



Education
Scotland
Foghlam Alba

“If I can’t understand it, and I don’t know how to say it, I won’t be able to read it.”

Building up young children’s oral language skills from shaky foundations.



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For Scotland's learners, with Scotland's educators
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Overview of the Workshop

What is oral language?

How children learn to talk

How talking and understanding relate to reading and writing

The current context: a public health crisis?

You can make the difference: it's simple but not always easy!

What is oral language?



Who have you spoken to today?

What information was exchanged?

What did you get out of the interaction?

What is oral language?

We speak to each other for different reasons

When we can't communicate – it has an impact on our wellbeing, participation and inclusion

Oral language skills build friendships, support play, help us manage emotions and give access and engagement with learning.

Pre-birth to 5: trajectory of progress

From cooing
baby to non-
stop chatter

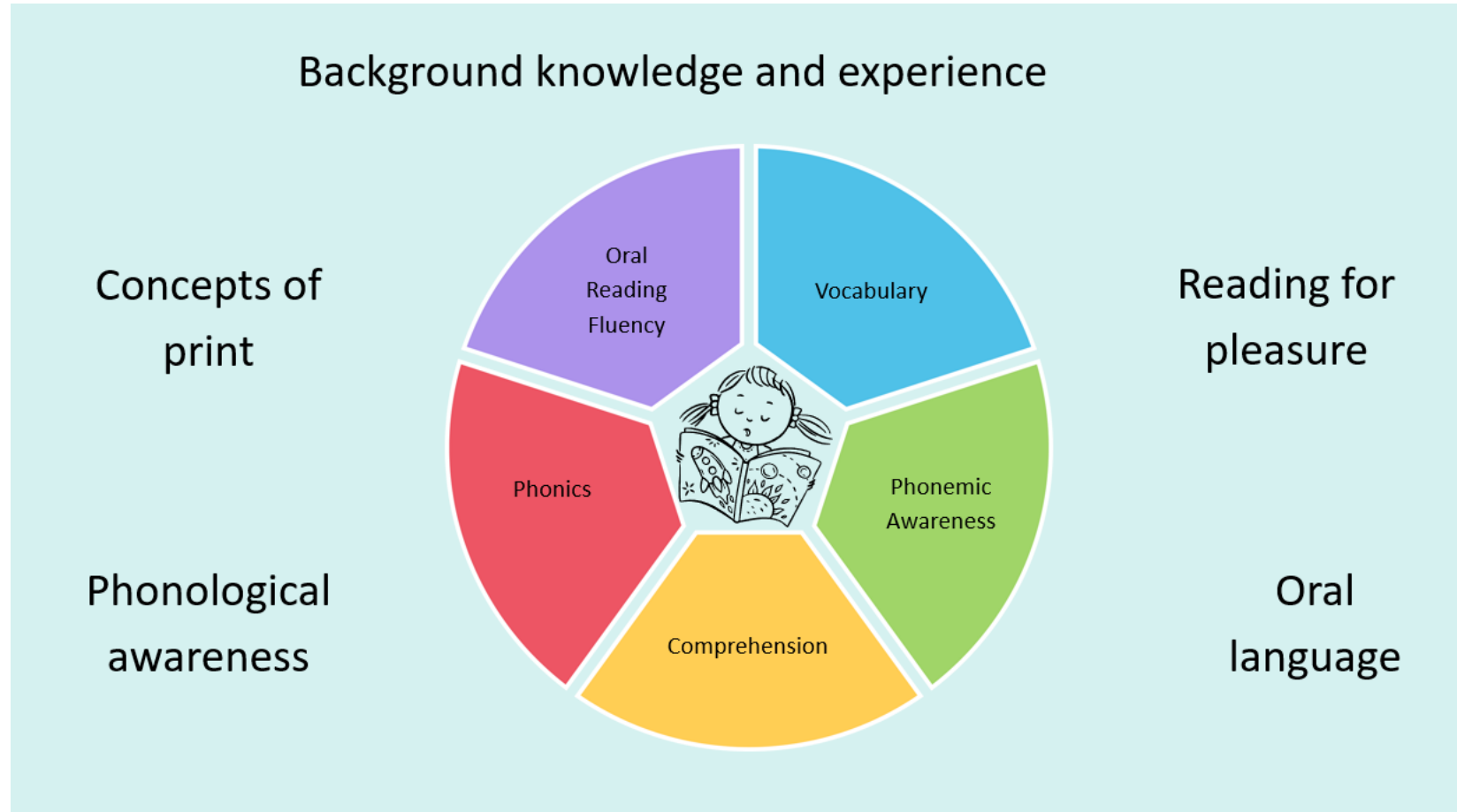
What fuels this
epic
developmental
progression?

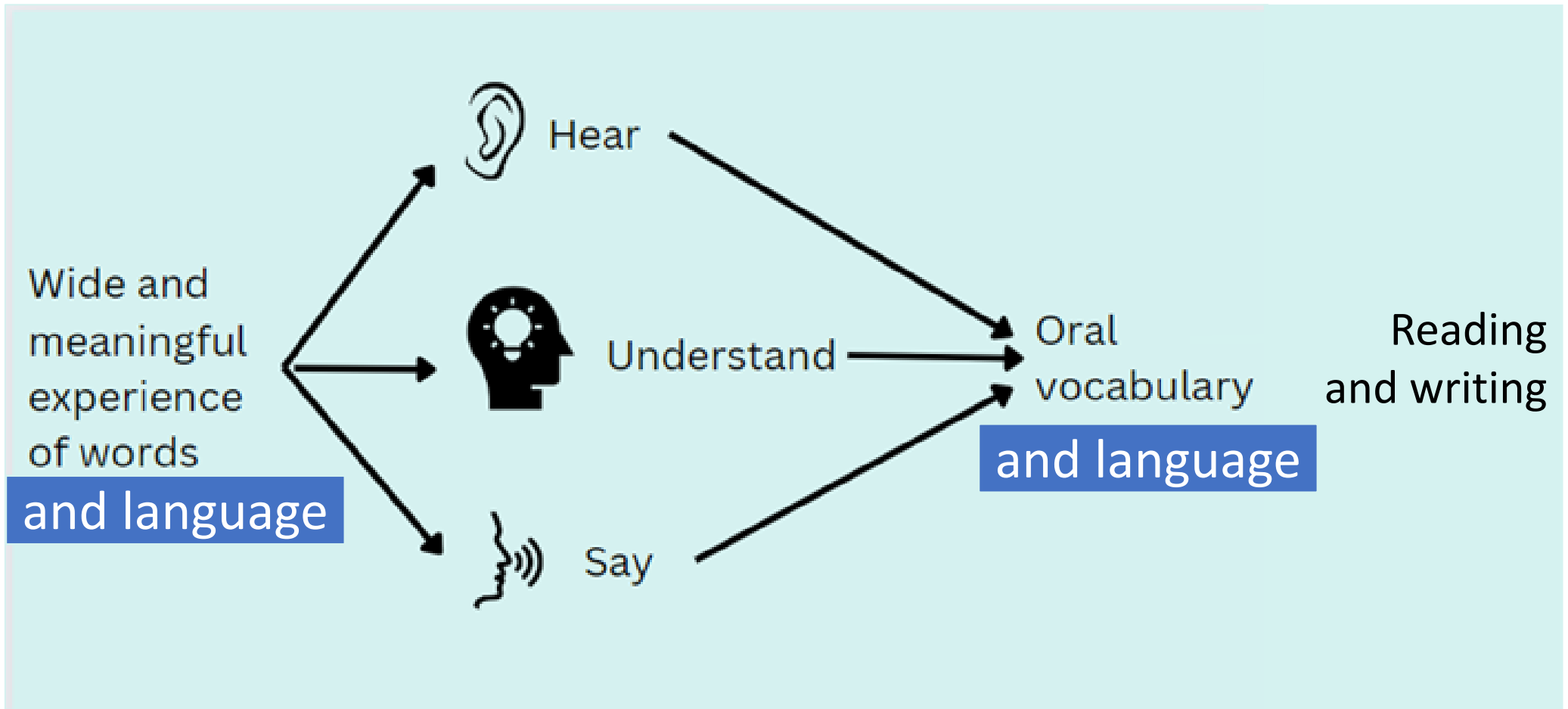
What help or
hinders?

Pre-birth to 5: trajectory of progress



Why Oral Language Matters to Literacy

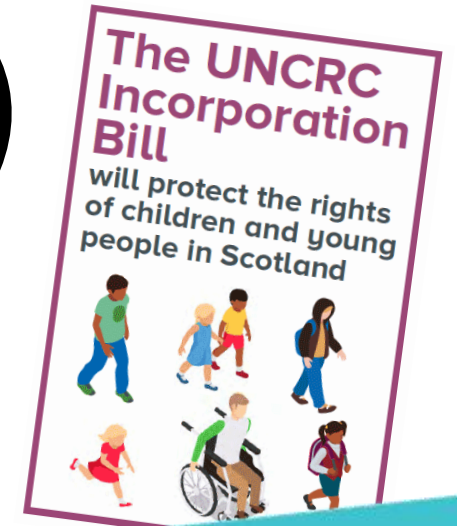




Why oral language and communication skills matter

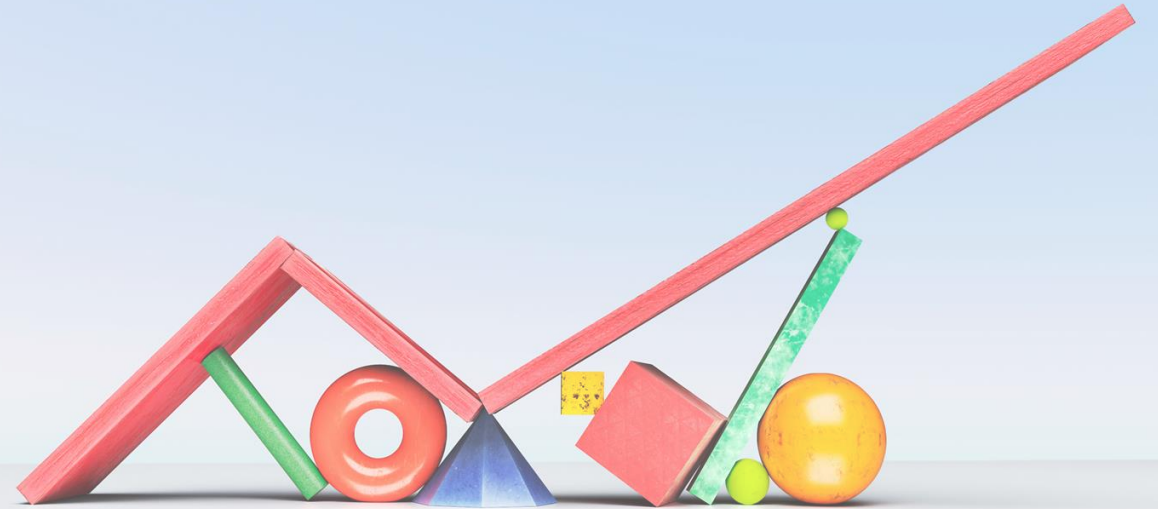
Children and young people with good communication skills have a reduced risk of mental health difficulties

Boosting the vocabulary skills of disadvantaged young children may help them escape poverty in later life



The current context: a public health crisis?

275,000 children in Scotland have a predicted speech, language and communication need



Significant increase in identified concerns at child health developmental reviews post pandemic.

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Long term implications

- Impact on school attainment
- Risk of behavioural problems
- Risk of long-term unemployment
- Risk of mental health difficulties

A close-up, soft-focus photograph of a baby lying on its back. A hand is gently holding the baby's hand. The background is bright and out of focus, suggesting a window or a bright room. The overall mood is calm and nurturing.

What can you do to help
oral language?

Communication



“...the key part of the environment for children is the human, social environment of positive nurturing interactions...”

Interaction

Realising the Ambition, 2020



Adult-Child Interaction (ACI)

Face to Face

Observe, wait and listen

Follow the child's lead



Weitzman and Greenberg, It Takes Two to Talk (2017)

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Adult-Child Interaction (ACI)



Supporting Oral Language

Questions

Commenting and Expanding

Modelling

Word types

The apple goes
beside the orange

This one
here



Supporting Oral Language



Evaluation





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