

Two speech and language therapists launch world's first online speech therapy club to help thousands of pre-school kids

Some good news! Two paediatric speech and language therapists are addressing the language delay crisis that is affecting pre-schoolers all round the world

LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM, March 11, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Two paediatric speech and language therapists, with over 50 years of experience, have launched the world's first online speech therapy club to address the global crisis that is affecting pre-schoolers all round the world in the hope of helping this generation to start talking.

With an estimated 1.5 million children (ICAN*), whose speech development has been negatively affected by lockdown, demand for speech therapists is at an all-time high. Many worried parents are looking at well over a year for their child to be seen for even an initial speech and language assessment.

Claire Heslop and Claire Whittaker, two speech and language therapists (who are both mothers themselves), have teamed up to create a new service that is revolutionising the world of speech therapy and helping children to start talking.



Claire Whittaker and Claire Heslop have set up Speech Club



Videos can be watched at home to help teach your child how to speak

Speech Club is an online service which allows families to access immediate speech and language

therapy in their homes. Families no longer have to wait, and instead can watch online pre-recorded lessons, download manuals, handouts, illustrations and everything they need in order to develop their child's speech and language. Members of the club also become part of a specific online community where they get the chance to interact personally with the therapists and can share support and advice with each other. Monthly live Q&A's have become invaluable to families around the UK and, following numerous positive testimonials, the therapists are now launching this service globally.

Claire Whittaker said: "After the first lockdown my work phone did not stop ringing with parents distressed and frustrated that they couldn't get the help they needed. Their children were not learning to talk as they were not able to interact with others and this, coupled with mask wearing, meant that their communication skills were so limited. We became aware that there was a generation emerging of pre-school children who were unable to talk and whose parents had nowhere to turn."

Claire Heslop posed the following question: "How can we get speech therapy to the children in need?" The therapists had so much experience and knew what would work and how to help these children if only they could reach them, but with the sheer numbers of children requiring help it meant this was not physically possible. Children were now used to online learning so perhaps they could pre-record lessons? Could the children watch the speech therapist on their phone or tablet? Before they knew it, Speech Club began to emerge...

Felicity, a mother and member of Speech Club, said: "The course is simple to access, easy to follow, and provides all of the activities, resources and videos for you to work on together. We feel empowered in the knowledge that we are using professional-standard tools to help our son and after only three weeks we (and others) have noticed a difference. His verbal communication has improved, he is making new sounds and he is showing more confidence in using words with meaning and purpose."

At a cost of less than £1 a day, this is providing a solution to thousands of families who are currently in need. It is widely recognised that since the pandemic, the NHS Speech and Language Therapy waiting lists are unacceptable. Perhaps this is offering a solution?

*ICAN's report, "Speaking up for the Covid generation: nearly 1.5 million children are struggling to be able to speak and to understand what other people are saying to them are at risk of not being able to speak or understand language at an age-appropriate level."

<https://ican.org.uk/speaking-up-for-the-covid-generation/>

Additional reference to the UK's speech problem:

According to a study by the Royal College of Speech Therapists (RCSLT Jan 2022, "The sustained

impact of Covid-19 on Speech and Language therapy services in the UK (rcslt.org)": "More than three quarters (77.1%) of speech therapists reported that the demand on their service had increased since before the pandemic, with over a quarter of these (28.6%) indicating that the demand 'had at least doubled' and that 'over three quarters of respondents indicated that demand on their services had increased since the onset of Covid-19 in the UK, with a substantial proportion of these specifying that it had at least doubled.'"

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