>
<td>Meeting with EY EP to identify setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Development of</td>
<td>Meeting at EY setting</td>
<td>03.09.13</td>
<td>Meeting to discuss research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the Initial</td>
<td>EY setting Team</td>
<td>10.09.13</td>
<td>Explained research to staff, provided Consent forms and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model of Practice</td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td></td>
<td>Participant Information sheets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Semi-structured</td>
<td>24.10.13</td>
<td>Semi-structured interviews with EY practitioners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>interviews</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Questionnaires</td>
<td></td>
<td>Handout/collection of Pre-model questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus Group</td>
<td>01.10.13</td>
<td></td>
<td>EP Focus Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus Group</td>
<td>09.10.13</td>
<td></td>
<td>EY Focus Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phase 2</strong></td>
<td>Planning Meeting</td>
<td>01.10.13</td>
<td>Winter term planning meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work delivered</td>
<td>21.01.14</td>
<td></td>
<td>Spring term planning meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>within the</td>
<td>29.04.14</td>
<td></td>
<td>Summer term planning meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>model of Practice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Work/</td>
<td>10.10.13</td>
<td></td>
<td>Attendance at new parents/carers’ evening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>support</td>
<td>12.12.13</td>
<td></td>
<td>Christmas Nativity and discussions with parents/carers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meetings with SLT</td>
<td>20.11.13</td>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting regarding work, SENCo/Head etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26.11.13</td>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting regarding work (SENCo/EY EP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>05.02.14</td>
<td></td>
<td>Discussion with SENCo/Head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12.02.14</td>
<td></td>
<td>Discussion with SENCo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13.03.14</td>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting with SENCo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial Work with</td>
<td>17.10.13</td>
<td></td>
<td>Nursery 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>24.10.13</td>
<td></td>
<td>Nursery 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31.10.13</td>
<td></td>
<td>Childcare Provision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenting workshops</td>
<td>14.11.13</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sleep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>06.02.14</td>
<td></td>
<td>Toileting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>08.05.14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Meetings</td>
<td>16.10.13</td>
<td></td>
<td>CAF (Child 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20.11.13</td>
<td></td>
<td>CDC review (Child 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04.12.13</td>
<td>CAF (Child 2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.01.14</td>
<td>CAF (Child 2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.03.14</td>
<td>CAF (Child 2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09.04.14</td>
<td>CDC review (Child 1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.05.14</td>
<td>CAF (Child 2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03.06.14</td>
<td>PEP (Child 1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04.06.16</td>
<td>CDC review (Child 1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.01.14</td>
<td>Meeting regarding language intervention</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.01.14</td>
<td>Meeting regarding language intervention</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.01.14</td>
<td>Language intervention group 1 (sessions x18)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.04.14</td>
<td>Language intervention group 2 (sessions x18)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Run twice weekly (1x session run by staff without researcher)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.12.13</td>
<td>Home Visit (Joint visit with Portage)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.12.13/</td>
<td>Email with parent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.12.13</td>
<td>Phone call with parent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.12.13</td>
<td>Home Visit (Joint visit with Portage)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.01.14</td>
<td>Home Visit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.02.14-</td>
<td>Home Visit (Joint visit with HV) (x8)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.06.14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.12.13</td>
<td>Solution Circle 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.01.14</td>
<td>Solution Circle 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.03.14</td>
<td>Solution Circle 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.05.14</td>
<td>Solution Circle 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07.11.13</td>
<td>Child 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.11.13</td>
<td>Child 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.12.13</td>
<td>Child 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.01.14</td>
<td>Child 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.03.14</td>
<td>Child 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09.04.14</td>
<td>Child 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.05.14</td>
<td>Child 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01.05.14</td>
<td>Child 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.05.14</td>
<td>Child 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.07.14</td>
<td>Post project focus group with EY practitioners</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.07.14</td>
<td>Post project focus group with SENCo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Phase 3**

Evaluation of the Model as a Focus Group

Semi-structured Interview
3.8 Data Analysis Methods

Within this research, two forms of data analysis took place: thematic analysis and some descriptive statistics. The majority of the data gained are qualitative and thus qualitative evidence is given more weight in terms of the analysis and findings. The data analysed through thematic analysis include data gained from the pre-model questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, focus groups, research diary, and the open-ended questions in the evaluation questionnaires and those in the post-model questionnaire. The data analysed through descriptive statistics include the data from the evaluation questionnaires and pre and post-model questionnaires. Although this is primarily a qualitative study, it is not driven by a particular method but by the type of research it is itself. Thus due to the nature of Action Research, the data collection was opportunistic and evolving.

The rationale for this combination of data collection includes: to provide an ongoing check of the work throughout the duration of the project, to formally add to the Action Research cycles and consequently inform the direction of the project; to include constant participation and involvement from participants; to provide a rich picture of the project and provide data from triangulation; to provide an initial baseline and ending evaluation and finally, to supplement information where it was unable to be collected, for example, child outcomes.

This section will consist of five parts: an explanation of thematic analysis and descriptive statistics, and then these analyses will be explained in terms of the three main stages of the research: the development of the model of practice, conducting the model of practice and finally the evaluation.

3.8.1 Thematic Analysis

Much of the data collected within this study were analysed via thematic analysis. Therefore, before the process of analysis for each section of the research is presented, the method of thematic analysis used will be described.

According to Braun and Clarke (2006), a theme is able to capture something salient about the data in relation to the research questions. However, it was important that the researcher did not think about the research questions during this process as she wanted the analysis to be led by the participants not the researcher. Thematic analysis can take either an inductive or a theoretical approach. Theoretical analysis can also rely on a top down approach and be deductive. This method acknowledges the influence of the researcher and her role in analysing the data in light of her interest, and involves coding the data for specific research questions. Inductive analysis dictates
that themes are identified in a bottom-up approach whereby themes correlate to data, and the analysis is not driven by the researcher’s prior interest in the topic or via preconceptions about the outcomes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Therefore, inductive thematic analysis is data driven and was the approach taken by the researcher.

However, it is important to note that despite the researcher taking an inductive approach when analysing the data, the researcher had already influenced the data she was going to collect through the structures imposed on the semi-structured interviews, focus groups and questionnaires. The researcher imposed these structures as there was certain information she needed to gather in order to effectively evaluate the model of practice, such as whether participants felt certain pieces of work were beneficial and exploring value for money. If the interviews had not been semi-structured then it is possible that the participants may not have evaluated these particular aspects of the model. Despite imposing these structures as part of a semi-structured interview, it was still up to participants to decide how they wanted to review the work and it was this information that dictated an inductive approach, which was to be applied when the data were analysed.

Within thematic analysis, the researcher must also decide upon the level at which themes are analysed. These include: at a semantic level, an explicit level, or a latent or interpretative level (Boyatzis, 1998). When analysing data at a semantic level, themes are identified at a superficial level and focus is placed on the explicit meaning of the data. Conversely, when analysing data at a latent level, the researcher attempts to identify underlying ideas, and this involves some interpretation of the data. The researcher initially identified themes at a semantic level as this was in line with the value the researcher and research placed on the subjective experience.

The choice of an inductive analysis at a semantic level was driven by the desire of the researcher to want to describe and summarise the perceptions of those involved within the project. She did not want to interpret the data further than at its face value, but wanted to value its current subjective nature.

The researcher followed Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six phase process. The six phases of the process were as follows:

1. *Familiarisation with the data*: The researcher transcribed data from interviews/focus groups or typed data up from questionnaires all onto one word document. The researcher then read through all the relating data in order to familiarise herself with it and note down initial ideas.

2. *Generating initial code*: The researcher went back through the word document initially coding interesting features, then colour coding these features according to each code.
3. **Searching for themes:** Once all the information was coded, it was read as separate data and a theme produced that fully reflected the codes within the data.

4. **Reviewing themes:** The researcher checked that all the themes corresponded with the codes for the entire data set.

5. **Defining and names themes:** The researcher went back to the uncoded data set and checked that the themes produced were a true reflection of the data set as a whole.

6. **Producing the report:** The colour coded data with attached themes was then copied onto a new document and the data cut down, in order for quotes to be left, which reflected the data from that theme.

This analysis was completed in various word documents. This was done as it allowed the researcher to easily colour code different sections of information and make sure all information was coded. Once all the information had been colour coded, it could be easily moved about, putting all the different sections, which represented one code together. Due to the amount of data needed to be analysed, this felt a much more feasible way of conducting the analysis then the use of post-it notes and mind-maps in order to organise the data. Please see Appendix 17 for an example of the thematic analysis.

Once all the information had been coded, tables were created which stated the final themes, subthemes where relevant, the most salient quote which represented that theme and where that quote was from (*step 6 producing the report*). These tables are those used throughout the findings chapter, illustrating the main themes and subthemes.

The use of Braun and Clarke’s (2006) thematic analysis was felt to be the most appropriate method of analysis for this project. It supported the subjective nature of this research, whilst providing a clear structure for the researcher to follow. Other forms of qualitative analysis were considered, for example, the use of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), which takes an idiographic focus, offering insights into how a given person, in a given context, makes sense of an event (Gill, 2014). However, this project was not just about participants’ experiences of the work conducted, but also about the development of the work and modification of it throughout the academic year. Additionally, this type of analysis has anecdotally been described as ‘walking into someone else’s shoes’ and it was felt that the researcher was too much a part of the research to effectively complete this analysis without bias. Therefore, this type of analysis was not felt appropriate and thematic analysis was felt most befitting with the aims of the research.
3.8.2 Descriptive Statistics

The majority of the data within the study were analysed via thematic analysis. However, any quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics. This included data from the evaluation questionnaires and comparisons between the pre and post questionnaires.

According to Cohen et al. (2013) descriptive statistics describe the data so the researcher may further analyse and interpret them. Therefore, as quantitative data were collected as part of the study it was considered that this was the most appropriate method to analyse those data. The researcher felt that the data needed to be taken at face value and there could be some danger in conducting more complex analyses. This may include the researcher adding her own interpretation to the data, increasing researcher bias. Only basic descriptive statistics were used, including comparing and describing data from the evaluation questionnaires that asked about participants’ knowledge/strategies after support was provided. Additionally, comparisons were made between pre and post quantitative data collected from the Pre and Post questionnaires, which are illustrated within the bar chart in the findings chapter.

Therefore, these statistics added to the qualitative information already collected that could then also be used to triangulate information. These data also produced a baseline and could measure the before and after effects of the project.

3.8.3 Developing the Model of Practice

When developing the model of practice, data were collected from four sources. This included data from the pre-model questionnaire, three interviews with EY practitioners, a focus group with EPs and then a focus group with EY practitioners. These data were collected in consecutive order, as the analysis of each part fed into what occurred within the next:

Pre-model ➔ EY practitioners Interviews ➔ EP Focus Group ➔ EY Focus Group ➔ Initial Questionnaire ➔ Initial Model of Practice

After each data collection method occurred, individual thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) as previously described was conducted. The data from this then fed into the script for the next data collection method. The final EY focus group was then analysed and fed into the creation of the initial model of practice, resulting in a Service Level Agreement (Appendix 8). Table 9 shows the initial model of practice created within the service level agreement.
Table 9: Initial Model of Practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agreed Planned Work (Proactive)</th>
<th>Unplanned Work (Reactive)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Parents Meeting: 10.10.13</td>
<td>Regular Support/Advice: Thursday Mornings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadowing Staff (Feedback): 17.10.13 / 24.01.13 / 31.01.13</td>
<td>Identifying needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular Support/Advice: Thursday Mornings</td>
<td>Specific Interventions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly Staff Groups: 1 hour</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing Knowledge (Language Support)</td>
<td>Developing Knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planned Casework: 07.11.13 / 24.01.13 / 31.01.13 (6 sessions termly)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casework Continuity</td>
<td>Casework Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint Working</td>
<td>Joint Working</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting Families</td>
<td>Supporting Families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Parent Sessions (half termly): 2 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Talk at Parents Group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning Meeting: 21.01.13 (Spring)</td>
<td>Planning Meeting (Summer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Review Meeting: 04.02.13 / 11.02.13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to promote rigour within the focus groups and interviews, ‘progressive focussing’ (Stake, 1994) was used to ensure that any themes that emerged were given attention and ensured that participants were given opportunities to reflect upon and validate generated data. Therefore, ‘respondent validation’ (Smith, 2003) was used whereby the researcher made notes throughout the interview and meeting and then fed these notes back in order to check with the participants if these were the main ideas and if there was anything else they would like to add.
3.8.4 Conducting the Model of Practice

When conducting the model of practice, data were collected throughout from a variety of sources. These included notes from meetings, conversations with different members of staff and observations, which were recorded within the researcher’s research diary. Additionally, data were collected from the evaluation questionnaires.

As this is an Action Research project, it was really important that participants gave constant feedback throughout the research that subsequently shaped it. Due to this continuous process, it was not possible for formal analysis to be conducted during this part of the study. However, when feedback was gained from participants, it was shared with EY practitioners, discussed and subsequently directly influenced how the model of practice developed.

3.8.5 Evaluating the Model of Practice

The evaluation of the model of practice was conducted in two stages. During Step 1 (familiarisation with data) of Braun and Clarke’s (2006) framework, it became apparent that the data related to specific pieces of work but also to more overarching themes. Therefore, the analysis was conducted at both levels analysing data relating to specific pieces of work and again analysing the data in relation to the project as a whole. Within both stages, thematic analysis and descriptive statistics were utilised.

When evaluating specific pieces of work, the researcher collated all the information relating to that piece of work (e.g. solution circles). Data taken from all areas were triangulated, including data from the initial focus groups, research diary, notes made on meetings, evaluation forms, ending interviews and focus groups. Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six stage process of thematic analysis was then carried out. During stage 6 (producing the report), the data were laid out in a word document in order to explain the process of how the work came about as well as its overall evaluation. Quantitative data were also taken from the likert scales on the evaluation questionnaires to produce descriptive statistics.

Once all specific pieces of work were evaluated, the researcher went back to all the data as a whole starting at Stage 1 (familiarisation with data) in order to identify the initial codes that reflected the research as a whole. The full cycle of Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six stage process took place and data were added from the descriptive statistics gained from the Pre and Post questionnaires.
3.8.6 Summary of Data Analysis Methods

This section outlines the methods of data analysis used and how they were applied to the different stages of the research. Table 10 illustrates these methods of data analysis and indicates how each data source relates to the key research questions.

Table 10: Research Questions, Data Source and Data Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Data Source</th>
<th>Data Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| What is the role of Educational Psychologists in supporting an Early Years setting? | - Pre questionnaires  
- Semi-structured interviews with EY practitioners  
- Focus group with LA EP  
- Focus group with EY practitioners  
- Evaluation questionnaire | - Descriptive statistics and thematic analysis  
- Thematic analysis |
| How can a pilot model of Educational Psychology practice using an Action Research approach support an Early Years setting? | - Pre and post questionnaires  
- Evaluation questionnaires  
- Research diary  
- Evaluation focus group with EY practitioners  
- Semi-structured interview with SENCo | - Descriptive statistics and thematic analysis  
- Descriptive statistics and thematic analysis  
- Thematic analysis  
- Thematic analysis |

3.9 Critique of Method

A critique of the methods used within this study will now be presented.

3.9.1 Critique of Design

This mainly qualitative approach aims to provide rich, descriptive data in order to capture the thoughts, feeling and opinions of those taking part in the research. According to Smith (2003), qualitative research is a method by which this information can be gained. However, there are many criticisms found with conducting this type of research, mainly linked to its lack of generalisability (Hancock, 2002). Yin (2011) states that qualitative studies produce a unique data set that allows the researcher to examine a previously unexplored area, as long as this is recognised, rigour can be
maintained. Indeed, the aim of this project was not to produce a replicable model of practice, but to highlight the need for additional support in EY and illustrate what that support could look like from the perspectives of those involved in the research.

Action Research was specifically chosen due to its ability to be flexible, collaborative and cyclical. According to McTaggart (1989), it involves people theorizing about their own practices and values, requires authentic participation, is collaborative and seeks to improve social practices through change. As this research project aimed to examine a model of practice based on the need of a setting, the setting was involved in creating the model and subsequently shaping it, thus making Action Research an ideal method of research. There are, however, some difficulties with this approach. This process values the subjective views of those involved far more than the objective truth. Therefore, it is a process of working with perspectives, which may lead to difficulties. Additionally, it could be argued that, as it is such a collaborative process, it may remove the possibility for there to be ‘experts’ within the process. For example, staff in the setting may be experts on the setting processes, whereas the researcher may be an expert in the use of psychological theories and models. It is possible that this process may remove the recognition and value of this. Holly (1984) also states that communication in this process must be free-flowing and transparent. In practice, this was difficult at times due to the hierarchical and bureaucratic structures found within the setting. Indeed, in an ideal world, the researcher would have developed this research project with all members of EY practitioners involved. However, it became apparent at the start of the project that although the setting was willing to collaborate, they preferred for it to be co-ordinated via one member of staff. Therefore, it could be argued that this project was not as collaborative as the researcher intended and subsequently did not fit as well as hoped into an Action Research framework.

Additionally, it is also important to note that as this research came out of the needs of the researcher, not the setting, it does not exactly follow the premise of Action Research, the initial collaborative development of the project. Therefore, this is a major critique of the methodology. It could be argued that any difficulties with the collaboration within this study will be attributed to the origins of the study. Subsequently, the EY setting may have not been as ‘on board’ with the study as the researcher, despite being very keen to take part.

3.9.2 Critique of Data Gathering Methods

There are, invariably, various critiques of the specific data collection techniques used within this research study, in particular, the use of semi-structured interviews, focus groups, questionnaires and a researcher diary. There is a lot of potential researcher bias that may occur through these techniques, as questions may be asked that elicit a positive response. However, awareness of such
issues and working reflectively will aim to reduce potential bias (Stake, 1994). Additionally, using such a range of data sources allows for the cross-referencing of data, thus making the process more inductive and reflective.

3.9.2.1 Semi-structured Interviews

According to Willig (2001), semi-structured interviews can provide an insight into how participants may perceive their world, as the interview can be directed by them rather than completely researcher led. As this research places so much value on subjective experience and personal interpretation, this was an ideal way to collect information. However, some may argue that the value of the objective experience may be lost through methods like this. Therefore, it was important that the questions provided within these interviews were open ended and did not contain any leading questions. Additionally, this method is time consuming and only allows for data to be collected from one participant. Despite these difficulties, the researcher felt this was the most effective way to collect information at the start of the project and again at the end.

3.9.2.2 Focus Groups

Barbour (2007) criticises the use of focus groups as they do not provide data amenable for statistical generalisation and may not be a representative sample as the opinions and attitudes expressed may not reflect the setting as a whole. Morgan (1988) also criticises their use suggesting that the researcher can use control of the discussion or certain participants can dominate. In order to account for these criticisms where possible, the participants within the focus groups were chosen in order to provide a broad range of opinions (e.g. a newer and older standing member of staff). Through a use of questions, a structure in the focus groups was also provided to keep participants on track and gain particular information needed for evaluation. Additionally, it was felt that this approach allowed a variety of views to be collected and valued the subjective experience of the participants. Again, the questions within these focus groups were open and not leading; this not only reduced researcher bias, but supported participants in expressing their thoughts and opinions regarding the project.

3.9.2.3 Questionnaires

Coolican (2009) states that questionnaires produce information that describes what a questionnaire is measuring rather than explaining it, therefore suggesting the information produced can be superficial. Thus, it was important that the questionnaires were not used as evaluation material in isolation, but supported by a variety of different data sources. These questionnaires also allowed for quantitative data to be collected, which in turn could support the qualitative data.
3.9.2.4 Research Diary

It could be argued that the researcher places significant value upon the research diary within this study. However, part of Action Research is its collaborative nature, therefore the researcher has also interpreted this in placing value not only of the subjective experiences of the participants invited to take part but also upon the subjective experiences of the researcher. Thus, by default, the researcher is a participant and data gained from her should be valued and explored. The researcher does acknowledge the subjective nature of this data gathering tool, but also considers that the information gained could not have been gained in other ways. For example, it was able to provide an insight into the structures of the setting, notes from meetings and practices, as well as identifying the subjective experiences of the researcher as a participant.

Nevertheless, this information was never used in isolation but triangulated with other pieces of data in order to support the findings.

3.9.3 Critique of Data Analysis

According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is flexible and unlike many other types of qualitative analytical methods, it is not theoretically driven, therefore providing it with theoretical freedom. It is important that this research profiles a rich, detailed yet complex account of the project that is purely data driven, as reflects the stance of the research. This was, therefore, considered to be the most appropriate type of analysis. However, there are limits in the use of thematic analysis. This method may miss nuanced data through the process of developing themes and has limited interpretive power. Reliability may also be reduced through the personal interpretation of the research. Therefore, a section of the coding was checked by an additional researcher in order to reduce the impact of this bias. The present researcher and additional researcher reached a high percentage of agreement: two pages of transcription were coded by the additional researcher, out of 774 words coded by the researcher, 692 were matched by the additional researcher, creating 89% reliability. Of those 2 pages, the researcher separated the data into 6 codes, these 6 codes, although had different wording, was also matched by the additional researcher.

Additionally, within the focus groups and semi-structured interviews, data checking occurred. Therefore, notes were made during the data collection methods that reflected the discussions. Towards the end, these notes were read to the participants to check that this was what they meant and to check if they wanted anything else to be added.
3.9.4 Dual-Role of the Researcher

A major critique of this research is the dual-role of the researcher, as she also was the trainee EP conducting the work within the setting. This added to the already subjective nature of the study and made it more difficult for the researcher to reflect truly upon a process that she was a part of. However, a key aspect to this research is its attempt to make it as real-world-research as possible, its transferability to EP practice. EPs, within their everyday practice, have to evaluate their practice and even more so with a move towards traded services. Additionally, with increasing cuts to EP services it would be unreasonable to provide one setting with more than the one EP on a regular basis. Therefore, it was decided that the researcher would take on the role of conducting the research as a practitioner and evaluating it as a researcher in order for it to reflect the role of the EP as closely as possible.

3.9.5 Demand Characteristics

Leading on from the dual-role of the researcher it is important to reflect upon the demand characteristics this may have created. When evaluating the project, participants may have shown socially desirable responses or demand characteristics in order to support the researcher (Bryman, 2001). Therefore, in order to reduce some of this bias where possible, the focus group and semi-structured interview conducted towards the end of the project were not conducted by the researcher but by an EP independent of the setting.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

This research study has been carried in accordance with the School of Education Ethical Practice Policy and Guidance (School of Education, University of Manchester, 2012). Effort has been made to demonstrate research integrity by considering the following principles for ethical practice:

- Respect for human dignity
- Ensure integrity and quality
- Respect for free and informed consent
- Respect for vulnerable persons
- Respect for privacy and confidentiality
- Participation should be voluntary
- Procedures should avoid harm
Informed consent was gained from all parents/carers, EY practitioners, EPs and additional professionals who were involved in providing data for the study. Evaluation questionnaires were completed anonymously and names were not recorded after voice recordings were taken. All information that was collected during this study was strictly confidential and it was made clear that participants had the right to withdraw at any point of the project. No one, other than the researcher, listened to the audio recordings of the focus groups and semi-structured interview. All recordings, transcriptions and additional data collected have been kept securely in a locked filing cabinet and an encrypted data stick. This data will be stored securely for five years after its collection. The receipt of UREC research approval is in Appendix 18.

There are is a variety of ethical considerations that are specific to this research.

3.10.1 Dual-Role of the Researcher

As previously mentioned there are a variety of ethical issues surrounding the dual-role of the researcher. This included making it more difficult for the researcher to reflect objectively regarding the project as she was so involved. This may have made it difficult for the researcher to make decisions that were more favourable for the setting than the research and thus take a more ethical decision. For example, in the last half term of the project the researcher did not conduct any direct work with staff, despite having capacity to do so. As it was a busy time for the EY setting the researcher decided not to contact the setting too often to offer work, despite reducing the work previously planned. It was felt that too much contact and offering increased involvement may have increased stress within the setting, particularly in terms of logistics. Therefore, it was really important for the researcher to receive supervision surrounding issues such as these as well as how EPs can balance evaluating their practice along with providing direct work.

The dual roles occurred constantly throughout the research. Although they could have been conducted by separate people, it could also be argued that having one person so involved with the setting may be preferable from an organisational aspect, facilitating the forming of relationships and providing regular contact.

3.10.2 Impact of the Researcher

Due to the high level and individual involvement from the researcher, it was important to reflect upon the impact the research has had upon the researcher. The frequency and types of contact between the researcher and others within the research meant that the researcher’s role included offering time and space for staff and parents/carers to offload and to provide emotional containment. It was vital that the researcher also then received the emotional containment in turn
from supervisors in order to offer effective support. The researcher also used the research diary as a method of support.

Throughout the research, it also became apparent that similar to many organisations there were a number of systemic and bureaucratic issues within the setting. As the researcher was so involved with the setting and perceived as ‘one of the team’ these issues became more apparent. The researcher regularly reflected upon these in supervision and looked for guidance in how to not add and be a part of these issues, but support their reduction where appropriate. Similar to the point raised above, this also took an emotional toll on the researcher, who needed support in order to remove herself from such ‘within’ issues in the setting and stick to her role within the setting.

At the start of the research, the researcher developed a flow chart of supervisors and other EPs that she could contact should they need additional supervision. A significant amount of peer supervision also occurred within the EP service where the researcher worked.

3.10.3 Research Boundaries

The systemic and bureaucratic issues raised above, along with the collaboration in developing the research, lead to some blurred boundaries being created between the setting and researcher. As the role of the researcher was fluid and changed according to needs of the setting, it made it difficult for the setting to be aware of what the researcher’s role exactly included, despite the written contract between the two. As the researcher was often part of the team and had good relationships with staff, it made it easier for them to ask the researcher to do things not part of her role, for example, provide one-to-one support for children when they were short staffed. It also made it easier for the setting to not complete paper work properly or ask the researcher to find a different room to work with a child, giving outside professionals the priority. These issues were reflected upon within supervision and the importance of clear boundaries discussed.

3.10.4 Research Ending

Another issue that the researcher was mindful of throughout included the ending of the research. As the EY setting was to receive a lot of educational psychology support for the one year period, then revert to the original level of EP support, the researcher did not want to leave the nursery staff in a difficult position whereby they might struggle with reduced support. Therefore, much of the direct work with the setting was about increasing capacity of staff and parents/carers in order for them to carry aspects on without the researcher. The researcher also requested to remain involved with the setting, by supporting them as their EP for the next academic year in order to continue the relationship that had built up during the year. This would also allow the researcher to provide
further support in line with the work already conducted, as long as it was within their allocation, if needed.

3.11 Summary of Methodology

The investigative nature of this project was dictated, to a large extent, by the methods of data collection and analysis chosen to complete the research. As a piece of Action Research, the fact that the evaluation of the project by its participants, which included the researcher, also formed part of the data analysis, added a layer of complexity when tackling issues such as choice of data collection methods and researcher bias. A justification of the chosen methods has been given and examples of attempts to reduce any potential researcher bias presented. It is nevertheless acknowledged that, since the researcher has remained throughout an integral participant in the project, some element of subjectivity is inevitable. Although this may be construed as undesirable in terms of ‘scientific enquiry’, it nevertheless represents an authentic approach to research in the ‘real world’ of the EP.
Chapter 4: Findings

4.1 Chapter Outline

The longitudinal nature of the project and the cyclical nature of this type of Action Research has led to the creation of a vast amount of data. As a result of each cycle, the researcher had to plan the work, conduct it, monitor it, produce data, analyse that, then review and reflect upon it. Therefore, once one cycle was completed, the researcher went back to the start of the cycle in order to keep monitoring and adjusting the work as part of this project. A decision has been made regarding how best to present the findings in a way that is consistent with the Action Research framework and most appropriately tells the story of the project and its outcomes. It was felt that a chronological account of each phase of the project, detailing in turn how the work developed, the data that led to those developments and the overall findings of the work, would be the most appropriate approach to take. Therefore, the findings are presented chronologically in three main phases, these relate to:

- Phase 1: The Development of the Initial Model of Practice
- Phase 2: Work Delivered within the Model of Practice
- Phase 3: Evaluation of the Model as a Whole

Each of the three phases is further subdivided, as appropriate, into various sections. Due to the complexity of this chapter, the contents are provided below in order to outline the different parts of this chapter.

Phase 1

4.2 The development of initial model of practice

4.2.1 Part 1: Initial ideas about the model of practice
4.2.2 Part 2: Making the model of practice tangible and feasible
4.2.3 Part 3: Finalising proposed model of practice

Phase 2

4.3 Work delivered within the model of practice

4.3.1 Staff support

4.3.1.1 Initial work with staff
4.3.1.2 Solution circles
4.3.1.3 Language intervention

4.3.2 Casework involvement

4.3.2.1 Planning meetings
4.3.2.2 Attendance at additional meetings
4.3.2.3 Individual casework
4.3.3 Parent support

4.3.3.1 Attendance at new parent’s meeting
4.3.3.2 Parent workshops
4.3.3.3 Outreach work

Phase 3

4.4 Evaluation of the model as a whole

4.4.1 Quantitative data from the pre/post questionnaires
4.4.2 Overall themes
4.4.3 Comparison of initial model to actual model
4.4.4 Traded services
4.4.5 Future use of EP time

4.5 Summary

The table below includes each phase along with the data sources used within those phases.

**Table 11: Chapter Outline with Work Included and Data Source Used**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Work Included</th>
<th>Data Source / Appendices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phase 1: The development of initial model of practice</td>
<td>Part 1: Initial ideas about the model of practice</td>
<td>Pre-model questionnaire (questionnaire – Appendix 4)/Staff interview (script – Appendix 5)/Discussion with SENCo/Head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Part 2: Making the model of practice tangible and feasible</td>
<td>EP focus group (script – Appendix 6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Part 3: Finalising proposed model of practice</td>
<td>EY practitioners focus group (script – Appendix 7)/Service level agreement (Appendix 8)/Proposed model of practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 2: Work delivered within the model of practice</td>
<td>Staff support</td>
<td>Initial EP focus group/Initial EY focus group/Research diary/Post-model EY focus group (script – Appendix 16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Initial work with staff</td>
<td>Solution circles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Initial EY focus group/13 solution circle evaluation (questionnaire – Appendix 9)/Post-model questionnaire (questionnaire – Appendix 14)/Post-model SENCo interview (script – Appendix 15)/Post-model EY focus group/Research diary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Language intervention</td>
<td>Initial EY Focus Group/2 language intervention evaluation questionnaires (questionnaire –</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casework involvement</td>
<td>Planning meetings</td>
<td>Initial EY interviews/Post-model SENCo interview/Research diary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance at additional meetings</td>
<td>Initial EY Focus Group/Initial meeting with Head, SENCo/Post-model SENCo interview/Research diary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual casework</td>
<td>Initial EY interviews/Post-model SENCo interview/Research diary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent support</th>
<th>Attendance at new parent’s meeting</th>
<th>Post-model SENCo interview/Research diary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent workshops</td>
<td>Initial EY interviews/Initial meeting with the Head, SENCo/6 workshop evaluation questionnaires (questionnaire – Appendix 11)/Post-model SENCo interview/Post-model EY focus group/Research diary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outreach work</td>
<td>Post-model SENCo interview/Research diary/Outreach evaluation form (questionnaire – Appendix 12)/Joint working evaluation form (questionnaire – Appendix 13)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase 3: Evaluation of the model as a whole</th>
<th>Quantitative data from the pre/post questionnaires</th>
<th>Pre/post questionnaires</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall themes</td>
<td>Pre/post questionnaires/Post-model SENCo interview/Post-model EY focus group/Research diary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comparison of initial model to actual model</th>
<th>Initial EY Focus Group/Overall themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traded services</td>
<td>Post-model SENCo interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future use of EP time</td>
<td>Post-model SENCo interview</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Before the findings are described in more detail it is important to provide further details on how specific pieces of work developed through the use of the RADIO and Action Research frameworks. As mentioned within the introduction multiple cycles of Action Research were conducted within this project, thus cycles were conducted for all the specific pieces of work. Therefore, when work was planned at the start, it was reflected upon in terms of its implementation, was conducted then evaluated. This evaluation was particularly important if further work was going to be conducted within in this area. Additionally, as all the pieces of work were a part of the research there were times when there were cross-overs of the work. For example, the language intervention was initially developed and agreed upon when a participant brought it as an issue to a solution circle. This was then discussed in more detail in a planning meeting before the work started. Once the work was underway after each intervention the researcher and staff reflected upon its progress and modified it ready for the next session to take place. This offers a typical example of how there was constant reflection and modification throughout the work conducted as part of this model of practice.

Further detail regarding the development of the model and the pieces within it are described in the sections below.

4.2 Phase 1: The Development of Initial Model of Practice

This phase describes the three parts involved in the development of the initial model of practice. Part 1 includes the initial ideas about the model of practice. This will outline the data sources used and the process of gaining initial ideas from these sources. This information is then pulled together and its results are presented in Table 11. This table provides the main themes, subthemes and corresponding quotes from the data. Part 2 includes making the model of practice tangible and feasible. This will outline the data sources used and the process of how the model could be more tangible and feasible from these sources. This information is then pulled together and its results are presented in Table 12. This table provides the themes, subthemes and corresponding quotes from the data. Part 3 includes finalising the proposed model of practice. This will outline the data sources used and the process of finalising the proposed model of practice occurred from these sources. This information is then pulled together and its results are presented in Table 13. This table includes how the information related to the model, themes and corresponding quotes from the data. It is then explained how this information created the Service Level Agreement.
4.2.1 Phase 1 - The Development of Initial Model of Practice: Part 1: Initial Ideas about the Model of Practice

In order to develop the initial ideas about what could be included within the proposed model of practice, information was taken from semi-structured interviews with staff, qualitative information from the pre-model questionnaire and a discussion with the SENCo and Head Teacher of the EY setting. Data were collected from multiple sources in order to be triangulated.

The semi-structured interviews with staff were conducted first in order to gain an understanding about the setting as well as broad and systemic information regarding the current EP role and a possible future role. The interviews were conducted on the eighteenth of September 2013 with three EY practitioners including: a member of management, a long-standing staff member and a relatively new member of staff in order to gain a collection of possibly diverse views. The interviews included questions regarding their current use of EP support, what they found most useful about such support and if given greater accessibility to an EP, what input they would like to receive in the future.

Information was also taken from 11 filled out pre-model questionnaires, from the open-ended questions regarding how the EP had supported them in their role and what they felt to be the most important aspect of EP support.

Additionally, information was taken from an unrecorded meeting with the Head Teacher and SENCo as they also wanted to express their views together regarding possible use of researcher time. Although this meeting was not voice recorded, the researcher did make notes in order for this to feed into the initial ideas about the service delivery model.

The interviews, qualitative data from the pre-model questionnaire and notes from the meeting with the Head Teacher and SENCo, were then analysed for themes. Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six phase process of thematic analysis, as described in the methodology chapter, was employed for this analysis; initially phase 1-4 (1. Familiarisation with the data, 2. Generating initial codes, 3. Searching for themes, 4. Reviewing themes) was conducted for all individual data sets. The information created from phase 4 was then combined, the themes were reviewed again (phase 4) and phase 5. Defining and names themes, and phase 6. Producing the report took place in order to produce the initial ideas about the service delivery model.

The table below combined the themes found from the data in order to give a representative sample of the data. Please see Appendix 19 for full quotes with themes.
Table 2: Themes, Subthemes and Quotes from Initial Ideas regarding Model of Practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Theme</th>
<th>Subtheme</th>
<th>Quote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Current EP Support</strong></td>
<td>Process</td>
<td>“But it had been a long process before… (EP) had even come in to just say try this with them.” (EY practitioner)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Planning Meetings</td>
<td>“We also have planned meetings with the EP throughout, yearly.” (SENCo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consultations</td>
<td>“….sat in on consultations with… (EP) and spoke about a child…” (EY practitioner)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assessments</td>
<td>“…supporting statements for statutory assessment” (SENCo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identifying Needs</td>
<td>“Given information about specific needs of a child” (EY practitioner)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Knowledge about the Child</td>
<td>“General information that paints a picture before the child even starts. So the information we get from the EP, that gives us good background knowledge so that gets things put into place ready for the child for when they start.” (SENCo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Specific Advice/Strategies</td>
<td>“(EP) has given me advice and new strategies to move that child forward.” (SENCo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Joint Working</td>
<td>“…because I’m the SENCo I tend to do most of the liaison with the Educational Psychologist.” (SENCo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Supporting Setting</td>
<td>“The EP definitely supports the setting and some of the children accessing this provision” (EY practitioner)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Improving Practice</td>
<td>“They have helped me to understand the different ways to work with children.” (EY practitioner)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work with Parents/carers</td>
<td>“…talked about next steps with the parents/carers together.” (SENCo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aspects of EP Support most Valued</strong></td>
<td>Statutory Assessment Advice</td>
<td>“…particularly in terms of supporting decisions about statutory assessment and whether children meet the criteria for statutory assessment. It’s having someone with that knowledge and expertise to guide, talk to and help, plan the next steps.” (SENCo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Knowledge about the Child</td>
<td>“…to continue to share knowledge with staff to enable them to be able to provide support.” (SENCo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identifying Needs</td>
<td>“Identifying needs any other problems that may have arisen.” (EY practitioner)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Specific Advice and Strategies</td>
<td>“…next steps/interventions tried or recommendations.” (SENCo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint Working</td>
<td>“To work together.” (EY practitioner)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting Children</td>
<td>“Supporting children and the staff so they know how to help the child and family best.” (EY practitioner)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Supporting staff with their roles in situations that may come up and how to help that certain child or staff more effectively.” (EY practitioner)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing Links</td>
<td>“Our Educational Psychologist is linked to the Child Development Centre and is the Educational Psychologist that does the reviews and the assessments there and that helps us from an early years, early intervention point of view and bringing it together. So it’s holistic, keeping things in the loop.” (SENCo)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modelling Practice</td>
<td>“I have observed the way ... (EP) worked and picked up different skills which has moved my knowledge forward.” (EY practitioner)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Intervention</td>
<td>“... And also, early intervention, which is the key.” (EY practitioner)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with Parents/carers</td>
<td>“…The work with parents/carers as well.” (EY practitioner)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideal EP Support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying Needs</td>
<td>“...the more specific needs that a child has, if they have a particular diagnosis or a difficulty.” (SENCo)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular Support/Advice</td>
<td>“To be in the setting more often, to be on hand more...” (EY practitioner)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“…providing more continuity for the child in general, and for their family.” (SENCo)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific Interventions</td>
<td>“And any specific work, I think, something that would be good if we had the time and the allocation would be that the Educational Psychologist would be able to work directly with that child or work more directly with that child and their support assistant to make sure that the strategies are being put in place, but also being adapted individually to the child and to the group as well.” (SENCo)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint Working</td>
<td>“…just work together really” (EY practitioner)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback on Practice</td>
<td>“To feedback to us on our practice.” (EY practitioner)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Supporting Families

“...and also that support with parents/carers as well. The Educational Psychologist is in more of a professional position to suggest to a parent, or make certain diagnosis if you like that we might feel but not necessary be able to make. So that’s useful.” (EY practitioner)

“A more structured approach to supporting parents/carers. For example, run half termly evening sessions about specific themes, such as sleep/toileting/play/behaviour where they are advertised and certain parents/carers are approached to see if they would attend.” (SENCo)

Developing Knowledge

“I would love to be able to work alongside you and get some more information from yourself and better my position to support the child.” (EY practitioner)

Casework Continuity

“To have more frequent involvement with certain casework.” (SENCo)

4.2.2 Phase 1 - The Development of Initial Model of Practice: Part 2: Making the Model of Practice Tangible and Feasible

The themes and ideas developed from these interviews, the pre-model questionnaire and Head/SENCo meeting, as described above, were then discussed within a focus group with EPs from the LA during a team meeting on 1st October 2013. The EPs were used to apply their knowledge of what was feasible and realistic when working with the settings, with the information gained from the interviews.

Appendix 20 shows the themes in visual form which were displayed in the focus group.

Within this focus group, several aspects relating to creating a model of practice were discussed. These included the duration and timing of entering the setting, planned and reactive work and finally anything else the EPs wanted to add.

Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six phase process of thematic analysis was undertaken on the transcript from the EP focus group. The table below illustrates the themes found from this focus group following the thematic analysis. Please see Appendix 21 for full quotes with themes.

Table 13: Themes, Subthemes and Quotes from EPS Focus Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Subthemes</th>
<th>Quotes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initial</td>
<td>Concerns</td>
<td>After</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“My concern is the year after when it goes back to the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>overcrowding and not feeling supported.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>Research</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>original service, there needs to be some work around that.</em> (EP)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dynamics</td>
<td><em>“I think that will be quite hard because it is a nursery where there is a hierarchy.”</em> (EP)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wording</td>
<td><em>“The word ‘training’ does not help with joint working, ‘I train you’, so I would always substitute it with workshop.”</em> (EP)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logistics</td>
<td><em>“And logistics as well, is there space for you to be there for all that time. Where will you be when you’re in the setting?”</em> (EP)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Time     | *“…to keep it frequent but maybe time managed and shorter, obviously based on the feedback that comes out of the setting.”* (EP)  
|          | *“I think there is value in maybe front-loading the time …and then decide on an ideal time to go in, a regular slot after that.”* (EP) |
| Focus Group | *“One of the ways in which you can most diplomatically manage people’s contributions is by having a very structured way of doing it...”* (EP)  
|          | *“I think you’ve got to have really clear ground rules, and you could even put, make a joke of it, if you put it as a joke then later on its easier to address it isn’t it”* (EP) |
| EP Model | Partnership Working |
|          | *“…one of the benefits about a solution circle is that we get to learn from each other’s practice, maybe that’s a format that could be used if they have the capacity to help their learning.”* (EP)  
|          | *“It’s also about making clear that you value everybody there, you work equally. Whoever is there, you work equally, also side them and with them its equal status.”* (EP)  
<p>|          | <em>“I think going back to the sleep clinic it might be worth identifying again somebody within the setting who is going to run it with you and you could do some joint learning about sleep so when you do go that person can carry it on.”</em> (EP) |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff Capacity</td>
<td>“I think there is something about asking them to identify it for themselves, what their capacity is to interact with you.” (EP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Needs</td>
<td>“…almost identifying what they perceive their strengths to be, what they see to be their areas of development and thinking about how we can build upon these…” (EP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting Current Knowledge</td>
<td>“It’s about acknowledging their expertise because there is lot of expertise there. There are a lot of very difficult children there and they are managing very well so it’s almost reminding them that there are doing it on a daily basis” (EP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“…it’s making sure you go back to building on their strengths the whole time and keep reminding them about that.” (EP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I like the idea of a language champion, somebody, or two language champions who you coach but then they’re responsible for coaching everybody else and from the ICAN training.” (EP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working Agreement</td>
<td>“And I think if you have a service level agreement, it can be a joint one, rather than go in with one already written, it can be discussed and plan it all together with the goals attached.” (EP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“…so they are very clear on boundaries, what to expect and you’re expecting of each other and then there is an end point.” (EP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>“…get a buy-in from them before you deliver the training or workshops, that they are going to follow it through and build it in.” (EP)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Goals                                     | “Some clear targets, what are the strengths, what are the needs and what’s it going to look like in the end.” (EP)
These themes from the EP focus group were used to inform the structure of the following EY focus group. This can be seen in the script for the EY focus group (Appendix 7).

4.2.3 Phase 1 - The Development of Initial Model of Practice: Part 3: Finalising Proposed Model of Practice

All themes outlined above, which had developed from the information gathered up to this point, were taken to the focus group with EY practitioners in order to be discussed on 9th October 2013. Within this focus group, a model of practice was proposed including: how often the researcher would be in the setting, the importance of partnership working, recognising strengths and flexibility.

The possible work within the setting was then discussed and agreed including what they thought would work or not work in order to adapt to meet the needs of their roles and the setting. Interestingly, as the initial model of practice developed, all the data collected fed into the next section of data gathering pool as many themes overlapped and supported the next part of the process. For example, from the initial ideas gained from the pre-model questionnaires and interviews, a tangible model was then created within the EP focus group. This model was then adapted within the EY focus group in accordance with their wants and needs.

Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six phase process of thematic analysis took place on the transcript for the EY focus group. Table 4 below illustrates the themes found when discussing the important aspects of the model as well as agreeing the work within it. Please see Appendix 22 for full quotes with themes.

<p>| Table 94: Relation to Model, Themes and Quotes for Finalising Proposed Model of Practice |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Relation to model | Theme | Quote |
| Important Aspects of Model | Partnership working | “…and working in a more collaborative way.” (EY practitioner) |
| Supporting and recognising staff knowledge, skills | “Recognising staff knowledge, everyone has already been on hundreds of training courses and I don’t think I need to do training or anything like that. It’s using what you’ve got and how we can take that forward and what you...” (EY practitioner) |
| <strong>Supporting existing structures</strong> | “I think we need to have a certain agreement around that as well, the professional responsibilities, you know if you have concerns around the child, if you are struggling with the child then this is not necessarily the forum to raise them.” (SENCo) |
| <strong>Responsibilities of the trainee EP (researcher) and staff</strong> | “There will always be a space, even my office.” (SENCo) “And I suppose part of that is getting us to commit to our part as well.” (SENCo) “I think that’s something that we’ve raised before, is that bit about the professional responsibilities as well really…” (SENCo) |
| <strong>Collaborative goals</strong> | “I’ve like staff to say that they’ve found this a useful opportunity and they’ve got something from engaging in this project and to have some impact on the children, whatever that is and what that might be. And whether, that through support that’s been given to a parent ultimately.” (SENCo) |
| <strong>A model of practice that is modifiable based on need</strong> | “…this model will be adjusted based on need. So it is split into planned and unplanned work.” (Researcher) “For the support and advice, can that session be used for staff or parents/carers?” “Either or, depending…” “On the issues that arise.” (Researcher/SENCo) |
| <strong>Engaging Staff</strong> | “But ultimately we need the engagement.” (SENCo) |
| <strong>Supporting all Staff</strong> | “The reason why I haven’t just brought in teachers or HLTA’s is because it’s the lead staff who tend to get more professional development just because they have too, for their role and...” (SENCo) |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model of practice</th>
<th>Shadowing</th>
<th>Solution circles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agreed planned work</td>
<td>“I think that’s one of the reasons that I want to come in and spend the day here, a few days, so people can get to know me, know my face and I can keep badgering them and talking about this and go from them.” (Researcher)</td>
<td>“…is the solution circles, once a month, I think they may be quite useful but we can play about with those as well.” (SENCo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solution circles</td>
<td>“I’d say a big one is sleep, I think they’d be interested in that. The younger ones, I think it’s even things like routine, don’t even know the basic things like that, so even that would help. It tends to be eating and sleeping are the main ones.” (EY practitioner)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talks for parents/carers</td>
<td>“I wanted to; sort of follow him through as a case. There is a meeting for him next Wednesday so I don’t know if that’s something that you’ve want to, I’m just saying it before I forget. It’s a team around the child meeting, if that’s something that…” (SENCo)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casework continuity</td>
<td>“We already have the casework from the Planning Meeting.” (SENCo)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning meetings</td>
<td>“But, if there is a scenario where staff might want support from you and you can offer that support.” (EY practitioner)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unplanned reactive work</td>
<td>“Parents/carers who are particularly worried about sleep can come in and have a chat about that.” (Researcher)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular support and advice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting families</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific interventions: supporting language</td>
<td>“I can definitely do a specific language intervention anyway with a group of children, ones that you think would be..., and it’s a good way to model.” “And it would be good to have a member of staff to work with you and see that.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Once the work had been agreed, the staff and researcher together discussed creating a Service Level Agreement, a contract of the work, which would subsequently be typed up and signed. This contract included partnership working, supporting and recognising staff knowledge, the responsibilities of staff and researcher, the goals of this project and a copy of the model of practice. A final copy of the Service Level Agreement is presented in Appendix 8.

It is important to note that although there was an agreed Service Level Agreement and agreed work to be conducted, an important part of this agreement was the flexibility, and that the model was not permanent and things could change and be adapted based on the needs of the setting.

### 4.3 Phase 2: Work Delivered within the Model of Practice

The next phase of this chapter will discuss and present findings from different pieces of work that were completed within the model of practice. These pieces of work can be broken down into three main types of work: staff support, casework and parent support.

Staff support is where the researcher has worked directly with staff as part of the research. This section can then be broken down further into three subsections: initial shadowing of staff in the setting, solution circles with staff and a language intervention run alongside staff. The next type of work relates to casework involvement, where the researcher has been more directly involved with supporting children. This section can be broken down further into three subsections: attendance at termly planning meetings, attendance at additional meetings related to casework and conducting direct casework. The final type of work relates to supporting parents/carers. This section can be further broken into three subsections: the researcher attending a new parent’s meeting, conducting workshops for parents/carers and outreach work with a hard-to-reach family.

Each section will follow a similar format. Initially the section will be introduced and will then be split into the subsequent subparts. The subsections will include initial details about the work, for example, number of sessions/number of participants. The development of the work and how it came to be agreed as part of the model of practice will be explained. Corresponding quotes are used, where appropriate, to support this information. Finally, each subsection will include a table, which presents the overall data relating to that piece of work. This will include naming the themes, providing quotes supporting those themes and then the source of information of those quotes.

It is important to note that when the initial stages of thematic analysis were taking place (Braun & Clarke, 2006, *1. Familiarisation with the data* and *2. Generating initial codes*), it became apparent that the best way to divide and code the data would be through individual pieces of work as part of
the project. Therefore, once the analysis started, the data were divided up into the individual pieces of work and stages 3-6 on thematic analysis took place (3. Searching for themes, 4. Reviewing themes 5. Defining and names themes, and 6. Producing the report).

4.3.1 Phase 2 - Work Delivered within the Model of Practice: Staff Support

This section will include pieces of work where the researcher has worked directly with staff. This includes the initial work with the EY practitioners, the solution circles and the language intervention.

4.3.1.1 Initial Work with Staff

Within the development of the initial model, it was proposed that the researcher should conduct some shadowing with staff before any direct work with nursery staff was conducted. It was planned for this to take place for three days, including a day shadowing staff in the room for three to four year olds (Nursery two), a day shadowing staff in the room for three year olds and younger (Nursery one), and a day shadowing staff in their day care for all nursery ages during the half term holiday. However, in practice, it did not seem productive for the researcher to do this; instead, it proved more effective for the researcher to work alongside staff for the three days. This included supporting staff with children, building relationships whilst observing staff practices and setting routines and dynamics.

Data are taken from the initial EP focus group, initial EY focus group, research diary and post-model EY focus group.

The idea of shadowing was suggested within the pre-model focus group as a good way to start the project and to get to know staff: “… maybe spending full days and getting to know the routine, because there are different staff coming in at different times and maybe for the first half term going for longer periods and then gradually reduce…” (EP, initial EP focus group)

When analysing the data overall, in accordance with Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six phase process, there were several themes that developed regarding the initial work with staff. The table below illustrates these themes, with quotes and the data source where the quotes were found specific to this initial work. It is important to note that all the themes found were facilitators to the project.
### Table 15: Themes, Quotes and Sources of Information from Initial Work with Staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Quote</th>
<th>Source of Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understanding setting</td>
<td>“This has given me a new appreciation for their roles, how exhausting it is…” (Researcher)</td>
<td>Research diary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building relationships</td>
<td>“Personally, I would want to have a chat with every member of staff, touch base and just say this is to get to know you.” (EP)</td>
<td>Initial EP focus group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“…I want to come in and spend the day here, a few days, so people can get to know me, know my face…” (Researcher)</td>
<td>Initial EY focus group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I also thought it was really valuable that staff saw me working at ground level, with them supporting them but also allowing them to support me, so there was equal status between us.” (Researcher)</td>
<td>Research diary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting to know children</td>
<td>“It actually gave her the opportunity to see the children before we (discussed them... we’d say ‘a problem with that child’ and she’d say ‘I do remember that child’... ‘and I witnessed’, so she sort of confirmed why we were thinking of that particular child.” (EY practitioner)</td>
<td>Post-model EY focus group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I think it was useful, but I think it was useful for Erica as well, as it was a good opportunity for her to why these children were chosen to work with her because seeing them in groups and seeing them in certain situations she was able to pinpoint what each child would need once we went into the intervention group” (EY practitioner)</td>
<td>Post-model EY focus group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiarizing with practices</td>
<td>“I saw some really positive practices from staff” (Researcher)</td>
<td>Research diary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Overall, I felt it was a really valuable experience, I learnt a lot about staff practices but also about the children.” (Researcher)</td>
<td>Research diary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4.3.1.2 Solution Circles

Four solution circles took place over the academic year, involving fourteen participants (a variety of three EY practitioners and two Higher Level EY practitioners). Data were taken from: thirteen solution circle evaluation forms, which were completed by participants after they attended each
solution circle; information relevant from the post-model questionnaire; the post-model SENCo interview; post-model EY focus group; research diary and the initial EY focus group.

The use of solution circles arose from the EY practitioners wanting regular time with the researcher in a way that empowered staff and built upon their existing skill set rather than formal training. When explaining different methods the researcher could use in order to meet these needs, EY practitioners felt that solution circles would be most appropriate: “...a big thing that I think through doing this is about recognizing staff capability and expertise, and seeing if we can build on that, if you want to do so.” (SENCo, initial EY practitioners focus group).

“We all know a lot about language, or we should do because we’ve had a lot of training and there’s no point doing anymore really. But it’s about then how we as teachers implement that and how we get better at doing that or are more specific about measuring our impact on the children. I think it’s more about using the knowledge we’ve got.” (SENCo, initial EY practitioners focus group).

“...the solution circles, once a month, I think they may be quite useful” (SENCo, initial EY practitioners focus group) / “The group were interested in the solution circle and it was ‘sold’ as a professional development opportunity” (Researcher, research diary).

There were, however, some difficulties with the implementation of the solution circles. Logistically, it was difficult for several members of staff to be released at once from working directly in the nursery, therefore the staff who attended the solution circles came in their free time after they had finished work: “Some staff found it difficult to stay after hours but it is also difficult to get out during our normal sessions” (EY practitioner, solution circle evaluation form). This may explain why over the course of the academic year only four solution circles occurred. Nevertheless, it is important to note that all staff attended in their free time after they had finished a full day of work.

When the participants were asked to rate how useful they found the solution circles 100%, rated 4-5 (1 being low – 5 being high) (Solution Circle Evaluation Form). When analysing the data overall, in accordance with Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six phase process, there were several themes that developed. Table 15 below illustrates these themes, with quotes and the data source where the quotes were found. It also includes whether the themes were felt to be facilitators or barriers to the project.
## Table 16: Facilitators or Barriers, Themes, Quotes and Sources of Information from Solution Circles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facilitator or Barrier</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Quote</th>
<th>Source of Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facilitators</td>
<td>Identifying needs/children</td>
<td>“Identifying the needs of the children and who (which child) to discuss” (EY practitioner)</td>
<td>Solution circle evaluation form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Valuing ideas/collaborative working</td>
<td>“Discussing the children’s progress and how we can move them on together” (EY practitioner)</td>
<td>Solution circle evaluation form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Other people’s ideas and putting them together to make a plan” (EY practitioner)</td>
<td>Solution circle evaluation form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Given us time to discuss the issues of the children and work towards a resolution together” (EY practitioner)</td>
<td>Post-model questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“We know strategies and things, but sometimes we get so deep into things, you forget your own practice and I think we reminded each other of good practice” (EY practitioner)</td>
<td>Post-model EY focus group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Felt the staff really value the sharing of ideas” (Researcher)</td>
<td>Research diary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“The staff came out with some great strategies” (Researcher)</td>
<td>Research diary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having time to discuss a child</td>
<td></td>
<td>“To take the time to discuss just one child...” (EY practitioner)</td>
<td>Solution circle evaluation form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“By providing the solution circles it has given me the opportunity to spend time taking with other staff about identified children or problems” (EY practitioner)</td>
<td>Post-model questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Given us time to discuss the issues of the children and work towards a resolution together.” (EY practitioner)</td>
<td>Post-model questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“I think they have just enjoyed the time to be together as a staff.” (SENCo)</td>
<td>Post-model SENCo interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“I think the solution circles we did ...we all got together and we’ve all had the time to talk about”</td>
<td>Post-model EY focus group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identified strategies</td>
<td>“Bubbles and hello card for child to encourage him to sit for a group” (EY practitioner)</td>
<td>Solution Circle evaluation form</td>
<td></td>
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<td>-----------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Select children to focus on daily to monitor their development” (EY practitioner)</td>
<td>Solution Circle evaluation form</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting child development</td>
<td>“I think it made the difference to some of the children didn’t it.” (EY practitioner)</td>
<td>Post-model EY focus group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional development</td>
<td>“More confident after input about how to deal with a situation” (EY practitioner)</td>
<td>Post-model questionnaire</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I’m sort of looking at that as staff development work...” (SENCo)</td>
<td>Post-model SENCo interview</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Between us, we got something out of it.” (EY practitioner)</td>
<td>Post-model EY focus group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuity</td>
<td>“The outcome from the solution circle was discussed at the next meeting” (EY practitioner)</td>
<td>Post-model questionnaire</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I think the only downside to that is the following up of it ....I think sometimes the ideas are there and they plan out the strategies but I know in reality it hasn’t happened.” (SENCo)</td>
<td>Post-model SENCo interview</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“...make sure it was followed through and we meet again, meant you had to do something” (EY practitioner)</td>
<td>Post-model EY focus group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for an external facilitator</td>
<td>“I could see how that could be really useful for staff to have that expert opinion and guidance really and help them with their professional development.” (SENCo)</td>
<td>Post-model SENCo interview</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barriers</td>
<td>More staff present</td>
<td>“More people to attend” (EY practitioner)</td>
<td>Solution circle evaluation form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“...it was open to more staff, but that was just a case of how many we could get there at the time.” (SENCo)</td>
<td>Post-model SENCo interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“That would have been nice for more staff to have been involved.” (EY practitioner)</td>
<td>Post-model EY focus group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timing/Logistics</td>
<td></td>
<td>“Some staff find it difficult to stay after hours but it is also difficult to get out during our normal sessions” (EY practitioner)</td>
<td>Solution circle evaluation form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“It’s a voluntary process... The actual logistics of it have been difficult because it’s the timings, when can they meet and how does it work” (SENCo)</td>
<td>Post-model SENCo interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member of SLT present</td>
<td></td>
<td>“Having a lead staff present to ‘ok’ ideas so that we can start them more quickly” (EY practitioner)</td>
<td>Solution circle evaluation form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“I did speak to Erica, about in terms of just being aware of the strategies that are already in place and have been planned and set by the teacher and by the SENCo ...if they were thinking of their own ideas and strategies that’s fine but it has to feed into what the class teacher is doing and what the SENCo is doing as well.” (SENCo)</td>
<td>Post-model SENCo interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“I was worried about sharing the information with the SENCo as I didn’t know what she would think of the strategies.” (Researcher)</td>
<td>Research diary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.3.1.3 Language Intervention

In total, 34 language intervention sessions were held across the spring term. This included seventeen sessions, run twice a week for each of two groups. A morning group and an afternoon group were held with four children in each (a total of eight children worked with), along with two EY practitioners who worked alongside the researcher in each group. Data for these findings are taken from two evaluation forms completed by the EY practitioners who worked directly with the intervention, as well as information specifically relevant from the post-model questionnaire, the post-model SENCo interview, post-model EY focus group, research diary and the initial EP focus group.

Within the initial interviews with staff about the sort of support from the researcher they would like, it became clear that support around promoting language development would be something really helpful. When this information was taken to the initial EP focus group, ideas about how to support staff to support language development were discussed. It became clear that specific training may not be a helpful model, but some sort of joint working and recognition of specific needs were raised: “I think the joint working with a member of staff and a child is a really effective way of modelling. I think everybody learns, I think you’ll learn from them and they will learn from you.” (EP, initial EP focus group). “The themes, a common one in early years is about language development, you know there are so many ways you can come at it …maybe there’s something about, I don’t know which staff or a part of the staff that need …But getting the staff to do their own kind of needs analysis, so getting the staff to identify what they feel their needs are in relation to children’s language development.” (EP, initial EP focus group). “…and the mentoring or the coaching that would go alongside that role.” (EP, initial EP focus group). “…making sure you go back to building on their strengths the whole time and keep reminding them about that.” (EP, initial EP focus group).

Through discussions with staff in the initial EY focus group and SENCo/Head, it was decided that the setting would like a specific language intervention for supporting language development within children as well as supporting the professional development of staff. In order to address these needs, a member of staff volunteered to discuss how the researcher could support child’s language and staff needs within the first solution circle.

This first solution circle identified children who could be supported as well as how the interventions could be run. This information was further discussed with the SENCo. It was decided that the researcher would conduct the interventions alongside EY practitioners and focus on supporting the language needs of the identified eight children and also support the professional development of the two members of staff included.
The intervention sessions did not have a standard formula and were based on supporting the identified children’s needs, which were predominately around difficulties with attention and concentration. Initially, the researcher planned the sessions, then the sessions became jointly planned and delivered. Finally, for the last month of sessions, the EY practitioners planned and ran the sessions themselves. Discussions were held in between the sessions about the focus, aim and how to achieve this. Half way through the intervention, it was decided that these discussions should be more formal. Therefore, a structured evaluation form was completed after each session. This form included how the session went, what worked, what did not work as well, what could be improved, what that might look like, and what might be done differently in practice overall following the session (Language Intervention Reflection Form - Appendix 23): “I felt talking about the session at the end was really useful as allowed us to reflect on the session as a whole and unpick what we could improve on together.” (Researcher, research diary).

It became apparent that doing this was also helpful for the EY practitioners and they asked for copies to take to their review meetings: “Both TAs asked for copies of our evaluation as they wanted to take this to their review meetings and discuss their progress in these meeting.” (Researcher, research diary).

I felt this approach made it acceptable for staff and the researcher to admit to when things did not go according to plan and to think about ways to move forward together: “I felt some of the new games didn’t work as well so **** and I discussed why this might be and came up with ideas about how to move things forward.” (Researcher, research diary).

Throughout the intervention, one TA in particular appeared to improve in her practice. At the start of the intervention the research diary read: “I felt this group did not go as well as the prior group. The TA was a lot more directive, less flexible with the children” (Researcher, research diary).

Half way through the intervention the research diary read:

“I was really pleased with **** after the session, as she really wants to move things forward, has lots of ideas and asked if she could take over running the groups. I was really pleased about this, as I felt she had grown so much in confidence and in her approach with the children.” (Researcher, research diary).

According to the ending evaluation forms, when the TAs were asked to rate the improvement of their knowledge of and practical ideas to support language development; they both felt that these had improved following the intervention (language intervention evaluation form). When analysing the data overall, in accordance with Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six phase process, there were several themes that developed. The table below illustrates these themes, with quotes and the data
source where the quotes were found specific to this intervention. It also includes whether the themes were felt to be facilitators or barriers to the project.

Table 17: Facilitators or Barriers, Themes, Quotes and Sources of Information from Language Intervention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facilitators or Barriers</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Quote</th>
<th>Source of Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facilitator</td>
<td>Small group/targeted work</td>
<td>“Being able to take a small group and do individual work with them.” (EY practitioner)</td>
<td>Language intervention evaluation form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Focusing on the children in small groups to observe their learning.” (EY practitioner)</td>
<td>Language intervention evaluation form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“That was useful and for those specific children, they were children who obviously had potential but needed something very specific in terms of their language.” (SENCo)</td>
<td>Post-model SENCo interview</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“…they were brilliant, really, really good weren’t they? And as well for us giving us the opportunity to work closely with those children, because you try to work with all the children in your group but it so difficult to reach all of these children so actually having the opportunity to choose a selection of children that you can work closely with…”(EY practitioner)</td>
<td>Post-model EY focus group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional development</td>
<td></td>
<td>“…more attentive to supporting children in a variety of different ways” (EY practitioner)</td>
<td>Post-model questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Made me think about the way I talk to the children, what my strong points are and what I could work on.” (EY practitioner)</td>
<td>Post-model questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“From the success of the group I will follow it up using the phonic programme” (EY practitioner)</td>
<td>Language intervention evaluation form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting child</td>
<td></td>
<td>“I was pleased with how the interventions were going, I, with the TA had started to notice...”</td>
<td>Research diary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td>improvements in the children’s attention, listening and concentration.” (Researcher)</td>
<td>Research diary</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Overall, I am pleased with how the language interventions have gone, the staff and myself have noticed the differences in the targeted children progress, particularly around attention and concentration, I also feel the TA’s skills have improved” (Researcher)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“…the children have developed very well in the past 8 weeks.” (EY practitioner)</td>
<td>Language intervention evaluation form</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“That was useful and for those specific children” (SENCo)</td>
<td>Post-model SENCo interview</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“…you can clearly see the progress that they’ve made and with the interventions that Erica put in place and the support that she gave to us, the children did make progress from it.” (EY practitioner)</td>
<td>Post-model EY focus group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I know one particular child in that group who’d we’d been struggling with for 12 months and since she went in that group we progressed so much, concentration wise and since the group has stopped I’ve actually since her regress again, which is a shame but it was that focus which made the difference.” (EY practitioner)</td>
<td>Post-model EY focus group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I think my children who I worked with in the small group became more confident, some that didn’t speak a lot, struggled to concentrate, came out better.” (EY practitioner)</td>
<td>Post-model EY focus group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“And we know now that they’ve progressed so that’s sign enough for us that it’s worked.” (EY practitioner)</td>
<td>Post-model EY focus group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Flexibility</th>
<th>“She changed her ideas part way through as well.” (EY practitioner)</th>
<th>Post-model EY focus group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I remember once we were doing a story about”</td>
<td>Post-model EY focus group</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Collaborative Working

“...on a couple of occasions she observed me and ****, how we approached the group and she said ‘I’d like to do that, that’s a really good idea’ and we’d observe Erica and say that’s a really good idea.” (EY practitioner)

“...being aware of my own practice with children.” (EY practitioner)

“If it did make us think more about our practice.” (EY practitioner)

When asked about improvements: “A more varied session, rhyming, singing, etc” (EY practitioner)

When asked if value for money: “Yes, there were 8 children involved in that and 2 members of staff, so if you were to apply that figure and share it out between those children and staff and if we did receive money” (SENCo)

“...on a couple of occasions she observed me and ****, how we approached the group and she said ‘I’d like to do that, that’s a really good idea’ and we’d observe Erica and say that’s a really good idea.” (EY practitioner)

“...being aware of my own practice with children.” (EY practitioner)

“If it did make us think more about our practice.” (EY practitioner)

Variation in sessions

Value for money

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4.3.2 Phase 2 - Work Delivered within the Model of Practice: Casework Involvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

This section will include particular pieces of work that relate to the casework conducted within the setting. This includes the planning meeting, attendance at additional meetings where the researcher had been involved with the child through casework and the process of doing the individual casework in the setting.
4.3.2.1 Planning Meetings

During the academic year, three planning meetings took place, at the start of the winter term, spring term and summer term. Data are taken from the initial EY interviews and the post-model SENCo interview.

It became apparent that a planning meeting is something that the setting has always received from the EPS and so wanted it to continue. When asked what staff currently valued about EP support within the initial EY interviews, one response included: “...coming to SEN planning meetings.” (SENCo, initial EY interviews).

It was agreed within the initial EY Focus Group that these meetings should continue throughout the project. These meetings were used to identify the children regarding whom the nursery would like to have assessments and consultations. These meetings were also used to discuss the work that the researcher would be conducting that term.

The themes that were found when evaluating this work, in accordance with Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six phase process, are provided in Table 17 with illustrative quotes and the source they are from. It is important to note that all the themes found were facilitators to the project.

Table 18: Themes, Quotes and Sources of Information from Planning Meetings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Quotes</th>
<th>Source of Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bringing information</td>
<td>“...particularly in EY work the children are sometimes going through the child development centre or involved, it helps to bring information together.” (SENCo)</td>
<td>Post-model SENCo interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>together</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting next steps</td>
<td>“…and plan out the best course of action.” (SENCo)</td>
<td>Post-model SENCo interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussing children</td>
<td>“And again, just being able to talk through the cases sometimes, saying what should I do with this or what do you think, having the EP to say ‘yes we will do an assessment’ or ‘have you tried this’ or you could refer to that.” (SENCo)</td>
<td>Post-model SENCo interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiarity with setting</td>
<td>“So, it’s been useful and a couple of children who I have brought up in the monitoring and the planning and the next steps Erica was familiar with because of the work in the setting, she had come across them so we could kind of compare notes if you like in terms”</td>
<td>Post-model SENCo Interview</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
of her thoughts really.” (SENCo)

### 4.3.2.2 Attendance at Additional Meetings

Over the course of the year, the researcher attended five Common Assessment Framework (CAF) meetings, three Children Development Centre (CDC) reviews and one Personal Education Plan (PEP) meeting. Through casework, the researcher had been involved with the children for whom the meetings were held. The researcher was requested by the SENCo on different occasions to attend these meetings to either feedback on work she had completed with a child and to represent the views of the nursery when they were unable to attend. Data were taken from the initial EY focus group, initial meeting with Head/SENCo, post-model SENCo interview and research diary.

A theme that became clear throughout the Initial EY interviews and Initial meeting with the Head/SENCo was regarding casework continuity and about being more involved with certain children where it might be helpful: “...sort of follow him through as a case” (SENCo, initial EY focus group). / “...casework continuity, that would be about keeping in check with that.” (SENCo, initial EY focus group).

The themes that were found when evaluating this work, in accordance with Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six phase process, are provided in Table 18 with illustrative quotes and the source they are from. It is important to note that all the themes found were facilitators to the project.

**Table 19: Themes, Quotes and Sources of Information from Attendance at Additional Meetings**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Quotes</th>
<th>Source of Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recognising child’s needs</td>
<td>PEP meeting: “I was really glad I attended this meeting...I was able to bring everything back to the child’s needs, as it often became about the adoptive parents/carers needs. I think the SENCo was really glad I attended...” (Researcher)</td>
<td>Research diary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement with child/family</td>
<td>“...if Erica didn’t have much background on the family or wasn’t working with the family in addition, there probably wouldn’t be much value in that, without knowing the family that well, you couldn’t bring that much” (SENCo)</td>
<td>Post-model SENCo interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Erica has done an assessment and she knows the children...” (SENCo)</td>
<td>Post-model SENCo interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication/ bringing information together</td>
<td>“I fed back to the SENCO about how the child review at the Child Development Centre had gone, what was discussed” (Researcher)</td>
<td>Research diary</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“It supports the communication it keeps everything together…” (SENCo)</td>
<td>Post-model SENCo interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“…can link that together for us, that’s important.” (SENCo)</td>
<td>Post-model SENCo interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting for parents/carers</td>
<td>“Parents/carers stated that they were having lots of night time issues so I agreed to stay behind afterwards to talk to them.” (Researcher)</td>
<td>Research diary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I am pleased I attended (the CDC review) as was able to have a quick chat with the foster carer and walk in together as it can be a daunting experience.” (Researcher)</td>
<td>Research diary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“…making the process more smooth of the parents/carers as well.” (SENCo)</td>
<td>Post-model SENCo interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representing nursery</td>
<td>“…she thanked me for going on the nursery’s behalf.” (Researcher)</td>
<td>Research diary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“But having someone there who is in fact representing education and health…” (SENCo)</td>
<td>Post-model SENCo interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value for money</td>
<td>“I think the CDC ones are good value for money because it’s supports the communication it keeps everything together…” (SENCo)</td>
<td>Post-model SENCo interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I’m not sure how valuable the CAF meetings would be if Erica didn’t have much background on the family or wasn’t working with the family in addition… But the potential of that, potentially it’s very good value for money.” (SENCo)</td>
<td>Post-model SENCo interview</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3.2.3 Individual Casework

Five pieces of casework were conducted over the project, one in the winter term, two in the spring term and two in the summer term. The casework included play-based and cognitive assessments with children and consultations with staff and parents/carers. These pieces of casework were
discussed and planned within the SEN planning meetings. It is important to note that due to the resource provision status of this nursery, they are entitled to receive six pieces of casework per year, two per term. Therefore, the nursery did not use their ‘full entitlement’ during the first term as they decided to use researcher time for other projects. Data are taken from the Initial EY Interviews, Post-model SENCo interview and research diary.

It was clear from discussions at the nursery that casework was valued by members of staff. Therefore, it was decided it would be an important part of the work conducted by the researcher. According to the initial EY interviews the casework: “Provided knowledge and information in supporting children.” (EY practitioners, initial EY interviews). / “To look at the wider picture of a child’s development - breakdown their skills/abilities.” (EY practitioners, initial EY interviews). / “By writing the relevant reports for the child, so we know the background.” (EY practitioners, initial EY interviews). / “…provided answers and shared knowledge.” (EY practitioners, initial EY interviews).

Therefore, the individual casework remained a key aspect of the work provided within the model of practice. When looking at casework overall, the themes found in accordance with Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six phase process, illustrative quotes and their source are presented in Table 19. It also includes whether the themes were felt to be facilitators or barriers to the project.

Table 20: Facilitators or Barriers, Themes, Quotes and Sources of Information from Individual Casework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facilitators or Barriers</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Quotes</th>
<th>Source of Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facilitators</td>
<td>Familiarity with setting</td>
<td>“…they don’t feel as daunted by ‘this is an Educational Psychologist who’s assessing my child’.” (SENCo)</td>
<td>Post-model SENCo interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“I felt the casework went well because I knew the staff and I knew the child.” (Researcher)</td>
<td>Research diary</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“…the SENCo asked me about casework for next term and together we were able to identify a child who may benefit from further work with myself.” (Researcher)</td>
<td>Research diary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value placed</td>
<td></td>
<td>“…casework is invaluable.” (SENCo)</td>
<td>Post-model SENCo interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“…would need to be quite a big part of the work”</td>
<td>Post-model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative working</td>
<td>“It’s a more positive working together to find strategies and so on to support parents/carers and I think they have found that helpful.” (SENCo)</td>
<td>SENCo interview</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“The SENCo and I feedback to parents/carers about the assessment, I felt we worked really well together as were coming from the same angle.” (Researcher)</td>
<td>Post-model SENCo interview</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“….the SENCo asked me about casework for next term and together we were able to identify a child who may benefit from further work with myself.” (Researcher)</td>
<td>Research diary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statutory assessment</td>
<td>“The casework tends to be more often when we are looking at possible requesting statutory assessment…”(SENCo)</td>
<td>Post-model SENCo interview</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Next steps</td>
<td>“….and look at what we need to do next really” (SENCo)</td>
<td>Post-model SENCo interview</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I would say because often with the casework, you know we’ve tried strategies and we’ve tried and we’ve got to a place with these children where perhaps we need more.” (SENCo)</td>
<td>Post-model SENCo interview</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting parents/carers</td>
<td>“Casework with **** I just know that the parent agreed with everything that she said.” (EY practitioner)</td>
<td>Initial EY focus group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I think, she did an assessment on ****, I think she let mum know that some of the things she was thinking were actually right and looking at ideas as to how to be effect.” (EY practitioner)</td>
<td>Initial EY focus group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Met with a mother, who I completed a piece of casework with her child last term, however she did not feel ready/comfortable to meet with me then. Therefore, the SENCo just kept the offer of her meeting with me until/if she wanted to at a later date, so she clearly felt comfortable/ready to now meet with me” (Researcher)</td>
<td>Research diary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value for</td>
<td>“We do have a lot of children with emerging...”</td>
<td>Post-model</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
money
additional needs, obviously being EYs children are often coming to us with no other input so we kind of need it.” (SENCo)

| Barriers | Staff involvement | "I know the children that she’s worked with but not really been involved with it.” (EY practitioner) | Initial EY focus group |

4.3.3 Phase 2 - Work Delivered within the Model of Practice: Parent Support

The final section of phase two will report the findings of the work that was conducted in order to support parents/carers. This includes attendance at the parents/carers’ evening held for new parents/carers, the parent workshops and the outreach work conducted with one family.

4.3.3.1 Attendance at New Parents/Carers’ Evening

The researcher attended a parents/carers’ evening in the winter term for new parents/carers. The evening aimed to support parents/carers and staff in getting to know each other better and providing some more information about the setting in general and show some of the work and activities the children have done. Through discussions at the start of the project, the researcher was asked by the SENCo if she could attend, as a way to become more familiar with parents/carers and the setting. Data is taken from the post-model interview with the SENCo and research diary.

The themes found, in accordance with Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six phase process, regarding this piece of work are provided in the table below along with quotes and the information source. It is important to note that all the themes found were facilitators to the project.

Table 21: Themes, Quotes and Sources of Information from Attendance at New Parents/Carers’ Evening

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Quotes</th>
<th>Source of Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part of the team</td>
<td>&quot;... I was saying before about this person is part of our team, we are a multi-agency team and its how we work together.” (SENCo)</td>
<td>Post-model SENCo interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Was introduced (at the parents/carers evening) as the 'in-house trainee Psychologist’” (Researcher)</td>
<td>Research diary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships with</td>
<td>&quot;I think it just helps to build those relationships and break down any barriers.&quot; (SENCo)</td>
<td>Post-model SENCo interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parents/carers</td>
<td>&quot;I felt it was good for parents/carers to get to know my face”</td>
<td>Research diary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.3.3.2 Parent Workshops

Three workshops for parents/carers were held during the project, one per term. These were run by the researcher with input from the SENCo regarding content. The SENCo also attended half of the first workshop. The first was regarding children’s sleep difficulties and the next two concerned difficulties with toileting children. A total of eleven parents/carers attended the workshops (seven in the first, one in the next, then four in the final workshop). Data for these are taken from the initial EY interviews, initial meeting with the Head/SENCo, six workshop evaluation forms, post-model interview with the SENCo, post-model EY focus group, and the research diary.

A theme that became common when producing the initial model of practice was around supporting parents/carers. For example: “...and also that support with parents/carers as well. The Educational Psychologist is in more of a professional position to suggest to a parent...” (EY practitioner, initial EY interviews).

The idea of parent drop-in sessions was also mentioned: “I think a drop-in might be nice for parents/carers.” (EY practitioner, initial EY interviews).

When this information was shared in the initial meeting with the Head/SENCo, concerns were raised about parents/carers’ attendance and it not being a productive use of researcher time. Through discussions, it was decided that parent workshops concerning specific issues may be more beneficial. It was also suggested that the workshop would address the most prominent need of the parents/carers expressed to the nursery at that time. For example, during the winter term the SENCo and staff had noticed that many parents/carers were raising difficulties with getting their children to sleep. Therefore, it was decided that the first workshop should be about sleep difficulties.

These workshops included: a simple theory base, impact of difficulties, strategies, activities where parents/carers were asked to apply these strategies and time for discussion (see Appendix 24 sleep workshop slides and Appendix 25 for toileting workshop slides). In the first workshop, it is
important to note that it was planned to last for forty-five minutes but continued for one hour fifteen minutes with five of the seven attendees staying behind when the workshop finished: “The session went on for 1 hour and 15 minutes (30 minutes over the planned 45 minutes) and 5 parents/carers stayed to talk to me afterwards ...the parents/carers clearly valued the workshops.” (Researcher, research diary).

Evaluation data from parents/carers were not collected from the first workshop as the researcher had yet to receive ethical permission to so do. However, permission was gained for the subsequent workshops.

The second workshop, regarding toileting, only had one parent arrive therefore it was made into a consultation. Within this consultation, many issues arose regarding sleep and toileting issues (two separate evaluation forms were filled regarding the two issues). Feedback regarding this consultation was provided second hand from a member of staff within the post-model EY focus group: “…I do know one parent that did attend, she said she had a 100% success with it. She also gave advice on sleep patterns and a few more issues came out with that particular parent, which she gave some good ideas...” (EY practitioner, post-model EY focus group).

According to the workshop evaluation forms that were given to parents/carers after they had completed the workshops (workshop 2 and 3), in which parents/carers were asked to rate their knowledge of toileting difficulties and practical ideas, indicated that these had improved after the workshops. The overall themes found, in accordance with Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six phase process regarding these workshops, are presented in the table below along with quotes and the information source. It also includes whether the themes were felt to be facilitators or barriers to the project.

Table 22: Facilitators or Barriers, Themes, Quotes and Sources of Information from Parent Workshops

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facilitators or Barriers</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Quotes</th>
<th>Source of Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facilitators</td>
<td>Need based</td>
<td>“So we identified EY issues, toilet training and sleep and these were things that we get many enquiries and difficulties and you know, many parents/carers need support and advice around that.” (SENCo)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“The SENCo suggested that I do the talk again at a later date for those who couldn’t make it this time.” (Researcher)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Post-model SENCo interview</td>
<td>Research diary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical ideas</td>
<td>“Ideas for getting them (my children) out of my bed” (Parent)</td>
<td>Workshop evaluation forms</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Be more consistent” (Parent)</td>
<td>Workshop evaluation forms</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Using toys and talking about going to the toilet and making it fun” (Parent)</td>
<td>Workshop evaluation forms</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>“Feel like I can so this now I have had a talk with Erica” (Parent)</td>
<td>Workshop evaluation forms</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“…towards the end parents/carers started talking and sharing experiences. I felt my role was about facilitating these discussions. It also helped me to recognise the importance of peer support” (Researcher)</td>
<td>Research diary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative Working</td>
<td>“We’ve agreed that we would do is some work with parents/carers on specific issues.” (SENCo)</td>
<td>Post-model SENCo interview</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I think that’s been a good thing to work together on really.” (SENCo)</td>
<td>Post-model SENCo interview</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trainee knowledge</td>
<td>“I would say the more expert opinion and checking out what’s the most up-to-date, current, correct advice based on research and best practice really.” (SENCo)</td>
<td>Post-model SENCo interview</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value for money</td>
<td>“I would probable tie that in with the parent information sessions (parents/carers evening) in terms of value for money, so they were equal depending on what’s most appropriate at the time for the parents/carers that we are working with or the children that we are working with.” (SENCo)</td>
<td>Post-model SENCo interview</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barriers Logistical difficulties</td>
<td>“Managed to get into the community room 5 minutes before then had to move the room around” (Researcher)</td>
<td>Research diary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.3.3.3 Outreach Work

The researcher conducted 11 home visits to one family who were having significant difficulties at home regarding their child who attended the nursery. These visits were conducted over a seven month period from December to July. The first two visits were conducted with a LA Portage Worker, one visit involved the researcher on her own, then eight joint visits with the families’ Health Visitor took place. Data came from the post-model SENCo interview, research diary, outreach evaluation form and joint working evaluation form.

As previously mentioned, ‘supporting parents/carers’ was an important identified theme from the initial information gained. As the research progressed, the SENCo asked if the researcher would be willing to spend some of her time doing some work within the home with a family from the nursery. There were many concerns about this family and their children and the SENCo asked the researcher if she could do some targeted work supporting the family. Evidence from the post-model SENCo interview highlights the aim/need for the work:

“That is something which I think is not common for EP to do, but from our point of view that was something really, really useful ...It wasn’t going to work just talking about it in a meeting and saying ‘try this’ or ‘have you done this’, you actually needed somebody. And also in terms of, I would say the emotional needs of the family as well, it decided somebody quite skilled to do that work with the family because they were very down on the child. Everything that was going wrong in the family was because of this child so they did need that psychology input to actually change their behaviour and change their way of thinking. It was quite a specific piece of work that really needed the psychology professional I feel to really bring something extra to that that hadn’t been brought before.” (SENCo, post-model SENCo interview)

In order to get to know the parents/carers, it was decided that the researcher would undertake a couple of joint visits with a Portage Worker who was soon to withdraw from the family. A new Health Visitor also became involved with the family, so through discussions with herself and the SENCo, it was decided that a more collaborative/multiagency approach could be more beneficial between the researcher, Health Visitor and family.

This family had appeared to be ‘written off’ by many professionals. Consequently, the Health Visitor and researcher decided to take a really positive approach to the home visits: “I didn’t want to be another professional that saw this family as a ‘hopeless’ case, I wanted to offer something more than nursery could, something in their own home.” (Researcher, research diary).

Half way through the support, the family told us that they had been involved with a TV programme that supported families with difficulties. However, they were not very pleased with how they had
been treated, indeed: “****’s dad said that he preferred working with us to (TV presenter), as we
didn’t make it feel small, or tell him what to do, he also said that he liked that we talked about
different strategies and he could decide what might work best.” (Researcher, research diary).

In the final session, the work was evaluated and reflected upon with the family. It is important to
note that the parents/carers had split up before the final two sessions. Despite this, both still
attended. According to the outreach work evaluation forms both parents/carers rated the support as
‘high’, when asked to rate it from 1 being ‘low’ to 5 being ‘high’. They both rated their practical
ideas before involvement as ‘low’ and then as ‘high’ after involvement. The overall themes and
subthemes found, in accordance with Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six phase process, along with
illustrative quotes and information sources are in the table below. It is important to note that all the
themes found were facilitators to the project.

### Table 23: Themes, Quotes and Sources of Information from Outreach Work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Quotes</th>
<th>Source of Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical</td>
<td>“TV stopped at night/changed routines” (Parent)</td>
<td>Outreach evaluation form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>“Somebody to talk to and support me.” (Parent)</td>
<td>Outreach evaluation form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personalised</td>
<td>When asked what the work added: “Perceived personalised support” (Health Visitor)</td>
<td>Joint working evaluation form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“…we’re trying to identify something very specific” (SENCo)</td>
<td>Post-model SENCo interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived</td>
<td>“Thank you very much for the support, we couldn’t have done it without you.” (Parent)</td>
<td>Outreach evaluation form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progress</td>
<td>“I was really pleased with the parents/carers progress, not only with the improvements with ****’s sleep, but it was mainly their attitude towards him, their acceptance of him and his difficulties, instead of seeing him as this ‘bad child’.” (Researcher)</td>
<td>Research diary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“In a meeting dad starting to explain his acceptance of ****, I felt this was a real move forward.” (Researcher)</td>
<td>Research diary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“... noticed throughout the visit how vocal (the child) was becoming, which is something his key worker had also spoken to me about.” (this child had a language</td>
<td>Research diary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative working</td>
<td>“Helped with my professional development” (Health Visitor)</td>
<td>Joint working evaluation form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Was a pleasure working with you.” (Health Visitor)</td>
<td>Joint working evaluation form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I found it really helpful having the HV there, as we not only took the same positive, supportive approach together but she could provide the medical support that I could not.” (Researcher)</td>
<td>Research diary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different ways of working</td>
<td>“That is something which I think is not common for EP to do, but from our point of view that was something really, really useful” (SENCo)</td>
<td>Post-model SENCo interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“... it’s been very beneficial to us as a school to find a different way forward to work with this family.” (SENCo)</td>
<td>Post-model SENCo interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value for money</td>
<td>“The outreach work as I said if that was an option and appropriate for particular families then that is something we have found useful and that is something that we would want to us in the future.” (SENCo)</td>
<td>Post-model SENCo interview</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4.4 Phase 3: Evaluation of the Model as a Whole

The last phase in this findings chapter is about the model of practice overall. This phase can be split into five sections. The first section will present the quantitative data from the pre/post questionnaires collected. It will include the details of the data (e.g. number of responses) and provide a figure illustrating the changes in participant response scores. The next section will illustrate the overall themes found when considering the EP role overall. The themes found will be displayed in a table, which distinguishes whether they are: facilitators or barriers, the themes, corresponding quotes and the sources of information they are gained from. The next section compares the original themes from the proposed model of practice to the themes from the actual model of practice. The next two sections present findings relating to traded services and the future use of EP time. They summarise the relevant information, provide corresponding quotes and the data source. Full Quotes and Themes from Post-Model SENCo Interview and Post-Model EY Focus Group are displayed in Appendix 26 and 27 consecutively. Appendix 28 contains full data sets from the questionnaires used within this study.
4.4.1 Phase 3 - Evaluation of the Model as a Whole: Quantitative Data from the Pre/Post Questionnaires

Before the overarching themes are explored, the quantitative data from pre/post questionnaires will be discussed. These data provide information, which is able to reflect the impact of the project over time, as the data from the Post questionnaire can be compared to that from the Pre questionnaire. Therefore, it aims to measure any change in views about educational psychology support, including questions relating to participant’s understanding of the EP role, accessibility of an EP, control over the support received, what that support may provide and whether more support is needed. It is important to note that the term ‘EP’ was used instead of researcher, so it was clear to participants that they were comparing the EP support they receive prior to the project with what they received from the researcher. As the researcher created the questionnaire, it provides information the researcher felt was important; however, this was the only way to create a baseline and measure change. Questions were asked in both the Pre questionnaires (11, collected in September) and the Post questionnaires (seven, collected in July) in order to track any changes in views. Those who filled out the Post questionnaires had also filled out the Pre questionnaires. The results (mean participant scores of questions) are summarised in the bar chart below, Figure 1.

Figure 1: Bar Chart to Show data from Pre/Post Questionnaires regarding View of EP Work
This Figure illustrates that overall the participants’ scores for understanding the EP role, accessibility to an EP and control increased after the project, when compared to the scores received at the beginning of the project. In particular, the figure shows that the greatest increases in scores were found in the accessibility of the EP and control over what support they receive. There was only one response whereby the score decreased after the project; this was whether they would like more EP support. However, despite this decrease, it is important to note that participants still wanted more EP support then they had received.

4.4.2 Phase 3 - Evaluation of the Model as a Whole: Overall Themes

This section will describe the themes created from data from the participants, which can be used alongside the quantitative information above to evaluate the model of practice. Prior to this overall analysis taking place, the data had been thematically analysed whereby it became apparent that coding the information in terms of individual pieces of work was the most effective way to analyse the data. However, it became apparent that there were also data relating to the general use of the researcher within the setting, which had not been included in previous themes. Therefore, Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six phase process was conducted once more exploring all the themes within the data that had not been initially captured when themes and coding were organised by individual pieces of work. These themes are presented in Table 23, including themes, which were facilitators to the project and those which were barriers.

Table 10: Facilitators or Barriers, Themes, Quotes and Sources of Information from All Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facilitator or Barrier</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Quotes</th>
<th>Source of Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Needs-based</td>
<td>“…we’ve also been able to target parents/carers who we feel we need more guidance or would be able to learn skills, depending on what it is.” (SENCo)</td>
<td>Post-model SENCo interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PEP meeting: “I was really glad I attended this meeting, ...I was able to bring everything back to the child’s needs, as it often became about the adoptive parents/carers needs. I think the SENCo was really glad I attended... ” (Researcher)</td>
<td>Research diary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collaborative working</td>
<td>“I think that’s been a good thing to work together on really.” (SENCo)</td>
<td>Post-model SENCo interview</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“I received a phonecall from SENCo about **** parents/carers ....she thought I should know...I was really felt that this felt this was important to call me about”  (Researcher)

“I felt this meeting was really positive. I felt the SENCo valued my input in front of other professionals ...perhaps saw me as a ‘useful ally’.”  (Researcher)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths building</th>
<th>“More confident after input about how to deal with a situation.”  (EY practitioner)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Made me think about the way I talk to the children, what my strong points are and what I could work on.”  (EY practitioner)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supporting staff practice</th>
<th>“Made me think about how I could support the children with speech and language more.”  (EY practitioner)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“(I’m) more attentive to supporting children in a variety of different ways.”  (EY practitioner)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>“Given us time to discuss the issues of the children and work towards a resolution together.”  (EY practitioner)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“...it has given me the opportunity to spend time taking with other staff about identified children or problems.”  (EY practitioner)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accessibility</th>
<th>“She’s approachable, you have a question and you can just go to her.”  (EY practitioner)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Answered questions whenever I asked.”  (EY practitioner)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I think it’s having the whole sort of flexibility and ease of access and ongoing contact.”  (SENCo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“...she also asked me to attend two more meetings that week if I was available which I was.”  (Researcher)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationships</th>
<th>“…got to know the staff got to know the children,</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

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**Research diary**

**Post-model questionnaire**

**Post-model questionnaire**

**Post-model questionnaire**

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**Post-model questionnaire**

**Post-model questionnaire**

**Post-model questionnaire**

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**Post-model questionnaire**

**Post-model questionnaire**

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**Post-model questionnaire**

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**Post-model questionnaire**

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Continual involvement</th>
<th>build up relationships with the children. And we’ve seen Erica a lot in and out, parents/carers have got to know her and the staff have got to know her...” (SENCo)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“She’s always very bright isn’t she, always very friendly. The children love her.” (EY practitioner)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Was really pleased that she felt able to call and ask on the off chance.” (Researcher)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>“So, it’s been useful and a couple of children who I have brought up in the monitoring and the planning and the next steps Erica was familiar with because of the work in the setting, she had come across them so we could kind of compare notes if you like in terms of her thoughts really.” (SENCo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“…if Erica didn’t have much background on the family or wasn’t working with the family in addition, there probably wouldn’t be much value in that, without knowing the family that well, you couldn’t bring that much” (SENCo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Erica has done an assessment and she knows the children…” (SENCo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different ways of working</td>
<td>“...you do just want to sound your ideas with someone or what the EP opinion is or decide what the next move is.” (SENCo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I think it’s the regular contact…” (SENCo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Had a quick catch up with the SENCo/Head, they said they were both happy with everything so far” (Researcher)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“That is something which I think is not common for EP to do, but from our point of view that was something really, really useful” (SENCo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“…I think looking at the different aspects of the EP Post-model SENCo interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role/Group</td>
<td>Quote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Early Intervention</strong></td>
<td>“...whereas it’s kind of almost early intervention then you would normally get, which means that you can start focusing on these children a lot sooner which is a lot more effect.” (EY practitioner)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Then you are catching all these children all across the area rather than just when they’ve hit and certain point...” (EY practitioner)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Early intervention is the key isn’t it. ...for any child.” (EY practitioner)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Child/staff/parent progress</strong></td>
<td>“…Just to say thank you really for the progress that the children have made and, you know nothing is more valuable is it to give that extra push to those children and the main thing that they’ve benefited.” (EY practitioner)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“…you can clearly see the progress that they’ve made and with the interventions that Erica put in place and the support that she gave to us, the children did make progress from it.” (EY practitioner)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I was really pleased with the parents/carers progress, not only with the improvements with ****’s sleep, but it was mainly their attitude towards him, their acceptance of him and his difficulties, instead of seeing him as this ‘bad child’. ” (Researcher)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Overall, I am pleased with how the language interventions have gone, the staff and myself have...”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SENCo interview**

“It’s a more flexible way of working I think that’s what I’m trying to say.” (SENCo)

“...it’s been very beneficial to us as a school to find a different way forward to work with this family.” (SENCo)

**Post-model SENCo interview**

“role and how different parts of that are useful for different cases” (SENCo)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barriers</th>
<th>Logistical/time/contact difficulties</th>
<th>Solution circle evaluation form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Some staff find it difficult to stay after hours but it is also difficult to get out during our normal sessions” (EY practitioner)</td>
<td>Post-model SENCo interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“It’s a voluntary process... The actual logistics of it have been difficult because it’s the timings, when can they meet and how does it work” (SENCo)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“…again the solution circle was cancelled” (Researcher)</td>
<td>Research diary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I arrived at 1:30 but the SENCo was unable to see me for our meeting until 2:10.” (Researcher)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Phone call from the SENCo to say that she didn’t have the consent forms signed, so I said that I could not come in and would see her next week.” (Researcher)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“...during my meeting with the SENCo she was answering the door/phone and running around.” (Researcher)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I was asked a couple of times by a member of staff”</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

**Further support**

- “We could do with somebody permanently couldn’t we?” (EY practitioner)
- “We could do with her coming back” (EY practitioner)
- “If we had someone once a fortnight, we could look at something like that. Having lots of intervention groups, then I think that would make a big difference. We could share with all the nurseries in the area, couldn’t we and she could go around on a rota. Then you are catching all these children all across the area rather than just when they’ve hit and certain point...” (EY practitioner)

**Boundaries**

- “...during my meeting with the SENCo she was answering the door/phone and running around.” (Researcher)
- “I was asked a couple of times by a member of staff” (Researcher)
whether I was free to help with support for an event where they were low on staff.” (Researcher)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting dynamics</th>
<th>“I felt there were a lot of dynamics in the room that I needed to be really mindful of, e.g. the importance of providing control and giving as much as possible to management, whilst still listening to staff views at the same time. I felt this may be quite difficult to manage but an important aspect of my role.” (Researcher)</th>
<th>Research diary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I felt the SENCo was quite directive to staff.” (Researcher)</td>
<td>Research diary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“...although nothing was verbalised there were clearly tensions between staff and the SLT.” (Researcher)</td>
<td>Research diary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I didn’t want to appear as if I’d picked a side between staff and SLT.” (Researcher)</td>
<td>Research diary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SENCo/EP role</td>
<td>“I started to feel like I needed to prove myself and show I had value.” (Researcher)</td>
<td>Research diary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“...she was pleased about the difficulty we were discussing however she made it clear that she had given a lot of input around this already.” (Researcher)</td>
<td>Research diary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I personally feel and I know this is the feeling of the head teacher as well is that, that work would be more directed by the needs of the school and directed more by the SENCo, by me, as opposed spending more time on particular issues or around working with particular children as opposed to the solution circles and I think with reference to this particular setting I think that would be more beneficial to us.”(SENCo)</td>
<td>Post-model SENCo interview</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table highlights the many themes that developed out of the research when investigating the role of the researcher overall. Interestingly, this table shows a number of positive attributes about the work, for example, the relationships built and the accessibility. However, the data also highlights some of the barriers this project faced, such as logistical difficulties, the boundaries of
the work, the dynamics found within the setting and the difficulties navigating the role of the researcher when compared to that of the SENCo.

It is also important to note that the evaluation focus group completed with five members of staff was completed after the staff’s working day; therefore, they came in their free time in order to evaluate the work.

4.4.3 Phase 3 - Evaluation of the Model as a Whole: Comparison of Initial Model of Practice to Actual Model of Practice

This part will present any information gained from the project, which compares the initial model of practice to the actual model of practice conducted.

The only comment comparing the original proposed model to actual model was produced by the SENCo, who felt that the setting had received less contact with the researcher towards the end of the project:

“I think looking at how the time as worked out, we haven’t had as much contact face-to-face as we thought we might have in the beginning. I think the way it was kind of split is I think we might have a weekly session as you like, it probably adds up, the allocation of time I would guess that, equivalent to once a week, but I do think that touching base every week and coming in and being with the children every week and following up those children that sometimes we are monitoring, you know, someone else’s eyes saying have you tried this, or I think you should do that, you know, so I think that’s. …I think particularly over these last, the second half of the year we’ve probably not had as much actual contact, but having said that we’ve kept in contact really well by phone or by email, you know information sharing has not been difficult.” (SENCo, post-model SENCo interview)

This quote highlights many of the difficulties faced within this project. There were some difficulties with boundaries, what the researcher’s role was and how that fits within the SENCo’s role; therefore, it may have made it more difficult for the researcher to engage in work, as she was very aware of ‘not over stepping the mark’. Additionally, it was made clear at the start of the project that unplanned/reactive work would not be helpful, that it needed to be planned, making it hard for the researcher to ‘drop in’ weekly.

There were also many logistical barriers to this project. Overall, a considerable amount of planned work was either cancelled and work that was hoped to be conducted became logistically difficult so did not occur. For example, initially, it was hoped that the solution circles would occur on a monthly basis. Also, it was hoped some systemic work regarding language development following
the interventions would take place. However, attempts to book in and conduct this work were cancelled or never arranged despite the fact that the researcher was regularly in contact with the SENCo about how the project could progress. Part of this may be attributed to difficulties within the setting, unexpected issues that arose, staff sickness, the demands of the setting. Perhaps, there was a difficulty with communication and it not being made explicitly clear enough the control the setting had over the work.

Table 24 below highlights the themes when creating the initial model of practice compared to the themes later found.

Table 11: Pre-model Themes Compared to Post-model Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-model Themes</th>
<th>Post-model Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A model of practice that is modifiable based on need</td>
<td>Needs-based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnership working</td>
<td>Collaborative working</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative Goals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting and recognising staff knowledge, skills</td>
<td>Strengths building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting staff practice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaging Staff</td>
<td>Relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting all Staff</td>
<td>Accessibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Continual involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibilities of the researcher (trainee EP) and staff</td>
<td>Different ways of working</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Early Intervention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting Existing Structures</td>
<td>Boundaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Setting dynamics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Child/staff/parent progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Further support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Logistical/time/contact difficulties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SENCo/EP role</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table illustrates that despite the barriers that were experienced during the project, many of the initial themes/ideas from the initial service delivery remained throughout the project. The arrows used within this table illustrate a similarity in the themes. Indeed, although not as much work may have been completed as may have been predicted throughout the project, all the different aspects of the work as part of the service delivery model did occur.
4.4.4 Phase 3 - Evaluation of the Model as a Whole: Traded Services

As part of the post-model SENCo semi-structured interview, the notion of traded services and value for money were included. Although this is discussed in the analyses for particular pieces of work, it is important to recognise the main theme that came out of this part of the interview. It is clear that although the SENCo valued each piece of work, albeit slightly differently, she felt that the setting did not have the money to spend on it: “...we probably would find hard to actually afford.” (SENCo, post-model SENCo interview). This was summarised by the EP in the interview: “...you would consider buying in work from the EPS but you don’t have the money...” (SENCo, post-model SENCo interview). The SENCo added:

“...such as this a deprived area, with high levels of social and you know, children with SEN and we did have access to funding such as a pupil premium, then, you know, personally, something such as the EPS traded service is something I would spend my money on.” (SENCo, post-model SENCo interview)

The SENCo suggests that perhaps the support available for some families at school should also be accessible to nursery schools, as well as for those who need the support.

4.4.5 Phase 3 - Evaluation of the Model as a Whole: Future Use of Educational Psychology Time

Additionally, within this interview the SENCo was asked about how she would subsequently use her EP time given the work she had received over the year. It was clear that the casework was still her main priority: “...obviously the casework which is a big percentage of the time would still feature, would need to be quite a big part of the work really” (SENCo, post-model SENCo interview).

However, the SENCo was open to using the time for other types of work based on need: “The outreach work as I said if that was an option and appropriate for particular families then that is something we have found useful and that is something that we would want to us in the future.” (SENCo, post-model SENCo interview). Adding at the end: “I think I have probably already said in terms of the exploring the variety of work and potentially how we could work and different ways of working...” (SENCo, post-model SENCo interview).

4.5 Chapter Summary

The findings have been presented chronologically, in three main phases using an amalgamation of data sources. The findings reveal many positive outcomes of the project as well as identifying both
the barriers and logistical difficulties in terms of delivering a model of practice to this particular EY setting. The implications of these findings will be discussed in Chapter 5.
Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Chapter Outline

This chapter includes the research’s contribution, reflections on and questions about the current literature, based on the findings of this study. The research questions are answered in terms of the contents and the process of the study. The contribution to EP practice is explained along with the study’s limitations and implications for future research. Finally, this chapter explores next steps for the research and how the researcher would like to take this research forward.

5.2 Research Question 1: What is the Role of Educational Psychologists in Supporting an Early Years Setting?

This research question predominantly relates to the content of this project, i.e. the work that was completed within the project. From this work, it suggests that there is a larger role for EPs within EY than the present literature indicates. This role includes casework involvement, supporting staff and supporting parents/carers. Although the literature does already highlight a role for EPs in casework, through assessment and consultation (MacKay & Greig, 2011), the present research also suggests that there may be a role for a more in depth, continual involvement with casework. Literature also highlights that there is a role for EPs in supporting the systems that surround each child (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). In relation, this research offers specific example of how EPs may support these systems through the work conducted with staff and parents/carers within EY, as well as justifying why there is a need for such work, specifically within EY settings.

5.2.1 Casework Involvement

Research suggests that casework is an important part of the EP role (Farrell et al. 2006). Casework may include conducting assessments with children as well as consultations (MacKay & Greig, 2011). Anecdotally, the researcher is aware how this way of working is a predominant aspect of the EP role and that many schools and EY settings choose to use their allocated EP time for this type of support. Therefore, it is clearly an important aspect of the EP role. Within the present study, the researcher conducted SEN planning meetings, assessments and consultations and attended additional meetings relating to the casework. Arguably, the researcher spent more time supporting this type of work then the setting would have previously received, thus suggesting that if EY settings have a choice they may wish to have more EP time to spend on supporting casework.

Overall, it appeared that the SENCo valued the collaborative, flexible and ongoing support the researcher provided for particular pieces of casework, at the SEN planning meetings and attendance at additional meetings. It could be suggested that this type of work was valued more than if
separate pieces of work were conducted, as it was the researcher’s ongoing knowledge and familiarity with the child and setting that further supported this type of work.

However, it is important to note that it was predominantly the SLT who decided on how they wanted to use the researcher’s time. Furthermore, other members of staff perceived the casework involvement as not as valuable and saw it as the SENCo’s role not theirs. Also, it could be suggested that the SENCo may have seen this work as within her role and not to be shared with staff. Another important aspect to consider is the perceived outcome of casework involvement. Fallon et al. (2010) suggests that EPs may be perceived as a “gatekeeper” of resources rather their involvement being about the findings of the assessment. Therefore, this could suggest that the SENCo may have perceived the casework as a means to gain resources rather than about specific agreed actions being set from assessment.

Although, it is clear that casework is valued by the EY setting, this finding does raise questions about its overall value and if it is seen as a specific person’s role then not everyone will be involved in putting in place strategies to better support that child and family. This then may make us question how casework involvement is perceived and whether the EP role may be about meeting the needs of SENCos and their perception of the support that they require rather then what support will actually meet the needs of the child.

It is also important to mention the value of casework involvement within early intervention. If there is an area of need within a child’s development, EY settings may be one of the first places where professionals have the opportunity to spot that need. Allen (2011) highlights the importance of early intervention within EY, indicating that programmes and support can be put in place in order to support children in reaching their full potential. Therefore, it could be argued that although casework involvement may be an important aspect of the EP role, it may be more so within EY due to the importance of early intervention. Although Fallon et al (2010) suggests that the role of EPs may be misconstrued within the statutory process; there is still a significant need for EPs within this system. Additionally, this further fits with MacKay and Greig (2011) consideration that casework is one of the core functions of the EP role.

Overall, the present research fits within previous literature, which highlights the value that a setting can place on casework, particularly for the setting’s SENCo. It appears this type of work is beneficial for a number of reasons, including what the work involves and the frequency of it. It could also be concluded that the value that an EY professional may place upon casework involvement may depend upon their actual involvement with the process. Nevertheless, this research suggests this setting does want more casework involvement than they previously received.
5.2.2 Supporting Staff

The Department for Education (2013a) highlights a role for EPs in supporting and working with a wide range of professionals. However, there appears to be little research that examines the general role EPs play in supporting staff in settings. Nevertheless, there is literature stating how training can be used in supporting EY practitioners in their practices (Horm-Wingerd et al., 1997; Haupt et al., 1995; Rhodes & Hennessy, 2000). In addition, Elfer (2012) highlights a role for outside professionals in supporting staff and suggest that working within EY is an emotionally complex task. Consequently, it is conceivable that there is a role for professionals in supporting staff emotionally, in order for them to fulfil their roles effectively. Research highlights how EY practitioners need to be supported more than staff in other educational settings and how this support needs to include an emotional aspect. This literature fits within the present research, as it also highlights a role for EPs in providing support for staff. In addition, this research goes one step further and suggests that there is a larger role in offering lots of different types of support at once, dependant on the needs of the setting.

The initial work conducted by the researcher with the setting was well received by all staff and the researcher. It could be suggested that this initial work was particularly useful in ‘setting the scene’ for the research and provided a foundation for the work to be subsequently conducted within it. According to Rogers (1957), in order to build a therapeutic relationship, the therapist must show empathy, congruence and accept the client unconditionally. It could be argued that the initial work conducted within the setting was a way for the researcher to be able to show these features to staff in order for them to then be able to receive support from the researcher. Furthermore, it could be suggested that staff may feel that they need to feel safe and supported by the researcher in order to complete additional work with her, thus creating a safe space between the researcher and the EY practitioners. This concept fits within Elfer’s (2012) research that highlights a role for professionals in creating a safe environment in order to support for EY practitioners.

In addition, it is conceivable that this relationship created between the researcher and staff enabled some of the initial positive outcomes from the particular pieces of work, such as staff attendance to the solution circles in their free time. These positive effects also included: having time to talk about children, identify needs, and discuss ideas collaboratively and the continuity of the support were found to be in line with the research that surrounds solution circles. Indeed, Stephenson (2008) found that a solution circle approach in a junior school was: collaborative, supporting, led to sustained developments, led to greater cohesion and coherence in practice. Brown and Henderson (2012) found staff from primary and secondary schools reported positively about the process and its potential to promote inclusion. In line with the present study, Brown and Henderson (2012) found it allowed for more opportunities for formal discussions, peer support and problem solving.
between staff. However, Brown and Henderson’s (2012) research found difficulties with staff being able to find a problem to talk about and suggested that some staff found it hard to ‘admit’ to having a difficulty with a particular child. Interestingly, this did not arise within the present study, which again may have been linked with the relationship and the safe space that the staff had with the researcher and the relationships they had with each other.

Furthermore, Brown and Henderson (2012) also suggested that solution circles are able to fit ideally within the time constraints of schools due to them being brief ‘time wise’. However, they did find it hard to find a time to implement the solution circles within schools. This was the same problem found within the present research, as the majority of difficulties with the implementation of solution circles were logistical in nature. Initially, many more solution circles were proposed; however, logistical difficulties led to a reduction in the amount conducted. Another difficulty included the time at which they were planned to start, as the SENCo did not want staff to miss any work and also stated that it was difficult to release the number of staff required. As a result, the solution circles had to start after staff finished work. Therefore, it made it difficult for members of staff to attend, a criticism that staff raised, as they felt more staff may have enriched discussions and further supported their professional development. Despite this criticism, it does highlight how much staff valued each other’s opinions and they considered it was a great opportunity for their own professional development.

Another difficulty expressed was the lack of attendance from a member of the SLT. This made it difficult for staff to set strategies to support children without the possibility of undermining supporting strategies that the SENCo had already put in place. However, it could be suggested that the SENCo may have seen this approach as a way of directly improving general strategies for staff rather than catering for particular children, which could account for the SLT’s lack of attendance. Perhaps this is, therefore, a criticism of the researcher. In hindsight she should have explained in further detail the nature of solution circles; that it is up to staff what is discussed and its essence is more of a supervisory, rather than directive type approach. Based on the overall feedback, the researcher might go as far as to suggest that it was the non-directive, supportive, supervisory type approach within the solution circles framework that led to its being valued so highly. This research therefore supports the current literature surrounding solution circles and highlights this approach’s ability to provide staff with time and a safe space to talk as well as valuing what they already know.

Within the language intervention, a very similar type of approach was taken. Although there is a vast amount of literature highlighting the use of training within EY settings (Horm-Wingerd et al., 1997; Haupt et al., 1995; Rhodes & Hennessy, 2000), the researcher was directed to being more hands-on when supporting staff in their understanding of language development and how to support it in the setting. This type of ‘supportive coaching’ was a collaborative process, where
existing and new skills were applied and fed back by both the researcher and the TA. According to the findings, it was indeed this approach that the TAs valued, reporting progress within their practice as well as the children’s language development. Hordern (2013) expressed concerns over the prescriptive approach training can take in supporting EY settings, recommending practitioners being given greater ownership of the design and delivery of their CPD, supporting them in participating more fully. Indeed, the present research suggests there is a role for making CPD more individualised and collaborative, thus increasing participation and control based on competency. This further supports Hodern’s (2013) dislike of a ‘one size fits all’ approach, which he considered unhelpful.

Literature highlights a role for EPs in supporting staff (Department for Education, 2013a). This support may include a variety of different approaches already described. The present research suggests that the variety of different approaches to supporting staff was dependent on the needs of the setting. Once the initial building of positive relationships with staff (initial work with staff) had been established, opportunities were provided within a safe place (solution circles) to discuss any difficulties, as well as offering individualised, strengths-based CPD through a collaborative approach where direct work with children was also conducted (language intervention). Although there may be EPs who work in such a way, there appears to be no research that highlights the use of a variety of different approaches. Thus, we may conclude that there is a larger role for EPs in supporting staff than previously stated within the literature, a role that is particularly prominent within EY, due to the emotional complexities found within these settings.

Although the support provided in this project relates to an EY setting, the majority of other educational settings do also involve emotional complexities. Therefore, it could be suggested that the role EPs can take in supporting staff, such as through solution circles or ‘supportive coaching’, could also be provided in any setting whereby they feel it would benefit and support staff. Thus, this way of working may be applicable to a variety of settings.

5.2.3 Supporting Parents/Carers

Farrell et al. (2006) state that the EP’s role also includes supporting parents and carers. However, there is little research that tells us what this support actually looks like and what it might include. Indeed, there are a variety of EY projects that highlight the importance for parental involvement as part of effective EY education (Hanon, 1995; OECD, 2001; NESS 2005; Siraj-Blatchford & Woodhead, 2009; The EPPE research project, 2004). Indeed, the EPPE research project (2004) states that it is the home environment that has the greatest impact on a child’s development. Therefore, we could suggest that there is clearly a role for EPs in supporting parents/carers, particularly in terms of supporting early intervention.
Similarly to the researcher’s initial work with staff, the researcher attended the new parents/carers’ meeting in order to meet and build relationships with parents/carers. The SENCo reported that it was useful to present as a multi-agency team within the setting and was an example of collaborative working with their ‘in house’ psychologist. It could be suggested that this type of introduction was useful in breaking down any barriers with parents/carers, arguably so they did not feel worried about having an appointment with the researcher. This also may have supported them in feeling comfortable in approaching the researcher for support if needed. Although these findings do not directly fit within the present literature framework, due to a lack of research, they do support the literature that highlights the importance of multi-agency and collaborative working as well as the need to build those initial relationships.

Such work may have also supported the initial attendance of parents/carers at the parent/carer workshops. From the findings gathered, it is clear that the parent/carer workshops were clearly valued, not only by the parents/carers who attended, but also by the setting. The only barrier to this work was logistical, with difficulties accessing appropriate space and equipment for the workshops. However, it could be argued that within a busy setting, such difficulties may be likely to occur.

Sanders et al. (2009) similarly conducted three brief seminars for parents/carers based around a variety of parenting advice and support. This approach was taken in order to reduce the large time commitment, which more intensive parenting programmes bring. Although this research examined different outcomes to the present study, they found a significant reduction in difficulties with child behaviours and parenting styles. Both this study and present research illustrate the impact that such brief interventions can have in supporting parents/carers and difficulties they may have with their children.

The final aspect of parent support within this research included conducting the joint working outreach work. From the findings it was clear that the parents/carers’ attitudes towards their children in general had improved, as well as reporting positive changes in the child’s behaviour, thus highlighting the positive effects of the work. This approach also illustrated effective multi-agency working between an education professional and a health professional. It was clear both professionals found the joint working not only effective in supporting the family but also useful in terms of their own professional development.

Similarly, there are a variety of different programmes that EPs undertake within the home, for example, the use of VIG interventions (Landor, 2014). Although video work was not included as part of this intervention, many features of this approach were utilised within this work. This includes taking a strengths-based approach, empowering clients and attempting to create new, more positive self-narratives. Additionally, this work also drew from aspects of parenting programmes, such as Triple P and the Solihull Approach. Therefore, it is clear that the work conducted did not
follow a prescriptive intervention but the researcher drew from a variety of different approaches in order to best meet the needs of the family involved.

It could be suggested that this is how a variety of EPs practice, picking the most relevant approaches to use from their ‘tool belt’ of approaches. If this is how EPs practice then it is important that it is evidence-based. However, this type of working makes evaluation very difficult as it can only ever be examined as a case study approach. Additionally, as previously mentioned the researcher has been trained within these methods of outreach work and therefore felt competent when conducting such work. Therefore, if there is a move towards this type of practice, it is important that EPs are trained and supported within these approaches.

Although EPs may conduct home visits, the researcher is aware that this type of intensive home support programme may not be common practice. Nevertheless, this was a piece of work that was requested by the setting, and one which was highly valued and supported by the family involved, as well as this work supporting a need for more concentrated multi-disciplinary working. Consequently, this research suggests that there could be a role for EPs in supporting this type of outreach work using their expertise to support families with difficulties within the home. Indeed, it could be suggested that this is a piece of in-depth casework, similar to those conducted within the setting, but within the home environment instead, supporting the systems around a child, which was the foundation of this work. Thus, it could be suggested that the parameters around the definition of the casework may be changing, which in turn, further advocates a more community-based approach, a distinctive aspect of the EP role (Farrell et al., 2006).

It could be argued that anecdotally many EPs take a variety of different approaches to supporting parents/carers within EY, based on their ‘tool belt’ approach. The present study supports a larger role for EPs in supporting parents/carers than the present literature suggests. As it is the home environment that has the greatest impact on a child’s development (EPPE research project, 2004), it fits that the present research advocates a greater role for EPs in providing support for families as a whole. Indeed, given the need for services right at the start of any difficulties that may occur early on within a child’s life, such early intervention work is vital in supporting that child and the systems that surround them.

5.2.4 Research Question 1 Summary

There are a variety of definitions and explanations regarding the EP role that have already been discussed. The current research challenges some of these definitions and suggests that there is not only a bigger role for EPs than previously suggested, but also that this is specifically greater within EY. Although it could be suggested that this way of working could be applicable in a variety of
different settings, such work is of greater cost and time. Given Allen’s (2011) suggestion that putting more money into the EY would be more beneficial, perhaps a greater role for EPs within EY would also be more cost efficient.

The EP role within this research included working in a variety of different ways in order to meet the needs of the setting, through casework involvement and being more involved with a case than EPs may have previously done. This suggested role also includes the need to have specific time to build relationships with staff and parents, in order to support them directly through needs and strengths based individualised approaches. Research suggests, that it is not just about whether a child attends an EY setting that supports their development, but is linked to the quality of the setting (Hay, 2014). Thus, given the findings from this research, it is conceivable that increased support and involvement could improve the overall quality of the setting.

Although many EPs already use a strengths based individualised approach to their work, this research suggests that we must evidence such work and highlight exactly what work was conducted and how. This is in order to advocate the need for more EP time, particularly within EYs, and subsequently provide more services as part of early intervention.

5.3 Research Question 2: How can a pilot model of Educational Psychology practice using an Action Research approach support an Early Years setting?

This research question is less about the content of the model, but relates more to the processes within and the principles that underpin it. As already suggested, there are many similarities in the approaches of the different types of work conducted. These will be discussed in terms of the barriers to the project as well as the facilitators.

5.3.1 Facilitators to this Project

One of the key features of the different types of work undertaken as part of this project was taking an integrated approach, focusing on the needs first and applying approaches that support the needs and the relevant people, so as to avoid working prescriptively. Lightfoot (2013) advocates this tailored approach, stating that the support must be based on need. Dunsmuir and Kratochwill (2013) state that although there may be a variety of evidence based interventions, such approaches may not always work for every child. They suggest that there may never be specific solutions to specific problems, thus the importance of taking context into account is important. In order to attempt to correctly respond to this context and subsequent need, the present research did this by asking the setting directly how they wanted to be supported, what that looked like and to review the work as it proceeded and developed.
Fox (2011) investigated evidence-based practice concluding that although EPs must be informed by research and their own expertise, the choice of the intervention should always remain with the client. This choice was provided to the setting throughout this research, was considered an important aspect of this work and supported a collaborative way of working. Such collaboration is also advocated within the literature surrounding consultation (Booker, 2005; Leadbetter, 2006). It could be suggested that the use of collaboration supported the working relationships between staff and the researcher and the setting may have also appreciated the flexibility and willingness to work in a way in which they felt heard. However, it is also important to state that this may also be a main criticism of the research. As previously mentioned, the work conducted was according to the views of the SLT rather than what may have best supported the setting. Arguably, there may be a fine line between feeling one is doing the most appropriate work for the child, family, staff and the setting yet still giving the final choice and control to the setting. This may also be an issue that many EPs must negotiate within their general practice, balancing the wants of a setting against the needs of a child or young person.

It was also clear that the researcher’s relationship with staff, setting, parents/carers and other professionals was also an important aspect of the work. Within Farrell et al.’s (2006) research, they state the need for good working relationships between the EP and setting. Additionally, within Douglas-Osborn’s (2013) assignment (again caution must be taken when interpreting these results); she highlights the importance of these relationships and the increased and more regular involvement of EPs within EY. Indeed, Elfer (2012) highlights the role for professionals in supporting staff, and arguably for professionals to be able to do this effectively, they must have good working relationships with those within the setting. In terms of overall EP practice, this not only highlights the importance of such relationships, but may also support the system of settings having an allocated EP.

Additionally, it is important to highlight the strengths-based approach that was consistently taken in all aspects of the work, and again an important aspect of EP practice. This is similar to the techniques used within solution-focused approaches (Franklin, Trepper, Gingerich & McCollum, 2012), by discussing what is working well and how that can be repeated in other situations. Therefore, it is conceivable that these individualised, collaborative and strengths-based approaches were facilitators of this project.

Within the present research, the researcher felt this more intensive involvement led to a greater understanding of the setting, its systems and practices. This understanding was central in conducting the work. It could be argued that such benefits may have been due to the involvement of the research project overall, rather than particular pieces of work. For example, the relationships and understanding of the setting may have come about because of the amount of time the
researcher spent in the setting and the regularity of the visits. This fits within Douglas-Osborn (2013) preliminary study that also advocates more support and contact from an EP.

Another very important facilitator to the project was the supervision and support EPs offered the researcher throughout the project. Although this support would have directly affected the researcher, it would in turn have had inadvertent effects on the rest of the project. Indeed, in order for the researcher to effectively support the staff in the setting, it was important that she was also effectively supported by her placement. According to Dunsmuir and Leadbetter (2010) supervision is key to the delivery of high quality psychological services. They suggest good supervision supports the professional competences of a practitioner, their well-being as well as considering the outcomes for children, young people and their families, an essential part of EP practice. The researcher received support from a number of areas, including supervision from her university tutors and placement tutors. This further highlights the importance of supervision in supporting and developing practice, an important aspect of the EP role. It is important to note that it was only as the project got underway that the importance of supervision became so significant, which is why it is a part of this chapter and not within the literature review.

Furthermore, the researcher also received support from a number of other EPs in her placement through peer support. Within the researcher diary, all formal and informal supervision sessions are written up and reflected upon and have had clear influences on the project. Given the length of this project, the barriers that developed and the researcher at the time being a second year trainee, it was important that she received a large amount of support, supervision and practical advice in order to maintain the project as a whole.

The use of Action Research and the RADIO framework was also a very important aspect of this research. Without such frameworks, the researcher would have had little structure throughout the project and may have struggled in keeping the project contained. In particular the use of both frameworks together worked well, with the steps of RADIO providing specific steps to follow, while the cycles of Action Research gave a framework for reflective thinking within those steps. Therefore, although both frameworks were used slightly differently they complemented each other when used as part of this research.

These frameworks were also shared with the SENCo by means of explanations of where in the research the setting and researcher were up to. Additionally, when difficulties or facilitators to the work arose, the researcher was able to take a step back and make use of the Review and Reflect, step 4 within Tripp’s (2003) Action Research model. The frameworks were also used flexibly, which also fitted with the researcher’s need to be flexible, as demonstrated when asked to attend to meetings at short notice or re-schedule work to fit with the setting. Thus, the use of Timmins et al.
(2003) RADIO model in structuring the initial development of the model, in conjunction with interchangeable use of Tripp’s model (2003), was able to provide a clear structure for this research. Therefore, this research highlights how supportive such frameworks can be in structuring all areas of EP practice.

This research suggests the particular use of frameworks including Action Research and RADIO were vital in supporting the researcher in organising and conducting the research. This research also highlights that other facilitators in the project including the collaboration, providing choice, being needs-based, strengths-based, flexible, individualised, building relationships, frequency of involvement and the emotional support offered to all involved in the research, including the researcher, were all important factors in the development of the project. It could be suggested that these facilitators are aspects of good EP practice, however, there appears to be little research which names exactly what the factors are and how they can subsequently support the EP’s role.

5.3.3 Barriers to this Project

As previously mentioned, the researcher was very flexible in her approach to the project, which although was a positive aspect of the work, could have led to difficulties. For example, the researcher was often able to reschedule work for the setting, thus the setting may have felt it acceptable to keep changing dates/time for the researcher. Additionally, when the researcher was asked to move rooms when other outside professionals needed a space, it could be suggested that due to the researcher’s flexibility, as well as being seen as ‘part of the staff team’ may have led to expectations and boundaries changing from what they might have been for the previous EP for the setting. This may have also accounted for the logistical, time and contact difficulties found within the research. Although such difficulties could be considered the result of the busy environment of the setting and its staff, they may also be partly due to the blurred boundaries created around being supported by the ‘in-house psychologist’.

Within Morewood and Rumble’s article (2013) that discusses the role of a trainee EP placement attached to a school, whereby similarly to this research there is a more frequent, intense EP role, they do not mention such systemic issues. However, this article was only written after one term of involvement, and such systemic issues may have not been part of the aim of the article. Therefore, the present author questions whether this may in fact be an issue for ‘in-house psychologists’ placed within educational settings. This highlights the important consideration that when EPs start to work more closely within settings they need to think about how they might set boundaries and prevent difficulties from arising.
Furthermore, it is also important to reflect upon some of the systemic issues that became apparent within the research. This again may be something that became more evident as an EP works more frequently within a setting, thus supports a need to draw from aspects of organisational psychology; something not mentioned within the literature review. There were some difficulties within the setting between different members of staff, which the researcher became more aware of throughout the project. Wageman (1995) states that people have both an ‘individual identity’ and a ‘social identity’. The ‘social identity’ is created through the awareness and understanding of group dynamics. Therefore, it could be suggested that some of the difficulties within the setting may have been due to social groups. There was a clear distinction of two groups within the setting, however it was important that the researcher did not ‘join’ either group but remain separate from such difficulties. This was done through an awareness of such dynamics as well as supervision, so that the staff felt supported regardless of their ‘social identity’ within the setting. Again, this is something EPs must bear in mind when becoming more frequently involved with settings.

Another important barrier to this research to be mindful of includes the role of the researcher when compared to the role of the SENCo. Forsyth, in his book *Group Dynamics* (2009) suggests that within groups, group leaders can emerge. Group leaders have a higher status than other group members leading to a ‘pecking order’ of different statuses. Within this setting, it was clear that there were different statuses between staff, with SLT being at the top. As the researcher became ‘one of the team’ it is possible that finding her status within the setting disrupted this ‘pecking order’. It could be suggested that some of the work conducted by the researcher could have also been conducted by the SENCo. For example, there may have been some overlap between whose role specifically belonged to whom, such as who was first point of call to discuss SEND. Therefore, this may have questioned the role of the SENCo and where it fits within the research. Furthermore, the SENCo may have felt that some of the work conducted in the setting with the staff, such as the language interventions and solutions circles, that may have been more in her remit in supporting the staff and may have felt the researcher’s role lay more within directly supporting children and parents. Despite requesting the various types of work, it is possible that it was not until the work started to be conducted that the SENCo may have felt these difficulties with dynamics. This may have provided the SENCo with difficulties regarding the researcher’s status in comparison to her own, thus putting her within a difficult and possibly disempowering position.

Therefore, an EPs awareness of group dynamics and group roles, and thus organisational psychology is an important aspect of increased involvement with different educational settings. Perhaps, this is something that needs to be discussed at the start when working with a setting, making it clear exactly what the different roles include and also what different professionals can do if they do feel uncomfortable regarding any of the work the other is conducting.
It is also important to highlight the differences in value members of staff placed upon different aspects of the work. For example, the SENCo felt that the most valuable work conducted by the researcher was the casework, while the staff felt the work in which they were directly supported, for example, the language interventions and the solution circles were more beneficial. This does add evidence to a point previously discussed that questions whether the work conducted as part of the project was most beneficial to the setting overall or based upon one person’s perception. Therefore, is this something that happens regularly within settings, that EPs work more to the needs of the SENCo than the setting? However, it could be suggested that this is a consequence of supporting SENCos and arguably a skilful SENCo may be one whose needs match those of the setting. Nevertheless, it was important that the researcher had a role in hearing different staff opinions and supporting them accordingly whilst attempting to make sure no-one felt the researcher placed more value upon some work over another. Again, this takes into account the need to be mindful of group dynamics and the researcher’s impartial role within the setting. Additionally, this supports the need for professionals to feel supported within their role (Elfer, 2012).

There was also a difficulty in the researcher being a trainee EP and not fully qualified. Despite the setting receiving more time from the researcher, they may have felt that they had lost out because they were no longer receiving support from a qualified EP. Additionally, staff may have felt that they had a role in training the researcher and supporting her in her role. Indeed, on a few occasions the researcher was asked by the SENCo what she had learnt after work and whether she had found it useful for her development. Although this was useful for the researcher’s professional development, it is possible that the SENCo felt a duty to train the researcher, thus not making this a collaborative process, but one that held more of a hierarchy. Again, this highlights a possible ‘pecking order’ (Forsyth, 2009), whereby it was important for the SENCo to place the researcher within that order. It could also be suggested that the SENCo did not feel that she was in charge of the research but rather in charge of the researcher. Again, this raises issues around boundaries and the need to be explicit when an EP starts to support any setting.

Interestingly, within the last term of the research, the SENCo felt that the setting had received less researcher support than she would have liked, despite having had more support offered. On reflection, although the researcher was able to conduct more work, it would have had to been discussed, thought through and organised by the SENCo, therefore creating more work at an already busy period (last half term of the summer term). Therefore, regardless of how much work the researcher offered, it may have been more about the setting’s ability and time to support this work than what the researcher could do, which determined the amount of work actually conducted. Additionally, it could be suggested that even if the setting were able to support as much work as the researcher could have conducted, they could have felt they needed more. Furthermore, the
researcher speculates that sometimes there may be an attitude within any educational setting of wanting more support and never feeling there are enough services and agencies to support their needs.

All these factors did make it particularly difficult to stick with some of the core features of Action Research, including being truly collaborative, working through problems that arise and developing solutions with all participants involved (Zuber-Skerritt, 1996). From these barriers, it could be suggested that the project was not as collaborative as hoped; that the setting may have seen the researcher as having the main ownership of the project and that they were there to guide it and support the researcher in a hierarchical way through this process. It is also important to reflect upon this project not being true Action Research, as the initial idea came from the researcher not the setting. It could be suggested that this may have stopped the setting from feeling as if the research was theirs and that they were fully in control. Therefore, in order for the model to maximise its effectiveness, the need for different types of support and different ways of working must truly come from the setting, not the researcher.

Despite these difficulties, the researcher was able to navigate and negotiate her way through them when supported by her supervisors. Indeed, these barriers provided important points about working within similar settings, particularly when an EP may be working more frequently in that setting, as well as considerations around how such barriers could be overcome and safeguards put in place in order to support the work.

5.3.2 Research Question 2 Summary

This research suggests that this pilot model of EP practice is able to support an Early Years setting through the use of a number of supporting factors and research frameworks. These supporting factors relate to more than just the content of the work, but include the processes of the project. Arguably, many of these factors are conducted within everyday EP practice; however there is little research that actually names these individual factors and highlights how important they are in supporting this practice. Indeed, there is a need to be overt about the specific approaches EPs take as well as how they use frameworks in supporting settings. It is also important to reflect upon the factors that led to difficulties within this research, including the value that is placed on work, who decides on work as well as the dynamics and systems found within the setting. Only through reflecting upon such factors can these barriers then be turned into facilitators of EP practice.
5.4 Evaluation of the Model of Practice

When looking at the themes that developed from the research it is clear that the model had a lot of positive attributes, as positive effects were reported from staff, parents/carers and noticed in the staff reports of the children involved directly in the language intervention. Therefore, based on this evidence, we might assume that the model was successful. However, it is important to highlight that the evidence which supports the research’s success is only based on the perceptions of the staff, parents/carers and of the researcher. All the self-reporting tools including: pre, post measures as well as the questionnaires, interviews and focus groups only asked about staff perceptions of the work, no specific measures of tangible practice among the staff and parents/carers were taken. Therefore, although staff and parents/carers noticed improvements in their practices or felt more confident in their abilities, it is conceivable that such improvements may not have actually occurred as they may have only thought they had.

Despite this major criticism of the work, the researcher still values the changes in perceptions and would suggest that this is what she intended to do within the research. This project was not about collecting data to show improvements in practices, but to build on the limited research and develop a model of practice within an EY setting, based upon the needs of the setting and how they would like to be supported. Therefore, this research was about staff perceptions, supporting EY practitioners and parents/carers in feeling more supported and more competent in their abilities with children. The researcher did not collect data regarding the children within the setting, as this was not an aim of this work. However, it was an additional benefit for staff to report the direct benefits of the work with the children involved in the research.

The researcher compared the initial data regarding the proposed model of practice to the actual model conducted within the research. This comparison was made in order to evaluate whether the researcher did what she intended to do within the project. Table 24 (Pre-model Themes Compared to Post-model Themes) highlighted a number of similarities including: being needs based, collaborative, strengths based, supporting all staff through accessibility, building relationships, communication, completing the work planned and staying within the existing structures of the setting. Themes that were not included within the initial proposed model included the progress found with the children, staff and parents/carers, the setting still wanting more support, the logistical, time and contact difficulties and the difficulties between the SENCo and researcher role. Although some themes developed which were not anticipated within the initial model, all the themes that were found at the start of the project were also found at the end (albeit with slightly different wording).
Another difference found between the pre and post model was how the time was planned. Initially, it was proposed that the model would be made up of ‘planned’ and ‘unplanned’ time within the setting. This was an aspect of Lightfoot’s (2013) model that staff found useful, whereby an EP was made available in the setting at specific times. However, although this was suggested initially through the development of the model, this did not appear to be an appropriate way to work, as it was important to the SENCo that she knew exactly what work the researcher was undertaking, when and why she would be doing it. It could be possible that this is linked to the difficulties found between the role of the researcher and the role of the SENCo. Therefore, all the work conducted was planned and set within the planning meetings. Nevertheless, the parents/carers and different staff members including the SENCo still requested unplanned support through informal chats, phone calls and emails. One could argue that the model that was created was not actually the one that was originally planned. However, the overarching feature of the model was that it was based on need and it became a need of the setting for the work to be planned and organised. Therefore, from this qualitative evidence it could be suggested that the researcher did in fact do what she intended to do within the research, giving the project high trustworthiness.

Despite the argument supporting the project’s trustworthiness, it could be suggested that the research has little dependability and applicability. This is because of the nature of this Action Research, which was based solely on need. Hence, if replicated in a different setting, different results may be found. Furthermore, this project demonstrated the difficulties with having ‘a one size fits all’ approach, in accordance with Hodern (2013). Therefore, one would expect little dependability and applicability if this project were to be repeated. Indeed, the researcher would suggest that this can be a positive outcome as all children, families and staff have different needs, which should be reflected in the work and the approach an EP takes.

However, it is also important to mention this research’s generalisability following this lack of applicability. The work that was conducted, the approach taken and the barriers and facilitators found are associated to this type of research. It is difficult therefore for these findings to then be relevant in absolute terms to future EP work within EY. Nevertheless, even if these findings are not completely applicable, they do produce information relevant to EP practice within EY that may be central when attempting to support and expand EP practice within early intervention.

Sustainability is also an essential aspect of this research’s evaluation. Although the project included specific interventions and work, it did attempt to build capacity within the setting at the same time. For example, information about conducting solution circles was left in the settings and the running of them was discussed to enable them to continue without the researcher’s involvement. The language interventions were able to support staff practice as well as supporting the children’s language development. The parent workshops also involved increasing capacity along with the
outreach work. Therefore, the work conducted was hoped to leave the setting in a position whereby staff and parents/carers could feel more able and more confident in some of their practices, thus supporting the sustainability of the work. However, there was some work that was conducted whereby capacity was not able to be built in the same way; including the initial work with staff, attendance at planning meeting, attendance at meetings and individual casework. As this was the work that was requested by the setting it was not always possible to work in a way that increased capacity.

Practically speaking, it is important again to state that the model was not sustainable. It would be unrealistic for a setting within the present LA to receive the amount of support that it did from the EPS, unless part of a research project. As the setting is entitled to 16 hours per term, any increase in this would have to be paid for by the setting. Buying in EP support was discussed as part of the research; the setting stated how they did not have the money to buy in further support. Although the researcher was not able to continue providing the same level of support to the setting, she was still able to provide the same type of support on a smaller scale by remaining as the setting’s trainee EP. Thus, this would continue the working relationship between the setting and researcher as well as the researcher being able to continue supporting the setting in a way that they would like to be supported within their time allocation.

Finally, an important aspect of evaluating this model includes considerations around the role of the researcher. If it was agreed that the model is successful and valid, and is therefore a valuable project to the setting, it is important to think whether the researcher is unique in her contribution. Could this project have been conducted by another professional and what makes the researcher best placed to conduct this type of work? Arguably, there are other professionals who support EY settings, including EY practitioners based in the LA, such as Area SENCos and professionals such as Clinical Psychologists.

It is clear from the literature review within this study that there is a vast amount of psychological theory and practice that has informed this research. The researcher drew from an understanding of early child development, theories around supporting this development, understanding of how to support staff and parents/carers effectively, helping them to feel supported, improving confidence as well as improving overall strategies and practices. Although arguably much of this type of support could be conducted by EY practitioners within the LA, it is the drawing from psychological literature and theories, as well as the counselling training and training approaches that the researcher has received, that suggests a psychologist or psychologist in training was best placed to conduct this work.
Furthermore, it could then be suggested that this work could also be conducted by a Clinical Psychologist instead of a trainee EP. Clinical Psychologists who work within EY appear to work predominately work within specialist Tier 3 or Tier 4 services such as Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) or within outreach services (CAMHS Tier 4 Report Steering Group, 2014). This suggests that they have specialist knowledge within particular areas of EY. However, this project was about being able to support the setting as a whole and being able to conduct a variety of different work. For example, the researcher conducted casework, supported the statutory process while also providing outreach work. Therefore, whoever conducted the project needed to be able to adapt to the needs and draw from a variety of ways of working, rather than a specialist area; a distinct aspect of EP practice.

These assertions do not attempt to suggest there is a lesser need for Clinical Psychologist or EY professionals such as Area SENCos in supporting EYs. In fact, based on the need for early intervention and the findings that the setting still wanted more support following the project, this suggests there is definitely a need for a variety of professionals within EYs. Additionally, the joint work conducted by the researcher and health professional highlights how professionals can work together to support families as well as each other. As well as a need for a variety of professionals, this project would suggest that EPs are best placed to conduct this type of work, based on their distinctive contribution to EY settings due to their unique skill set.

5.5 Impact of the Researcher

Another important aspect of this research to include is the impact the research had upon the researcher. As already stated within the barriers sections of this chapter, the researcher did come across a number of difficulties, which were directly linked to her role. These included difficulties due to her status as a trainee rather than a fully qualified EP, setting dynamics, lack of boundaries within the work and the difficulties between the SENCo’s role and that of the researcher.

Therefore, when thinking about EPs working specifically and more frequently within settings, there is a need to reflect upon these difficulties and to put safeguards in place in order to support the EP. Within the present study these safeguards included receiving support from a variety of different sources, including tutors at university, on placement and EPs from the EPS. Additionally, the researcher made use of her research diary in order to recount and reflect upon some of her experiences, giving it a therapeutic role.

This support highlights another very important as another aspect of the research, which was the emotional containment that the researcher provided to the staff and parents/carers. Although staff did not frequently approach the researcher for emotional support, there were occasions when they
did. Additionally, much of the work conducted with parents/carers included offering a degree of emotional support, particularly for the outreach work. Providing this type of support was not unexpected, as Elfer (2012) highlights the importance of emotional support within EY settings due to the attachment type relationships staff can build with the children they support. Therefore, the researcher used time within supervision to offload any issues that arose due to the emotional complexities of this work.

Despite these difficulties within the research, the researcher was able to overcome these barriers, which has further supported her professional development. Indeed, on reflection, the barriers that arose provided some really valuable findings to the study and highlighted some of the hurdles EPs must negotiate when being intensively involved with a setting and being a part of their team, such as setting dynamics and navigating where the EP role actually fits within a setting.

5.6 Contribution to EP Practice

This present research suggests that EPs have a larger and more varied role within EY than the existing literature suggests. This role may include having more regular, intensive involvement with casework and supporting staff and parents/carers. Although literature does highlight various roles for EPs, many of them are specific projects (e.g. video interactive guidance, training, solution circles, consultation etc). They do not appear to highlight this ‘tool box’ approach that many EPs may take, whereby they may use a variety of different approaches and techniques to support their practice. Indeed, this research highlights the overall need for different evidence-based approaches based on the needs and wants of the setting they support.

Literature highlights the importance of EY settings and the need for their effectiveness (Sylva et al., 2004). The present research extends this current thinking and suggests a much larger, more intensive role for the EPs in supporting this effectiveness within these settings. This further implies a greater role for an EP in supporting early intervention and putting services in place as soon as possible when a child, family or setting may need extra support. Consequently, this research promotes a move away from EPs conducting solely casework within EY and supports a move towards utilising EP skills in a variety of different ways, such as offering specific support to parents/carers and staff. This way of working very much fits within Elfer’s (2013) research as well as Douglas’s (2006) emotional containment from the Solihull Approach, all of which highlight the importance of supporting people in order for them to best be able to then support a child or children. While this research cannot state what exact work may be helpful to conduct within an early setting, due to its lack of generalisability, it does suggest that if settings had the choice they would request to have more EP time and use this in a variety of different ways that draws on the extensive ‘tool kit’ and knowledge base of the EP.
According to Allen (2011), if we are able to support EY more effectively, then we not only make long term saving in public spending, but more importantly, support children in reaching their potential and become “the good parents of tomorrow.” (p.xi). Therefore, this research fits perfectly within the current legislation surrounding EY and suggests there is a role for services and professionals to carry out more support than is presently available. This researcher would even go as far as to suggest that there does not appear to be a service that has taken ownership over this present gap in services and so there may be an opportunity for EPs to fill this gap and offer more intensive, regular support to EY in line with this legislation.

However, despite this suggestion, at the present time it would be unrealistic for this to occur within many LAs, due to the costs of EPs and the current lack of funding within EY settings. Many LAs may also not be able to increase such resources to support settings. Whilst it is arguable that there is an overall lack of LA funding within EY, there is currently a move in some LAs to other funding streams, such as the SEND funding. For example, in 2015 it has been suggested that Nursery Schools may receive a notional SEND budget (additional funding to support children with SEND). Additionally, in the present LA within which this research has been conducted, in September 2014, two funding streams have been created: ‘Support’ an additional £1,500 and ‘Support Plus’ an additional £3,000. Therefore, this is why it was important to ask in this research for all separate pieces of work to be evaluated in terms of ‘value for money’, in order to gauge whether the setting would be willing to ‘buy in’ from these funding pots for additional EP support. Although the SENCo did place different value on the pieces of work, she did feel that the majority of the work was value for money but stated that the setting did not have the funding to be able to buy in such resources. Hence, given this change to funding streams, it will be interesting to see whether there is a move towards EY settings buying in EP traded services when they would like support beyond what the LA is currently able to fund.

This research has highlighted EPs’ distinctive contribution to supporting EY settings, in particularly not just through the specific pieces of work, but the approach EPs are able to take and ability to work in accordance with the needs of the setting. It could also be suggested that there may be a role for EPs in supporting other professionals more directly within EY, such as Health Visitors and Portage Workers. EPs may also have a role in supporting the families and children who do not attend settings, either out of choice or as the child is too young. Many of the skills used within this research could be applied to a variety of ages and professionals in order to further meet the needs of young children and their families as soon as they are in need of this support. The DfEE (2000) suggests that EPs have a role in delivering a greater range of service, including more outreach type work. This is further supported by Farrell et al. (2006) who advocate a more community-based approach to the EP role. Burton and Kagan (2003) not only advocate a role for
more psychologists within community-based services but highlight the lack of such support within the UK. Therefore, it could be suggested that there is a greater community-based role for EPs, particularly within EYs.

5.7 Limitations of the Study and Implications for Future Research

Before the limitations of this study are discussed, it is important to highlight the current context that surrounds SEND. In September 2014, a new SEND Code of Practice removed the previous statementing system. It was replaced with a new system, which provides an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan for children with SEND who would need additional support in order to access the curriculum. It is important to also note that the terminology has changed from SEN to SEND; hence why this term is used interchangeably dependant on date throughout this document. Therefore, from September 2014, all the previous statements provided are to go through a transfer review process whereby some will be converted into an EHC plan. New applications for additional support would now be made in the hope of receiving an EHC plan, rather than a statement. Since September, it has become apparent that LAs appear to have interpreted this legislation differently, with some EPS practices working in the same way before the legislation came in, for example, using their time in school to conduct casework including single consultations and assessment, and later sending a report. However, within the LA where this research was conducted many changes to how EPs work have been made.

Within the present LA, EPs are following a clear Assess-Plan-Do-Review process to guide their work in line with the SEND Code of Practice (DfE/DoH, 2014). This means that EPs are involved in the initial planning of support for a child in a setting and also within the review process, therefore they are already more frequently involved with that child. These changes are already fitting within the casework recommendations of this research. Additionally, in order for an EY setting to access the initial ‘Support’ funding, they must have shown they have conducted two cycles of the Assess-Plan-Do-Review process with a child and a further two cycles to access the ‘Support Plus’ funding (four cycles conducted overall). If a child is still not able to access the curriculum appropriately, following these different levels of support, then the setting can apply for an EHC plan, with the LA suggesting that the children who receive EHC plans are those with more complex needs. Therefore, the setting must have already provided and monitored specific interventions for a child before additional funding can be provided. It is then up to the setting how they would like to spend this funding. As the SEND Code of practice (2014) advocates a move away from using funding for purely TA support, it is possible that funding settings receive at the different levels may be used to buy in EP traded services etc.
As previously mentioned, this new legislation and how it has been interpreted within the present LA, do fit well together, as in line with this research, it advocates increased EP involvement with a child and the staff who support them. It also supports settings in using the additional funding to buy in whatever services they feel would best support the needs of the child, which supports the need for support through EP traded services.

Although this research did fit within present legislation, there are some limitations. Even though this project was conducted for an academic year period, it would be interesting to look at further measures following the project, for example whether in 6 months and 12 months the parents/carers and staff still feel that the benefits they received from the work were continued or whether they had reduced after involvement. A further limitation of the project, as previously mentioned, was the data that were collected was only the perceptions of staff and parents/carers, therefore no correlations can be made between the model of practice and staff/parent/carer practices. Additionally, although staff reported that some children did make progress because of the work, this again was not critically measured so cannot be assumed.

It is also important to think about the need for EP support. As the findings suggested that despite the level of support the setting got over the year, staff still felt that they would have liked more researcher time overall. Furthermore, the SENCo stated that she would have liked more EP support than she had received in the final term despite being offered it. Perhaps this is a culture within educational settings, always feeling that they might want more EP support or support from additional agencies. Therefore, this is also something to be mindful of when interpreting these results.

As already mentioned, caution must be taken when transferring these findings. Consequently, it is important to include the context of this research in reporting its findings. Nevertheless, this research does pave the way for more work to be conducted within this field. Indeed, if similar research were to be conducted again many of the barriers to this work would also need to be addressed.

These may include being really clear about the ownership of the project, perhaps stating that although the research model comes from the researcher, the work conducted within the setting is the choice of the setting. Furthermore, status is also an important aspect of this work, and it is conceivable that it would be helpful to have a qualified EP conducting the work in order to minimise any hierarchy systems that may be in place within the setting. Additionally, it would have to be clear exactly what the role of the EP was in comparison to the SENCo. As previously mentioned, both the EP and SENCo would need to decide on protocols for if they felt the need to have difficult conversations with each other, for example, what each person’s role involves, as well
as systems for supporting themselves throughout the project. Such processes would then further support the boundaries structuring this work, which arguably became slightly blurred within the present research.

Another important point was the dual-role of the researcher. For the purpose of this research, it was about creating a model of practice that could be as realistic to EP practice as possible. Thus, it was felt appropriate that the researcher should develop the model, conduct the work and be involved within its evaluation, in the same way that an EP should constantly be evaluating and monitoring their practice. However, there are difficulties with this, as the researcher became more involved within the research, this made it difficult for her to reflect upon the research as a whole. Additionally, it may have impacted upon demand characteristics bias as staff/parents/carers may have evaluated the work conducted in a way that they considered the researcher would like. Again, this highlights the importance of supervision within such work as well as the need for an independent EP to conduct the final interview and focus group.

When thinking about the limitations of this research, it is important to appreciate it for what it was: a piece of Action Research, thus an individual needs-based exploratory study. Therefore, context is very important when thinking about its implications and application to EP practice. Nevertheless, it is hoped that the present research has provided some evidence and support for practitioner based research within EY, further advocating to this ‘tool-belt’ EP approach guided by an EY setting and their needs. It is hoped this may lead onto further research within this field and really start to evidence the importance and distinctiveness of the contribution EPs can make within EY and impact upon early intervention.

5.8 Next Steps

As well as attempting to address some of the limitations described within the previous section, this research could also be further expanded. This could be achieved through applying a similar model of practice, but instead of using perceptions as measures, use objective staff/parent/carer/child measures, such as observations and specific self-report measures. This would help to investigate whether this type of more intensive EP support actually has direct impact upon staff and parent/carer practices, and in turn whether this also has an impact upon child measures. In order for this to remain objective, the dual researcher role would have to be split, separating the EP conducting the work with another EP conducting the evaluations.

Once such research has been conducted, there might be more literature supporting a greater need for EP support within EY, thus building upon the present research. If positive effects were found, the next stage within this process would include conducting a similar model within a variety of
settings, and again having a researcher separate from the EP conducting the work in order to evaluate the model separately within each setting. This way of working would move beyond a single setting and would attempt to look for similarities between the models developed within different settings.

Such expansion of this research would require a lot of time and additional funding in order to be conducted. Therefore, if EPs are able to evidence their work within EY and start to provide research highlighting its importance, this may in turn lead to future funding grants that attempt to fill the gap in EY services as previously mentioned.

Although the model used within this research does not tell us exactly what work to conduct within EY settings, it does provide a framework for offering more intensive support, which can be applied within other settings and built upon in order to further expand this research.

5.9 Summary

This research suggests that the role for EPs within EY is more than just casework. Indeed, it is about providing a more holistic approach, which more intensively supports the systems that surrounds casework through increased staff/parent/carer support. This research overtly describes the type of work conducted in order to do this as well as the approach and frequency of the work, which arguably, is just as important as the work itself. It highlights the importance and use of research framework in guiding thinking as well as not only investigating but also truly valuing the perceptions of EY practitioners through providing them with the control over this research. This study builds upon existing literature and legislation, and suggests a greater role for EPs within EY, proposing that EPs have a role in filling the present gap within early intervention services not only with their practice but also with their future research.
References


Hancock, B. (2002). *Trent Focus for Research and Development in Primary Health Care: An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. Nottingham: Trent Focus.


University of Manchester, School of Education. (2012). *Ethical Practice Policy and Guidance.* Manchester, UK: The University of Manchester.


Appendices

Appendix 1: Participant Information Sheet for Staff

You are being invited to take part in a research study that will be assessed as part of the researcher's Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

Who will conduct the research?

Erica Douglas-Osborn, School of Education, University of Manchester, M13 9PL

Title of the Research

Early Investment: The Role of Educational Psychologists in Supporting an Early Years Setting

What is the aim of the research?

The aim of this research is to develop and evaluate a pilot model of EP practice in an Early Years setting over an academic year period. The pilot model will be based upon the needs of this setting and may change throughout the year in order to adapt and adjust to the staff and setting demands.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen to take part in this study because the setting you work within has been identified as being open to developing staff practices and may feel that more support is needed from outside agencies, particularly educational psychology input. Everyone working within the nursery has been asked to participate within this research as well as some additional professionals and parents.

What would I be asked to do if I took part?

If you took part within this research you will be asked to work alongside a trainee Educational Psychologist. This may involve the trainee supporting you in your role through work with specific children and families, informal chats, meetings, consultations and in observing you in your role. The way is which the trainee EP will work with you will be developed through conversations with staff members throughout the research. You will be asked to
fill out a questionnaire which asks you about current EP support at the start of the study, around September, and then again at the end, in July.

Some members of staff will be asked to take part in an interview and/or focus groups during the study. Additional information will be provided if you are asked to take-part in these.

**What happens to the data collected?**

Data will be collected from the questionnaires, and information from the interviews and focus groups will be transcribed. The researcher will also keep a research diary, where notes will be made about the development of the study. Any names/place, including any personal information mentioned throughout the research process will be anonymised. All the information collected will be used to develop and adapt the model of EP practice, and to also evaluate it.

The researcher hopes this research will support a more intensive, collaborative and systemic way of working with EY settings.

**How is confidentiality maintained?**

All information that is collected during this study is strictly confidential. No-one other than the researcher will have access to the research diary, questionnaires and the audio recordings made of the interviews and focus groups without your explicit permission. All recordings, notes and transcriptions will be kept securely in a locked filing cabinet or on an encrypted data stick. The audio recordings and transcripts of the interviews and focus groups will be stored securely for five years after being collected.

**What happens if I do not want to take part or if I change my mind?**

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

**Will I be paid for participating in the research?**

There will be no payment for participating in this research.

**What is the duration of the research?**

It is proposed that this research will last for an academic year period, from September 2013 to July 2014.

**Where will the research be conducted?**

The research will be conducted in your Early Year’s setting.

**Will the outcomes of the research be published?**

The research will be written up into an assignment that will be assessed as part of the researcher’s Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology. The researcher may also be published in a scientific journal and your permission will be sought via a consent from to use the data from your interview for this purpose.
Criminal Records Check

The researcher has undergone a satisfactory criminal records check and can therefore conduct research within Early Years settings.

Contact for further information

If you have any questions about this research, the researcher and supervisor of the project can be contacted for further discussion about the study. Please do not hesitate in contacting either if you would like any more information.

Erica Douglas-Osborn (researcher)

Email: e.douglasosborn@......gov.co.uk

Telephone: 0161 275 3511 (Please leave a message with ......, .......)  

Address: Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology, Educational Support and Inclusion, School of Education, Ellen Wilkinson Building, Manchester University, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9PL

Dr ...... (supervisor)

Email: ......@......co.uk

Telephone: 0161 275 3511 (Please leave a message with ......, .......)  

Address: Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology, Educational Support and Inclusion, School of Education, Ellen Wilkinson Building, Manchester University, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9PL

What if something goes wrong?

You can contact the researcher or supervisor at any point during or after the research if you require assistance with anything related to the research conducted.

If there are any issues regarding this research that you would prefer not to discuss with members of the research team, please contact the Research Practice and Governance Co-ordinator by either writing to 'The Research Practice and Governance Co-ordinator, Research Office, Christie Building, The University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL', by emailing: Research-Governance@manchester.ac.uk, or by telephoning 0161 275 7583 or 275 8093
Appendix 2: Participant Information Sheet for Parents

Early Investment: The Role of Educational Psychologists in Supporting an Early Years Setting

Participant Information Sheet for Parents

You are being invited to take part in a research study that will be assessed as part of the researcher's Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

Who will conduct the research?

Erica Douglas-Osborn, School of Education, University of Manchester, M13 9PL

Title of the Research

Early Investment: The Role of Educational Psychologists in Supporting an Early Years Setting

What is the aim of the research?

The aim of this research is to develop and evaluate a pilot model of Educational Psychology practice in an Early Years setting over an academic year period. The pilot model will be based upon the needs of this setting and may change throughout the year in order to adapt and adjust to the staff and setting demands.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen to take part in this study because the Early Years setting your child goes to is part of a research study where they are being regularly supported by a trainee Educational Psychologist. You have either requested to be supported by this trainee or it has been suggested to you and you have been willing to be supported by them.

What would I be asked to do if I took part?

If you took part within this research you will be asked to fill out a questionnaire about the support you have received from the trainee Educational Psychologist. This questionnaire will ask you whether the trainee have provided you with helpful support for your child, if there is anything you would like to improve about the support you have received and any additional comments you would like to make.
What happens to the data collected?

Data will be collected from the questionnaires. Any names/place, including any personal information mentioned throughout the research process will be anonymised. All the information collected will be used to develop and adapt the model of Educational Psychology practice, and to also evaluate it.

The researcher hopes this research will support a more intensive, collaborative and systemic way of working with Early Years settings.

How is confidentiality maintained?

All information that is collected during this study is strictly confidential. No-one other than the researcher will have access to the questionnaires without your explicit permission. The questionnaires will be kept securely in a locked filing cabinet or on an encrypted data stick, and stored securely for five years after being collected.

What happens if I do not want to take part or if I change my mind?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

Will I be paid for participating in the research?

There will be no payment for participating in this research.

What is the duration of the research?

It is proposed that this research will last for an academic year period, from September 2013 to July 2014.

Where will the research be conducted?

The research will be conducted in your Early Year’s setting.

Will the outcomes of the research be published?

The research will be written up into an assignment that will be assessed as part of the researcher’s Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology. The researcher may also be published in a scientific journal and your permission will be sought via a consent form to use the data from your interview for this purpose.

Criminal Records Check

The researcher has undergone a satisfactory criminal records check and can therefore conduct research within Early Years settings.

Contact for further information

If you have any questions about this research, the researcher and supervisor of the project can be contacted for further discussion about the study. Please do not hesitate in contacting either if you would like any more information.

Erica Douglas-Osborn (researcher)
Email: e.douglasosborn@......gov.co.uk

Telephone: 0161 275 3511 (Please leave a message with ......, .......)

Address: Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology, Educational Support and Inclusion, School of Education, Ellen Wilkinson Building, Manchester University, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9PL

Dr ...... (supervisor)

Email: ......@......co.uk

Telephone: 0161 275 3511 (Please leave a message with ......, .......)

Address: Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology, Educational Support and Inclusion, School of Education, Ellen Wilkinson Building, Manchester University, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9PL

What if something goes wrong?

You can contact the researcher or supervisor at any point during or after the research if you require assistance with anything related to the research conducted.

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Appendix 3: Consent Form

Early Investment: The Role of Educational Psychologists in Supporting an Early Years Setting

CONSENT FORM

If you are happy to participate please complete and sign the consent form below

1. I confirm that I have read the attached information sheet on the above study and have had the opportunity to consider the information and ask questions and had these answered satisfactorily.

2. I understand that my participation in the study is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

3. I understand that I will be asked to fill out a questionnaire about the support I have received from a trainee Educational Psychologist.

4. I agree to the use of anonymous quotes

5. I agree that any data collected may be published in anonymous form in academic books or journals.

I agree to take part in the above project

Name of participant .................................. Date Signature ..........................

Name of researcher ................................. Date Signature ..........................
Appendix 4: Pre-Model Questionnaire

Early Investment: The Role of Educational Psychologists in Supporting an Early Years Setting

Have you signed the consent form? ................................................................. Y/N

Please circle which answer is most relevant:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>False</th>
<th>Somewhat true</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
<th>Mostly true</th>
<th>True</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I understand what an EP’s role is:</td>
<td>1……..</td>
<td>2…………</td>
<td>3…………</td>
<td>4…………..</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The EP is accessible:</td>
<td>1……..</td>
<td>2…………</td>
<td>3…………</td>
<td>4…………..</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I have control over what EP support I receive:</td>
<td>1……..</td>
<td>2…………</td>
<td>3…………</td>
<td>4…………..</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The EP has provided me with greater knowledge of child development:</td>
<td>1……..</td>
<td>2…………</td>
<td>3…………</td>
<td>4…………..</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I feel the EP support I receive supports me in my role:</td>
<td>1……..</td>
<td>2…………</td>
<td>3…………</td>
<td>4…………..</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I feel the EP support received supports this setting overall:</td>
<td>1……..</td>
<td>2…………</td>
<td>3…………</td>
<td>4…………..</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I would like more support from an EP:</td>
<td>1……..</td>
<td>2…………</td>
<td>3…………</td>
<td>4…………..</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please answer the following questions:

How has the EP supported you in your role? ...........................................
..................................................................................................................

Do you think the EP has made you more effective in your role? ...............
..................................................................................................................

What do you think is the most important aspect of EP support is? ..........
..................................................................................................................

Thank you for filling out this questionnaire
Appendix 5: Initial Semi-Structured Interview Script

Initial Early Years Semi-Structured Interview Script

Welcome

Thank you for agreeing to speak with me today and thank you for taking part in the research. As you are already aware I am coming to spend a year in your centre in order to develop and evaluate a model of Educational Psychology (EP) practice. Before I start working here I need to gather some information about what EP support you have received previously, what was useful about that support and to think about some ideas about how I could start to work with you over this coming year.

To do this I am going to do a semi-structured interview where I will ask you some basic questions. However, is it possible that we might go off on a slight tangent, which is absolutely fine as I really want to get some useful information about how you would like me to come in and support you and the setting. How does that all sound? Have you got any questions?

Ethics

This interview will be recorded on a voice recorder, so I can listen back to it to write down the ideas and themes that you have come up with. It is important to make sure you that you know you are within your right to withdraw at any moment, or after we’ve finished the discussion later if you want to do so. You also have the right to not take part at any point if you decide you don’t want to. All information you provide will be strictly confidential, only I will listen to the audio recording. Do you have any questions?

Discussion

Ok, let’s get going. The first part of the interview today is about how you are currently supported by an EP and what you think is good about that support.

1. So, do you know how EP currently support this setting?
2. Have you worked directly with an EP? What happened?
3. What has been good about any of this EP support?
4. What do you think might have supported you specifically in your role?

Would you like to take a short break at all? The second part of this interview is about how Educational Psychologists, specifically how I could come and support this setting.

5. In an ideal world, how would you like an EP to support this setting?
6. How would you like an EP do directly support you?
7. Do you think an EP could develop your understanding in any particular area?

Conclusion

Summarise discussion. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Thank you for participating
Appendix 6: Initial Educational Psychology Service Focus Group Script

Initial Educational Psychology Service Focus Group Script

Thank you very much for attending.

So this afternoon is about using your knowledge as EP to shape how I am going to be working with a Nursery School in ....... I am going to tell you a bit about the research, hand out the participant information sheet/consent forms, then have a focus group where we can discuss how you all think I could work in the Nursery and this will be based on some information already gained from the Nursery. We are booked in from 3 – 4 today.

Does that all sound alright to everyone, does anyone have any questions before we start?

So this is a piece of Action Research (so the research is constantly developing) about the role of EP working in EY settings. As most of you know I came from working with 0-5 year olds and I feel that there are not enough services available for families in early years. Therefore I feel that there is a big gap which EPs could play a role in filling. This research is about working with one EY setting for a year period in a way that they would like to be supported. So I will be going into the setting a more regularly, possible once a week and doing more than casework, so possible interventions, parent work, staff training etc. Another important aspect of this study, is the way I will be working is not static, I want to work in a way where I can change what I will be doing throughout the year in order to meet the needs of the nurseries and there cohort of children.

Here are the participant information sheets and consent forms. Please have a read through and ask me any questions. I just want to add, that please fill under no obligation to take part and if you would like to withdraw at a later date just let me know.

So far I have gone into the setting several times, I have asked staff to complete a questionnaire about how they are currently supported by an EP and run done interviews with staff about current support, about what is good about the current support and how they would like to be supported by an EP in an ideal world. I have also had a meeting with the Head and SENCo where some of these ideas were discussed.

So, in the focus group today we are going to look at what staff said and I want to use your EP knowledge and skills to attempt to create a possible model of service delivery, which I will subsequently deliver. So it’s about thinking about the nurseries needs, giving them control over the way I work but also thinking about what is feasible and realistic, which is where I need your advice. I will then take this model back to a focus group in the nursery where I will explain how I could be supporting them, in order to allow them to comment, make changes, suggestions etc. After that I will start working regularly within the nursery. Does that sound OK, does anyone have any questions so far?

I am also going to be tape recording the focus group, can I just check that you are happy for me to do so?
I am going to start by sharing the information I have gained so far from the setting. I have put things on post-it notes to make it easier to see and so we can use them to move things around.

Current EP support

Aspects of EP support most valued

Ideal EP support

That’s all the information I have gathered, from this information and your knowledge there are some questions and I hope we can try and answer.

- How often do I go in the setting? For how long?

- Something that came out of the research and another Trainee’s previous research is about having time set aside for planned work, but also leaving work for more reactive work. Do you think that’s a good idea? Shall we put things into planned or unplanned categories?

- Is there anything else that we could add or if you think there is an important aspect of EY work that you think needs to be added? (i.e. parenting group/language training)

- How much time should be planned? How much time should be unplanned (open for reactive work)?

- Are you happy with this as a model, is there anything you would change, adjust or like to add?

Thank you very much for your help and support.
Appendix 7: Initial Early Years Focus Group Script

Initial Early Years Focus Group Script

Thank you very much for attending this focus group. Just to let you know a focus group is like a structured discussion, so it’s about us all sharing our thoughts and ideas together.

So this afternoon I am going to present to you a model of how I will support you and this setting. Firstly, I am going to talk about how I intend on working with you, present and discuss the model, then I hope to create an agreement about how we can work together.

We are booked in from 3 – 4 today.

Does that all sound alright to everyone, does anyone have any questions before we start?

So as you are already aware, my research is about how I can support you and this setting. So far I have conducted interviews, done questionnaires, had discussions with staff and ran a focus group with ...... EPS about how I could support you. From this, I have developed a provisional way of working which we are going to discuss today.

I am also going to be tape recording the focus group, can I just check that you are happy for me to do so?

I am now going to discuss my proposal with you, but please stop me at any point if you want to discuss it further or make changes.

Overall I intend on being in this setting 3-4 hours each week. I intend on working in partnership with you, so I want to highlight how skilled you all already are in your jobs, and recognise the expertise you all have within Early Years. The way I will be working will be about recognising these strengths and supporting you to take your knowledge and understanding further if you would like and if you need support.

Present model (refer to possible language champions) and calendar of working.

Discuss likes/dislikes regarding proposed model.

Following this model I would like to create a service level agreement. This is an agreement between staff here and myself which describes how we intend on working together. So I hope now we can write it, then I will type it up along with the model, to produce a document for us all to sign. So it’s a set agreement about how we are going to work. May include:

- Partnership work
- Supporting and recognising staff knowledge
- Responsibilities
- Goals (EP: to conduct research for a year period, to increase capacity (i.e. around language) and support staff / Staff?)
- Includes model

Are we all happy with this? This will be typed up, discussed with other members of staff and will hopefully guide how we are going to work together over the next year.

Has anyone got any questions or anything they would like to add before we finish?

Thank you very much for your help and support.
SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT

BETWEEN EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY SERVICE ...... COUNCIL

CHILDREN’S SERVICES

AND

...... NURSERY SCHOOL

For the research and work of Trainee Educational Psychologist, Erica Douglas-Osborn, in conjunction with ...... Educational Psychology Service and

The University of Manchester

2013 – 2015
# Contents

The following document outlines the Service Level Agreement (SLA). It covers:

1) Agreement 2 - 3
2) Background information 3
3) Purpose and Focus of SLA 3
4) Model of Service Delivery 3
5) Goals 5
6) Review Details 5
7) Quality Assurance 5
8) Responsibilities of ...... Nursery School 5
9) Complaints 6
10) Signatures 7
SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT

The Service Level Agreement has been produced collaboratively between ...... Nursery School and Trainee Educational Psychologist, Erica Douglas-Osborn. This trainee will be supported and supervised by ...... Educational Psychology Service and The University of Manchester.

Name of School, College or Setting: ...... Nursery School

Date: 10.10.2013

Address: ......

Post code: ......

Name of Headteacher: ......

SENCO: ......

Telephone number: ......

E-Mail: ......
**AGREEMENT**

1. Contact Information for the EPS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your named EP is:</th>
<th>Erica Douglas-Osborn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Address:</td>
<td>..........................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel:</td>
<td>..........................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email:</td>
<td>e.douglasosborn@.......gov.uk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact hours:</td>
<td>Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday 9-5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Background information

The support offered to ...... Nursery School is part of a research study that will be assessed within the researcher’s Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology. The title of this piece of work is: Early Investment: The Role of Educational Psychologists in Supporting Early Years Settings. The aim of this research is to develop and evaluate a pilot model of EP practice in an Early Years setting over an academic year period. The pilot model will be based upon the needs of this setting and may change throughout the year in order to adapt and adjust to the staff and setting demands.

3. Purpose and Focus of SLA

The purpose and focus of this SLA is to collaboratively agree what services and support will be offered by the Trainee Educational Psychologist who in turn will be supported and supervised by ...... Educational Psychology Service and The University of Manchester. A service will be offered based on:
- Partnership working
- Supporting and recognising staff knowledge and skills
- Responsibilities of the Trainee Educational Psychologist and staff at ........
- Collaborative goals
- A model of service delivery that is modifiable based on need

4. Model of Service Delivery

This model has been developed in collaboration with ...... Nursery School and ...... Educational Psychology Service. It is based on the needs of children, parents and staff at ...... Nursery School.

**Offer:**

This is an offer of 3-4 hours of weekly planned and unplanned support based on the proposed service delivery model. This includes face-to-face support, observations, assessments and admin which is will be conducted within the setting. Work will be based upon a service level agreement, which includes staff and Educational Psychology working in partnership to support the setting. This model may be modified and adjusted based on need.

**Proposed Model:**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Agreed Planned Work (Proactive)</strong></th>
<th><strong>Unplanned Work (Reactive)</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Parents Meeting: 10.10.13</td>
<td>Regular Support/Advice: Thursday Mornings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadowing Staff (Feedback): 17.10.13 / 24.01.13 / 31.01.13</td>
<td>Identifying needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular Support/Advice: Thursday Mornings</td>
<td>Specific Interventions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly Staff Groups: 1 hour</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing Knowledge (Language Support)</td>
<td>Developing Knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planned Casework: 07.11.13 / 24.01.13 / 31.01.13 (6 sessions termly)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casework Continuity</td>
<td>Casework Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint Working</td>
<td>Joint Working</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting Families</td>
<td>Supporting Families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Parent Sessions (half termly): 2 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Talk at Parents Group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning Meeting: 21.01.13 (Spring)</td>
<td>Planning Meeting (Summer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Review Meeting: 04.02.13 / 11.02.13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Unplanned Work (Reactive)</strong></th>
<th><strong>Planned Work (Proactive)</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Regular Support/Advice (staff and parent drop-ins)</td>
<td>- Initial Shadowing Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Identifying Needs</td>
<td>- Regular Support/Advice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Specific Interventions (according to need)</td>
<td>- Monthly Staff Groups (solution circles)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Developing Knowledge (one-to-one support)</td>
<td>- Developing Knowledge (specific language intervention/language champions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Casework Continuity</td>
<td>- Planning Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Joint Work</td>
<td>- Planning Meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Supporting Families</td>
<td>- Annual Review Meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Parent Sessions (sleep/eating/toileting/positive behaviour management)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Talk at Parents Group</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
5. Goals

- To improve outcomes for the children.
- To allow staff the opportunity for professional development.
- To support staff in becoming more confident with their current skills and knowledge.
- To increase capacity to effectively support children, parents and other members of staff.
- To complete a longitudinal piece of research, whereby a Trainee Educational Psychologist supports this setting according to the settings wants and needs.

6. Review details

This piece of research will be reviewed via:

- A questionnaire provided at the start and end of the research.
- A focus group run at the end of the research.
- A research diary will be kept to log information
- Discrete pre and post measures will be created for individual pieces of work.

7. Quality Assurance

The Trainee Educational Psychologist will be regularly supported and supervised by:

- Educational Psychologists from ...... Educational Psychology team; Main supervisor ...... (contact details: ......@.......gov.uk).
- Educational Psychologists from The University of Manchester; Main supervisor ...... (contact details: ......@......co.uk).

This work will adhere to the quality standards and ethnical codes set by the HCPC, BPS and AEP

8. Responsibilities of Schools, Colleges and Settings

- To adhere to the current procedures and protocols in place for supporting children with special educational needs.
- To work collaboratively and engage with the support provided by the Trainee Educational Psychologist.
- To highlight the needs of children, parents and staff where appropriate.
- Provide a fully completed Request for Involvement Form (RFI) with signed parental consent for EP involvement prior to the work for a particular child commencing.
- Make available to the EP relevant reports and other documents to enable the EP to have a full and updated view of a child’s needs and difficulties.
- To support and co-ordinate consultations with parents, other agencies and additional offered support.
- Inform the EP in advance if possible of pupil/staff absence.
- To provide a suitable space for the Trainee Educational Psychologist to work within the Nursery.
9. Complaints

The EPS is committed to providing a high quality service with a foundation in evidence-based practice and is keen to receive feedback regarding its delivery as part of a commitment to continuous improvement. It is important that service users are able to comment on the service they have received. Schools will be formally asked for feedback (including positive comments) on a yearly basis.

If your school feels it has cause for concern, the Head teacher or designated member of staff should:

- Speak to the school’s designated EP about the issue and keep a written record of the discussion.
- If appropriate or if the matter remains unresolved, contact the Team Manager/DPEP, who will seek to address the concerns raised at ……, Email: …..@…….gov.uk
- If the other options have been explored and the school remains concerned, the matter should be referred in writing to ……, the Strategic Lead, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children at ……, Email: …..……@…….gov.uk

If the EPS feels that it has cause for concern then the EPS Team Manager will discuss this with the Head teacher or designated member of staff.

If there are any issues regarding this research that you would prefer not to discuss with members of the research team, please contact the Research Practice and Governance Co-ordinator by either writing to "The Research Practice and Governance Co-ordinator, Research Office, Christie Building, The University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL", by emailing: Research-Governance@manchester.ac.uk, or by telephoning 0161 275 7583 or 275 8093.

All Educational psychologists working for …… Educational Psychology Service and The University of Manchester have enhanced CRB checks and are registered with the Health Care and Professions Council.
## SIGNATURES

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<tr>
<th>Signed:</th>
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<td>Print:</td>
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<td>Date:</td>
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*For the EP Service*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signed:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Headteacher</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. SENCO</td>
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</table>

*For the School, College or Setting*
Appendix 9: Solution Circle Evaluation Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Please rate how useful you found the solution circle.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What did you find the most useful part of the solution circle?</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Are you going to do anything differently following the solution circle?</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Would you attend another solution circle?</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Is there anything that you think can be improved about the solution circle?</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Is there anything else you would like to add?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Thank you.
Appendix 10: Language Intervention Evaluation Form

Language Intervention – Evaluation

Please answer the questions that are relevant to you.

1. Please rate your knowledge of language development before the intervention.
   ![Rating Scale](1,2,3,4,5)

2. Please rate your knowledge of language development after the intervention.
   ![Rating Scale](1,2,3,4,5)

3. Please rate your practical ideas to support language development before the intervention.
   ![Rating Scale](1,2,3,4,5)

4. Please rate your practical ideas to support language development after the intervention.
   ![Rating Scale](1,2,3,4,5)

5. What did you find the most useful part of the intervention? .................................................................
   .............................................................................................................................................................

6. Are you going to do anything differently when supporting children’s language following this intervention?
   .............................................................................................................................................................
   .............................................................................................................................................................

7. What you think having a Trainee Educational Psychologist brought to the intervention?
   .............................................................................................................................................................
   .............................................................................................................................................................

8. Is there anything that you think can be improved? .................................................................
   .............................................................................................................................................................

9. Is there anything else you would like to add? .................................................................
   .............................................................................................................................................................

Thank you.
Appendix 11: Parent Workshop Evaluation Form

Parent Workshop – Evaluation

Please answer the questions that are relevant to you.

1. Please rate your knowledge of the area talked about before the workshop.
   Low 1………2………3………4………5

2. Please rate your knowledge of the area talked about after the workshop.
   1………2………3………4………5

3. Please rate your practical ideas to support this area before the workshop.
   1………2………3………4………5

4. Please rate your practical ideas to support this area after the workshop.
   1………2………3………4………5

5. What did you find the most useful?

...........................................................

6. Are you going to do anything differently following this input?

...........................................................

7. Do you feel you can book an appointment at the Nursery for further support in this area?

...........................................................

8. Is there anything that you think can be improved?

...........................................................

9. Is there anything else you would like to add?

...........................................................

Thank you.
Appendix 12: Parenting Support Evaluation Form

Parenting Support – Evaluation

1. How useful has this support been? Low 1……..2……..3……..4……..5 Medium High

2. Please rate your practical ideas to support your children before the support. 1……..2……..3……..4……..5

3. Please rate your practical ideas to support your children after the support. 1……..2……..3……..4……..5

4. What did you find most useful about the support received? .................................................................

5. Have you done anything differently following this support, please describe what this is? .................................................................

6. Is there anything that you think can be improved? .................................................................

7. Do you feel you need further support, if so where will you get this from? .... .................................................................

8. Is there anything else you would like to add? .................................................................

Thank you.
### Joint Working – Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How useful has do you feel the joint working has been?</td>
<td>1...</td>
<td>2......</td>
<td>3....</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What did you find most useful about the joint working?</td>
<td>.................................................................</td>
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<td>.................................................................</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. What do you feel the joint working added to supporting this family?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>.................................................................</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Is there anything that you think can be improved?</td>
<td>.................................................................</td>
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<td>.................................................................</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Would you do further joint working with an EP in the future?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>.................................................................</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Is there anything else you would like to add?</td>
<td>.................................................................</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>.................................................................</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Thank you.
Appendix 14: Post-Model Questionnaire

Early Investment: The Role of Educational Psychologists in Supporting an Early Years Setting

Have you signed the consent form? ................................................................. Y/N

Please circle which answer is most relevant:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>False</th>
<th>Somewhat true</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
<th>Mostly true</th>
<th>True</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

1. I understand what an EP’s role is: 1........2........3..........4........5
2. The EP is accessible: 1........2........3..........4........5
3. I have control over what EP support I receive: 1........2........3..........4........5
4. The EP has provided me with greater knowledge of child development: 1........2........3..........4........5
5. I feel the EP support I receive supports me in my role: 1........2........3..........4........5
6. I feel the EP support received supports this setting overall: 1........2........3..........4........5
7. I would like more support from an EP: 1........2........3..........4........5

Please answer the following questions:

How has the EP supported you in your role? ..............................................
......................................................................................................................

Do you think the EP has made you more effective in your role? Yes/No
......................................................................................................................

What do you think is the most important aspect of EP support is? ..............
......................................................................................................................

Thank you for filling out this questionnaire
Appendix 15: Post-Model SENCo Interview Script

SENCo Evaluation Semi-structured Interview Script

Welcome

Thank you for agreeing to speak with me today and thank you again for taking part in the research. As you are aware the project has nearly finished as Erica has been with you for a full academic year. So this part of the project is about evaluating the work that Erica has done, thinking about what was useful, what was not so useful and how Educational Psychologists can use this information to move their practice in early years forward.

The evaluation of this project has included the questionnaires to staff and parents after each piece of work, the post-project questionnaires, the focus group run with staff and this semi-structured interview with yourself. Have you got any questions before we start?

Ethics

This interview will be recorded on a voice recorder, so it can be listen back in order to write down how this research may or may not have been helpful to you and your setting. It is important to make sure you that you know you are within your right to withdraw at any moment, or after we’ve finished the discussion later if you want to do so. You also have the right to not take part at any point if you decide you don’t want to. All information you provide will be strictly confidential, apart from me now only Erica will listen to the audio recording. Do you have any questions?

Discussion

1. When thinking generally about the work Erica has done what do you think has been the most valuable about this involvement?
   Prompts relating to: impact on self / staff / parents / children, e.g. what about parents...

2. Now I would like to ask you about particular pieces of work that she has done and how it might have been beneficial to yourself, staff, parents, or children at the nursery: Hand out Handout 1
3. **Handout 1**

- Planning Meetings - (You receive these termly)
- Coming to the parents evening - (Erica attended a one off evening for new parents at the start of term)
- Parenting workshops - (Three workshops have been run, 1 about sleep and 2 for toileting)
- Attendance at additional meetings - (Erica has attended various CAF, CDC reviews and PEP)
- Language intervention – (This includes the initial meeting regarding supporting language and the sessions run with staff)
- Outreach work - (This includes the home visits to JB’s (including joint visits with Health Visitor (.....) and Portage Worker (....))
- Solution circles – (4 sessions with staff regarding a specific issues have been conducted)
- Casework - (This includes ..../.../.../....)

4. So having experienced a range of types of Educational Psychology work, and seeing the time taken to do each piece, how might you use your nursery’s entitlement for next year (48 hours/16 hours per term)? (Planning meetings do not come out of this time)

I am also interested in asking you about value for money in terms of traded services. As you may be aware of some services within .... LA have recently become traded or are moving that way. .... EP service offers a variety of different services charged at £60 per hour with reductions on bulk purchases. With this in mind I would like to evaluate the particular pieces of work in terms of there costings in order to look at value for money. So at present you are entitled to 48 hours per year, £2,880 per year, e.g. 2 pieces of work per term, 6 per year.

**Hand out Handout 2**

Here are costings for particular pieces if work, let’s discuss your thoughts on whether you feel they were value for money:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning Meetings</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coming to the parents evening</td>
<td>£120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenting workshops (3 workshops, 3 hours + 3 hours prep)</td>
<td>£120 each x 3 = £360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance at additional meetings (including CAF/CDC reviews/PEP x9) (7 ½ hours)</td>
<td>£450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language intervention (17 hours) 34 sessions</td>
<td>£30 each x 34 = £1,020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outreach work (Home visit to ....’s) (10 ½ hours) 11 visits</td>
<td>£630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solution circles (3 ½ hours) x4</td>
<td>£210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casework (..../..../..../...../....) (40 hours) x5</td>
<td>£2,400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Following this information would you consider buying in additional Educational Psychology time?

6. When thinking overall, rather than individual pieces of work, how do you think the nursery has benefitted or not from Erica’s close involvement?

7. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Conclusion

Summarise discussion. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Thank you for participating
Appendix 16: Post-Model Early Years Focus Group Script

Early Years Evaluation Focus Group Script

Attendees:________________________________________________________

Welcome

Thank you for agreeing to take part take in this focus group, and thank you again for taking part in the research. As you are aware the project has nearly finished as Erica has been with you for a full academic year. So this part of the project is about evaluating the work that Erica has done, thinking about what was useful, what was not so useful and how Educational Psychologist’s can use this information to move their practice in early years forward.

The evaluation of this project has included the questionnaires to staff and parents after each piece of work, the post-project questionnaires, this focus group and an interview with the SENCo. Have you got any questions before we start?

Ethics

This interview will be recorded on a voice recorder, so it can be listen back in order to write down how this research may or may not have been helpful to you and your setting. It is important to make sure you that you know you are within your right to withdraw at any moment, or after we’ve finished the discussion later if you want to do so. You also have the right to not take part at any point if you decide you don’t want to. All information you provide will be strictly confidential, apart from me now only Erica will listen to the audio recording. Do you have any questions?

Discussion

8. When thinking generally about the work Erica has done what do you think has been the most valuable about this involvement?

   Prompts relating to: impact on self / staff / parents / children, e.g. what about parents...

9. Now I would like to ask you about particular pieces of work that she has done and how it might have been beneficial to yourself, staff, parents, or children at the nursery:

   - The initial shadowing – (Erica did three days shadowing at the start of the project, one day in N2, one day in N3 and one day in the childcare provision)
   - Coming to the parents evening - (Erica attended a one off evening for new parents at the start of term)
   - Parenting workshops - (Three workshops have been run, 1 about sleep and 2 for toileting)
- Attendance at additional meetings - (Erica has attended various CAF, CDC reviews and PEP)
- Language intervention – (This includes the initial meeting regarding supporting language and the sessions run with staff (.... and ....))
- Outreach work - (This includes the home visits to ....’s (including joint visits with Health Visitor (....) and Portage Worker (....))
- Solution circles – (4 sessions with staff regarding a specific issues have been conducted)
- Casework - (This includes ..../..../..../....)

10. When thinking overall, rather than individual pieces of work, how do you think the nursery has benefitted or not from Erica’s close involvement?

11. Is there anything that you think could be improved?

12. Is there anything else that you would like to add?

**Conclusion**

Summarise discussion. Is there anything else you would like to add?

**Thank you for participating**
Appendix 17: Example of Thematic Analysis

Example Thematic Analysis

In accordance with Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six phase process:

1. **Familiarisation with the data:** The researcher transcribed data from interviews/focus groups or typed data up from questionnaires all onto one word document.

   Example:

   Participant1: “We have a named EP who supports us by doing casework, supporting statements for statutory assessment and general consultation, advice, coming to SEN planning meetings.”

   The researcher then read through all the relating data in order to familiarise themselves with it and note down initial ideas.

2. **Generating initial code:** The researcher went back through the word document initially coding interesting features, then colour coding these features according to each code.

   Example:

   Participant1: “We have a named EP who supports us by doing casework, supporting statements for statutory assessment and general consultation, advice, coming to SEN planning meetings.”

   Codes: Planning Meetings / Consultations / Knowledge about the Child / Specific Advice, Strategies.

3. **Searching for themes:** Once all the information was coded, it was read as separate data and a theme produced which fully reflected the codes within the data.

   Example:

   

   Planning Meetings = “...coming to SEN planning meetings.”

   Consultations = “...general consultation...”

   Knowledge about the Child = “...casework, supporting statements for statutory assessment...”

   Specific Advice, Strategies = “advice...”

4. **Reviewing themes:** The researcher checked that all the themes corresponded with the codes for the entire data set.
Example:

**Codes:** Planning Meetings / Consultations / Knowledge about the Child / Specific Advice

5. **Defining and names themes:** The researcher went back to the uncoded data set and checked that the themes produced were a true reflection of the data set as a whole.

Example:

All data set is checked the themes correspond throughout, if not codes were modified.

**Codes:** Planning Meetings / Consultations / Knowledge about the Child / Specific Advice

6. **Producing the report:** The colour coded data with attached themes was then copied onto a new document and the data cut down, in order for quotes to be left which reflected the data from that theme.

Example:

**Current EP Support**

*Planning Meetings* “...coming to SEN planning meetings.”

*Consultations* “...general consultation...”

*Knowledge about the Child* “...casework, supporting statements for statutory assessment...”

*Specific Advice* “advice...”

*Strategies*

This process was completed for all data sets.
Appendix 18: Ethics Approval

Ethics Approval Application - CONFIRMATION after Panel 2012-13

Ethics Education (ethics.education@manchester.ac.uk)

18/10/2013

To: edouglas-osborn@hotmail.co.uk

Cc: ..... / ..... 

Dear Erica

Apologies for the delay in getting this approval confirmed to you

Ref: PGR- 7123296-A1

Title: Early Investment: The Role of Educational Psychologists in Supporting Early Years an Setting

I am pleased to confirm that your ethics application has now been approved by the School Research Integrity Committee (RIC) against a pre-approved UREC template.

If anything untoward happens during your research then please ensure you make your supervisor aware who can then raise it with the RIC on your behalf

This approval is only for the Ethical Approval Application, you are still required to have received approval from your Panel before carrying out any research.

Regards

Gail Divall | Senior Programmes Administrator

School of Environment, Education and Development | The University of Manchester | Arthur Lewis Building 2.020 | Oxford Road | Manchester M13 9PL | UK

Tel: +44(0)161 275 0317

Intranet: http://www.seed.manchester.ac.uk/studentintranet/miestudenthome/integrityethics/

For information on ethical research within the University, please refer to www.researchsupport.manchester.ac.uk/Goverance/Ethics
Appendix 19: Full Quotes and Themes for the Development of the Initial Model of Practice

**Quotes/themes from Initial Interviews / Questionnaires / Meeting**

**Thematic Analysis of Initial EY Interviews**

**PURPLE = Participant 1  
RED = Participant 2  
GREEN = Participant 3**

- **Current EP Support**
  
  **Process**
  ‘…seems right at the end for me the process, when …(EP) comes in and I sit with her through that one meeting really. I know she does come in but she does more with the Head and SENCo then with me.
  ‘But it had been a long process before …(EP) had even come in to just say try this with them.’

  **Planning Meetings**
  ‘We also have planned meetings with the EP throughout, yearly.’
  ‘…coming to SEN planning meetings.’

  **Consultations**
  ‘…sat in on consultations with … (EP) and spoke about a child…’
  ‘…general consultation’

  **Assessments**
  ‘…supporting statements for statutory assessment’
  ‘…writes the report’

  **Knowledge about the Child**
  ‘General information that paints a picture before the child even starts. So the information we get from the EP, that gives us good background knowledge so that gets things put into place ready for the child for when they start.’
  ‘EP did an assessment, then we all had discussion and liaison and she provided me with some information about a certain diagnosis that this child may possible have, signs of this and we discussed whether we thought this could be something.’

  **Specific Advice/Strategies**
  ‘(EP) has given me advice and new strategies to move that child forward.’
  ‘…advice’
  ‘So she brought it together really and identified appropriate interventions.’
  ‘…she will give us some strategies’
  ‘…we get the recommendations.’
  ‘So we work on anything, with the advice that …(EP) has given us’
  ‘…the recommendations, it could have been something simple, like you know if it was just behaviour, you could try this and its work and it like why didn’t I think of that, but I didn’t know that…’

  **Joint Working**
  ‘…because I’m the SENCo I tend to do most of the liaison with the Educational Psychologist.’
  ‘We work directly, in terms of the planning meetings, discussing the child’s need, prioritizing the children.’
  ‘We worked together…’
  ‘…offered advice together’
  ‘We had a meeting together…’
  ‘…then meets with the parents and me as well’

  **Work with Parents**
  ‘…spoke to the parents’
  ‘…talked about next steps with the parents together.’
  ‘…then meets with the parents’
‘…So we work on anything, with the advice that …(EP) has given us or the family meeting’

- **Aspects of EP Support most Valued**
  
  **Statutory Assessment Advice**
  ‘…particularly in terms of supporting decisions about statutory assessment and whether children meet the criteria for statutory assessment. It’s having someone with that knowledge and expertise to guide, talk to and help, plan the next steps.’

  **Identifying Needs**
  ‘Identifying needs any other problems that may have arisen.’
  ‘…sometimes when we’ve felt that a child isn’t making good progress, you know having that other professional view, you know on how we might put a case together, or approach things, or what next steps might be.’

  **Knowledge about the Child**
  ‘…the background, knowing the background knowledge of the child and the child’s family’

  **Modeling Practice**
  ‘I have observed the way … (EP) worked and picked up different skills which has moved my knowledge forward.’

  **Early Intervention**
  ‘ And also, early intervention, which is the key.’

  **Providing Links**
  ‘Our Educational Psychologist is linked to the Child Development Centre and is the Educational Psychologist that does the reviews and the assessments there and that helps us from an early years, early intervention point of view and bringing it together. So it’s holistic, keeping things in the loop.’
  ‘…joining up with the Child Development Centre, what we do and the medical side of things, what the Educational Psychologist does, I think, is a really important link in that, that we wouldn’t necessarily get otherwise.’

  **Work with Parents**
  ‘…The work with parents as well.’

- **Ideal EP Support**
  
  **Identifying Needs**
  ‘…the more specific needs that a child has, if they have a particular diagnosis or a difficulty.’

  **Regular Support/Advice**
  ‘To be in the setting more often, to be on hand more…’
  ‘…providing more continuity for the child in general, and for their family.’
  ‘General help and advice’
  ‘…that discussion, getting clarity of what we feel, or think may be appropriate strategies or next steps.’
  ‘…that reassurance and guidance on what to do, what’s appropriate’
  ‘To have more contact with us so wouldn’t of have to wait so long and until that next place that comes up for …(EP) coming in for, so could of already asked for advice and that could have been in place with that child.’
  ‘So for an EP to come in more, like a drop-in, so I could of asked about specific children, or generalize children’s behaviour. So like, ‘we are having this (difficulty), do you know what we could do’?’

  **Specific Interventions**
  ‘…support us with early intervention or any specific interventions that supports the child, or interventions with a group of children, where other needs may be identified’
  ‘And any specific work, I think, something that would be good if we had the time and the allocation would be that the Educational Psychologist would be able to work directly with that child or work more directly with that child and there support assistant to make sure that the strategies are being put in place, but also being adapted individually to the child and to the group as well.’
Joint Working
‘…just work together really’

Feedback on Practice
‘…maybe shadow us’
‘To feedback to us on our practice.’

Supporting Families
‘…providing more continuity for the child in general, and for their family.’
‘…to be there to support families and children with additional needs.’
‘Also, to support the parenting group that is going to be set up in the near future.’
‘…and also that support with parents as well. The Educational Psychologist is in more of a professional position to suggest to a parent, or make certain diagnosis if you like that we might feel but not necessary be able to make. So that’s useful.’

‘I think a drop-in might be nice for parents. So the parents can see whoever’s face it was, so the parents are going to know because when I’ve had to ask parents, I know it’s been scary. Even to just say the title. And if they’ve seen your face it’s not going to be as daunting that, ‘this is EDO and she’s going to she my child’. I know it’s worrying for them isn’t it when you say I’m going to put you in touch with a psychologist.’

Developing Knowledge
‘Show me things that you might have in mind that can support me to support the child.’
‘I would love to be able to work alongside you and get some more information from yourself and better my position to support the child.’
‘So for me to keep up to speed with research and strategies and thinking around social communication and autism is particularly important.’
‘I think that would support us if we had more strategies in place, or obviously we would have more knowledge because if we knew something from the first child, we would use that again and again for the future.’
RE Training: ‘I do, I don’t know what area, I’d say lots. Possibly behaviour. Because when it has been behaviour we don’t necessarily go on for a statement. So around behaviour.’

Thematic Analysis of Pre-Model Questionnaire

- Current EP Support
  Knowledge about the Child
  ‘Provided knowledge and information in supporting children.’
  ‘To look at the wider picture of a child’s development - breakdown their skills/abilities.’
  ‘By writing the relevant reports for the child, so we know the background.’
  ‘…assessment’
  ‘provided answers and shared knowledge.’
  Identifying Needs
  ‘Given information about specific needs of a child’
  Specific Advice and Strategies
  ‘…ways in which to try and progress their learning.’
  ‘After reviewing a child they have suggested different ways to work with them.’
  ‘When I worked in RP last year I received support for the girl I worked with and I found it helped.’
  ‘…advice’
  Joint Working
  ‘…joint work’
  Supporting Setting
  ‘….links with transition.’
  ‘The EP definitely supports the setting and some of the children accessing this provision’
  Improving Practice
  ‘They have helped me to understand the different ways to work with children.’
‘When working with that child my practice was more effective and I've been able to use in different situations.’

- **Aspects of EP Support most Valued**

  **Knowledge about the Child**
  ‘…to continue to share knowledge with staff to enable them to be able to provide support.’
  ‘Knowledge…’
  ‘The children's development.’

  **Joint Working**
  ‘To work together.’

  **Supporting Children**
  ‘To provide the best for children that may need extra support…’
  ‘Supporting children and the staff so they know how to help the child and family best.’
  ‘To be available to support the children and staff.’

  **Supporting Staff**
  ‘Supporting children and the staff so they know how to help the child and family best.’
  ‘Supporting staff with their roles in situations that may come up and how to help that certain child or staff more effectively.’
  ‘To be available to support the children and staff.’

  **Specific Advice and Strategies**
  ‘…advice.’
  ‘…next steps/interventions tried or recommendations.’

  **Identifying Needs**
  ‘Giving information about the children's needs and ways to support their learning.’
  ‘Assessing children for statements so that the children can receive the support needed.’
  ‘Assessment/analysis of need, support for statutory assessment, discussion around behaviours, needs, progress’

**Thematic Analysis of Head/SENCo Meeting**

- **Specific Interventions**
  They liked the idea of working directly with a group of children around specific themes that have been identified by staff as present needs, e.g. language. They stated that some direct work with one child and their parent would have been helpful last year, which arose out of need. Therefore such work may be useful if any other difficulties develop other the year. It was suggested that some time should be reserved for this type of ‘reactive’ work.

- **Being Available**
  Staff drop ins. Being around in the setting, report writing at setting etc, so staff are able to pop-in when need to. Another ‘reactive’ approach.

- **Supporting Parents**
  - **Structured Parents Sessions**
    It was suggested that I develop a more structured approach to supporting parents. For example, run half termly evening sessions about specific themes, such as sleep/toileting/play/behaviour where they are advertised and certain parents are approached to see if they would attend.
  - **Talk at Parents Group**
    Attending the parenting group for the parents of the resource provision. It was discussed that this is more of a closed group and they should be approached about me coming to talk during one session if they would like.

- **Staff Training**
  Staff training.
- **Casework Continuity**
  To have more frequent involvement with certain casework.

- **Reactive/Unplanned Work**
  Specific Interventions
  Being Available

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<td>Supporting Parents</td>
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<td>Casework</td>
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Appendix 20: Photograph of Themes taken to Educational Psychology Focus Group from Early Years Focus Group

Themes taken to Educational Psychology Focus Group
Appendix 21: Full Quotes and Themes from EP Focus Group

Quotes/themes from EP Focus Group

Initial Planning

Concerns

After Research:

‘My concern is the year after when it goes back to the original service, there needs to be some work around that.’

‘And I think that you need to be very clear about the bits that are linked to that piece of research and the bits of work that are linked to the service.’

Dynamics:

‘I think that will be quite hard because it is a nursery where there is a hierarchy; I think you are very aware of that coming from the Head particularly. Having said that I try very hard to work with them top-down and I have pretty good relationships with the staff and it might be different when you are placed there. I mean I kind of work with who I work with but I don’t decide who I work with, somebody else does that and I don’t actually know who makes that decision. Sometimes I work with a Teacher but quite often I work with a TA or a HLTA.’

Wording:

‘Just one quick one, its only one word, the word ‘training’ does not help with joint working, ‘I train you’, so I would always substitute it with workshop. So we are having a workshop around an activity, not that I am training you, so avoid the word training.’

Logistics

‘And logistics as well, is there space for you to be there for all that time. Where will you be when you’re in the setting?’

Time

‘...to keep it frequent but maybe time managed and shorter, obviously based on the feedback that comes out of the setting.’

‘I think in answer to your question in general. I think there is value in maybe front-loading the time and spend more time, the first perhaps month, going in for longer periods of time regularly, getting to really know the members of staff and then maybe. I am just thinking about when I’ve done long-term pieces of work in general, maybe tailoring that off a bit as you get to know the staff. So they’ll know you start away, maybe spending full days and getting to know the routine, because there is different staff coming in at different times and maybe for the first half term going for longer periods and then gradually reduce that as you’ve collected your data and you need more time.’

‘Because you will get to know the people who come in at lunch time, the people who come in, in the afternoon and you’ll pick up more and then decide on an ideal time to go in, a regular slot after that.’
**Focus Group**

‘I think those points about having those focus group discussions to identify their needs but if you do it in a solution focused way, you’ll get some goals. If you get them thinking about this language thing they want, what do they want it to look like, what do they want, what will the kids be doing, what will the parents be doing and you can elicit your goals.’

‘It’s probable worth priming them before you have the focus group as well so they can have a think about those things. So they’re not thinking on the spot.’

‘I think it’s really important. Well, one of the ways in which you can most diplomatically manage people’s contributions is by having a very structured way of doing it, so either it is very clear you take turns or you have a certain sequence, or you put people in partners and you swap partners, so it’s a very clear structure, its very clear when it’s your turn to speak and its clear when its not. So if you’re worried about the hierarchy dynamics within the nursery then that kind of structure helps.’

‘Leading on from that, use a model, I mean we are psychologists aren’t we, use solution circles, or use an approach, something that you can refer back to, so yes that good but we are using this model today and we are going to stick to that…’

‘…this is how we are going to structure our discussion.’

‘Share it first, go through it, talk about its advantages and why you are using it, and then…’

‘Because structured discussions are more effective then unstructured. It’s a more efficient use of peoples thinking and time.’

‘I think you’ve got to have really clear ground rules, and you could even put, make a joke of it, if you put it as a joke then later on its easier to address it isn’t it.’

**EP Model**

**Partnership Working**

‘Just picking up on that point about generalizing, what we were saying about one of the benefits about a solution circle is that we get to learn from each other’s practice, maybe that’s a format that could be used if they have the capacity to help there learning. On a hierarchy there might be modeling, coaching, group thinking. As ...(EP) says they’ve had all the input, there are the things that would help the implementation.’

‘And the solution circle would be good is because part of the reason they haven’t implemented what they’ve learnt is because they are on a treadmill. You know, this is a very disadvantaged nursery with a very high level of need in terms of single parents, you know, a lot of refugees, additional languages etc all linked with disadvantaged all linked with impoverished language generally, behaviour issues, difficult to engage families. So you know, they have so much to do so they don’t have time to stop and about what they are doing. It’s giving them those opportunities.’

‘I think it’s really essential and it keeps going through my mind, about your role. I think you’re dead in the water if you set up, if they see you as an in-house expert. We’ve got our own EP, no chance, what you’ve really got to sell is joint working. Everybody is the same status, you bring certain things and they have certain things and you have equal status. Do not allow them to make
you their in house expert because they will, there will be questions that you can’t answer and your credibility will die.’

‘It’s also about making clear that you value everybody there, you work equally. Whoever is there, you work equally, also side them and with them its equal status. It’s joint working, I’m just saying that there might be a better phase.’

‘Partnership working between you and the piece of research so they are very clear on boundaries, what to expect and you’re expecting of each other and then there is an end point.’

‘I think going back to the sleep clinic it might be worth identifying again somebody within the setting who is going to run it with you and you could do some joint learning about sleep so when you do go that person can carry it on.’

‘I think you can bring the facilitation of the process from discussions with them, I think that’s the EP’s role, the key role; consultation, solution-focused discussions.’

‘To build a relationship with everyone. You are not in the hierarchy and don’t spend all your time with the Head and SENCo, make it clear that you are separate from that.’

‘I think the joint working with a member of staff and a child is a really effective way of modeling. I think everybody learns, I think you’ll learn from them and they will learn from you. And don’t associate yourself with the hierarchy as far as possible. Personally, I would want to have a chat with every member of staff, touch base and just say this is to get to know you.’

**Staff Capacity**

‘I think there is something about asking them to identify it for themselves, what their capacity is to interact with you. How much time have then got for training and meeting with you, etc, for the staff focused work. Some of the work they want around parents, what capacity have parents got, what’s the capacity to interact with them.’

‘Have the staff on the ground got capacity?’

**Staff Needs**

‘The themes, a common one in early years is about language development, you know there are so many ways you can come at it, you mentioned all of those, maybe there’s something about, a don’t know which staff or a section of the staff that need, or it was voiced by or whether it’s a need across all the staff. But getting the staff to do their own kind of needs analysis, so getting the staff to identify what they feel their needs are in relation to children’s language development. If you were to take that up as a training theme, then you were to investigate finding out about their needs.’

‘Something that I’ve done recently with a looked after children’s team is a focus group almost identifying what they perceive their strengths to be, what they see to be there areas of development and thinking about how we can build upon these, I found that a really useful process and just having that space together and it came out with some really useful discussions on how to focus them and what their needs are and what they might want there to be support. I think that would be a useful model to use.’
**Supporting Current Knowledge**

‘But also they’ve had lots and lots of training, it’s about how they implement what they have been trained to do in those day-to-day interactions or whether it’s in small groups or whatever, but its more about implementation then sitting them down to train them, they’ve had that already really.’

‘Maybe, I like the idea of a language champion, somebody, or two language champions who you coach but then there responsible for coaching everybody else and from the ICAN training I’ve got some pledges where they pledge to implement some of the strategies that they’ve learnt so they write down, you know, ‘on this training these are the things I plan to implement’, and then you can go back and revisit that so they can do 1,2,3 strategies that they’ve learnt about in the past that they are going to focus on and make part of their every day practice because that’s often where it falls down isn’t it. They know it in theory when you prompt them but they don’t use it in practice’

‘As I’d say they’ve had lots of training, workshops or whatever you’d call it. They are not generalizing it into their practice, that’s the gap.’

‘I really like … (EP)’s idea of the champion and the mentoring or the coaching that would go along side that role.’

‘There is a lot of knowledge there.’

‘It’s worth asking them about what training they’d been on and asking them to all bring something back from that training and they’ve remembered and used. To use it as a workshop.’

‘It’s what … (EP) said about looking at the strengths, the training they have already been on and then looking at needs and building on it.’

‘And also using a more solution focused way, where would they like to get to, what would that look like.’

‘It’s about acknowledging their expertise because there is lot of expertise there. There are a lot of very difficult children there and they are managing very well so it’s almost reminding them that there are doing it on a daily basis. Its ok for us to come in and do 5 minutes, but they are doing on a daily basis. And, you know, they are very good at it.’

‘Yes, its making sure you go back to building on their strengths the whole time and keep reminding them about that.’

**Working Agreement**

**Agreement:**

‘Is there some kind of agreement I guess that you could draw up? I mean going back to the original question about time spent and things. Some kind of, I know we have service level agreements and things, but some kind of agreement that you could draw up about time and about partnership working as well, so it lays it all out in the beginning so they know what to expect for you and you know what to expect from them.’

‘Partnership working between you and the piece of research so they are very clear on boundaries, what to expect and you’re expecting of each other and then there is an end point.’
'Have some clear guidelines.'

‘And I think if you have a service level agreement, it can be a joint one, rather than go in with one already written, it can be discussed and plan it all together with the goals attached.’

‘That setting, so they agree it and that’s the way you’re going with it.’

**Prioritizing:**

‘I think you need to agree as well, what exactly you are going to do because you have got so much there and you could be in and out constantly doing so many things. Are they going to prioritize exactly what they would like you to do? Because otherwise you could be so, you know wearing yourself thin because you could just be trying to do so much stuff.’

**Responsibility:**

‘Also linking in with that, whether they’ve got capacity to help sustain some of that work as well, how are they going to follow up on that and follow up on interventions?’

‘Yes, get a buy-in from them before you deliver the training or workshops, that they are going to follow it through and build it in.’

**Goals:**

‘I think as you are going to give a block of your time to this setting, it is time limited no matter how generous you are, from my point of view I think you need to set yourself some goals. Possible achievable goals, EY settings may not have their own goals; they may have some goals they want to achieve. Find out from them as well, what their goals are, developmental goals. Set some goals for yourself so at least you can measure them and you have some sort of exist point as well, to reach your goals. You can’t make it all defined but.’

‘Some clear targets, what are the strengths, what are the needs and what’s it going to look like in the end.’

‘They are going to have clear national curriculum targets; they will be clear and spelled out by the authority, so the SENCo is the person to speak to about them.’

‘I think it’s about what they want to achieve at the end of the day as well, what they hope to get out and it’s about how to measure that and there are different ways of measuring that. I mean there is goal attainment scaling that you might want to use, there are different ways of measuring outcomes that I’m sure you have looked at. But it’s about being clear from the outset about what the end result is going to look like.’
Appendix 22: Full Quotes and Themes from Early Years Focus Group

Quotes/themes from Early Years Focus Group

Important Aspects of Model

**Partnership working**
“…and working in a more collaborative way.”

“I’m going to put about partnership working, about what we have already discussed and putting about us all being on the way level, I don’t want anyone to think ‘arhh, a psychologist’ because I’m not, I don’t know anything anyway, I’m just a trainee, I think that’s quite important.”

“I want this to be not just about supporting teachers, but teaching assistants, and the Head is she needs it, its about supporting everyone and working bottom-up.”

“…so its more a thing or sharing what we are doing rather then feeling like the expert. But other people can get involved in this and be empowered by this.”

**Supporting and recognising staff knowledge, skills**
“…a big thing that I think through doing this is about recognizing staff capability and expertise, and seeing if we can build on that, if you want to do so.”

“…that there is so much expertise already here, you know, you work with some really disadvantaged families and high need children, so instead of teaching you all to suck eggs, we can use this is see what you already know, talk about it all together and share our knowledge between, across classrooms, across staff members.”

“We all know a lot about language, or we should do because we’ve had a lot of training and there’s no point doing anymore really. But its about then how we as teachers implement that and how we get better at doing that or are more specific about measuring our impact on the children. I think its more about using the knowledge we’ve got.”

“That’s what really came out of my other focus group, its not bringing extra, but looking at what you’ve already gone.”

“We’ve done a lot of that, we’ve had a lot of people trained in interventions and its about how that person and about developing the staff skills, and about how that person gets it out to everybody else so its about how that impacts on everybody’s practice, and so the children get the most benefit so its not just the children are in that persons group or the child that get to work with that person benefit when the others don’t.”

“Also about supporting staff, that’s a big thing and its where I come from, helping people to feel supported and safe in the place that they work, in the hope that, that is what helps children and families feel supported.”

“Recognising staff knowledge, everyone has already been on hundreds of training courses and I don’t think I need to do training or anything like that. It’s using what you’ve got and how we can take that forward and what you personally want help with. Because you are all different and you all have different needs and I think it’s about recognising that.”

“…to develop your own practice and have further knowledge in that area.”
“…if there are things in our practice or things that we want to develop then we’ve like to act on that rather then it just being something for your thesis. We are here aren’t we, we’re going to be left with this after it’s finished.”

*Supporting Existing Structures*

“I think we need to have a certain agreement around that as well, the professional responsibilities, you know if you have concerns around the child, if you are struggling with the child then this is not necessarily the forum to raise them.”

“You’ve already got really good structures in place you see.”

*Responsibilities of the Trainee Educational Psychologist and staff*

“So what I would like to offer is 3-4 hours weekly, coming in on a Thursday”

“So in this service level agreement I am going to put about, well I’ve put 2-5, but we see how that goes and play it by ear to be honest.”

“There will always be a space, even my office.”

“And I suppose part of that is getting us to commit to our part as well.”

“You are all always running around and it’s all very well me saying I’m and come in and do drop-ins etc. But if you haven’t got time, there is no point.”

“EPS focus was really hot on, how much time and capacity have you got.”

“I think that’s something that we’ve raised before, is that bit about the professional responsibilities as well really…”

“I’ve also got here about responsibilities, about I will come in work with you in the hope that I have somewhere to work and the hope that staff are willing to get involved as well.”

*Collaborative Goals*

“My goal is to conduct a piece of research, but it is also to support an Early Years setting in a more structured, frequent way and then seeing whether that is also helpful or not. It might be a waste of time, you might not have time for me, there might be lots of things, but it’s seeing whether its helpful having me, using my psychological knowledge, doing solution circles, doing parents support and doing things like that.”

“I’ve like staff to say that they’ve found this a useful opportunity and they’ve got something from engaging in this project and to have some impact on the children, whatever that is and what that might be. And whether, that through support that’s been given to a parent ultimately.”

“It’ll just be about the impact for the children, that’s what you’ve ultimately want is to see a difference in children.”

*A model of service delivery that is modifiable based on need*

“…this model will be adjusted based on need. So it is split into planned and unplanned work.”

So this will be based on a service level agreement which we are going to do which will be in partnership.

“For the support and advice, can that session be used for staff or parents?” “Either or, depending…” “On the issues that arise.”
**Engaging Staff**

“But ultimately we need the engagement.”
“I don’t mind taking a lead on it, having to feed back to other members of staff.”

“...see it as a positive, supportive thing, you know, and if you’re not getting anything out of it then, you know…”

**Supporting all Staff**

“I want this to be not just about supporting teachers, but teaching assistants, and the Head is she needs it, its about supporting everyone and working bottom-up.”

“The reason why I haven’t just brought in teachers or HLTA’s is because it’s the lead staff who tend to get more professional development just because they have too, for their role and different responsibilities. But other people can get involved in this and be empowered by this.”

“...most things can be organised. It’s a lot easier to organise something that staff say ‘I really want to do this, I really want to learn’ and engage in this, then I will organise for you to have 2 hours out of the session for that to happen.”

“You know, the more staff want to use this and engage in this as a professional development opportunity, then I feel that is probable my role to facilitate that to enable you to work with those staff. If you can get that message out there…”

**Model of Service Delivery**

Agreed Planned Work

**Shadowing**

“I think that’s one of the reasons that I want to come in and spend the day here, a few days, so people can get to know me, know my face and I can keep badgering them and talking about this and go from them.”

“How does that all sound, to come in and do 3 Thursdays of full time with you. For the first 3 full days I am going to be in N2 and N3 anyway.”

**Monthly Staff Groups**

“Now, I’ve looked at a thing called a Solution Circle, this is when someone brings a case and we all talk about the case. Everyone would offer ideas and solutions, so I would facilitate and offer ideas and solutions as well, but we would all go round and work together about a certain case, so ‘I’m really struggling with this child I don’t know what to do?’ So we all sit and talk about it, in an hour and come up with something.”

“I am just thinking in that first solution circle I was talking about, because quite often you bring a case about a child, we could do about ‘how can we improve language here’, so that could be our first session and we all sit together and we talk about ideas ‘well how are we going to implement this, how are we going to check that we are all doing this’. That’s something that might work and then how is it going to be measureable, how are we going to evaluate whether this is working or not.”

“...is the solution circles, once a month, I think they may be quite useful but we can play about with those as well.”

“…because later is better at the end of the school day.”

**Talks for Parents**
“Supporting families, so we’ve got, we talked about the sleep clinic this next term so we need to decide on a date that’s best for parents. It would be quite nice to run it with a member of staff from here as well, and you wanted those every half termly.”

“So for the parent sessions we’ve got sleep, then eating and toileting and then positive behavioural management.”

“It’s the whole triangle, eating, sleeping, and toileting. I’d say a big one is sleep, I think they’d be interested in that. The younger ones, I think it’s even things like routine, don’t even know the basic things like that, so even that would help. It tends to be eating and sleeping are the main ones.”

**Casework Continuity**

“I wanted to; sort of follow him through as a case. There is a meeting for him next Wednesday so I don’t know if that’s something that you’ve want to, I’m just saying it before I forget. It’s a team around the child meeting, if that’s something that…”

“…casework continuity, that would be about keeping in check with that.”

**Talk at Parent’s Group**

“And I’ve got the talk at the parents group for when they would like that”

**Planning Meetings**

“We already have the casework from the Planning Meeting”

**Unplanned Reactive Work**

**Regular Support and Advice**

“For the support and advice, can that session be used for staff or parents?” “Either or, depending…” “On the issues that arise.”

“But, if there is a scenario where staff might want support from you and you can offer that support.”

“…have drops for staff ins for staff if they have an issue or we can talk a bit more about language, how we are supporting that.”

**Supporting Families**

“For the support and advice, can that session be used for staff or parents?” “Either or, depending…” “On the issues that arise.”

“I’ve planned, so we have time for these sessions and the times for things that might crop up.”

“…parents who are particularly worried about sleep can come in and have a chat about that.”

**Specific Interventions: Supporting Language (language champions)**

“The next thing is about developing knowledge, about providing support around language. I like the idea of having language champions and maybe having a language champion in N2 and N3 and I can then have a meeting with those two people and then we can look at how we are going to improve language across the whole setting. So thinking about what’s the best way to do this, what do we already know works best, so having them instead of me going away and doing a workshop or something, but getting them to do things with me, maybe do one-to-one with staff and a child or…”
Because I could to do a specific language intervention, which I could talk about with the language champions. So to have that, say the three of us are going to run…”

“But those language champions need to know that they have a job to model and disseminate, you know, to fill out to everybody.”

“It’s about how we make it really meaningful, something that is really achievable in practice. It’s not like, ‘I’m going to go off now and do a language intervention group’, because that only has an impact upon the children that are involved in it.”

“I can definitely do a specific language intervention anyway with a group of children, ones that you think would be…, and it’s a good way to model.” “And it would be good to have a member of staff to work with you and see that.”

“I can do the specific language interventions in that time.”

“For the specific language intervention, I would suggest that that would be better in the afternoon.”
Appendix 23: Language Session Reflection Form

Language Session Reflection Form

Group:

Session:

1. How did you feel today’s session went?

2. What went well today?

3. What didn’t go as well today?

4. What area shall we focus on improving?

5. What would that look like?

6. Is there anything you will do differently in your practice following the session today?
Parent Workshop – Sleep Presentation

Page 1

Supporting your Child to Sleep

**** SENCo & Erica Douglas-Osborn
Trainee Educational Psychologist

Page 2

What we are going to talk about...

• Why is sleep important?
• Causes of sleep difficulties.
• Bad and good sleep routines.
• Strategies to support sleep.
• What changes will you make?
• Relaxation technique.
• Is there anything else you would like to know/discuss?

Page 3

Why is sleep important?

• Supports growth and development.
• Leads to good health and wellbeing.
• Helps your brain work properly.

Page 4

How much sleep?

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<tr>
<th>Age</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>13 ½</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>10 ¾</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>10 ½</td>
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Page 5

Sleep difficulties

• Many children find it difficult to sleep and settle through the night.
• 20% of 2 year olds wake regularly during the night.
• Children with Additional Needs, such as Autism or ADHD, have more difficulties with sleep.

Page 6

Sleep difficulties

• Many children find it difficult to sleep and settle through the night.
• 20% of 2 year olds wake regularly during the night.
• Children with Additional Needs, such as Autism or ADHD, have more difficulties with sleep.
Why do children have difficulties...

There is a variety of reasons. These may include:

• May be upset or ill.
• May not be settled into a suitable night-time routine
• May have not learnt suitable night-time behaviours.
• Additional needs.
• A bad night may escalate.

A sleep routine...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5:00</td>
<td>Plays in bedroom with toys, leaves toys out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:30</td>
<td>Has bath and put pyjamas on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:00</td>
<td>Comes back downstairs and watches TV with mum and dad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:00</td>
<td>Has supper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:30</td>
<td>Goes back upstairs and cleans teeth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:45</td>
<td>TV or music on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:00</td>
<td>Child gets into bed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A better sleep routine...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4:30</td>
<td>Plays in bedroom with toys, leaves toys away.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:00</td>
<td>Has supper. Tea?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:30</td>
<td>Comes back downstairs and watches TV with mum and dad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:00</td>
<td>Has bath and puts pyjamas on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:30</td>
<td>Goes back upstairs and cleans teeth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:45</td>
<td>TV or music on for 15 minutes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:00</td>
<td>Child gets into bed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sleep strategies

Most important things to support sleep:

• Link bedtime routine to bedtime.
• Clear/consistent bedtime routine.
• Down time before bed
• Go to bed at the same time and get up at the same time.

What happens if they wake?

• Be clear
• Be consistent
• Don’t make waking up in the night exciting. Be boring. (If you let your child get into bed with you, this is a reward).
• Take one thing away at a time.
• It’s easy to do the easiest thing; this is not the easiest thing long term!
So what?

• What three things are you going to change about your child’s routine?
• What might happen...

Just before bedtime

• Visualisation.
• Story time.

How did you feel?

Do you think you could use these for your children?

Food for thought

• If you want change you need to do something different.
• Stick with it.
• If you want further support or help please come and see me.

Good luck!

Questions?

Thank you for attending.
Appendix 25: Toileting Workshop Slides

Parent Workshop – Toileting Presentation

Page 1

Supporting your Child’s through Toileting

****
SENCo
&
Erica Douglas-Osborn
Trainee Educational Psychologist

Page 2

What we are going to talk about...

• Introduce toileting.
• Is your child ready?
• Preparing for toilet training.
• Toilet training.
• Difficulties with toilet training.
• Questions and answers.
• Is there anything else you would like to know/discuss?

Page 3

Introduction

• The individual child.
• Language.
• When to start.

Page 4

Is your child ready?

• Is your child old enough?
• Is your child physically ready?
• Is your child able to dress/undress?
• Can you child follow simple instructions?
• Does your child know what the toilet is for?
• Understanding wet and dry.

Page 5

Preparing for toilet training

• Toilet or potty?
• Clothing.
• Pants or training pants?
• Diet.
• Letting everyone know.

Page 6

Toilet training

Aim:
• Sit child on potty/toilet.
• Child wees or poos.
• Adult praises enthusiastically!
• Accidents.
• Have fun!
Toilet training at night

- When to start?
- What you need.
- Accidents.
- If not working.
- Research.

Difficulties with toiletting

- Making it fun.
- Toileting diary.
- From prompting to independence.
- Being out and about.
- Any further questions?

Questions and answers

1. My son is 16 months and showing no awareness when he does a pee or a poo, but my mother keeps nagging me to start. Do you think he is ready?
2. We are going on holiday soon and my husband reckons that it would be a good time to start training our toddler as he would be around. What do you think?

Questions and answers

3. Should I reward my child with sweets or a treat when he has used the potty?
4. What should I dress my child in during potty training?
5. When should I start getting my daughter to use the toilet instead of the potty?
6. My son is 2½ and has been clean for 3 months, but still sits when he needs a pee. When is he able to stand up?

Summary

- Let’s talk about poos and wees.
- Are they ready? Are you?
- Getting prepared.
- Toilet/potty at intervals.
- Praise/making it fun.
- Being clear and consistent.
- Promoting independence.
  Remember every child is different.

More help...

- There are lots of helpful books/articles.
- Family and friends
- Nursery
- Portage
- Health Visitor
- Appointment to see me.
Questions?

Thank you for attending.
Appendix 26: Full Quotes and Themes from Post-Model SENCo Interview

Quotes/themes from Post-Model SENCo Interview

Solution Circles

Language groups, solution circles is really good and I could see how that could be really useful for staff to have that expert opinion and guidance really and help them with their professional development. I think the only downside to that is the following up of it and the how do you, it’s quite difficult to manage staff being, how do I say this. I think sometimes the ideas are there and they plan out the strategies but I know in reality it hasn’t happened. Maybe its follow-up would need to be more often, they actually need more input, it’s not just a case of discussing it in a meeting but they actually need the Educational Psychologist person working beside them a bit more or monitoring it a bit more.

I did speak to Erica about in terms of just being aware of the strategies that are already in place and have been planned and set by the teacher and by the SENCo and that staff are carrying out those consistently and if they were thinking of their own ideas and strategies that’s fine but it has to feed into what the class teacher is doing and what the SENCo is doing as well. I did have a little bit of a worry about that.

T: As I said I think they’ve been useful the feedback from the staff is positive and I think they have just enjoyed the time to be together as a staff. It’s a voluntary process so it’s your more keen people. It’s about how you kind of, I think share that with the team as well. The actual logistics of it have been difficult because it’s the timings, when can they meet and how does it work and how does it get followed up and... so yes, I think it’s the logistics, what happened after the solution circle. I’m not sure the impact was as great as it could have been. I think it was potentially very good. I think also, it took a bit of explaining to staff, whether it’s just individuals that were just working with or whether it’s just a generally thing of understanding what it is and why it would be benefit you and, I could of arranged, or I could have made people come to these meetings but obviously that’s not the idea. Yes, so I think that was the difficulty with it really, I think logistically it was a bit difficult.

T: Yes, as I say, potentially, I’m sort of looking at that as staff development work. I’d say that £210 mark around doing four sessions of staff development is good value for money. I think I’d want to look at how the structure of those sessions, but in terms of work with staff. You know and it was open to, more staff, but that was just a case of how many we could get there at the time, so, you know that is good value for money.

Parents evening

T: Again, that goes back to what I was saying before about this person is part of our team, we are a multi-agency team and its how we work together, this is what this persons role is, if you need that or we may well introduce this person to you. I think it just helps to build those relationships and break down any barriers.
Parent workshops

T: Just a couple of things, if we go back to parents, the workshops that we’ve done, because one of the things that we’ve agreed that we would do is some work with parents on specific issues. So we identified EY issues, toilet training and sleep and these were things that we get many enquiries and difficulties and you know, many parents need support and advice around that. So doing it as a workshop and getting everyone in on mass, although they didn’t quite come on mass, that was really useful.

T: They’ve been useful and I think it’s where I would say the more expert opinion and checking out what’s the most up-to-date, current, correct advice based on research and best practice really. And we’ve worked together on those which I think Erica’s found that useful as well in terms of her own development, what our experience is and how we normally go about toileting children and so on. I think that’s been a good thing to work together on really.

Um, I think the workshops have been useful and I think the work with the staff.

T: Yes, I would probable tie that in with the parent information sessions in terms of value for money, so they were equal depending on what’s most appropriate at the time for the parents that we are working with or the children that we are working with.

Language intervention

T: That was useful and for those specific children, they were children who obviously had potential but needed something very specific in terms of their language, their listening and attention and vocabulary and so on, so something that could really target that, something very specific and the work alongside with the staff.

T: Yes, there were 8 children involved in that and 2 members of staff, so if you were to apply that figure and share it out between those children and staff and if we did receive money, for example, the pupil premium, you know, that would be a valuable way to spend it and being a nursery school we don’t so. In terms of a traded service, that would be something that, it’s a big commitment that we probable would find hard to actual afford.

Outreach work

T: That is something which I think is not common for EP’s to do, but from our point of view that was something really, really useful because this is a family that we have been working with for a while with multi-agency support, you know, a family and a child that need a lot of support and we’re trying to identify something very specific that was going to try and help the family move on. For the meetings we were having it seemed as though the sleep issues and the relating behaviour issues were something that the family needed some very intense work with. It wasn’t going to work just talking about it in a meeting and saying ‘try this’ or ‘have you done this’, you actually needed somebody. And also in terms of, I would say the emotional needs of the family as well, it decided somebody quite skilled to do that work with the family because they were very down on the child. Everything that was going wrong in the family was because of this child so they did need that psychology input to actually change their behaviour and change their way of thinking. It was quite a specific piece of work that really needed the psychology professional I feel to really bring something extra to that that hadn’t been brought before.
The outreach work as I said if that was an option and appropriate for particular families then that is something we have found useful and that is something that we would want to us in the future.

T: Yes, it’s been very beneficial to us as a school to find a different way forward to work with this family so I wouldn’t like to say it’s not value for money, but when you think it’s one child and one family when we have got lots of others. And I think that family has been particularly lucky with the support they’ve had, with the individual professionals that they’ve had with them and what we’ve been able to provide really. It’s a big commitment to one family and with our limited budget, haha, it’s not so value for money as a school really.

Casework

and then if you do need to move things on say for a child who’s on the code of practice or whatever they don’t feel as daunted by ‘this is an Educational Psychologist who’s assessing my child’. It’s a more positive working together to find strategies and so on to support parents and I think they have found that helpful.

T: Yes, in terms of our SEN planning meetings, having the EP at the meeting from our point of view is very useful because again, for us, particularly in EY work the children are sometimes going through the child development centre or involved, it helps to bring information together and plan out the best course of action. And again, just being able to talk through the cases sometimes, saying what should I do with this or what do you think, having the EP to say ‘yes we will do an assessment’ or ‘have you tried this’ or you could refer to that. And I know Erica has attended these with Kay hasn’t she, both of them have attended. So, it’s been useful and a couple of children who I have brought up in the monitoring and the planning and the next steps Erica was familiar with because of the work in the setting, she had come across them so we could kind of compare notes if you like in terms of her thoughts really.

T: Yes in terms of the CDC that’s always helpful because I suppose it represents nursery and because Erica has done an assessment and she knows the children and she is able to give some feedback on our behalf and again it’s bringing it together and making the process more smooth of the parents as well. And the CAF meetings, that was a particular family that was identified that needed some specific work and it was agreed that we would look at Erica’s role and how she could work with that which has been beneficial for the family and for us at a school trying to support the family.

T: Yes, casework is invaluable. Again, these are children we’ve monitored for periods of time, set strategies and got to the stage where we need that further assessment really because we are skilled in this setting at working with children with additional needs whatever they are. The casework tends to be more often when we are looking at possible requesting statutory assessment and that’s helped to clarify that and look at what we need to do next really.

obviously the casework which is a big percentage of the time would still feature, would need to be quite a big part of the work really, um, the early intervention work is another side to it I would say because often with the casework, you know we’ve tried strategies and we’ve tried and we’ve got to a place with these children where perhaps we need more.

T: I think the CDC ones are good value for money because it’s supports the communication it keeps everything together, you know, as a school often it’s hard to attend the meetings because of the timings and all the rest of it. But having someone there who is in fact representing education
and health and can link that together for us, that’s important. I think the CAF, because the CAF meetings are with the same family that the outreach work has been done with, those two things tie together really, so I suppose you would have to say that’s value for money because. I’m not sure how valuable the CAF meetings would be if Erica didn’t have much background on the family or wasn’t working with the family in addition, there probably wouldn’t be much value in that, without knowing the family that well, you couldn’t bring that much. But the potential of that, potentially it’s very good value for money.

T: Yes, that is a lot of money isn’t it. But you know, as I was saying before it is one of the most, well it’s probable what we’ve used our educational psychology allocation for mostly, wholly in the past. We do have a lot of children with emerging additional needs, obviously being EYs children are often coming to us with no other input so we kind of need it.

General themes

T: I think it’s the regular contact and I think looking at the different aspects of the EP role and how different parts of that are useful for different cases because sometimes it is, you do just want to sound your ideas with someone or what the EP’s opinion is or decide what the next move is, I think it’s having the whole sort of flexibility and ease of access and ongoing contact. That I can see in some ways in moving forward to continue to work in that way you could probably save time and effort in some ways because you can get things done at source if you like rather then having to go through a referral process and do things that way.

T: Yes, and again it’s useful to show parents that working together and bring together that multi-agency work. I think with it being a familiar face and we can say ‘ow this is our EP, this is Erica she works with us or …’ it helps to normalise the process and I think it that is really good in a setting such as this were many parents, may lack confidence and maybe not have the best experiences themselves of education and so on. I think it comes across in a much more supportive way because, like I say, it’s a more familiar face, it’s ‘ow I’m Erica and I’m doing this today’ And also it’s the fact that although we are together, I know for one parent, for example, who I know Erica has supported with toileting I think she felt that maybe she could share some information with her because she wasn’t her key worker and she wasn’t as personal in some ways and to get a subjective opinion as well so I think it’s worked both ways, depending on the families, the parents. What the parents need and by school knowing that we can communicate and go do the best route for supporting the child I think, it’s a more flexible way of working I think that’s what I’m trying to say.

I personally feel and I know this is the feeling of the head teacher as well is that, that work would be more directed by the needs of the school and directed more by the SENCo, by me, as opposed spending more time on particular issues or around working with particular children as opposed to the solution circles and I think we reference to this particular setting I think that would be more beneficial to us.

J: OK, so following this information would you consider buying additional EP time?

T: Yes. Have we got the money, no.

T: Yes, I think I have probable already said in terms of the exploring the variety of work and potentially how we could work and different ways of working, yes it has been very valued and
Erica’s fitted in well with the team and got to know the staff, got to know the children, build up relationships with the children. And we’ve seen Erica a lot in and out, parents have got to know her and the staff have got to know her so that’s really valuable in terms of ease of access to the EP service as you like.

T: Yes, and I think we’ve kind of, because it has been open to everyone but we’ve also been able to target parents who we feel we need more guidance or would be able to learn skills, depending on what it is.
Appendix 27: Full Quotes and Themes from Post-Model Early Years Focus Group

Quotes/themes from Post-Model Early Years SENCo Focus Group

General themes

J: I think it’s the support, I’ve worked with her in small groups and it’s been the support that’s been there, ideas for activities and things.

K: The children were very happy to see Erica as well.

L: We could do with her coming back.

C: Tell her we need another 12 months.

L: She has also more accessible.

L: Because usually an EP has a certain amount of time allocated, there is only really certain children you can really flag up whereas it’s kind of almost early intervention then you would normally get, which means that you can start focusing on these children a lot sooner which is a lot more effect.

L: So the fact that she’s more accessible makes a big difference for us.

C: We could do with somebody permanently couldn’t we?

C: The area, the fact that we’ve got RP children as well.

L: If we had someone once a fortnight, we could look at something like that. Having lots of intervention groups, then I think that would make a big difference. We could share with all the nurseries in the area, couldn’t we and she could go around on a rota. Then you are catching all these children all across the area rather than just when they’ve hit and certain point and they’ve kind of.

C: Early intervention is the key isn’t it. Especially, for any child.

K: Especially in this catchment area.

L: If money was available to do so.

L: And then you are catching the children even earlier aren’t you, the younger age bracket.

K: Just to say thank you really for the progress that them children have made and, you know nothing is more valuable is it to give that extra push to those children and the main thing that they’ve benefitted. Bring her back in September, yes?
K: it’s been really good hasn’t it, it’s been really enjoyable. It really has.
C: She’s always very bright isn’t she, always very friendly. The children love her.
J: She is very clear isn’t she.
K: She’s approachable, you have a question and you can just go to her.
C: I think she will do very well.
L: I think they were the things that we were involved in that’s why. I think Tara has had more involvement with other things.
J: Sure, that’s what this is about just getting your views in terms of the work that Erica has done and it doesn’t necessarily mean that you know all about it, not all aspects. OK, that’s it, thank you very much.

Language intervention

K: I think also the children that I’ve worked with Erica, you can clearly see the progress that they’ve made and with the interventions that Erica put in place and the support that she gave to us, the children did make progress from it.
C: I know one particular child in that group who’d we’d been struggling with for 12 months and since she went in that group we progressed so much, concentration wise and since the group has stopped I’ve actually since her regress again, which is a shame but it was that focus which made the difference. The small group work.
E: I think my children who I worked with in the small group became more confident, some that didn’t speak a lot, struggled to concentrate, came out better.
K: All the parents consented for the intervention groups so I know they were all happy with them taking part.
K: Myself and Emma. She did a morning group and a afternoon group didn’t she and they were brilliant, really really good weren’t they. And as well for us giving us the opportunity to work closely with those children, because you try to work with all the children in your group but it so difficult to reach all of these children so actually having the opportunity to chose a selection of children that you can work closely with, and it wasn’t just children from our specific group it was other groups as well as being able to work with them a lot more closely. And we know now that they’ve progressed so that’s sign enough for us that it’s worked.
C: Did she change her ideas part way through as well.
K: She did yes and on a couple of occasions she observed me and Emma, how we approached the group and she said ‘ I’d like to do that, that’s a really good idea’ and we’d observe Erica and say that’s a really good idea.
E: It did make us think more about our practice.
K: It did didn’t it, yes, I was quite interesting. I remember once we were doing a story about strawberries and I said why don’t I bring some strawberries in and it went on and on from then.
was that one little thing that was able to extent. And when Erica wasn’t able to make it me still did
the intervention group and the children still knew what the expectations were so it was really good
the group wasn’t it?

Solution circle

C: I think the solution circles we did, I don’t know whether it’s the solution circle itself that made
the difference I think it’s that we’ve all got together and we’ve all had the time to talk about a
particular child or a particular problem that we have had.

L: It’s time with each other, it’s that opportunity.

C: It’s saying you are all going to sit down together. I don’t know whether it’s the solution side or
it but it’s the fact that we all had time to sit down together and focus on a child. I think it made the
difference to some of the children didn’t it.

L: Again it was about actually talking to each other and giving each other time to come up with
ideas and actually think I’ll try it rather then, I’m not sure if that’s going to work, but give it a try.

C: I think it jogged our memory, we know strategies and things, but sometimes we get so deep into
things, you forget your own practice and I think we reminded each other of good practice and make
sure it was followed through and we meet a again a month later, meant you had to do something.
But there is no point talking about it if you’re not going to put something in place.

K: The one thing that it taught me is that there is a solution within this little group, you think ‘what
do I do, what do I do’ and having that time to sit down and speak to your team. Someone has got
that solution it’s just about having that time and I quite like where you aren’t allowed to talk for a
certain amount of time, because I don’t shut up me, you had to listen, you took your turn, I did like
that part of it. Maybe not the silent though, haha.

C: She was flexible with the times.

L: Between us, we got something out of it. That would have been nice for more staff to have been
involved.

Casework

C: Casework with M I just know that the parent agreed with everything that she said.

I know the children that she’s worked with but not really been involved with it.

L: I think, she did an assessment on ..... I think she let mum know that some of the things she was
thinking were actually right and looking at ideas as to how to be effect.

Shadowing

K: I think it was useful, but I think it was useful for Erica as well, as it was a good opportunity for
her to why these children were chosen to work with her because seeing them in groups and seeing
them in certain situations she was able to pinpoint what each child would need once we went into
the intervention group. So I think it was beneficial for her as well as the children and us.
C: And actually it gave her the opportunity to see the children before we came to the solution circles, we say ‘a problem with that child’ and she’d say ‘I do remember that child’… ‘and I witnessed’, so she sort of confirmed why we were thinking of that particular child.

Parent workshop

C: She did the toileting workshops, it wasn’t very well attended, but I do know one parent that did attend, she said she had a 100% success with it. She also gave advice on sleep patterns and a few more issues came out with that particular parent, which she gave some good ideas to, as was finding it quite difficult to put something in place, but now she had to, not because of Erica but because family circumstances changed.

Outreach work

E: I think she’s noticed though, from what she’s said to me from seeing his behaviour in the home to what he’s like here, since what he was capable of doing here. I think that was able putting strategies in place at home for mum and dad, trying to improve.

K: it was very much the home life that needed more support, then JB really, because when he’s here it would follow a routine. He had moments when he did struggle a little bit, but there was a difference because there are boundaries set in nursery and there was focus in him at home and obviously at home, he was a different child. So a lot of focus has been the home life.

C: I think it’s probable changed again since Erica worked with them.
### Appendix 28: Full Data Set from all Questionnaires

**Full Data from Questionnaires** (Pre-Questionnaire/Post-Questionnaire/Solution Circle/language Intervention/Joint Working/Parenting Workshops (sleep/toilet)/Parenting Support)

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<th>1. I understand what an EP's role is:</th>
<th>2. The EP is accessible:</th>
<th>3. I have control over what EP support I receive:</th>
<th>4. The EP has provided me with greater knowledge of child development:</th>
<th>5. I feel the EP support I receive supports me in my role:</th>
<th>6. I feel the EP support I receive supports the setting overall:</th>
<th>7. I would like more support from an EP:</th>
<th>8. How has the EP supported you in your role?:</th>
<th>9. Do you think the EP has made you more effective in your role?:</th>
<th>10. What do you think is the most important aspect of EP support?:</th>
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<td>TRUE</td>
<td>DON'T KNOW</td>
<td>DON'T KNOW</td>
<td>SOMEWHAT TRUE</td>
<td>SOMEWHAT TRUE</td>
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<td>TRUE</td>
<td>Supporting children and the staff so they know how to help the child and family best.</td>
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<td>FALSE</td>
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<td>SOMEWHAT TRUE</td>
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<td>Giving information about the child's needs and ways to support their learning.</td>
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<td>When involvement was given - then yes - but EP not available for most of the time.</td>
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<td>Given information about specific needs of a child and ways in which to try and progress their learning.</td>
<td>After reviewing a child they have suggested different ways to work with them.</td>
<td>They have helped me to understand the different ways to work with children.</td>
<td>Assessing children for statements so that the children can receive the support needed.</td>
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<td>I have never had any personal contact with the EP whilst at this setting.</td>
<td>The EP definitely supports the setting and some of the children accessing this provision - but as above no personal contact to support any other children.</td>
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<td>MOSTLY TRUE</td>
<td>The EP has never supported me in my role.</td>
<td>No.</td>
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<td>The children's development.</td>
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<td>TRUE</td>
<td>SOMEWHAT TRUE</td>
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<td>By writing the relevant reports for the child, so we know their background.</td>
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<td>To be available to support the children and staff.</td>
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<tr>
<td>TRUE</td>
<td>TRUE</td>
<td>TRUE</td>
<td>SOMEWHAT TRUE</td>
<td>MOSTLY TRUE</td>
<td>TRUE</td>
<td>TRUE</td>
<td>SENCo role - advice assessment, joint work, links for transition.</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
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<td>After reviewing a child they have suggested different ways to work with them. They have helped me to understand the different ways to work with children.</td>
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<td>Assessing children for statements so that the children can receive the support needed.</td>
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<td>I have never had any personal contact with the EP whilst at this setting.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I am only aware of the contact she has with the EP children and children which are reassessed.</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supporting staff with their roles in situations that may come up and how to help that certain child or staff more effectively.</td>
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<tr>
<td>No.</td>
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<td>Yes.</td>
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<td>Yes.</td>
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### Post-Questionnaire for Staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q.</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Detailed Feedback</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I understand what an EP's role is.</td>
<td>TRUE</td>
<td>TRUE</td>
<td>TRUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The EP is accessible.</td>
<td>TRUE</td>
<td>TRUE</td>
<td>MOSTLY TRUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I have control over what EP support I receive.</td>
<td>TRUE</td>
<td>TRUE</td>
<td>MOSTLY TRUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The EP has provided me with greater knowledge of child development.</td>
<td>MOSTLY TRUE</td>
<td>MOSTLY TRUE</td>
<td>DON'T KNOW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I feel the EP support received supports me in my role.</td>
<td>TRUE</td>
<td>TRUE</td>
<td>MOSTLY TRUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I feel the EP support received supports this setting overall.</td>
<td>TRUE</td>
<td>TRUE</td>
<td>MOSTLY TRUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I would like more support from an EP.</td>
<td>TRUE</td>
<td>TRUE</td>
<td>MOSTLY TRUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. How has the EP supported you in your role?</td>
<td>TRUE</td>
<td>TRUE</td>
<td>MOSTLY TRUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9a. Do you think the EP has made you more effective in your role?</td>
<td>TRUE</td>
<td>TRUE</td>
<td>TRUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9b. If yes, please explain how.</td>
<td>TRUE</td>
<td>TRUE</td>
<td>TRUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. What do you think is the most important aspect of EP support is?</td>
<td>TRUE</td>
<td>TRUE</td>
<td>TRUE</td>
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<td>TRUE</td>
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<td>SOMETHING TRUE</td>
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<td>DON'T KNOW</td>
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<tr>
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<td>MOSTLY TRUE</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>MEDIUM/HIGH</td>
<td>Discussing behaviour in children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>MEDIUM/HIGH</td>
<td>We can base it on identified children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>HIGH</td>
<td>Other people’s ideas and putting them together to make a plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>MEDIUM/HIGH</td>
<td>All staff sitting together to discuss.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>HIGH</td>
<td>Discussing different strategies to solve problem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>MEDIUM/HIGH</td>
<td>To take the time to discuss just one child and how we can help to improve behaviour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>MEDIUM/HIGH</td>
<td>Ideas from staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>MEDIUM/HIGH</td>
<td>Discussing issues with the whole team.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>HIGH</td>
<td>Discussing the children’s progress and how we can move them on together.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>HIGH</td>
<td>Getting together as a group to talk about children making the best progress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>MEDIUM/HIGH</td>
<td>Discussion with other staff and listening ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>1. Please rate your knowledge of language development before the intervention</td>
<td>2. Please rate your knowledge of language development after the intervention</td>
<td>3. Please rate your practical ideas to support language development before the intervention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
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<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>4 - MEDIUM/HIGH</td>
<td>Yes - child attends smaller group.</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Language Intervention Questionnaire Data

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Intervention - Evaluation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Please rate your knowledge of language development before the intervention</td>
<td>2. Please rate your knowledge of language development after the intervention</td>
<td>3. Please rate your practical ideas to support language development before the intervention</td>
<td>4. Please rate your practical ideas to support language development after the intervention</td>
<td>5. What did you find most useful part of the intervention?</td>
<td>6. Are you going to do anything differently when supporting children’s language following this intervention?</td>
<td>7. What do you think having a Tieree EP brought to the intervention?</td>
<td>8. Is there anything that you think can be improved?</td>
<td>9. Is there anything else you would like to add?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 - MEDIUM/HIGH</td>
<td>5 - HIGH</td>
<td>3 - MEDIUM</td>
<td>5 - HIGH</td>
<td>Being able to take a small group and do individual work with them</td>
<td>Yes, from the success of the group I will follow it up using the phonic programme.</td>
<td>Information, different approach and further understanding</td>
<td>Use of a variety of resources, changing theme.</td>
<td>Thank you very, the children have developed very well in the past 8 weeks.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 - MEDIUM/HIGH</td>
<td>5 - HIGH</td>
<td>4 - MEDIUM/HIGH</td>
<td>5 - HIGH</td>
<td>Focusing on the children in small groups to observe their learning.</td>
<td>To approach the phonic programme in a variety of ways.</td>
<td>Being aware of my own practice with the children.</td>
<td>A more varied session, rhyming, singing etc.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Joint Working Questionnaire Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. on Form</th>
<th>1. How useful do you feel the joint working has been?</th>
<th>2. What did you find most useful about the joint working?</th>
<th>3. What do you feel the joint working added to supporting this family?</th>
<th>4. Is there anything that you think can be improved?</th>
<th>5. Would you do further joint working with an EP in the future?</th>
<th>6. Is there anything else you would like to add?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8 High</td>
<td>The balance of offering joint emotional and practical support for these parents, consistent focused approach</td>
<td>Perceived personalised support</td>
<td>Would very much welcome this approach.</td>
<td>Helped with my professional development and insight into a person centered working and family focused working</td>
<td>A pleasure working with you. Let me know when you qualify.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Parenting Workshop Questionnaire Data – Sleep

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. on Form</th>
<th>1. Please rate your knowledge of sleep before the talk:</th>
<th>2. Please rate your knowledge of sleep after the talk:</th>
<th>3. Please rate your practical ideas to support sleep before the talk:</th>
<th>4. Please rate your practical ideas to support sleep after the talk:</th>
<th>5. What did you find most useful?</th>
<th>6. Are you going to do anything differently following this talk?</th>
<th>7. Do you feel you can go and book an appointment at * * * for further support in this area?</th>
<th>8. Is there anything that you think can be improved?</th>
<th>9. Is there anything else you would like to add?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Medium</td>
<td>1 - LOW</td>
<td>1 - LOW</td>
<td>1 - LOW</td>
<td>Ideas for getting them (2 children) out of my bed.</td>
<td>Yes, try and get them into their own beds.</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Medium</td>
<td>2 - MEDIUM/MEDIUM</td>
<td>4 - MEDIUM/HIGH</td>
<td>4 - MEDIUM/HIGH</td>
<td>Preparation of the room.</td>
<td>Be more consistent.</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Parenting Workshop Questionnaire Data – Toileting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. on Form</th>
<th>1. Please rate your knowledge of toileting before the talk:</th>
<th>2. Please rate your knowledge of toileting after the talk:</th>
<th>3. Please rate your practical ideas to support toileting before the talk:</th>
<th>4. Please rate your practical ideas to support toileting after the talk:</th>
<th>5. What did you find most useful?</th>
<th>6. Are you going to do anything differently following this talk?</th>
<th>7. Do you feel you can go and book an appointment at *** for further support in this area?</th>
<th>8. Is there anything that you think can be improved?</th>
<th>9. Is there anything else you would like to add?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3 - MEDIUM</td>
<td>5 - HIGH</td>
<td>3 - MEDIUM</td>
<td>5 - HIGH</td>
<td>Not to shout when he’s had a wee in the corner of the room.</td>
<td>Yes, lots of praise be more consistent.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 - LOW/MEDIUM</td>
<td>5 - HIGH</td>
<td>2 - LOW/MEDIUM</td>
<td>5 - HIGH</td>
<td>Using toys and talking about going to the toilet and making it fun.</td>
<td>I am going to try some new things like reading books.</td>
<td>If I need too yes.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3 - MEDIUM</td>
<td>5 - HIGH</td>
<td>4 - MEDIUM/HIGH</td>
<td>5 - HIGH</td>
<td>Training my child.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4 - MEDIUM/HIGH</td>
<td>5 - HIGH</td>
<td>4 - MEDIUM/HIGH</td>
<td>5 - HIGH</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Parenting Support Questionnaire Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. on Form</th>
<th>Parenting Support</th>
<th>1. How useful has this support been?</th>
<th>2. Please rate your practical ideas to support your children before the support.</th>
<th>3. Please rate your practical ideas to support your children after the support.</th>
<th>4. What did you find most useful about the support received?</th>
<th>5. Have you done anything differently following this support, please describe what this is?</th>
<th>6. Is there anything that you think can be improved?</th>
<th>7. Do you feel you need further support, if so where will you get this from?</th>
<th>8. Is there anything else you would like to add?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>HIGH</td>
<td>1 - LOW</td>
<td>5 - HIGH</td>
<td>Somebody to talk to and support me.</td>
<td>Yes - stopped TV on at night time/changed routines.</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Home start. social worker.</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>HIGH</td>
<td>1 - LOW</td>
<td>5 - HIGH</td>
<td>Everything - talking, getting help and support.</td>
<td>Followed the support what we got.</td>
<td>No. done best you can.</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Thank you very much for help and support couldn’t of done it without you.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>