

Supporting Home Learning in the Early Years: Evidence-Informed Approaches and Resources

At Thrive Together Stronger Practice Hub, we understand that what happens at home is just as vital as what happens in early years settings when it comes to a child's development. High-quality home learning environments are consistently linked with positive outcomes in communication, language and literacy, especially for our youngest learners.

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) identifies Communication and Language as one of six key themes in the Early Years Evidence Store. The evidence shows that parental engagement with this area of learning, especially when supported through accessible and consistent resources, can significantly improve children's outcomes—particularly in the early years.

What the Evidence Tells Us

According to the EEF's Early Years Evidence Store, home learning is most effective when:

- Parents are equipped with simple, everyday activities that build vocabulary and interaction.
- Practitioners work alongside families, sharing practical ideas that fit within real life routines.
- There is a consistent and positive approach to language and communication, reinforced both at home and in the setting.
- When there is a clear plan to identify and target those parents who need need the support most. Whereby settings monitor engagement to ensure that gaps are not being inadvertently widened for some children, rather than closed.



Turning Research into Practice: Tiny Happy People

An excellent, freely accessible tool that can help bring these principles to life is the BBC's Tiny Happy People platform. Designed for families with children aged 0–5, it is grounded in early communication and language development research, supporting families with bite-sized videos, conversation starters, and activities that align with the EEF's evidence-informed strategies.

Why Tiny Happy People Works:

- **Practical:** Parents are offered simple, no-cost ideas they can use in everyday routines like bath time, shopping or walking to nursery.
- **Accessible:** Written content is available in multiple languages, making it inclusive and culturally relevant for diverse families.
- **Evidence-informed:** Resources are underpinned by research and developed with input from speech and language therapists, early years professionals, and developmental psychologists.

Building Confidence in Families

We know from our work across the region that some families can feel unsure about how to support their child's learning at home. *Tiny Happy People* helps to break down those barriers, offering reassurance, encouragement and easy wins —while reinforcing the idea that every conversation counts.

Signposting for Impact

As settings, we can help bridge the gap between home and early education by signposting families to trusted tools. However, consider how you share aspects to ensure impact. A general message with a weblink might not engage some parents, so instead try;

- personalised message and link from the key worker,
- follow up link shared after 1:1 conversation,
- QR code link to a video, shared on the child's picture or story book
- printed copy of parenting information in the child's home language.

Key Links to Explore and Share:

 [Tiny Happy People Homepage](#)

 [Activities by Age](#)

 [EEF Early Years Evidence Store: Communication and Language](#)