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### **Feasibility Study of SKILLS (Support for Kids In Learning and Language Strategies); an Online Programme for Parents and School Support Staff.**

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**Feasibility Study of SKILLS (Support for Kids In Learning and Language Strategies); an Online Programme for Parents and School Support Staff.**

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2019

Thesis submitted to the School of Psychology, in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of MSc by research, Bangor University.

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## Declaration

*Yr wyf drwy hyn yn datgan mai canlyniad fy ymchwil fy hun yw'r thesis hwn, ac eithrio lle nodir yn wahanol. Caiff ffynonellau eraill eu cydnabod gan droednodiadau yn rhoi cyfeiriadau eglur. Nid yw sylwedd y gwaith hwn wedi cael ei dderbyn o'r blaen ar gyfer unrhyw radd, ac nid yw'n cael ei gyflwyno ar yr un pryd mewn ymgeisiaeth am unrhyw radd oni bai ei fod, fel y cytunwyd gan y Brifysgol, am gymwysterau deuol cymeradwy.*

*I hereby declare that this thesis is the results of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. All other sources are acknowledged by bibliographic references. This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree unless, as agreed by the University, for approved dual awards.*

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## **Abstract**

### **Objective:**

Although there is a wealth of evidence to support the effectiveness of social learning theory derived parenting programmes in improving the outcomes of children with childhood behavioural problems both at home and in school, there is limited evidence to support the use of interventions which target both environments simultaneously. With the background of increasing pupil numbers, decreased funding, and the introduction of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act (2018), the objective of this study was to explore the feasibility and reception to Support for Kids In Learning and Language Strategies (SKILLS), a self-directed online intervention based on social learning theory derived parenting programmes, for use by parents and school support staff, as well as to gain insight into the existing state of training available to classroom support staff in schools.

### **Method:**

A mixed methods study employing semi-structured interviews to both assess the existing experience of school support staff ( $n=5$ ) at baseline, and the experience of all participants ( $n=7$ ) in using the SKILLS programme at follow-up, alongside quantitatively analysed self-report measures and video observations to assess the impact of the programme on adult and child behaviour and well-being. Measures used were; Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire; Parental Sense of

Competence; School Support Staff Sense of Competence; Parenting Stress Index-short form; Teacher Stress Inventory; and SKILLS evaluation questionnaire. Video observations were coded using Dyadic Parent-child Interaction Coding System.

**Results:** At baseline school support staff reported a shared experience of challenges related to time pressures and child behavioural problems alongside difficulties in accessing job-related training. Challenges were experienced in terms of recruitment of schools and parents simultaneously. Results from the feasibility study found that school support staff and parents did not independently jointly engage with SKILLS. General communication difficulties between parents and schools were also highlighted during the feasibility phase of the study. Overall participant satisfaction with the SKILLS programme was high, with all participants who completed follow-up interviews ( $n=7$ ) expressing a view that the programme had been informative and easy to use.

**Conclusion:**

Overall this project has provided some insight into the challenges faced by schools in relation to pupil behaviour, parental engagement, and staff training. This project has highlighted challenges faced by researchers when working with schools, in terms of both recruitment and intervention implementation, which will need to be addressed if further home and school targeted interventions are to be tested

successfully. The high level of satisfaction reported by participants with the SKILLS programme alongside some small changes in behaviour warrant further investigation, although future research is required to examine the effectiveness of the SKILLS programme due to the small sample size of this project.



## **Thesis Overview**

This thesis explores the topic of training and development for classroom support staff and behaviour management policies in primary schools in Wales, with a particular focus on children with additional learning needs (ALN), through the lens of a feasibility study of the SKILLS online training programme for parents and school support staff. Chapter one examines the experience of classroom support staff in two primary schools in North Wales through semi-structured interviews. The chapter also gives a brief overview of current Welsh government policy affecting schools in Wales, as well as examining existing research into the experience of school support staff.

Chapter two builds on the fact that classroom support staff in chapter one report a significant challenge related to their job as pupil behaviour, by reviewing existing literature related to early onset child conduct disorder. This chapter gives a brief overview of the factors contributing to and long-term consequences of early onset child conduct disorder, before going on to examine the effectiveness of early interventions based on parenting theory. The content and delivery of the SKILLS programme is examined in chapter 3, alongside details of specific amendments and developments made to the programme for the present project.

Chapter four details the main feasibility study of the SKILLS programme. Beginning with a brief overview of the literature related to

online training for school staff and parents the chapter then moves on to examine the results and implications of the feasibility study.

Challenges related to participant recruitment and retention form the main focus of the discussion along with issues raised by the study in relation to general poor communication from schools and between schools and parents.

Chapter five builds on chapter four by examining the experience of participants who completed the SKILLS programme in relation to their satisfaction with it through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The chapter also discusses issues raised through interviews with participants related to existing school behaviour policy and the impact on children with ALN. Finally, chapter six concludes the thesis with an overall summation of the results and findings and a brief discussion of the implication of these on existing policy and practice as well as future research.

## **Chapter 1 – The Experience of Classroom Support**

### **1.1 - Literature Review**

#### **1.1.1 Background - Current challenges faced by schools across Wales**

Since July 1999 education has been a devolved issue in Wales (National Assembly for Wales (Transfer of Functions) Order 1999). The Government of Wales Act 2006 cemented the rights of the National Assembly for Wales to devise laws in relation to education in Wales. This has resulted in a gradual development of the education system in Wales that has diverged from that in England (Ware, 2019). One example of this can be found in the way in which funding is allocated to schools in Wales. Although funding is linked to the central UK government in Westminster (Reid, 2011), the National Assembly for Wales has the power to decide how this funding is distributed. This in part has contributed to a more rapid increase in per-pupil funding in Wales than in England over the past decade. Per-pupil funding in Wales has risen by 7% from the financial year 2009-10 to 2017-18, whereas for the same period the rise was only 4% in England (Institute for Fiscal Studies, 2018). However, when inflation is taken into account this 7% increase in funding actually amounts to a 5% decrease in real terms (Institute for Fiscal Studies, 2018).

As well as a decrease in real terms of funding over the past decade, schools in Wales have also been faced with the demands associated

with a rise in pupil teacher ratios. In 2009 the pupil teacher ratio across primary schools in Wales was 20.0 (Welsh Government, 2009), by 2018 this had increased to 22.0 (Welsh Government, 2018a). This increase was due to a combination of a 2% decrease in the number of qualified teachers in primary schools across Wales (Welsh Government, 2018c), alongside a 7% increase in overall pupil numbers (Welsh Government, 2009; 2018a). However, although the number of qualified teachers fell, the past decade has seen a dramatic increase in the number of classroom support staff working in mainstream primary schools across Wales. In 2009 there were 8215 classroom support staff employed in primary schools in Wales, by 2018 this figure had almost doubled to 15459 (Welsh Government, 2018b). There are several factors that could have contributed to this increase including legislation surrounding adult to child ratio requirements. However, of particular significance could be an increase in the number of children across Wales requiring 1:1 support in the classroom. In 2009 there were 54450 children in primary schools across Wales recorded as having some level of special educational need. In 2018 there had been a 3951 increase in the number of pupils recorded as having special educational needs to 58401 (Welsh Government, 2009; 2018a). Although this increase of 7% is in line with the overall increase in primary school pupils across Wales, the increase in numbers of children with special educational needs places significantly more pressure on schools due to the need for support and specialist equipment that these pupils may require.

The increase in numbers of pupils with some level of reported special educational need across primary schools in Wales is significant for schools in the context of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act (2018). The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act (2018) combines and replaces the previous legislation relating to children with special educational needs and young people with learning difficulties and disabilities in post-16 education in Wales to cover pupils of all ages. The act extends the rights of parents, carers and young people to appeal against local authority decisions relating to additional learning needs (ALN) through the Education Tribunal for Wales. A key feature of the act is the change in terminology from Special Educational Needs (SEN) to Additional Learning Needs (ALN). This is aimed at removing existing stigma surrounding the phrase 'Special Educational Needs', whilst also allowing the phrasing of the act to encompass all children and young people from birth to age 25 years in order to improve the transition to post-16 education and training. The Act also places significance on pupil voice and, as a result, requires that children and young people, as well as their parents and carers, are at the centre of all decisions made about them.

The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunals (Wales) Act (2018) replaces statements of special educational needs for children and young people with ALN with Individual Development Plans (IDPs). IDPs put strong emphasis on the requirement for children and young

people to be given appropriate support to achieve the best possible outcomes and reach their full potential. The specific detail of what will be required in an IDP are to be laid out in a statutory ALN code which will be legally enforceable across Wales and provide clear parameters for procedures that all organisations delivering services to children and young people should follow. The new code of practice comes into effect in September 2020 and final details have yet to be announced. However, the Draft Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales (2018), gives some insight into the detail to be included in the final code.

According to the Draft Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales (2018) IDPs will contain a detailed description of the additional learning provision (ALP) to be provided for the child or young person. An ALP is defined as the education or training provision that is different to that of their peers of the same age. IDPs will also include a legal duty for local authorities to keep ALPs under constant review to ensure that they remain suitable for the children and young people they are intended for. The code will also set out a duty of care for schools in relation to pupils with ALN. This states that they should; “provide appropriate additional and/or different support for the child or young person from the resources available to it, including access to input from external specialists; and, monitor the impact of support provided for the child or young person and alter it if it becomes apparent that this would be appropriate” (Draft ALN Code 2018, p. 92, chapter 9, section 9.32). Furthermore, where a child has an IDP their school will be legally

required to provide them with the ALP described in it. The school will also be required to prepare an IDP for any pupil they identify as having an ALN, or to refer the child to the local authority if it believes it will not be able to sufficiently provide for the ALP the child will require.

These new legal requirements placed upon schools in Wales by the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act (2018) and subsequent Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales will put increased pressure on senior staff members in deciding how best to support pupils. Within the context of decreased school funding and increased pupil teacher ratios, it is likely that schools will look to classroom support staff, such as teaching assistants and learning support assistants, to assist in the delivery of support to children with ALN.

### **1.1.2 The impact of school support staff on pupil outcomes**

The term 'classroom support staff' refers to any member of staff employed to work within a classroom who is not employed in the role of class teacher. The most common staff of this type in Wales are teaching assistants but it can also include learning support assistants who work primarily on a 1:1 basis with individual pupils, and specialist workers such as speech and language therapy assistants. There is mixed evidence for how effective these two types of support staff can be on pupil outcomes and attainment, which vary both in terms of the

needs of the individual pupils being supported and the level of expertise of the classroom support staff.

The Deployment and Impact of Support Staff (DISS) project is a large-scale study of teaching assistants and other school support staff across maintained schools in England and Wales and was conducted between 2003 and 2009 (Webster et al., 2010). Data collected during the DISS project highlighted the importance of tailored support for classroom support staff. Rather than supporting pupils, in many cases classroom support staff could have a negative impact on the academic attainment of pupils with additional learning needs. This was largely due to classroom support staff being more likely to prompt pupils than help them to reach answers on their own. It is likely that this sort of poor practice was due to insufficient training as classroom support staff were also reported to often struggle to clearly explain concepts or even to give pupils inaccurate information. The DISS project data also showed that there was a great deal of role ambiguity for classroom support staff (Webster et al., 2010).

A systematic review of existing literature on the impact of classroom support staff on pupils' academic attainments in mainstream schools by Farrell et al. (2010) found more positive results than the DISS project, but also highlights the importance of specialist training for classroom support staff. The systematic review focused on classroom support



staff working with children and young people aged three to sixteen years in mainstream schools and looked at papers from all over the world. In total 13 studies were examined by the researchers, nine of which focused on targeted interventions by classroom support staff and four of which had a non-targeted approach. They found that there was significant evidence that targeted support by trained classroom support staff directly impacted on the attainment of pupils with literacy and language problems, in a positive way. However, non-targeted studies showed no significant impact on pupil attainment associated with classroom support staff's involvement. It could be that, due to the small number of studies, these results are not representative of the wider situation. Two of the four non-targeted studies were several decades old and may not accurately reflect the situation today. However, the findings from the targeted intervention studies, when compared to those of the DISS project, further highlight the need for classroom support staff to be well equipped with relevant training and knowledge. The findings also show the positive benefits of using members of school support staff to deliver targeted interventions to vulnerable pupil groups.

A larger systematic review by Sharma and Salend (2016) included 61 studies, from 11 different countries, to examine the effectiveness of classroom support staff in inclusive classrooms. Similarly to the findings of Farrell et al. (2010) and the DISS project, Sharma and

Salend (2016) reported that classroom support staff were frequently untrained in best practice strategies for supporting pupils with ALN and therefore gave ineffective instructions. Furthermore, classroom support staff had the potential to undermine inclusion by their constant physical presence next to pupils with ALN in the classroom. Once again, in studies where classroom support staff were shown to have good quality specialist training and support, a positive impact on pupil inclusion and attainment was evident. However, even in these cases, the full potential of the classroom support staff was often hindered by more general poor role definition, communication and supervision from senior school leaders. Although studies from different countries with varying education systems may not be entirely comparable, these findings again highlight both the potential deficit in classroom support staff training, as well as the detrimental impact this can have on pupils.

In terms of other roles for classroom support staff, their role can be wider than a purely academic focus. A case study by Bland and Sleightholm (2012) into the feelings of year five and six pupils about their class teaching assistants found that most viewed the role of classroom support staff in a more pastoral way. Pupils were asked to think about what makes a good teaching assistant, whether teaching assistants help them effectively, and whether or not they felt able to confide in a teaching assistant. Pupils were then asked to write down their ideas in a classroom setting and asked to complete a questionnaire

on the topic. Pupils reported a need for teaching assistants to be kind and helpful with a good sense of humour. They also expressed a view that teaching assistants needed to be thoughtful, understanding, calm and patient. Whilst 85% of pupils felt that teaching assistants should have formal qualifications, when asked if qualifications were more important than experience 77% said that they were not. All pupils agreed that having a teaching assistant in the classroom increased their confidence. Forty-six percent of pupils said that they felt more able to talk to a teaching assistant than a class teacher, whereas only 8% felt more able to talk to a teacher than a teaching assistant. Although this was only one small case study in a single primary school in England, it points to a wider role of classroom support staff than simply to increase pupils' academic attainment. Where the evidence points to a detrimental impact of unskilled classroom support staff on pupil academic achievements, if they are also untrained in how to effectively support pupils social and emotional needs the same negative impact may exist.

### **1.1.3 Existing research into the experience of classroom support staff**

One way to determine the existing level of knowledge and training of classroom support staff, as well as their conceptualisation of the role as primarily academic or pastoral, is through qualitative research. Wren

(2017) explored how pupils with additional learning needs and their classroom support staff conceptualised the role and responsibilities of classroom support staff. Eleven pupils aged six and seven years, with a statement of special educational needs from schools across England were included in the study, along with 16 members of classroom support staff who each spent some or all of their time supporting one or more of the child participants. The classroom support staff participants in the study were all female and most had no formal training or qualifications relating to working with children with additional learning needs prior to commencing their current role. The findings from semi-structured interviews with participants, found that the way in which pupils conceptualised the classroom assistant role differed from that of classroom assistants themselves. In contrast to the findings of Bland and Sleightholm (2012), pupils viewed classroom assistants as primarily responsible for providing academic support, classroom support staff on the other hand viewed their role primarily in the frame of behavioural support. Although comparing pupil and classroom support staff conceptualisations of the role may not give an accurate picture of the reality of the experience of classroom support staff, the difference in perspective from pupils and their own support staff highlights potential difficulties in role definition/expectations.

Classroom support staff role ambiguity and gaps in training were again highlighted in the findings of a study by Bowles, Radford and

Bakopoulou (2018) into the perception of teaching assistants in relation to their use of inclusive pedagogical strategies. Semi structured interviews were conducted with 11 teaching assistants from two primary schools in London, England. Results showed that teaching assistants felt confident and knowledgeable when it came to emotional support, but were less confident and displayed gaps in knowledge, when it came to helping children to learn effectively. Researchers highlighted a particularly significant gap for most teaching assistants in relation to how best to encourage children to be independent learners. This is significant when viewed alongside previous research that shows the potential for classroom support staff to have a negative impact on inclusion by being constantly physically present but ineffective in supporting pupils' independence (Sharma & Salend, 2016).

One possible reason for poor training and role definition among classroom support staff could be found in the initial motivating factors for taking up the role. Maher and Vickerman (2018) conducted semi-structured interviews with school special educational needs coordinators (SENCOs) and the learning support assistants (LSAs) they employed from mainstream secondary schools across England. A total of 12 SENCOs (qualified teachers) and 12 LSAs were interviewed for between 30 and 120 minutes on the topic of their motivation for working in their current role, as well as their conceptualisation of the role of LSAs and their current methods for cultivating inclusion. Results showed a

distinct difference between the views and experience of SENCOs compared to LSAs. While SENCOs expressed a desire to help pupils with additional learning needs as a strong motivating factor behind taking up their role, LSAs motivation was mostly related to their own personal circumstances, such as a desire to gain more experience before applying for teacher training, or a need for working hours that fit with their parenting responsibilities. Furthermore, although both SENCOs and LSAs viewed the role of LSAs as valuable within the school, there were ideological differences when it came to the general conceptualisation of the role. SENCOs were more likely to view the role of LSAs as a go between for teachers and pupils, whereas LSAs viewed their role in a more pupil centric manner. Although this study was conducted in secondary schools rather than across a broader age range, the findings of a difference between LSAs and their employing SENCOs as to the purpose of their role once again highlights the issue of poor role definition for classroom support staff.

Further evidence of a disparity between the views and experiences of LSAs and SENCOs comes from a study by Abbott et al. (2011). Focus groups were conducted with LSAs who worked in primary, post-primary, or special schools in Northern Ireland. Although difficulties surrounding role definition differed across settings, all LSAs who took part reported issues with limited training opportunities. Based on the focus group responses a questionnaire was devised and sent to 400 LSAs across 200

randomly selected schools in Northern Ireland. Of the 154 LSAs who responded 77% reported providing support for emotional and behavioural difficulties, with most participants reporting providing support for one or more specific condition such as ASD (75%), general learning difficulties (70%), physical disability (40%), hearing impairment (35%), visual impairment (33%), and chronic illness (28%). This highlights the fact that LSAs often work with the most vulnerable group of pupils with additional learning needs, across settings. Abbott et al. (2011) also conducted semi-structured interviews with SENCOs who, perhaps as a result of the vulnerable nature of pupils supported, reported feeling that LSAs needed to be highly qualified to manage the complexity of the role. However, results from LSA participants showed that they did not necessarily possess the skill or qualification level desired by SENCOs. Ninety-seven percent of LSAs expressed a desire for more training related to their role, with most wanting specific training in the condition for pupils that they worked with, such as ASD, ADHD and Down's Syndrome. Many participants also expressed a desire for general behaviour management training and skills directly related to helping children learn, indicating their own perception of a low skill level in these areas. Despite this desire for more training, most LSAs reported only sometimes being allowed on training that they requested. The issue of training availability was also reported by SENCOs and explained as being due to a lack of suitable staff to cover for LSAs when they attended training

courses, as well as general financial restraints. This small-scale study focusing on Northern Ireland may not generalise to other education systems, however the fact that the findings again highlight issues surrounding limited education and training for classroom support staff points to a broader issue.

Research from the Republic of Ireland by Keating and O'Connor (2012) identifies similar issues related to classroom support staff roles, education and training. A mixed methods study using questionnaires, interviews, focus groups and classroom observations with school principals, class teachers, and special needs assistants (SNAs), was conducted across 55 mainstream primary schools in mid- and west-Ireland. The study explored the position of SNAs within schools, as well as training and professional development opportunities available to them. Although there were some differences in responses between class teachers, principals, and SNAs, for most participants the role of SNAs was clearly defined within the classroom. Where disagreement arose this was related to the extent to which SNAs should provide general assistance to class teachers or deliver teaching to small groups of pupils, which some SNAs reporting feeling unqualified to do. Although the number of SNAs with existing professional qualifications was higher than in previous studies at 73%, both SNAs and class teachers reported difficulty in accessing specific training related to the work of SNAs once in post. As with the finding of Abbott et al. (2011),



this was largely attributed to financial reasons. Most SNAs stated a desire for more specific role related training in areas such as behaviour management, ADHD and other specific learning difficulties. Although 96% of teachers felt SNAs were beneficial in the classroom, as with previous studies a lack of role clarity and pupil reliance on SNAs were seen as barriers to effectiveness in supporting pupils with additional learning needs. Although being largely questionnaire based makes it difficult to gain deep insight into the experience of classroom support staff, the fact that the results support those of other studies from a variety of different educational systems adds weight to evidence of a general trend of poor education and training opportunities for classroom support staff.

A case study conducted with eight LSAs at a primary school in north-west England conducted by Cockroft and Atkinson (2015) found that LSAs believed that having a minimum level two qualification was necessary to succeed in their role. However, some participants also reported that the formal level two training they had received before entering the profession was not as useful as on the job experience gained since becoming a member of school classroom support staff. Most participants placed high value on prior experience of working with children alongside formal training. Informal training from class teachers, fellow LSAs and external professionals, such as speech and language therapists, was also viewed as valuable and important in

contributing to their effectiveness in carrying out their role. When it came to formal training, despite a desire to attend courses most participants reported limited opportunities being offered to them, with some reporting never having been offered any formal training within their role. As with previous studies this was attributed to a lack of school funding and having to spend time away from the child they supported when no suitable cover could be found. However, from the LSAs perspective this was short sighted as they viewed the potential long-term benefits of being more skilled through training as outweighing any short-term detrimental effects. Participants in this study were also asked about the personal qualities they believed were important for LSAs to possess. The most important personal qualities necessary for achieving success in their role were viewed as listening, patience, understanding and flexibility. Participants also stated a belief in the importance of having a positive attitude towards their work in order to be more effective and also to cope with the stressors associated with the role. These qualities are similar to those given by pupils in research by Bland and Sleightholm (2012) and highlight the potentially broad focus of the role of classroom support staff encompassing both academic support to pastoral care.

Another case study conducted by Syrnyk (2018) points to the importance of viewing the role of classroom support staff beyond their academic support capabilities as well as the effectiveness of having

good quality training available to them. Interviews, questionnaires and surveys were conducted with 19 classroom support staff at a specialist nurturing school in the Midlands region of England. Unlike previous studies, participants mostly had a high level of education and specific training in additional learning needs and childcare prior to commencing their role. The study found that participants were mostly very satisfied with their role and could define it well. Participants also had a good level of knowledge of the key principles of the school in which they worked, including a clear understanding of the use of a nurturing approach within the classroom. However, although participants had a good level of formal training, most placed more value on experiential learning once in the role than their course-based training. Although this is a small study of one school and may not generalise to other schools, it does point to the positive impact clear and appropriate training can have on both pupil achievements and the wider atmosphere of the school and the role of classroom support staff within it.

#### **1.1.4 Aim of the present study**

As described above, the level of training and development achieved by classroom support staff directly impacts on their ability to support pupils effectively. This is of particular importance within the context of both the introduction of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act (2018) and a real terms decrease in per pupil

funding in Wales, which places schools across Wales under pressure to provide tailored support to pupils while also managing tightening budgets. At present there is limited research to explore the unique experience of classroom support staff in Wales, especially in the context of the new legislation. Therefore, the aim of the present study is to explore the lived experience of classroom support staff working in maintained primary schools in Wales in relation to their preparedness for the role and the impact this has upon their success within the role. The research questions for this study are;

1. Do classroom support staff in Wales have a shared experience of education and training related to their role?
2. How does the experience of education and training impact upon pressures faced in the role of classroom support staff in Wales?

## **1.2 - Method**

### **1.2.1 Design**

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with members of school support staff on the topic of their day to day working life and training related to their role. Qualitative methods, from a subjective critical realist perspective, were used to gain insight into the lived experience of participants. Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the School of Psychology Ethics review panel at Bangor University.

### **1.2.2 Participants**

Participants were recruited as part of the wider feasibility study of the SKILLS online training programme for parents and school support staff of the same child (see chapter 4). To be included in this study participants had to:

1. be a member of school support staff in a mainstream primary school
2. be able to spend at least ten minutes of their time each day working on a 1:1 basis with a named child
3. have the parents of the named child also take part in the SKILLS programme
4. work with children aged between three and seven years
5. have a good command of written and spoken English

Participants were recruited via school head teachers and additional learning needs coordinators. All participants worked at one of two participating mainstream schools which are located in the coastal region of the North Wales county of Denbighshire. Socioeconomic information was not collected from participants in this study, however coastal regions of Denbighshire are in the top 10% of the most deprived areas of Wales according to the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2014 (Welsh Government, 2014). Participant demographic characteristics are described in table 1.1 below.

Table 1.1.

*Individual participant demographic information in detail.*

<b>Participant number</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Class Working in</b>	<b>Years of Experience</b>	<b>Number of Schools Worked in</b>	<b>Highest Level of Education</b>
1	25	Teaching Assistant	Nursery	1	1	Level 2 Teaching Assistant
2	21	Teaching Assistant	Nursery	1	2	BA Photography Level 2 Teaching Assistant
3	21	Teaching Assistant	Year 2	1	1	Level 3 Teaching Assistant
4	24	Learning Support Assistant	Year 1	<1	1	BA Education and Childhood Studies
5	49	Teaching Assistant	Year 1	12	1	BTEC HND Applied Sciences

A slightly lower number of participants that would be desired participated in this study, this was due to recruitment for this study being linked to the wider SKILLS project, therefore issues surrounding recruitment in general (see chapter 5) impacted upon the number of participants.

### **1.2.3 Materials**

All participants were given a participant information sheet which included information about this study and the wider SKILLS project (see appendix 4). Participants completed a consent form (see appendix 6) along with a demographic questionnaire (see appendix 8) at the first meeting, during which the interview for the present study took place. All interviews followed the same interview schedule (see appendix 9) and were audio recorded using a digital voice recording device.

### **1.2.4 Procedure**

All interviews were conducted in a quiet room within the school at which the participant was based. All interviews lasted between two and seven minutes, with the average interview duration being five minutes. Before the interview was conducted participants were given an overview of the SKILLS research project as well as the process and structure of the informal interview. Participants were informed that participation in the interview was voluntary and that they would not be prohibited from participating in the wider project if they did not wish to take part in the interview. Time was given for participants to ask any questions they had and these were all fully addressed before consent was taken.

All participants completed paper copies of the consent form.

Participants were further informed that they did not have to answer any questions that they did not feel happy to answer and of their right to withdraw from the study for any reason during the interview process.

The digital voice recorder was shown to all participants before interviews commenced and the process of anonymous transcription and analysis was described, interviews then commenced once a final verbal consent had been given by the participant.

The same interview guide (see appendix 9) was followed with all participants, based on the structuring advice for effective qualitative interviewing by Arksey and Knight (1999). All questions were open ended to allow participants to reflect on and develop their own views. Additional questions were asked by the researcher when more clarity was required or where a participant initiated a discussion not covered by the interview guide. Questions in the interview guide were designed to begin with a general discussion about the role of classroom support staff before focusing in on training, which was the main topic of the research questions. The reason behind this approach was to allow participants to give a view of their role in more general terms before the topic of training was overtly discussed. The more general opening to the discussion also allowed for participants to raise the topic of training and development independently if it was a key area of importance to them.



Interview audio recordings were later transcribed verbatim with all references and identifiable information about the participant and school redacted to ensure complete anonymity of all participants.

### **1.2.5 Analysis**

In common with previous similar research (Bowles, Radford, & Bakopoulou, 2018; Cockroft & Atkinson, 2015) deductive thematic analysis was used to analyse all transcripts, looking for common themes related to the lived experience of classroom support staff in relation to their perceived competence in carrying out their role. Inductive thematic analysis was also used briefly, to allow for themes not anticipated by the researcher to be explored. Thematic analysis is an effective method for analysing interview transcripts as it allows for detailed description of patterns within data as well as flexibility in determining themes (Braun & Clarke 2006).

All analysis took place at a semantic level looking at only the explicit meaning of participants responses and no inferred meaning was considered. As far as possible, within the confines of the present study, themes were identified until the point of saturation (Morris 1995;2000). The six phases of thematic analysis as stated by Braun and Clarke (2006) were followed. These phases are; 1. Familiarising yourself with your data; 2. Generating initial codes; 3. Searching for themes; 4.

Reviewing themes; 5. Defining and naming themes; 6. Producing the report (Braun & Clarke 2006 p. 87).

According to Bird (2005) transcription forms a crucial role in the initial phase of familiarisation with the data, therefore all interviews were manually transcribed by the researcher. Transcripts were then proofread, and mistakes corrected, to further gain increased familiarity with the data, before being coded for words and phrases linked to the lived experience of classroom support staff. A further coding took place to examine any emerging themes or topics not previously anticipated by the researcher. Once codes were organised into themes, they were then condensed using a mapping technique (Braun & Clarke 2006). Finally, main and sub-themes were defined and named appropriately to give meaning to their content.

### 1.3 - Findings

Three major themes, two with two sub-themes and one with three sub-themes, were found after analysis of interview transcripts as shown in figure 1.1 below.

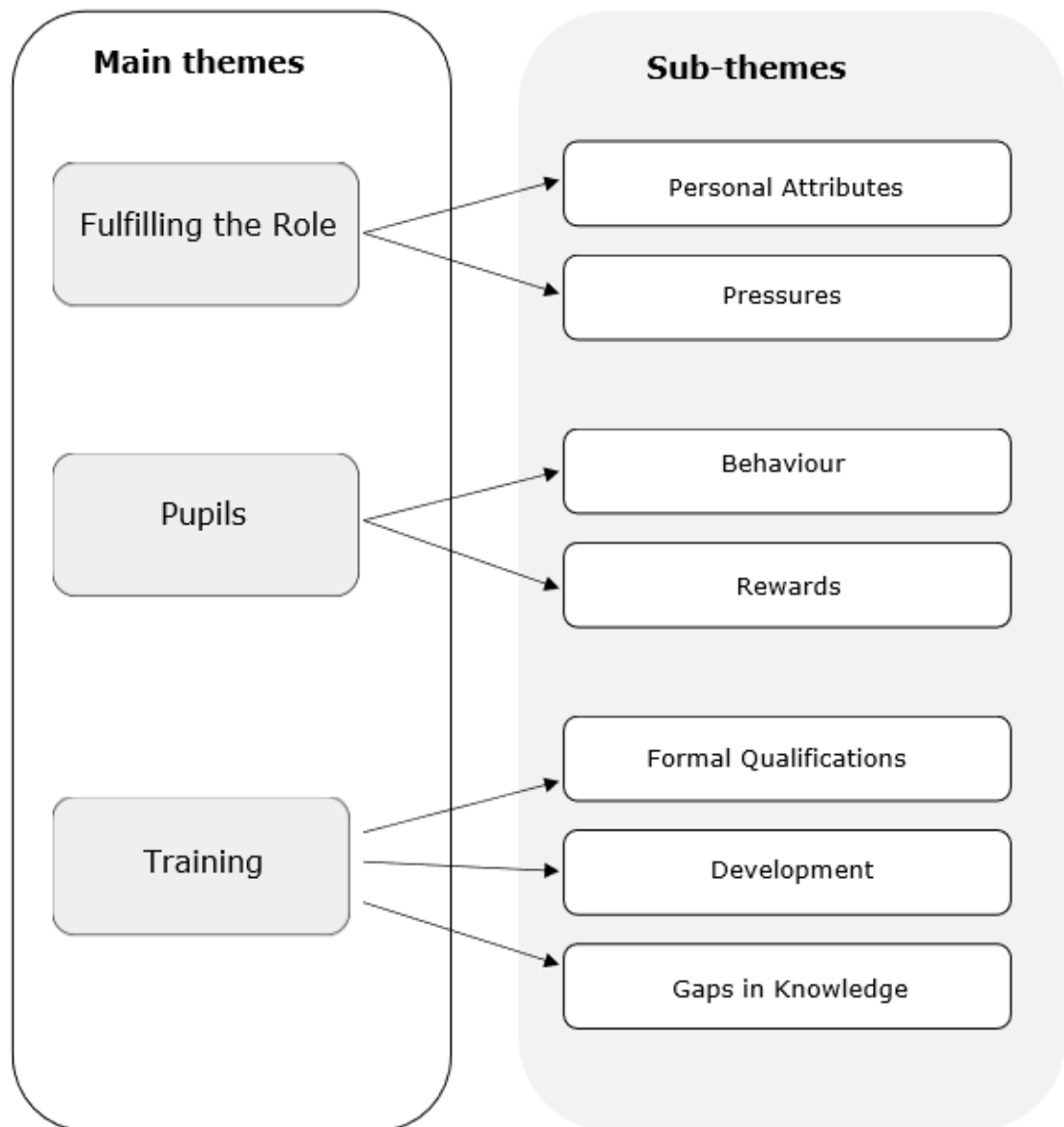


Figure 1.1 Classroom support staff interviews thematic map

### **1.3.1 Theme 1 – Fulfilling the role**

All participants talked about their role as a member of classroom support staff in a largely positive light. All participants listed multiple positive personal attributes as skills necessary to succeed in the role of classroom support staff. Most participants viewed their role in the frame of their relationship with the children in the class they worked in, rather than the wider school context. When participants did talk about the wider school context it was mostly in a negative light, in terms of the external pressures they faced in the day to day tasks of their role.

#### **1.3.1.1 Personal attributes**

All five participants cited patience as an important skill needed to be an effective member of school support staff:

*Patience. A lot of patience. Umm, have understanding, compassion. Having a bit of understanding and compassion, and yeah, patience, having a lot of patience. (Participant 1, Nursery Class Teaching Assistant, 1 years' experience)*

Several participants viewed the ability to adapt to individual children's needs as an important skill needed to fulfil their role. Many of these participants expressed a belief that all children have an individual learning style that needs to be considered when working with them:

*...you need to be able to have different ways of being aware of how children learn, so they're all gonna learn in a different way, so being able to accommodate, accommodate those needs.*

(Participant 3, Year 2 Teaching Assistant, 1 years' experience)

More experienced participants also expressed a belief in the value of getting to know children and their families:

*You've got to have an understanding of the child, as a whole, you can't just expect them all to be at the same level, or respond in the same way. You know. Because you've been here a long time I suppose you know the families more, so it's quite nice to have a bit of knowledge about the child, what's going on.*

(Participant 5, Year 1 Teaching Assistant, 12 years' experience)

For two participants being enthusiastic was seen as a positive skill necessary for encouraging children to interact and complete tasks:

*... just bubbly, to like get them to do things. And quite persuasive at times [laughs].* (Participant 4, Year 1 Learning Support Assistant, 1 month's experience)

*And obviously, a certain, to have a passion about something would be great. (Participant 5, Year 1 Teaching Assistant, 12 years' experience)*

For Participant 2 the ability to set boundaries for children was seen as an essential skills for classroom support staff to possess:

*...just to give them that border, or boundary, of what they can do and what they can't do, I think that's really important. (Participant 2, Nursery Teaching Assistant, 1 years' experience)*

#### **1.3.1.2 Pressures**

For several participants finding time within their working day to complete all of the tasks required of them was seen as a significant strain:

*Umm, we have, lots of like different things to do, and different things to work with, with children. So, it's finding time really, to be able to have that time with certain children, I think. As well as doing other jobs within the classroom. (Participant 3, Year 2 Teaching Assistant, 1 years' experience)*

For participant 2, time pressures exacerbated other anxieties around confidence in reading to pupils:

*That just comes down to my English, it's just umm, having a bit more time, rather than somebody saying can you go and read this, or can you go and do this work, I like to sort of look over, or pre-read, I dunno, a pack of the books they've got there, so I know and I feel confident reading them. There's nothing worse when you're stuck, when you're in front of the class.*  
(Participant 2, Nursery Teaching Assistant, 1 years' experience)

Participant 5 viewed increased demands and time pressures as directly linked to school funding cuts:

*...just time really, trying to fit everything in, is an ongoing, with cuts, just an ongoing thing really. You know you should be supporting somebody, but you need to be doing this, so you're pulled and pushed one way and the other.* (Participant 5, Year 1 Teaching Assistant, 12 years' experience)

For one participant dealing with the varying medical needs of a child was viewed as the most significant pressure of the role:

*Just his medical needs. They're the challenges I face, because every day is different with the child.*  
(Participant 4, Year 1 Learning Support Assistant, 1 month's experience)

### **1.3.2 Theme 2 – Pupils**

Pupils constituted a significant theme across all participants. For most participants managing pupil's challenging behaviour and attention was seen as an important aspect of their role. Pupil achievement and progress was also viewed by some participants as a significantly rewarding aspect of working as a member of classroom support staff.

#### **1.3.2.1 Behaviour**

Managing challenging behaviour from pupils was seen as a significant aspect of the role of classroom support staff for most participants. Many participants particularly focused on physical aspect of pupils' behaviour:

*...behavioural challenges, depending on how the child is feeling on the day of coming in. Umm, they sometimes kick out, when she tries, if she's frustrated, she'll try and hit and kick out. So, you've got to try to avoid that and deal with that.*

(Participant 1, Nursery Class Teaching Assistant, 1 years' experience)

For participants with more experience in the role there was a belief that incidence of challenging behaviour among pupils was increasing:

*Behaviour. Umm, a lot this year, sharing, we've got a lot of kids that are fighting or they're pushing or*



*they're hitting, like retaliating back...I think just in general across different years. The behaviour coming through has changed.* (Participant 2, Nursery Teaching Assistant, 1 years' experience)

*I suppose behaviour's quite a big one as they're coming up now, there's more and more disruption in the class. I'd say this year not as bad as last year, but last year was worse.* (Participant 5, Year 1 Teaching Assistant, 12 years' experience)

For some participants maintaining pupils' attention was viewed as a significant barrier to carrying out their role:

*Within the teaching assistant role, the challenge of trying to keep the children focused on activities, sometimes it's a bit of a struggle. Trying to keep them on one activity that you're trying to do with them.* (Participant 1, Nursery Class Teaching Assistant, 1 years' experience)

For participant 2 maintaining a consistent routine was an important strategy for managing potentially challenging situations:

*Umm, keeping a structure, making sure that the children sort of have a routine, because we find this does come up, sort of like change of time, they're*

*like 'no we're not doing this'. (Participant 2, Nursery Teaching Assistant, 1 years' experience)*

### **1.3.2.2 Rewards**

For some participants the rewards of seeing children develop mitigated the negative impact of challenging behaviour:

*...you do feel like actually I have helped somebody today, it is positive to have that, at the end of the day when you feel like [sighs], when you walk in and you see the, sometimes you see the bad behaviour and you think, 'oh no, it's gonna be a tough day', but then you have little mini break throughs throughout the day and you just, you do walk away feeling like you have accomplished something today, it's a really rewarding job. (Participant 1, Nursery Class Teaching Assistant, 1 years' experience)*

For one participant the rewards of the job were directly linked to feeling content with the class and year group worked in:

*I like the year group I'm in, I do think that makes the difference...I'm in a middle room so I have my own area, and I work with smaller groups, I like that, I think it makes the job easier. (Participant 5, Year 1 Teaching Assistant, 12 years' experience)*

### **1.3.3 Theme 3 – Training**

Due to the nature of questions posed to participants it is perhaps not surprising that all talked extensively about their training and qualifications. Therefore, training was included as a main theme as participants had strong and similar views on the topic. Using training as a theme heading also provides a clear link between the three sub-themes of; formal qualifications; development; and gaps in knowledge. Although all participants had a lot to say on the topic of training, no participants mentioned formal training until they were directly questioned on the topic. Furthermore, three of the five participants required clarification as to what the term 'training' referred to before they could answer. For all participants the focus of the majority of their training was outside the school in which they worked. Three participants had completed formal teaching assistant qualifications and related to this more than any in work training they had received. When it came to school-based training and perceived gaps in knowledge the majority of participants cited training directly linked to the curriculum such as literacy and numeracy programmes. However, some participants also expressed a desire for schools to implement training based on managing behaviour.

### 1.3.3.1 Formal Qualifications

For three participants the formal teaching assistant training course was the most significant training they had received, and this dominated their responses to questions related to training:

*Ah, ok, so you do your level 1 and 2 when you're training to be a teaching assistant, and then obviously its optional, you can do your level 3, it's up to you, I have done my level 3. (Participant 3, Year 2 Teaching Assistant, 1 years' experience)*

Although the formal training course was the most extensive training three participants had received in relation to their current role, for two participants the most valuable part of this course was viewed as classroom-based practice and observation with existing teaching staff:

*...experiences within the classroom that I was in, with a very experienced teacher. I gained a lot of knowledge from that, and a lot more experience from that. (Participant 1, Nursery Class Teaching Assistant, 1 years' experience)*

*...look at how different teachers have different techniques like traffic light systems, or they have a sticker reward chart, or some people had a jar and every time somebody did well in class they put some*

*magic glitter it was, and when it built up to a set level they could have a reward. So that was good...I felt we needed more work experience, more on the job stuff, rather than, they did a lot in the classroom, it was two days in the classroom and only one day on experience. (Participant 2, Nursery Teaching Assistant, 1 years' experience)*

For participant 4 the practical school-based experience element of a degree in Education and Childhood Studies was also viewed as important training to prepare for working as a member of classroom support staff:

*I've done a degree in Education and Childhood studies, so I studied for three years, and all my placements were in, primary based school, so that's all the training I've got. (Participant 4, Year 1 Learning Support Assistant, 1 month's experience)*

Participant 5 had the most work-based experience of all participants, however as with other participants most of the formal training received was external to the school in which they worked:

*And then I'm on a youth working course at the moment, level 3, so there is an element of training in that, we do some. (Participant 5, Year 1 Teaching Assistant, 12 years' experience)*

### 1.3.3.2 Development

For two participants valuable personal development came from working directly with children:

*...a close friend's child looking after them with autism, and, they've given me an awful lot of training as well. (Participant 1, Nursery Class Teaching Assistant, 1 years' experience)*

*...just being in it, after two years, this will be my second year, and I've learnt a hell of a lot, just from doing it, as well when I did the course and I came out I was like this is a lot different from what, do you know what I mean, you need more, umm, but they don't, they didn't feel it was necessary to do more days...Because I think I'd have different answers to what I actually wrote in my coursework. (Participant 2, Nursery Teaching Assistant, 1 years' experience)*

Some participants had attended training courses outside of school, which they found useful in their day to day role as a member of school support staff:

*I've got my first aid, and you see a lot of bumps and cuts and everything in class. (Participant 2, Nursery Teaching Assistant, 1 years' experience)*

*I do Childline counselling. So, I do ongoing training with them, and that's all sorts of things, from domestic abuse to forced marriage to mentoring. There's a whole heap of different ones that you sort of do. So, you aim to do a couple every year.*

(Participant 5, Year 1 Teaching Assistant, 12 years' experience)

Three participants had received some training through the school in which they worked. This was largely general training for all staff members, and related directly to the curriculum, such as numeracy and literacy programmes:

*Umm, I did Read Write Inc training umm, but apart from that I haven't done anything, no.* (Participant 2, Nursery Teaching Assistant, 1 years' experience)

*As part of this job we did some welsh training, we've done a bit of outdoors, you know outdoor classroom sort of training. Umm, I think we've done Makaton a few years ago, we had a child who struggled with speech. But again, the sort of skills that if you don't keep them up they slip, especially Welsh I'd say.*

(Participant 5, Year 1 Teaching Assistant, 12 years' experience)

Two participants had received some school-based training in working with children with additional learning needs. However, as with curriculum based training these were general programmes for all staff and not directly tailored to the specific role of classroom support staff or the individual children supported by the participants:

*oh we did umm, ELCLAN, which is like speech and language thing, just to give you an insight, not to overload them if they're process, and all that, to break things down for them. So yeah, over the years, done a few things. (Participant 5, Year 1 Teaching Assistant, 12 years' experience)*

*We have done one on autism, which was nice, and we did that as, all of us did that, so everyone one of us is trained, you know, in that. So that's nice to have. Not just a couple of people that are trained in different areas, but we're all trained in that, which is nice, and better as well, isn't it? (Participant 3, Year 2 Teaching Assistant, 1 years' experience)*

#### **1.3.3.3 Gaps in Knowledge**

All participants cited a general lack of training at the school in which they worked. Two participants had not been given any workplace training by their current school:



*Umm, with the one to one support I've not really had much with that.* (Participant 1, Nursery Class Teaching Assistant, 1 years' experience)

*Not through here no. But I've only been here like six weeks.* (Participant 4, Year 1 Learning Support Assistant, 1 month's experience)

For participants who had not received any training from the school they worked in, perceived gaps in training related directly to the curriculum and subjects being taught in the classroom:

*I think it's just like, you know, Read Write Inc, and stuff that they do. Just being able to do the sounds, being trained in that properly. And just things like that.* (Participant 4, Year 1 Learning Support Assistant, 1 month's experience)

*Maybe with the teaching assistant, just having more of an, sort of a wider understanding of it all, to know what I have to plan for the day and what I can do throughout the day for bettering the children, for the activities and stuff like that.* (Participant 1, Nursery Class Teaching Assistant, 1 years' experience)

Two participants cited a desire for specific training in managing children with challenging behaviour:

*Probably with behavioural side for the one to one support, I could do with a bit more understanding of it, and how I can better myself within it, and helping the children. Obviously in case of the breakouts and all the, the kick offs and stuff like that, I need to know ways to control it really. (Participant 1, Nursery Class Teaching Assistant, 1 years' experience)*

*Maybe with challenging behaviour a little bit more, umm and just different ways of you know, being able to deal with that. Because, you know, maybe there's lots of reasons why children are challenging, do have challenging behaviour, and I think that strategies, different ones, I would find beneficial, especially with certain children, so I am interested in, in having that. And you know, not just challenging behaviour, but behavioural issues and things like that. (Participant 3, Year 2 Teaching Assistant, 1 years' experience)*

For two participants gaps in training related directly to perceived personal shortcomings within the role:

*I think probably my IT given my age, I'm not the best at IT, that's a bit poor when you look to the children to help you. But maybe that's a good thing for them, because then they've got responsibility,*

*but, probably IT I'd say.* (Participant 5, Year 1  
Teaching Assistant, 12 years' experience)

*That just comes down to my English...But that's just  
my confidence I think, I think that's just, rather than  
being put on the spot. But that's the only bit I  
struggle in really.* (Participant 2, Nursery Teaching  
Assistant, 1 years' experience)

## **1.4 - Discussion**

The research questions for the present study were;

1. Do classroom support staff in Wales have a shared experience of education and training related to their role?
2. How does the experience of education and training impact upon pressures faced in the role of classroom support staff in Wales?

Although, due to the small sample size wider generalisations to the situation across Wales cannot be drawn, in answer to the first research question this study has shown that the classroom support staff who were interviewed did have a shared experience of limited opportunities for training and education once in their role. Furthermore, in answer to the second research question, the shared experience of participants not only directly impacted on their ability to effectively fulfil their role but also increased the negative impact of the pressures associated with the role.

Participants in this study placed higher value on experiential learning than on didactic learning, giving examples of classroom observation and practical experience during formal training as more valuable than tutor led elements. This also extended to professional development once in the role of classroom support staff, where learning from other more experienced colleagues was seen as particularly important. All participants had received the majority of their formal training outside of

the school in which they worked, both prior to commencing their current role and subsequently. Most participants had not been provided with any formal training directly related to their role by the school in which they worked. For participants who had received some in work training this was mostly broad in focus for all staff members and related to academic programmes or general school policy. Furthermore, no participants in this study mentioned formal training until they were directly questioned about it and three of the five participants needed clarification of the term 'training' before answering questions related to it. This perhaps highlights the significance of the lack of in work training opportunities classroom support staff in this study had, in that they did not associate the term 'training' with their role.

The limited opportunities for in work education and training either directly or indirectly impacted upon general stresses of the role of classroom support staff in a negative way. For all participants the most significant stresses were associated with pupil behaviour and general workload and time pressures. Participants reported a general sense that issues surrounding pupils challenging behaviour were increasing. However, most participants demonstrated gaps in knowledge in how to effectively manage pupils' behaviour, and no participant reported having received any formal training from their school on this topic. This is particularly pertinent as for many participants motivations for continuing in their role related to the rewards of succeeding in helping a child to succeed through successfully managing their behaviour.

The findings from this study match those of previous research into the experience of classroom support staff in relation to training and role conceptualisation. As with research exploring the views and experiences of classroom support staff working on a 1:1 basis with pupils (Abbott et al. 2011; Keating & O'Connor 2012; Cockroft & Atkinson 2015) this study has found that classroom support staff are motivated to learn and continue their personal and professional development once in their role, but face barriers to this due to a lack of training available to them.

In common with the findings of Cockroft and Atkinson (2015), participants in the present study reported seeking out opportunities to learn by talking to and observing colleagues. This method may be a direct result of experiencing gaps in knowledge while at the same time having limited opportunities for formal training. Although, experiential learning can be extremely effective, there is a risk that this method of informal learning could lead to a continuation of poor practice due to bad habits being shared among staff. A more robust method of ensuring quality professional development for staff would be to combine the observation and practical based methods with formal evidence-based training, which has been seen to achieve the best results for pupils and staff (Syrnyk 2018).

Unlike previous studies (Webster et al., 2010; Wren, 2017; Bowles, Radford & Bakopoulou, 2018) participants in the present study did not report issues surrounding role ambiguity. Although not asked directly

to define their role, participants appeared to have a good understanding of how their role fitted within the classroom in which they worked as well as the general school structure. This is possibly due to a higher percentage of participants in this study having completed formal teaching assistant training prior to commencing their role than in previous studies. Where participants reported issues surrounding the definition of their role this was related to not being employed for enough hours to enable them to effectively complete all the tasks required of them, rather than ambiguity as to their responsibilities. This would potentially have given them a better understanding of the wider context of the role of classroom support staff than for individuals with no prior experience of training related to the role.

The personal qualities given by participants in the present study as integral to the effectiveness of a member of school support staff, indicate a conceptualisation of the responsibilities of the role as to provide both pastoral and academic support. All participants cited patience as an important quality necessary for their role. This is in line with the findings of previous research (Bland & Sleightholm 2012; Cockroft & Atkinson, 2015) where members of school support staff and pupils also reported patience as an important personal attribute for school support staff. However, unlike previous studies, participants in the present study also talked specifically about qualities that enable classroom support staff to effectively support pupils with their academic achievements. The belief expressed by participants that classroom

support staff should have a good level of knowledge about how children learn, alongside an emphasis on qualities such as patience and understanding, indicates that participants view their role as both to support pupils in their academic work and provide a level of social and emotional support. This is particularly interesting when viewed in the context of issues surrounding the increase in pupils challenging behaviour and a gap in knowledge on how to manage this. It appears that members of classroom support staff with some level of formal training prior to entering the profession have a good understanding of their role and responsibilities and are therefore aware of the detrimental impact that challenging behaviour has on pupils' overall success at school. However, with limited opportunities to receive tailored training related to aspects of their role, such as managing behavioural challenges, once in work, classroom support staff do not always possess the skills necessary to support pupils effectively. This not only has a negative impact on the pupils, but also on the morale of the classroom support staff themselves as they are aware of their gap in knowledge but unable to acquire new skills due to a lack of training opportunities.

There are several limitations to the present study that must be taken into account when looking at the broader relevance and generalisability of the findings. Firstly, participants in the present study were all from the same local area of North Wales and worked in two schools that were both part of the same local authority. Therefore, their experience may not be the same as that of others across Wales. Secondly, due to



issues of recruitment, a relatively small number of participants took part in the present study. Future research with a larger number of participants from a broader geographic area is therefore necessary to indicate the accuracy of the picture painted by the current findings. Participants in the present study were also interviewed during their normal working day, which resulted in them feeling rushed and potentially unable to take time to give full detailed answers, due to being constantly focused on the clock. Therefore, in future studies it may be more effective to interview participants at the end of their working day so that they did not feel the need to rush back into the classroom and could give more time and consideration to their responses. Finally, as with all qualitative research, the findings of this study report the personal experiences and perspectives of the participants. Therefore, they may not give an accurate indication of the reality of issues such as training quality and availability. Future studies could provide more robust evidence by including some quantitative elements such as classroom observations, or training records data collection from senior school staff, as well as further exploration around how much input classroom support staff have in the development of pupils' individual behaviour plans.

## **1.5 - Conclusions**

This study has provided an insight into the experience of school support staff in Wales in relation to education and training and role pressures. Existing research in this area is limited and predominantly focuses on education systems in nations other than Wales, therefore the current study addresses a gap in the literature by focusing on the experience of school support staff in Wales. The main themes from participants answers related to fulfilling their role; pupils; and training. The findings echoed those of existing research where participants reported gaps in knowledge and a lack of available in work training opportunities. This similarity points to a general trend of poorly trained staff working with the most vulnerable pupils, which can have a detrimental effect on pupils' achievements. A positive finding from this study is that participants did not report issues of role ambiguity, and generally had a higher level of formal training before commencing their role than in other studies. Although knowledge gaps still exist, the fact that participants had a good level of existing general understanding and knowledge, may mean that less intensive training is required to address these gaps.

It is not possible to say whether findings from this small study can be generalised to reflect the wider situation in Wales. However, the finding that the school support staff interviewed had a good level of relevant education prior to entering the profession and therefore felt their role

was well defined, is a positive one. In the context of The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act (2018) and associated Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales, which place a legal responsibility on schools in relation to pupils with additional learning needs, it is vital that all staff have the necessary knowledge and skills to support pupils effectively. However, as is shown in the findings of the present study, schools cannot rely on the existing knowledge and skills of staff alone to address all challenges faced in the classroom. It appears that at present, possibly due to the real terms cut to per-pupil funding in Wales, that schools are not providing adequate levels of in-work training to allow classroom support staff the opportunity for continuous professional development. Therefore, it is essential that high-quality cost-effective training, tailored to the needs of school support staff, is available to schools.

## **Chapter 2 – Literature Review; Early Onset Child Conduct Disorder**

### **2.1 – Introduction**

As explored in Chapter 1, child behavioural problems are of significant concern to school classroom support staff, who often feel ill-equipped when managing problem behaviour. This chapter further examines the topic of child behavioural problems, giving a brief overview of the literature in relation to the impact of childhood behavioural problems and interventions that may mitigate them. Studies have been chosen for their relevance to the present thesis, in that they explore the contributing factors to, and long-term impact of, conduct problems in early childhood. Interventions chosen focus on parenting theory-based programmes implemented with children of primary school age as these most closely match the SKILLS programme.

The most serious and persistent child behavioural problems are often diagnosed as child conduct disorders and are the most prevalent form of childhood mental health conditions (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence [NICE], 2014). Child conduct disorders are defined as disruptive and aggressive behaviour which is repetitive and persistent and extreme enough to be beyond age appropriate social norms (World Health Organisation, 2018). As well as impacting on children's immediate life at school and home, childhood conduct disorders have been shown to have a detrimental impact across the lifetime.

Individuals who exhibit behavioural problems in childhood are more likely to experience physical and mental health problems in adulthood (Spengler et al., 2016; Loth et al., 2014) and have a greater chance of being involved with the criminal justice system (Farrington, Gaffney & Ttofi, 2016; Jolliffe et al., 2017). However, despite the potentially negative consequences of childhood conduct disorders, there is a growing body of evidence to support the positive mitigating impact of early intervention on both short- and longer-term outcomes (Hutchings et al., 2007; Tully & Hunt, 2016; Webster-Stratton et al., 2011), with interventions targeting both the home and school environment having an enhanced positive effect (Reid, Webster-Stratton & Hammond, 2003; Webster-Stratton, Reid, & Hammond, 2004). This chapter aims to give a brief overview of the literature in relation to long-term outcomes associated with childhood conduct disorder, factors associated with childhood behavioural difficulties, and interventions that can improve both short-term and long-term outcomes for children displaying signs of conduct disorder.

## **2.2. – Long term Outcomes for Early Onset Child**

### **Conduct Disorder**

Coleman et al. (2009) looked at data from the UK Medical Research Council's National Survey of Health and Development and found that participants who exhibited severe externalising behaviour in adolescence were also more likely to experience symptoms of depression, anxiety and nervous trouble in adult life. Results also showed that participants with severe externalising behaviour in adolescence were more likely to have poorer academic attainment than their peers and to encounter difficulties in forming relationships in adulthood than who did not exhibit externalising behaviour in adolescence. Although this study focused on behaviour in adolescence and did not distinguish between early childhood and late onset externalising problems, other research suggests that early onset childhood conduct disorders that persist into adolescence have the most significant detrimental impact on outcomes in adulthood.

The findings of Coleman et al. (2009) were mirrored in a meta-analysis of 10 studies looking at adult outcomes for individuals diagnosed with conduct disorders in childhood (Loth et al. 2014), which found that children who presented with conduct problems were more likely to develop depressive disorders in adulthood than their peers. Burke (2012) found a similar link between childhood behaviour and adult mental health using data from the Developmental Trends Study

conducted in the USA, to explore the link between psychopathology and oppositional defiant disorder (ODD), a childhood conduct disorder characterised by high levels of defiant emotional and behavioural problems. Irritability combined with ODD increased the likelihood of depression and neuroticism among participants, while ODD and either irritability or antagonistic behaviour increased the likelihood of anxiety.

Hofvander et al. (2017) found that a high proportion of men incarcerated in prison facilities across Sweden for violent crimes, had been diagnosed with conduct problems in childhood and were significantly more susceptible to psychiatric conditions and poor mental health than other violent offenders. The link between childhood behaviour and later involvement with the criminal justice system was also explored in an examination of several systematic reviews by Farrington, Goffney and Ttofi (2016). Evidence was found from several studies that behaviour in childhood was closely linked to antisocial behaviour later in life. Furthermore, another systematic review conducted by Jolliffe et al. (2017), found evidence of a link between poor parenting, hyperactivity, and impulsivity in childhood and criminality in later life.

Poor physical adult health has also been linked to behavioural problems in childhood. Spengler et al. (2016) examined data collected in Luxembourg from individuals when they were aged 12 and 52 years and found that adult outcomes were directly related to behaviour in childhood. Individuals with high levels of self-reported inferiority and

pessimism at age 12 years were more likely to be overweight or obese by age 52 years than their peers. Individuals whose teachers rated their studiousness poorly at age 12 years were also found to be at higher risk for poor self-reported health outcomes in adulthood. Similar results were found by Stumm et al. (2011) who used data from the Aberdeen Children of the 1950s (ACONF) study to assess the relationship between childhood conduct problems and adult health. Individuals whose teachers had reported conduct problems in childhood had a significantly increased risk of long-term diseases, having overall poor health, and being overweight or obese by age 46 to 51 years. Although both of these studies used existing data and relied on self-and teacher-reported measures of behaviour rather than clinical diagnosis, the results indicated a potential direct link between behavioural difficulties in childhood and poor outcomes in adulthood.

Kretschmer et al. (2014) used data from the Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children (ALSPAC) to examine adult outcomes of childhood conduct problem trajectories. ALSPAC recruited pregnant women who lived in south-west England and were due to give birth between 1st April 1991 and 31st December 1992. The study investigated the influence of factors on children's development and health. Participants were followed up through parental report up to the age of thirteen and then by computer assisted interviews between the age of seventeen and eighteen years. When factors such as family status and birth information were taken into account results showed a significantly



greater risk of poorer outcomes for participants who had childhood conduct problems that persisted into adolescence, when compared to their peers without conduct problems, or with early conduct problems that did not persist into adolescence. Although participants with early childhood only conduct problems were at a slight increased risk of poor outcomes, compared to those with no childhood conduct problems, the increase was only small when compared to those whose childhood conduct problems persisted into adolescence. Participants with persistent conduct problems were three times more likely to consume illicit drugs and twice as likely to engage in risky sexual behaviour, to smoke, to report criminal behaviour, and to suffer from depression and anxiety, than their peers who did not report any conduct problems. This suggests that the risk of poor long-term outcomes can be mitigated if behavioural issues are dealt with at a young age.

Raudino et al. (2012) explored data from 337 parents at age 30 years who were part of the Christchurch Health and Development Study (CHDS) to examine the link between conduct problems at age seven to nine years and parenting and partnership difficulties in adulthood. Data from self-report interviews on the topic of parenting skills and partnership conducted when participants were 30 years old found that increased levels of conduct problems in childhood were directly linked to increased likelihood of parenting difficulties and poor partner relationships in adulthood. However, although researchers examined the significance of confounding factors such as socioeconomic status

and conflict between parents in childhood, the style of parenting that they were exposed to in childhood was not accounted for. Therefore, it could be that conduct issues in childhood were the result of sub-optimal parenting, which in turn led to poor parenting skills in adulthood due to a lack of suitable role models for optimal parenting methods.

## **2.3 – Contributing Factors to Early Onset Child Conduct Disorder**

### **2.3.1 Early Language Skills and Conduct Problems**

A meta-analysis by Chow, Ekholm and Coleman (2018) using data from 30 studies found a significant negative correlation between early language skills and conduct problems in later childhood. The effect remained when controlled for confounding factors, such as gender, age, and type of language measure used. This suggests that good language development plays a major role in reducing the risk of challenging behaviour, as children who experience the most significant language difficulties at a young age are also more likely to display subsequent challenging behaviour. Data from the UK Millennium Cohort Study also shows a direct relationship between reports of poor expressive language at age three years and reports of conduct problems at age five years (Girard et al. 2016). However, a relationship was also demonstrated between conduct problems at age three and language delay at age five, suggesting the two have a reciprocal impact. This supports results from Yew and O’Kearney (2015) who found that, compared to their typically developed peers, children with language difficulties were significantly more likely to display conduct problems at every stage from age four to eleven years. Jackson (2017) found a significantly increased likelihood of anti-social behaviour in pre-schoolers who had experienced language difficulties in infancy, linking co-occurrence of language difficulties and

infant behavioural challenges. Furthermore, only infants who displayed challenging behaviour alongside language difficulties were at increased risk of anti-social behaviour in later childhood. Although the relationship between challenging behaviour and language difficulties may be more complex than a direct causal link, the association is still significant due to its implication for poor long-term outcomes. Hopkins, Clegg and Stackhouse (2018) found that a higher proportion of residents in young offenders institutions had some form of developmental language delay than the general population. They also found a direct correlation between poor language skills and incarceration in young offenders institutions, with young people being between one and five times less likely to be incarcerated for every unit increase in their language performance scores.

### **2.3.2 Parenting and Conduct Disorder**

The behaviour of parents has been directly linked to the behaviour of children in several studies. Gridley, Baker-Henningham and Hutchings, (2016) found that children's language development can be predicted by observing language used by parents, with higher levels of prompting questions and statements by parents being directly linked to higher levels of receptive and expressive language skill development in young children. Conversely this means that low levels of child directed prompting language from parents can negatively impact child language development, which can in turn increase the likelihood of childhood behavioural problems, as described above. Parents socioeconomic

status has also been linked to child behavioural problems, with lower socioeconomic status increasing the likelihood of child conduct disorder. However, McCoy, Frick, Loney and Ellis (1999) found that this apparent link has been found to be mediated by dysfunctional parenting practices.

A meta-analysis by Pinquart (2017) found that parenting behaviour has a direct impact on child behaviour, with harsh controlling parenting methods being most strongly linked to high levels of child externalising problems, and high levels of parental warmth being linked to low levels of child behavioural problems. Sypher et al., (2019) also found that low levels of positive parenting and high levels of harsh parenting practices are linked to high levels of aggression related social goals in children during middle childhood. Furthermore, Nix et al. (1999) and Park, Johnson, Colalillo and Williamson (2018), both found a direct link between parents' hostile attribution of child behaviour, negative parenting practices, and child problem behaviour, leading to a negative cyclical relationship between the three.

## **2.4. Interventions**

### **2.4.1 Parenting Interventions for Childhood Conduct Disorder**

Although early onset conduct problems can have long term detrimental impact on adult outcomes, parenting interventions in childhood to reverse trends towards challenging behaviour have the potential to mitigate this. Piquero et al. (2009) looked at randomised control studies using quantitative methods and a pre-post design, to evaluate intervention programmes for children with challenging behaviour. All studies focused on children aged five years or younger at baseline and reported on interventions which had a parent training program as a major component. In total 55 studies were included in the analysis, which found that although all interventions reduced child behaviour problems, the average effect size across all studies was only small to moderate. However, many studies included in this analysis were not specifically focused on directly targeting challenging behaviour. Therefore, it is possible that the small effect size was due to the general nature of some of the included programmes, rather than a general inability for early intervention to have a significant impact on child behaviour.

Tully and Hunt (2016) conducted a systematic review of parenting interventions with children aged two to eight years and a diagnosis of oppositional defiant disorder or exhibiting or at risk of elevated externalising behaviours. Unlike Piquero et al. (2009), no universal

programmes were included in this review, nor were studies targeting any other groups such as children with ADHD or global developmental delay. All studies were randomised controlled trials with a wait list control and treatment group comparison, and evaluated interventions consisting of a brief parenting programme, of less than eight sessions in total. Nine articles, describing eight studies, were included in the final analysis which found that all programmes showed a significant reduction in child externalising behaviours and increases in positive parenting when compared to control groups. However, most studies in this review were based on variations of the same parenting programme, Triple P, therefore the results could represent the benefits of this specific programme rather than giving insight into the effectiveness of early intervention in general.

The Triple P positive parenting programme teaches parents 17 core child management strategies, ten to promote children's competence and development and seven to help parents manage misbehaviour. There are three delivery styles for the programme; Standard, which consists of ten face to face group sessions; enhanced, which consists of 12 face to face group sessions; and self-directed where parents are provided with materials and instructions on how to complete the programme, but no further support. Sanders et al. (2000) compared the effectiveness of the three delivery methods for reducing challenging behaviour in children with early onset conduct problems. Three hundred and five families from across Australia, of pre-schoolers at high risk of

developing conduct problems, were divided into three treatment conditions and a wait list control group. All intervention groups showed a significant difference in child behaviour measures during post-treatment follow up, with the strongest effect being seen in the enhanced treatment group. However, at one year follow up there was no significant difference in treatment effect between groups. The enhanced and standard treatment group had maintained the positive impact of decreased incidence of child negative behaviour, and the self-directed intervention group had seen a further decrease from post-treatment to one year follow up. This indicates a potentially different style of learning for the self-directed group, perhaps due to a need to look back on the course material over a longer period to gain the same skill level as the face to face intervention groups.

Another intervention shown to have a positive impact on childhood behaviour problems is the Incredible Years (IY) parenting programme. IY uses a collaborative approach with methods including role-play, modelling and discussion in weekly group sessions. IY aims to promote positive parenting through building parent-child relationships, encouraging praise, setting clear expectations, and providing strategies for applying consistent consequences for problem behaviour. Scott et al. (2001) examined the effectiveness of IY for reducing childhood anti-social behaviour. A total of 141 parents of children aged three to eight years referred to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) for antisocial behaviour, were included in the study. After receiving the



IY intervention over a 13-16 week period children of parents in the treatment group showed significant reduction in antisocial behaviour when compared to the wait list control group, whose incidence of antisocial behaviour did not change between baseline and follow up. Although the overall effect size was reduced when participants lost to follow up were included, the intervention still had a small significant effect on child behaviour when compared to the control group.

A similar positive effect of the IY programme on childhood conduct problems was found by Gardner, Burton and Klimes (2006). The 14-week group IY programme was delivered to a total of 76 parents of children aged two to nine years who had been clinically referred for conduct problems, in either a treatment group or wait-list control group. Measures used included parent report questionnaires and home-based observation of child-parent interactions. The treatment group saw improvements in child behaviour from both parent report questionnaires and child-parent observations. An increase in positive parenting style was also observed. The treatment effect was also maintained at 18-month follow-up. There was no longer a control group for comparison at this stage and so the possibility of children's behaviour changing due to other factors during this period of time cannot be ruled out, however, the wide age range covered by the study coupled with evidence that childhood conduct problems often persist into adulthood makes this unlikely.

A 12-week version of the IY programme has also been shown to have a positive effect on child behaviour problems. Hutchings et al. (2007) evaluated the effectiveness of the IY basic parenting programme delivered to parents of children aged 36-59 months, at risk of developing conduct disorder, across 11 Sure Start areas in north and mid Wales. A total of 153 participants were recruited, including 104 in the intervention group and 49 in a wait list control, received the intervention as weekly group session delivered by existing Sure Start staff. Children in the intervention group had significantly reduced levels of antisocial behaviour and hyperactivity at follow up than baseline when compared to the wait list control group. Parenting in the intervention group was also seen to be significantly improved in parent-child observations conducted at follow up when compared to the control group.

The positive impact of parenting programmes in real-world settings rather than randomised controlled studies, has also been explored by Gray, Totsika and Lindsay (2018). Their study reported on outcomes of 1390 parents who took part in effectiveness trials and 3706 parents who took part in positive parenting programmes in a clinical setting across England. All participants in both groups were parents who had concerns about their child's behaviour, or where a professional had concerns about the child's behaviour and completed a parenting programme deemed effective by the UK Department of Education, including; Incredible Years; Triple P; and STOP, an 11-week programme

for parents of children aged 11-16 years. Results showed that service-led implementation of parenting programmes had similar results to those of randomised controlled trials at post-test and 12-month follow-up. Furthermore, the service-led implementation of parenting programmes had a greater effect size for improvements in parenting style at 12-month follow-up, than the randomised controlled trials. However, unlike other studies only participants with complete follow-up data were reported on, meaning no firm conclusions can be drawn.

#### **2.4.1.1 The Long-Term Impact of Parenting Interventions**

Averdijk et al. (2016) compared the long-term impact of a parenting and child directed intervention using Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS), a program designed to enhance cognitive and social competencies and reduce disruptive behaviour in primary school aged children, and the Triple P parenting programme delivered to the same parents, on antisocial behaviour in adolescence. The randomised controlled trial with 1675 primary school aged children in Zurich Switzerland, followed up in adolescence, found that there were few significant long-term benefits of either programme. The PATHS group had a significantly reduced prevalence of police contact when compared to control group, but for all other measures there was no significant difference between the treatment and control groups at adolescent follow up. The combined PATHS plus Triple P treatment group were even shown to have poorer conflict resolution skills in adolescence than their control group peers. Results from initial post-treatment follow-up

showed only a small treatment effect, therefore, it could be that the lack of long-term beneficial effects was a result of programme delivery issues, rather than the programmes themselves. Furthermore, this study used a universal population and did not target any specific at-risk group.

Webster-Stratton et al. (2011) examined the long-term outcomes of families in the USA who had taken part in an IY parenting intervention due to a child being clinically diagnosed with oppositional defiant disorder (ODD) and/or conduct disorder (CD). The original intervention took place when children were aged three to eight years and were followed up between eight and 12 years later when children were in adolescence. Most post-treatment effects were seen to have been sustained into adolescence, including the percentage of participants falling within the clinical cut off for diagnosis of ODD and CD, which had decreased from pre- to post-treatment measures. Although there was no control group for the long-term follow-up, comparison to national average for peers of the same age showed that participants had similar levels of drug and alcohol misuse and contact with the criminal justice system. This indicated a sustained treatment effect of the intervention. The study also found that post-treatment factors could predict outcomes in adolescence. Poor parent-child interactions, such as multiple instances of parental criticism during post-treatment observations, increased the likelihood of poorer outcomes in adolescence. This indicates that not only the number of sessions

attended by parents, but also the amount to which they were able to learn new skills from the programme had a significant impact on both short-term and long-term outcomes for their child.

The long-term benefit of IY in preventing antisocial behaviour was also examined by Scott et al. (2014) in a follow up study of children from a deprived area of London clinically referred for, or at risk of, ODD in childhood. Follow up data collected when children were aged nine to 13 years showed that those who had been clinically referred for ODD in childhood had significant improvements in ODD symptoms and antisocial personality traits, as well as improved reading skills and improved parenting. Diagnosis rates for ODD were also significantly reduced for this group when compared to the control group. However, for those deemed at risk of ODD in childhood, but not clinically referred, there was no significant long-term treatment effect for any outcome measured. This difference could be explained by the fact that those in the clinically referred group had a significantly higher average percentage of treatment sessions attended than those in the indicated group. However, the difference may also be linked to findings of other studies that suggest early intervention is most beneficial for targeted groups of children, already presenting with behavioural problems, than as a preventative measure for those deemed at risk, or the wider population.

Leijten et al. (2019) conducted two meta-analysis into the significance of various components of parenting programmes on their effectiveness

in relation to reducing disruptive child behaviour and the impact on long-term sustainability of outcomes. Results of the 154 trial meta-analysis showed that the strongest effect size benefits of parenting programmes were in clinical and indicated groups. Positive reinforcement, praise, and natural/logical consequences were the most significant components of programmes with regards to their effect on lowering disruptive child behaviour in the short term. Other components such as relationship building were only significantly associated with a strong treatment effect in clinical groups, with little to no additional benefit seen when parenting interventions were used for prevention in indicative groups. The second meta-analysis into the long-term impact of parenting programmes found that no individual component was directly linked to a stronger long-term retention of effect.

#### **2.4.2 Application of Parenting Programmes in Schools**

The Incredible Years Teacher Classroom Management (IY TCM) training programme applies techniques and strategies from the IY parenting programme to a school environment. The training sessions encourage teachers to build positive relationships with pupils and parents, as well as teaching strategies for reducing unwanted behaviour and building children's social and emotional skills. IY TCM training is delivered in a similar style to the IY parenting programme, using video examples, role play, group discussion and homework tasks. A randomised controlled trial of six control and six intervention classrooms implementing IY TCM in Wales found that the programme significantly improved pupil teacher

relationships (Hutchings, Martin-Forbes, Daley, & Williams, 2013).

Outcomes of a total of 107 children aged three to seven years were assessed in this study with results showing a significant reduction in both negative behaviour of teachers towards pupils and pupils towards teachers in the intervention group compared to the control, as well as a significant decrease in general class off-task behaviour. Furthermore, the strongest treatment effect for the intervention was found in children who had the highest levels of behavioural difficulties at baseline.

A similar positive impact of IY TCM was found in a comparison between 21 intervention schools and 23 controls in Norway, by Aasheim et al. (2018). A small, significant treatment effect of IY TCM on teacher-pupil relationships and parental school engagement was found when compared to the control group. The treatment effect on teacher-pupil relationships was enhanced for pupils with high level behavioural problems. This could explain the results of an exploration of the effectiveness of IY TCM in 45 classrooms in rural and semi-rural communities in the USA, compared to 46 controls, by Murray et al. (2018) which found a small treatment effect in children with the highest level of reported behavioural difficulties at baseline but poor overall results in relation to whole class and teacher behaviour. Although as these results differ from those of other studies it could also indicate a study specific issue such as quality of training delivery or programme fidelity.

A randomised controlled trial of 22 teachers and 217 children of an IY TCM intervention group and wait list control group, in Ireland (Hickey et al. 2015) showed a positive treatment effect on teacher reports of their own positive strategies and a decrease in teacher reports of child problem behaviour. However, actual observation data did not show any significant change in either teacher or child behaviour. The difference in perceived change and observed change could be indicative of a potential delayed treatment effect which would become apparent at a longer-term follow-up. These results could also highlight the nuanced overall impact of IY TCM on a general class, over specific sub-groups of children with high levels of behavioural difficulties. However, research into the impact of IY TCM on 83 children with high levels of behavioural problems in Norway by Kirkhaug et al. (2016) found that while teacher-pupil relationships were improved with the intervention there was no significant difference in child behavioural issues compared to the control group. These results were mirrored in an exploration of the impact of IY TCM in 46 kindergartens in Norway by Fossum, Handegård and Drugli (2017), that found only small decreases in child problems behaviours for children with the highest level of behavioural problems when compared to controls, indicating a whole class approach alone may not be suitable for children with the highest level of difficulties. Although IY TCM alone may not be sufficient for children with the highest level of behavioural difficulties, this issue could relate to secondary factors such as parenting environment at home. Ford et al.



(2019) explored the impact of IY TCM in a randomised controlled trial of 80 schools in the south west of England and found that while the programme improved all children's level of behavioural difficulties, with an increased effect size for children with the highest level of reported difficulties, children with the highest reported difficulties were also most likely to be missing parent report data at follow-up.

The Incredible Years Dinosaur School Curriculum trains teachers to deliver sessions to children on topics such as understanding their emotions and being a good friend, through songs, stories, and role play, followed by group activities. Baker-Henningham, Walker, Powell and Meeks Gardner (2009) explored the impact of IY Dinosaur Classroom Curriculum combined with IY TCM across 5 pre-schools in Kingston Jamaica. Results showed a significant positive improvement in teachers' interactions with children as well as positive improvements in child behaviour, indicating the positive added impact of the Dinosaur Classroom Curriculum on a wider class implementation of IY. However, no specific measures were taken to assess the benefit of the IY-TCM and Dinosaur curriculum on children with high levels of behavioural problems.

The benefits of small group IY therapeutic version of the Dinosaur Curriculum for children with behavioural problems in Wales was explored in a small-scale feasibility study comparing 12 children who took part in the intervention with 12 who did not (Hutchings et al. 2012). Children with high levels of behavioural problems at baseline

showed significantly increased problems solving and pro-social skills at follow-up compared to their peers in the control group. Although this was a small-scale study in one primary school in Wales the results to point to the added benefit of individual child training for children with high levels of behavioural difficulties. A larger trial of the IY small group therapeutic Dinosaur School programme in Wales, with 22 schools and a total of 221 children with high levels of behavioural problems, was conducted by Williams et al. (2019). One hundred and twelve children completed the intervention, which was delivered by teachers who had been trained in the delivery of IY classroom and small group Dinosaur School programmes and who received monthly supervision from a highly specialised clinical psychologist throughout the intervention period. Results showed a significant increase in problem solving for intervention children compared to control. Children in the intervention group were also significantly more likely to have reached their personal-social academic targets, as set by class teachers, by the end of the intervention period than their control group peers.

Green et al. (2019) explored the impact of IY Dina Dinosaur small group program for children aged six to eight years with 109 pupils with teacher identified emotional or behavioural problems from Ohio USA. Results showed a significant decrease in teacher reported child problem behaviour at follow-up when compared to baseline ratings. Children with clinically significant behavioural problems at baseline also had a significant decrease in teacher reported problem behaviour at follow-up,

however the treatment effect for this sub-group was not any larger than for the group as a whole. Although these results show the positive potential of direct child training for children with teacher identified and clinically significant behavioural problems, the small group intervention in this study was delivered by trainee clinical psychologists and not teachers, meaning that results may not translate into a real-world teacher delivered intervention. Furthermore, the Dinosaur curriculum was adapted for this study by both shortening the length of sessions and adding in new video examples and mindfulness activities making it difficult to say to what extent these results reflect the effectiveness of the IY Dinosaur curriculum in general.

#### **2.4.3 Home-School Interventions for Childhood Conduct Disorder**

As well as separate targeted interventions for parents, teachers, and children, a cross environment approach has also been found to have significant positive effects on children's problem behaviour. A meta-analysis of 117 studies by Sheridan et al. (2019), exploring the effectiveness of home-school interventions found overall positive outcomes. In general, home-school interventions examined in the analysis had a positive impact on child behaviour, social skills, and mental health. Furthermore, the study also found that quality of communication, parent-teacher relationships, and home-based support were all significant components related directly to increased effect size and positive outcomes.

Barkley et al. (2000) explored the impact of home school interventions on 158 children with high levels of disruptive behaviour entering kindergarten in Massachusetts, USA. Children were assigned to one of four conditions; parent training only; classroom treatment only; parent training plus classroom treatment; or no treatment control. Parent training consisted of ten weekly group sessions focusing on behaviour management techniques such as reward charts and time out, plus monthly booster sessions throughout the academic year. The classroom treatment condition involved a special kindergarten class set up exclusively for children with disruptive behaviour. Classes, with no more than 15 children each, were led by specially trained teachers who implemented a behavioural intervention including elements such as; positive reinforcement; cognitive-behavioural self-confidence training; and social skills training. Results found improvements in children's behaviour when placed in a treatment classroom, but no treatment effect for the parenting training element. However, less than half of families offered parent training attended more than 50% of the sessions offered. Therefore, it is not possible to say whether the intervention itself would have enhanced results.

The efficacy of a home-school intervention for preschool children with high levels of problem behaviour was assessed by Fiel et al. (2014). One hundred and twenty-eight children from the USA were assigned to either an intervention group involving children's class teachers and parents taking part in the Preschool First Step to Success (PFSS)

programme, or a no intervention control group. Over a six to eight week period PFSS trains teachers in classroom management and behaviour management strategies while also providing one to one support to parents to enable them to implement similar strategies at home through supporting them to teach their children school success skills such as sharing and problem solving, through stories, role-play and modelling. Children in the intervention group had significantly reduced problem behaviour both at home and at school when compared to the control group children, as well as significantly increased pro-social behaviour. The change from baseline to follow-up was larger in the school environment than the home, which may be due to the nature of the two environments, as well as the academic focus of the PFSS programme. Although these results point to a positive impact of interventions targeting both home and school on child behaviour the fact that there was no parent only or school only comparison group means it is difficult to say whether there was an increased treatment effect for the cross-environment intervention.

Webster-Stratton, Reid, and Hammond (2004) examined the benefits of combining parent, teacher and child targeted interventions using the IY parenting, TCM, and Dinosaur School programmes. One hundred and fifty-nine families of children aged four to eight years with oppositional defiant disorder were randomly assigned to one of six conditions; parent training; parent and teacher training; child training; child and teacher training; parent, child, and teacher training; or waiting list

control. At post-intervention follow-up all treatment conditions saw a decrease in child behavioural problems when compared to controls. Child treatment was found to increase pro-social skills when compared to controls. An enhanced treatment effect was found when teacher training was added to child or parent training in relation to child behavioural problems at school, with parent plus teacher and child training demonstrating the largest decrease in child behavioural problems at school as well as the largest increase in child pro-social behaviour. However, at one-year follow up, although the behaviour of children in most treatment conditions was sustained, a slight deterioration was found in the behaviour of children in the parent plus child and teacher group at school. This deterioration could be due to a larger positive change than other groups post-treatment, or other study specific factors as when Reid, Webster-Stratton and Hammond (2003) followed up the same study two years post-treatment, a sustained effect was found for the majority of children with three quarters remaining in the normal clinical range at both home and school. At two year follow up teacher training was found to enhance the treatment effect of other conditions, however the biggest predictor of sustained treatment effect was level of positive parenting at post-treatment, with children of mothers displaying negative parenting techniques being most likely to continue to exhibit high levels of behavioural problems at two year follow-up. This finding highlights the importance of both home and school-based interventions for the most positive outcomes, as well

as the importance of finding ways to engage parents of the most challenging children.

## **2.5 Conclusion**

Child conduct disorders form the largest proportion of childhood mental health referrals with young children who exhibit challenging behaviour being more likely to experience poor physical and mental health in adulthood, as well as having a higher likelihood of contact with the criminal justice system than their peers. These effects have been found in studies from across the world, indicating that a potential causal link that cannot be accounted for by national socioeconomic factors. Good quality early interventions, such as parenting programmes, when delivered effectively not only impact on the immediate behavioural issues but also contribute to long-term beneficial effects on adult outcomes and have been found to be equally effective in socially disadvantaged populations. This is especially the case when interventions are targeted at children with early onset clinical levels of conduct disorder. School based interventions derived from parenting programmes also have a significant impact on child behaviour both when targeted at high risk children directly and more widely through teacher directed training. Furthermore, interventions that target both the home and school environments through training parents and school staff in similar techniques have proved effective in decreasing children's problem behaviour and reducing the risk of long-term negative outcomes associated with early onset conduct disorder. It is therefore vital that good quality early interventions are delivered to young children displaying signs of conduct disorder through both their home



and school environments, not only to immediately improve their quality of life, but to also improve their longer-term outcomes.

## **Chapter 3 – The SKILLS Programme**

### **3.1 – Background**

Support for Kids In Learning and Language Strategies (SKILLS) is an online training programme designed for use by parents and school support staff. SKILLS was originally developed by Jones et al. (2019) as an early intervention tool for use by school support staff alone and was an adaptation of the Confident Parent Internet Guide (COPING) online parenting programme (Owen, Griffith, & Hutchings, 2017; Owen & Hutchings, 2017; Hutchings, Owen & Williams, 2018). The adaptation was undertaken to make the content more relevant to a school setting. COPING is an online universal parenting programme designed for use by parents of children aged three to eight years to encourage general child well-being through positive parenting. It is a self-directed online programme comprising 10 chapters which are designed to be completed one per week. COPING is based on the content of The Little Parent Handbook (Hutchings, 2013) which uses principles from social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) and evidence from previous research (Lane Hutchings, 2002; Hutchings et al., 2002) to support parents in developing positive parenting styles, with the foundation of building a positive relationship with their child.

The social learning theory approach to parenting is based on the principle that much of children's behaviour, particularly their social behaviour, is related to the environment that they are exposed to every

day (Bandura, 1977; Scott & Gardner, 2015). Therefore, when children are rewarded immediately after exhibiting a certain behaviour such as by gaining the attention of a care giver, they are more likely to exhibit that behaviour again. According to social learning theory children also learn behaviour by copying examples from those around them (Cooper, Heron & Heward, 2013), therefore if a parent exhibits negative or aggressive behaviour then the child will also exhibit negative or aggressive behaviour which will be repeated if it is reinforced.

Parenting programmes based on social learning theory have been widely tested to show a positive effect on both parenting and child behaviour (Tully & Hunt, 2016; Sanders et al., 2000; Scott et al., 2001; Gardner, Burton & Klimes, 2006). They generally follow a similar four level approach of gradually building up parenting skills over several sessions (Scott & Gardner, 2015). The first group of sessions in level one focus on developing a child-centred perspective through teaching parents to build relationships with their children using child-led play activities, which they are encouraged to do every day for 10 minutes. The second level of parenting skills include sessions related to increasing desired child behaviour through praise and reward. Parents are taught to encourage children by praising every positive behaviour with simple explicit praise and for more challenging behaviours to pair praise with small rewards. Sessions in level three focus on how to give effective commands to enable children to follow instructions effectively. Parents are encouraged to give fewer, more effective commands to

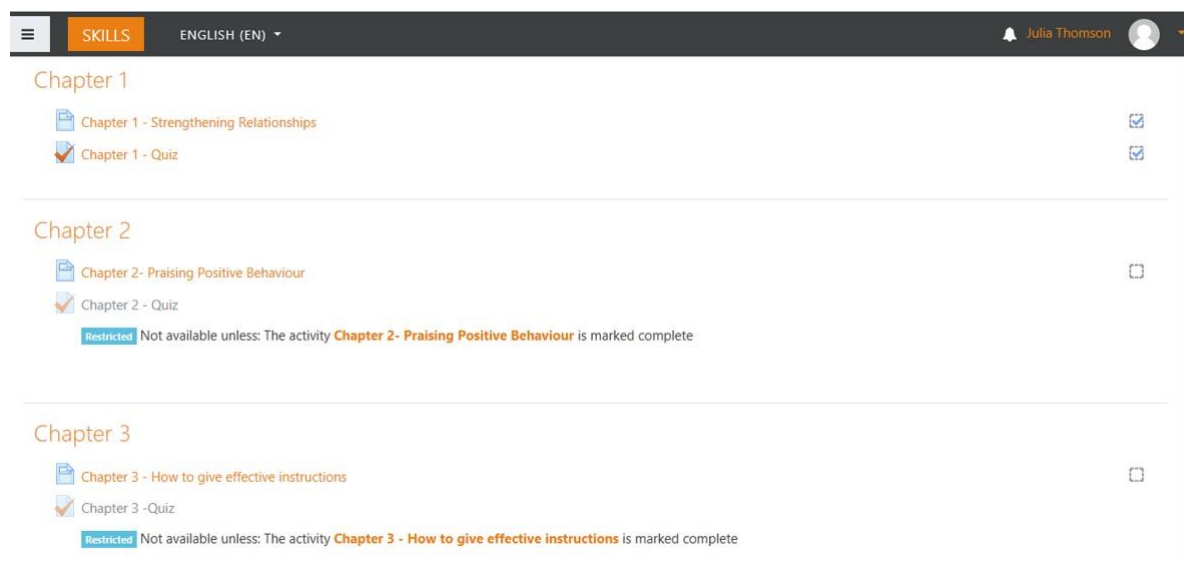
ensure that instructions are clear and specific, so that children understand what is expected of them. Finally, level four concentrates on reducing problem behaviours through strategies such as ignoring and giving children clear logical consequences, that can be followed through on immediately, for unwanted behaviour (Scott & Gardner, 2015). Along with teaching parents strategies derived from social learning theory, successful programmes also use many of these techniques such as modelling and praise in their delivery (Furlong et al., 2012).

Based on evidence to suggest an increased effectiveness of challenging behaviour interventions delivered both at home and school (Feil et al. 2014; Reid, Webster-Stratton & Hammond, 2003), SKILLS has now been further developed to address feedback from the initial trial and to enable both parents and school support staff to use the same programme. Unlike COPING, which is a universal parenting programme, SKILLS focuses on strategies most relevant to an educational setting, including those associated with praise, teaching new skills, and language development. The programme was originally developed with a total of five weekly chapters, however after feedback from the original study a sixth revision chapter has been added. The programme has also been developed, based on user feedback, to include more video and photographic examples of children with additional learning needs (ALN) and explicit behavioural problems.

## 3.2 – SKILLS Programme Delivery and Content

### 3.2.1 Delivery

SKILLS is an entirely self-directed training programme delivered online via the Moodle open-source learning platform. New users are given a log-in name and password along with a direct link to the SKILLS online log-in webpage and detailed printed instructions on how to access the programme (see appendix 10). Once logged-in users are presented with a list of chapter headings, each containing the main chapter content and a quiz.



*Figure 3.1* Screen shot of SKILLS programme chapter menu

All chapters are accessible, although users are encouraged to complete them in order, but quizzes only become accessible once the associated chapter content has been viewed. When a user clicks on the chapter content link, they are taken to a page containing the content of that chapter in the form of a video presentation. Video presentations are

password protected and users are instructed on how to enter the password on the page on which the video appears.

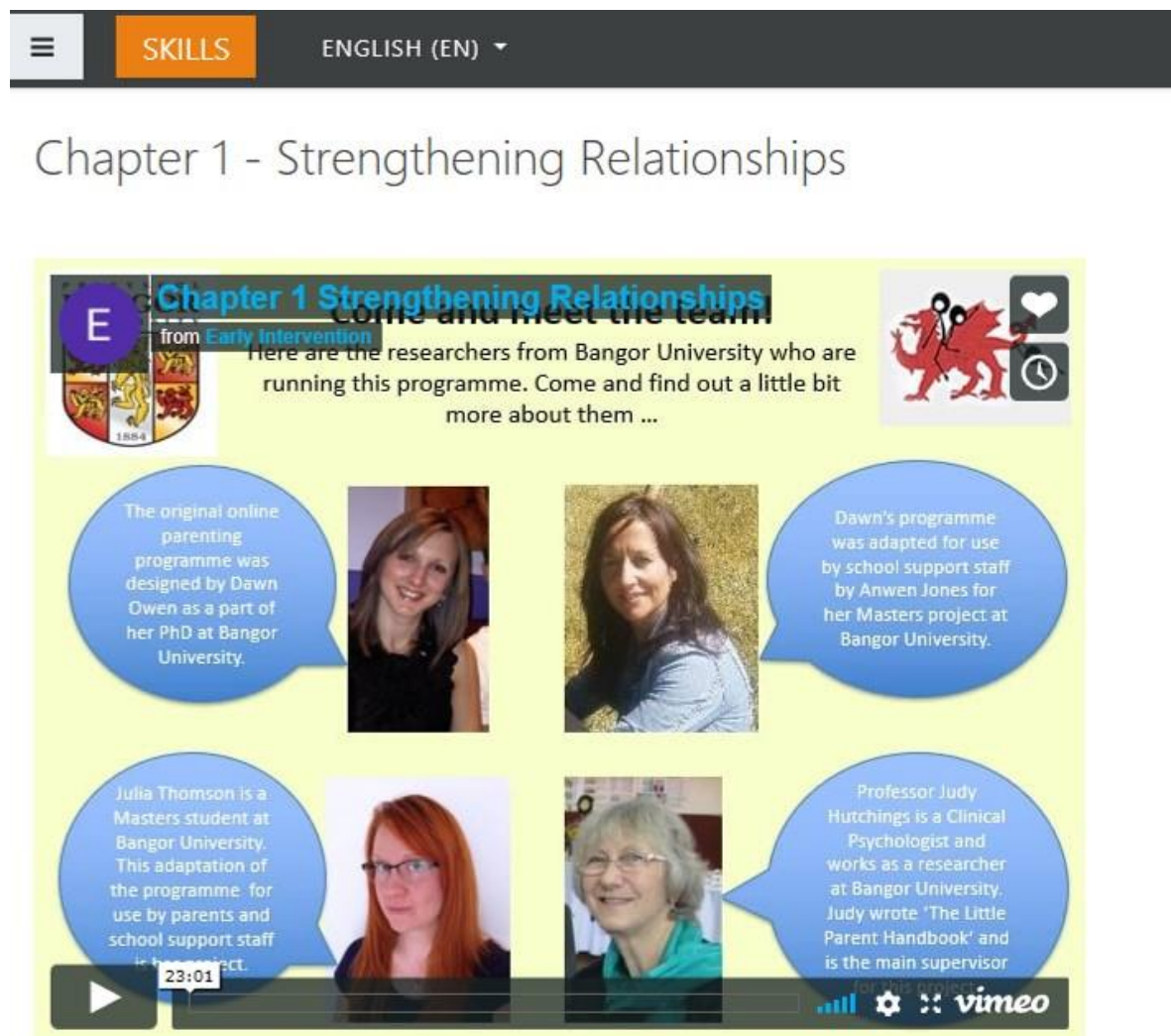


Figure 3.2 SKILLS programme chapter 1 video presentation entry page

Each video presentation is between 16 and 23 minutes long and can be paused, rewind, or fast forwarded by the user. The volume of the audio narration can also be adjusted or muted by the user if desired. Once they have watched the video presentation users are directed to the short 10 question quiz which they can complete as many times as they wish.

The screenshot displays the SKILLS programme quiz interface. At the top, there is a dark header bar with a menu icon, the word "SKILLS" in an orange box, and "ENGLISH (EN)" with a dropdown arrow. The main content area is divided into three sections, each for a question. Each section has a light blue background for the question text and a white background for the answer options. The questions are numbered 1, 2, and 3, and each is marked as "Not yet answered" with a score of "Marked out of 1.00". A "Flag question" link is provided for each question.

**Question 1**  
Not yet answered  
Marked out of 1.00  
Flag question

**When the child is playing, you should ...**

Select one:

- ☐ a. Ask them lots of questions
- ☐ b. Sit with them and comment on what they are doing
- ☐ c. Use the time to catch up on other tasks

**Question 2**  
Not yet answered  
Marked out of 1.00  
Flag question

**Who should choose the playing activity?**

Select one:

- ☐ a. The adult should always choose
- ☐ b. The school head teacher
- ☐ c. The child should always choose

**Question 3**  
Not yet answered

**Why is it important for us to behave positively?**

Figure 3.3 SKILLS programme quiz screen shot

Scores and feedback from each attempt remain available on the users account for them to reflect on at a later date. Once the quiz is completed users are instructed to log-out and return to complete the next chapter the following week. Progress is monitored in the form of check boxes next to each chapter and quiz to enable users to keep track of what they have completed so far. Individual participant usage data is also available to view by researchers, by logging into the Moodle platform as an administrator, to allow progress monitoring.

### 3.2.2 Programme Content

#### Chapter 1 - Strengthening Relationships

Chapter 1, Strengthening Relationships, introduces the general principles of the SKILLS programme by giving an overview of topics to be covered over the six chapters. The main focus of chapter 1 is to encourage relationship building with children through explaining and demonstrating the importance of child-led play. Users are encouraged to spend 10 minutes a day in a child-led play activity with their child, which is referred to as 'special time'.



## Strengthening Relationships



Unstructured play is a good way of teaching children important social skills such as turn-taking, co-operation and problem solving.

Some activities that work well for unstructured play are:

- Playing with Lego
- Arts and crafts
- Jigsaws and puzzles
- Playing with blocks
- Playing with toy cars
- Playing with dolls and teddies
- Play dough
- Pretend play
- Dressing up



Figure 3.4 SKILLS chapter 1 content example

The chapter then moves on to teach new skills related to child-led play by giving '16 important rules to follow when spending time with




children'. These rules focus on key principles of relationship building with children such as; ensuring children take the lead; keeping questions to a minimum; commenting on children's actions; and giving children full attention by physically moving to their level during play. Each rule is accompanied by a clear example which is either a written explanation, photograph, or video clip. Video clips are clearly labelled to ensure the user knows precisely what they illustrate. Relationship building is a key foundation of social learning theory-based parenting programmes, as it establishes the adult as a reinforcer through engagement in enjoyable child led activities (Hutchings, 2013). This positive relationship between adult and child is key to the successful implementation of all other levels of the programme as it reduces adult child conflict and provides adults with ample opportunity to praise positive behaviours (Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2006), which forms the next step in the programme. At the end of the chapter a 'top tip' is given to both remind users of the importance of relationship building, while also serving as a form of 'homework' to encourage the user to practice the skills taught in the chapter in their interactions with children during the following week.

## **Chapter 2 - Praising Positive Child Behaviour**


Chapter 2, Praising Positive Child Behaviour, focuses on encouraging positive behaviour from children through praise. Praise is important as it is a powerful reinforcement technique, which can encourage behaviour to be repeated (Cooper, Heron, & Heward, 2013). This is

particularly true when praise comes from someone that has shown interest in and built a relationship with an individual, a benefit of child-led play. The chapter begins with an overview of the difference between giving children attention for positive and negative behaviour. Detailed examples of both types of attention are given and users are reminded of the principle that to children attention for negative behaviour is better than no attention at all, and they are encouraged to give at least four times the amount of attention for positive behaviour than negative. Users are also encouraged to ignore unwanted behaviour, which is an especially effective technique when combined with 'special time' as children see that they receive attention unconditionally for positive behaviour rather than when they misbehave (Vollmer, 1993). The chapter then explains how by constantly praising children they can be encouraged to behave in a positive way and repeat behaviour for which they are praised. Explicit examples of words and phrase that can be used as praise are given alongside behaviours that may be considered positive in a school environment, such as those related to social skills, fine motor skills, and language development. The second half of the chapter goes through '10 important rules' to be followed when praising children.



## Praising Positive Child Behaviour

### Rule 5 – Use children’s names when you are praising them



- It is important to use children's names when you praise them. This way, they know that you are talking to them and praising them
- For example: *'Well done Emily for putting the toys away'*
- Children like it when you use their name!
- It is also good when other children hear you praising the child, as this can help give the child a positive reputation
- This will also help later on when we get to the chapter about giving instructions to children





Figure 3.5 SKILLS chapter 2 content example

As with chapter 1, each rule is accompanied by a detailed written, photographic, or video example. Rules encourage users to be specific and enthusiastic in their praise, and to share children’s success by praising in front of other people. The importance of backing up verbal praise with other more tangible rewards to reinforce positive behaviour for children with more challenging behaviour (Christy, 1975) is also explained. The chapter finishes with a reminder that praising children is important to encourage positive behaviour and also introduces that concept that adults are models for children’s behaviour and so when they praise children, children are then more likely to praise themselves


and others. Similar to Chapter 1, Chapter 2 ends with a 'Top Tip' to reinforce the key message of the chapter.

### **Chapter 3 - How to Give Effective Instructions**

Chapter 3, How to Give Effective Instructions, begins with a brief summary of the key points from the two previous chapters, it then moves on to explain the significance of helping children to learn to follow instructions in terms of their overall development. Effective instruction giving is important in reducing conflict between adult and child due to the problems that result from adult perceived non-compliance from children. Therefore, enabling adults to give children instructions more effectively, improves compliance from children which in turn gives adults increased opportunities to praise and therefore reinforce wanted behaviour, as well as strengthening the bond between adult and child. The chapter gives examples of '12 common mistakes' adults often make when giving instructions to children. Firstly, the mistake is presented, with examples where necessary, and then a 'solution' is given in the form of positive strategies such as gaining a child's attention before giving instructions. These 'solutions' are all supported by video, picture and written examples.



## How To Give Effective Instructions




### Common Mistake 3


Instructions are too general

- Instructions can be too general like '*be good*' or '*use your manners*'
- Adults know what they mean but, for younger children who have difficulty following instructions, these are too vague as they have not yet learned what they are supposed to do. What does "be good" actually mean?
- It might mean sharing toys with other children or it could mean playing quietly with the blocks or waiting in line to go out to play

Figure 3.6 SKILLS chapter 3 content example a



## How To Give Effective Instructions



### Solution 3

Make the instruction specific

- It helps children if you are specific and tell them exactly what you want them to do. As children get older they will understand what '*be good*' means, but to start with they need to learn exactly what you want them to do

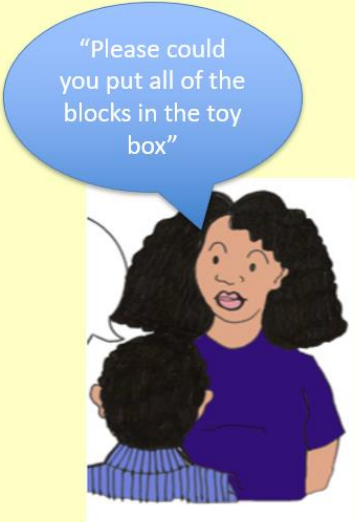



Figure 3.7 SKILLS chapter 3 content example b

The chapter concludes with some 'extra points' related to giving effective instructions to children, which summarise key principles such as praising children for following instructions and keeping instructions consistent and in line with general rules that apply to all children, such as walking when inside. Finally, the chapter ends with a 'Top Tip' which encourages parents to practice giving children effective instructions over the next week.


## **Chapter 4 - Teaching New Behaviours**

Chapter 4, Teaching New Behaviours, begins by summarising the key points covered in the previous three chapters. The most important aspects of each chapter are reiterated to highlight the fact that the topics being taught build on one another, rather than being stand-alone skills. The chapter then focuses on strategies for teaching new behaviours to children. These strategies are based on the key behavioural principles of prompting, shaping and modelling (Cooper, Heron, & Heward, 2013). The underlying theme of the programme 'we are models for our children's behaviour' is based on the modelling principle of social learning theory (Bandura, 1977), and is used to encourage adults to act as positive role models in order to teach children desired behaviours. In this chapter users are presented with six 'tools' that can be used to effectively teach children new positive behaviours. All 'tools' are explained in detail and video examples are given of most points. The chapter ends with a summary of key points and a 'Top Tip' encouraging users to choose a specific behaviour to

teach a child over the following week that can be broken down into small, easy steps.



## Teaching New Behaviours



**'We are models for children's behaviour'**

Children learn how to behave by watching other people behaving, especially parents and the staff they see at school. If they are good role models and engage in positive behaviours, children will copy this behaviour to see if they get rewarded for it.

**One way to teach children new behaviour is by modelling it, and then praising and rewarding the child when they copy you**

For example, if you would like a child to have good manners and say *'thank you'*, you must model this behaviour first. If the child copies you, praise and reward them with a specific labelled praise, *'well done for saying thank you!'*

Keep this rule in mind for the rest of this chapter ...

Figure 3.8 SKILLS chapter 4 content example

## **Chapter 5 - Promoting Language Skills**

Chapter 5, Promoting Language Skills, is the final chapter that introduces new content. It begins with a summary of key points from the previous weeks chapter on effectively teaching new behaviours, and then focuses specifically on teaching language skills. First a detailed explanation of the importance of language development is given, highlighting the significance of language competencies for children in terms of both social relationships and self-management. Next, general

strategies are given such as praise and modelling. Users are then presented with five 'rules' to follow when encouraging the development of children's language skills, that are accompanied by written or video examples. These 'rules' focus on the importance of incidental language teaching, through techniques such as constant labelling and describing of the environment during adult-child interactions, which is very important for supporting children to develop complex language skills (Hart & Risley, 1975). The development of complex language skills is important for reducing both unwanted child behaviour and adult-child conflict as, without good language skills, children may become more easily frustrated as they are not understood and also may not understand what is required of them by adults. Finally reading with children is highlighted as an important tool for language development, and then key points of the chapter are given before a final 'Top Tip' which encourages use of lots of positive descriptive language around children.





## **Chapter 5 – Promoting Language Skills**



**This week's chapter will cover:**


- A summary of skills to teach new behaviours
- Why it is so important to develop children's language
- Five rules to encourage children's language
- Summary
- Quiz



*Figure 3.9 SKILLS chapter 5 content example*

### **Chapter 6 - Summary**

Chapter 6, Summary, does not include any new information but brings together all of the key points from the previous five chapters. Chapter summaries are presented in order, including the lists of 'rules' or 'tools' presented in each chapter, as well as the final 'Top Tip' from each. The chapter ends with a final reminder of the importance of the underlying message of the programme; 'we are models for our children's behaviour'.



## Summary

Chapter 2 - Praising positive child behaviour

**Top Tips**

In order to encourage **positive child behaviour** you must **praise**

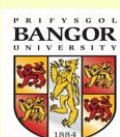
**Look out for opportunities to praise!**

Remember to smile and be positive!

Remember: You need to give a child four times more positive attention than instructions or reprimands.

**To a Child positive attention is better than negative attention, but negative attention is better than no attention.**

Figure 3.10 SKILLS chapter 6 content example a



## Summary

Chapter 4 - Teaching new behaviours

**Top Tip**

This week, help a child to learn a new behaviour!

Choose a specific behaviour and break it down into small, easy steps. Praise and reward the child for their effort.

Figure 3.11 SKILLS chapter 6 content example b

### **3.3 – SKILLS Programme Development**

Based on feedback from initial testing of the SKILLS programme for use by school staff (Jones et al., 2019), as well as to allow for the programme to also be used by parents, some amendments were made for the current study.

#### **3.3.1 The Addition of a 6th Chapter**

Unlike the COPING programme, in order to keep the content as concise as possible for use in a school setting, the original SKILLS programme did not include a revision chapter. However, feedback from research by Jones et al. (2019) showed that users thought that the inclusion of a summary chapter would be helpful to allow them to reflect on knowledge gained throughout the programme. Therefore, as part of the development of SKILLS for use by parents as well as classroom support staff, a sixth chapter has been added including all of the key points from the five main chapters. 'Top Tips' slides have been copied directly from each chapter into chapter 6 as they provide users with key points and useful ideas on how best to practice the skills they have learned. Other slides have been created to summarise key points from each chapter, including 'rules' and 'tools'. In order to keep chapter 6 as succinct as possible no video examples are included, and detailed explanations are kept to a minimum. The idea behind this is that chapter 6 acts as a point of reference as well as a refresher of key takeaway messages from SKILLS. Where a user feels they need to be

reminded of topics in more detail they can refer back to the content from the relevant chapter. This is particularly important for increasing the effectiveness of the SKILLS programme, as the ability to log in multiple times and check back on information already viewed has been shown to be important for facilitating learning through online delivery (Brouwer et al., 2011).

### **3.3.2 Inclusive Examples**

As modelling is a key social learning theory technique (Bandura, 1977; Cooper, Heron & Heward, 2013), the use of video examples can be an effective method for teaching parents positive parenting skills (Coughlin et al. 2009). However, feedback from participants in Jones et al. (2019) showed that users found it difficult to relate to the original video examples given. Users reported feeling that the children seen in the video examples were not typical of the children that they supported and appeared to be too well behaved. This made it difficult for users to visualise how the recommended strategies would be effective in their day-to-day work. Therefore, several hours of video observation were recorded of classroom support staff working with children with ALN in a special school. This video was then analysed, and clips made of the most appropriate sections for illustrating key points in SKILLS. Video clips of parents and grandparents interacting with children, some with ALN, in a home setting, taken from the COPING programme, have also been included in the SKILLS programme to broaden the programmes relevance to parents as well as classroom support staff.

### **3.3.3 Generalisation of Language**

As SKILLS was originally developed for use by classroom support staff, the language used related explicitly to a school environment. Children were often referred to as pupils or child worked with, and examples related specifically to a classroom setting, such as 'circle time' activities. In the development of SKILLS for use by parents as well as classroom support staff the language has been altered to reflect this broader audience. Some references to classroom settings remain, but other examples are provided that related to home environments. References to pupils, or the child worked with, have been replaced by the broader term 'children' to refer to either users' own children or children supported at school. Some language related to unwanted behaviour and ALN has also been altered to ensure that it is sensitive to the experience of parents of children with behavioural challenges. A child first approach has been used to establish that behaviour is separate from the child in that it is the behaviour that is the problem and not the child. Examples of less effective adult-child interactions are also described in general terms such as 'adult' rather than 'you' or 'we' to avoid stigmatising or attributing blame to users.

### **3.3.4 Overall Style**

As well as changes to the language style used, the visual appearance of SKILLS has also been developed to make it more accessible for a wider range of users. As research suggests most people scan online

information rather than reading it fully (Morkes & Nielsen, 1998), some repetitive information has been removed from slides and the font size increased to ensure that the most important points are clearly defined. The background colour of information slides has also been changed from grey to a warmer yellow/orange hue, which has been shown to improve readability, particularly for those with dyslexia (Rello & Bigham, 2017).

### **3.3.5 Narration**

The original version of SKILLS (Jones et al. 2019) comprised of silent slides containing information which users had to read followed by short video clip examples with sound. In order to improve the inclusivity of the programme for users with low levels of literacy in English, audio narration has been added to all information slides. The inclusion of audio narration alongside written information improves comprehension and knowledge retention for all users, not just those with low level literacy skills (Chang & Millett, 2015; Laitusis, 2010). Therefore, although users are able to mute the sound to remove audio narration, they are not explicitly encouraged to do this during the programme.

### **3.3.6 Video Delivery**

Gaining and maintaining attention is important for teaching new skills. As text based online programmes may encounter difficulties due to users scanning rather than taking time to read information (Morkes & Nielsen, 1998), SKILLS has been adapted from a slides-based delivery

model to a video delivery model. Slides with synchronised audio narration and accompanying video examples have been converted into single 16–20 minute video presentations. This also allows for a smoother flow of information as videos are interspersed between information slides, rather than appearing in succession at the end of all slides, as in the original SKILLS programme (Jones et al., 2019). Video delivery also allows for increased accessibility as the programme can now be accessed successfully on any internet enabled device from smart phone to television, alongside Laptops, PCs and tablets.

### **3.3.7 Quiz Development**

SKILLS includes a short quiz at the end of each chapter in order to reinforce knowledge learned. The quiz is multiple choice and the answers are easily obtained from the information provided in the chapter in order to promote self-esteem and confidence building. The quiz has been developed to include feedback after both correct and incorrect answers. This is because research shows that when feedback is given on multiple choice tests the level of knowledge retained is higher than when no feedback is received (Butler & Roediger, 2008). Feedback for correct answers also includes praise in order to further reinforce the learning of positive parenting techniques. If participants select an incorrect answer constructive feedback is given to explain why their chosen answer is incorrect and the correct answer is given.

## **Chapter 4 – SKILLS Feasibility Study**

### **4.1 - Literature Review**

#### **4.1.1 Introduction**

School classroom support staff in Wales are under increased pressure from high pupil-teacher ratios and increased numbers of pupils with additional learning needs (ALN), who may in turn present with more challenging behaviour (Welsh Government, 2009;2018a, 2018b).

However, schools often fail to provide suitable training to classroom support staff in how best to manage these challenges (see chapter 1).

Research into home-school interventions for challenging behaviour (Feil et al., 2014; Reid, Webster-Stratton & Hammond, 2003) has shown significant improvements in child behaviour from interventions where both parents and school staff are trained, compared to parents or school-based staff alone. However, interventions across environments may be challenging for schools and local authorities in the context of increased financial pressures on schools (Welsh Government, 2018c).

One potential way to keep training costs low is through online learning (Hall & Bierman, 2015). According to the Office for National Statistics (2018) 90% of households in Great Britain now have access to the internet, which rises to 100% for households with children.

Furthermore, 97% of adults aged 25 – 34 years have access to the internet whilst outside the home via smartphones and other internet



enabled portable devices such as tablets. Therefore, it is highly likely that parents as well as classroom support staff of primary school aged children could access an intervention delivered online.

There is currently no research evidence for the effectiveness of online interventions for use by both parents and school support staff.

However, research suggests that online interventions for parents can encourage a positive home-school relationship when recruitment is conducted via schools (Clarkson & Zierl, 2018). Furthermore, the effectiveness of separate online training programmes for parents and school support staff has been highlighted in research from around the world. 'Triple P Online' is a web-based parenting programme, based on the 'Triple P – Positive Parenting' programme. Studies have shown significant improvements in parenting following the completion of 'Triple P Online', when compared to controls (Baker et al., 2017; Day & Sanders, 2018). Research has also shown that Discrete Trial Instruction (DTI), an effective intervention for children with ASD, can be taught successfully to school support staff using an online training programme (Pollard et al., 2014; Higbee et al., 2016; Cardinal et al., 2017; Hutchings, Owen, & Williams, 2018). However, although research has shown the potential effectiveness of online training programmes for parents and school support staff as individual groups, there appears to be a gap in the literature when it comes to the potential added benefit of training parents and school staff working with the same child in the same intervention simultaneously.

#### **4.1.2 Online School Staff Training**

There is limited research into the effectiveness of school staff training using an online delivery method. However, a small amount of research into training for adults working with children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) indicate the potential for high fidelity implementation of interventions taught through self-directed web-based study.

McCulloch and Noonan (2013) examined the impact of online training videos on the implementation of Mand training, for school support staff in Hawaii, USA. Mand training is an applied behaviour analysis (ABA) derived technique for teaching individuals with ASD functional communication strategies, through teaching simple ways to make requests; called 'mands'. Three classroom support staff who worked with children aged six to ten years with ASD completed an online mand training course, comprising of video examples of mand techniques and related information, followed up by a quiz. Once participants had achieved a quiz score of at least 88% they were directed to download printable resources for use in the classroom. Those who scored less than 88% were directed back to the area of the course in which they showed the greatest weakness and then asked to complete the quiz again. Results showed an increase in the use of mand training techniques by participants, which was directly linked to an increase in the rate of spontaneous use of mand by pupils. This was a very small study conducted with a specific training technique and therefore the findings may not generalise to wider populations or interventions.

However, the fact that techniques were implemented with high enough fidelity to see a positive impact on pupils, supports the idea that self-directed online learning can be an effective training method for classroom support staff.

Further evidence of the effectiveness of online training for school staff can be found from research into the training of DTI, an intervention based on ABA for children with ASD. Pollard, Higbee, Akers, and Brodhead (2014) conducted an experimental study into the effectiveness of online learning for the teaching of DTI using undergraduate students studying special education in the USA as participants. Four students completed an online training programme comprising of instructional slides including video examples and questions with immediate feedback. They were then tested using role play with adult researchers, and teaching sessions with children with ASD. Results showed increased DTI fidelity among all participants at follow-up compared to baseline, with three out of four participants completing the online training without any support or feedback from researchers. Although these results again indicate the potential for training via self-directed online delivery, the fact that all participants were university educated with a specialism in special education may mean the results would not generalise to a real-world setting.

A replication study by Higbee et al. (2016) tested the generalisability of the findings of Pollard, Higbee, Akers, and Brodhead (2014) to a real world and cross-cultural setting. A similar online delivery method using

narrated slides, video modelling and questions with immediate feedback was used to train four university students and four special education teachers from Brazil in DTI. University student participants were recruited from fields other than special education and psychology. Results showed that most participants required personalised feedback from researchers, but that with this all were able to demonstrate implementation of DTI with a high level of fidelity, including in a classroom setting for the special education teachers. Special Education teachers also maintained knowledge at one-month follow-up. The fact that results from this study mirror that of Pollard, Higbee, Akers, and Brodhead (2014) indicate the potential for generalisability. However, the small sample size and the fact that participants were well educated may mean that this is not necessarily the case, particularly for classroom support staff who in general have a lower level of education than teaching staff.

Cardinal et al. (2017) investigated the effectiveness of a web-based video modelling DTI training programme with four classroom support staff working with children aged six to eleven years with ASD, in the USA. Participants, who had no previous formal training in either DTI or ABA, spent between 15 and 20 minutes every day on the intervention, over a four to six-week period. The intervention comprised of web-based video modelling and instruction related to DTI and also included brief in-person verbal feedback from researchers. Results indicated that tailored feedback was necessary to strengthen the fidelity of DTI

implementation, but with this all participants reached at least 90% fidelity by the end of the programme. Results also showed a positive result with regards to students' skills improvement at follow-up compared to baseline and all participants reported a positive experience from completing the intervention online. These results strengthen the idea that online delivery is an effective method for training school staff in new techniques, however due to the small sample size and focus on DTI these findings may not generalise to wider populations or different programmes.

#### **4.1.3 Online Parent Training**

Although there is limited evidence as to the effectiveness of online training for school staff, there is substantially more research into online parenting interventions. A variety of technology-assisted parenting interventions have been created and tested, with results demonstrating potential for positive results as well as improved access and reductions in delivery costs (Hall & Bierman, 2015; McGoran & Ondersma, 2015). A meta-analysis of 12 studies published between 2000 and 2010 by Nieuwboer, Furkink and Hermanns (2013), found a significant medium effect of online interventions on both parenting and child outcomes. Programmes that were entirely self-guided were also shown to have higher outcomes related to parental knowledge in comparison to facilitator led programmes, however programmes combining online learning with additional tailored support were found to lead to higher outcomes related to parental attitude and behaviour. These results are

mirrored in a wider systematic review of 31 studies evaluating online parenting interventions by Carralejo and Rodriguez (2018) that found that online parenting programmes effectively increased positive parenting and decreased child externalising behaviour. However, the systematic review also found that the majority of online programmes were supported by tailored coaching and very few studies examined cross cultural effects of adaptations, with the majority of research being conducted with white American families. Therefore, the positive results may not generalise to other cultural environments, or populations where tailored coaching is not possible due to financial or logistical reasons.

Taylor et al. (2008) explored the effectiveness of a computer-based parenting intervention with 90 Head Start families of children aged four years who scored highly on a disruptive behaviour screening questionnaire. Participants were given a computer-based intervention based on the Incredible Years parenting programme in two waves, where adaptations were made for wave two based on the results of wave one. Participants were loaned a computer with some content already installed by researchers and accessed additional material via the internet. Participants also received five home visits during the intervention as well as regular telephone calls from an experienced professional. Results showed that the programme had a positive effect on parents' perception of their children's behaviour as well as their confidence as a parent. Retention for the programme was comparable

to traditional methods of delivery with 56% of participants in wave one completing 100% of modules, rising to 76% of participants after adaptations for wave two. Although results suggest a positive impact of online parenting programmes, the significant amount of home coaching received by participants coupled with the fact that participants were loaned equipment to enable them to participate, may mean that costs are not significantly reduced relative to traditional delivery methods. However, as today more households have internet access than when this study was conducted it may mean that participants would no longer require the same level of technical support.

Enebrink, Högström, Forster, and Ghaderi (2012) explored the impact of an online intervention based on the Swedish social learning theory derived parenting programme Comet, with 104 parents of children aged three to twelve years presenting with behavioural difficulties, using a wait list control design. Of parents in the intervention group 65.5 % completed all seven sessions of the programme, which comprised of written text, video examples and illustrations around a different topic with homework tasks to be completed over one or two weeks between each session. Participants were also given tailored feedback by a research assistant every week. Parents in the intervention group reported lower negative parenting and higher positive parenting than the wait list control group at post-test follow-up. There was also a treatment effect on child behaviour, with significantly greater decreases in child problem behaviour in the intervention group than control, which

was also maintained at six-month follow-up. These results highlight the potential for online programmes to deliver positive results for parents and children, however weekly feedback from research assistants may explain or contribute to positive results, while also presenting an additional barrier for delivery in the real world due to the associated cost.

Although the addition of telephone coaching to online programmes may present a barrier to some organisations for financial reasons, when it is used research shows a translation of positive effects from randomised controlled trials (RCT) into a real-world setting. Ristkari, et al. (2019) compared the effectiveness of the Strongest Families Smart Website (SFSW), a web-based training programme with 11 weekly themes supported by telephone sessions, in an RCT and an implementation study in Finland. Results showed no significant difference in the programme's effectiveness between the RCT and implementation study. Participants in both groups reported positive levels of satisfaction as well as positive impacts on parenting and child behaviour. Results also showed that the retention rate of parents in the implementation study was higher than that of the RCT.

Triple P Online is the only evidence based online parenting programme currently available on a commercial basis in multiple countries throughout the world (Baumel & Faber, 2018). Standing for 'Positive Parenting Practices', Triple P Online is a web-based version of the Triple P programme aimed at parents of children aged 0-12 years, which is



also available in face to face delivery formats. The online version consists of five core modules; What is positive parenting; Encouraging behaviour you like; Teaching new skills; Managing misbehaviour; Dealing with disobedience; and three additional optional modules; Preventing problems by planning ahead; Making shopping fun; Raising confident capable kids. Each module takes between 20 and 30 minutes to complete and comprises of video examples, parent testimonials, and activities for users to complete. Each module ends with a homework task which encourages users to put what they have learnt into practice over the following week. Triple P Online is designed to be completely self-directed and as such, users are not provided with any tailored feedback or progress monitoring.

Although Triple P Online is an entirely self-directed intervention, Love et al. (2016) explored the impact of adding social media features such as discussion boards and an accredited Triple P facilitator to answer users' questions to the programme. One hundred and fifty-five parents of children aged two to twelve years from disadvantaged backgrounds in Los Angeles, USA, completed the programme with the additional interactive support features. Results showed participants gave positive feedback on the style of delivery and showed a significant increase in positive parenting practices alongside a decrease in child problem behaviours, which were maintained at six-month follow-up. Furthermore, retention rates for this mode of delivery were higher than previous studies in disadvantaged areas, and comparable to those

targeting more affluent parents, indicating a potential indirect benefit of adding social media style features to an online programme. However, this could also highlight the need for a trained professional to provide advice or coaching to ensure both retention and successful implementation of positive parenting strategies.

Day and Sanders (2018) explored the impact of the addition of telephone support to Triple P Online in an RCT with 183 parents of children aged one to eight years, presenting with conduct problems alongside family difficulties or disadvantage, in Australia. Parents in both treatment groups displayed a reduction in negative parenting strategies as well as a decrease in child problem behaviour when compared to the control group. However, participants who received telephone support demonstrated a greater reduction in negative parenting, saw a greater improvement in child behaviour, and were also more likely to complete modules as well as reporting greater satisfaction with the programme, than those in the entirely self-directed group. Although these results highlight the potential benefits of combining tailored feedback or coaching to online parenting programmes, they also demonstrate the fact that self-directed online interventions alone can have a positive impact on parental and child behaviour. Ehrensaft et al. (2016) examined the effectiveness of Triple P Online with young urban mothers enrolled in post-secondary education in the USA. Participants were contacted frequently during the intervention to prompt them to complete the programme, but no

tailored advice or programme related coaching was given. Results showed the intervention group had increased positive parenting compared to the control, with the effect size being significantly increased for participants who completed four or more of the eight Triple P Online modules.

Further evidence of the effectiveness of self-directed online parenting programmes can be found in a randomised controlled trial of 116 Australian parents of children aged two to nine years, displaying signs of early-onset disruptive behaviour (Sanders, Baker, & Turner, 2012). After intervention with Triple P Online, during which participants were telephoned by researchers to assist with technical issues but given no programme related coaching, parents reported a significant decrease in dysfunctional parenting and disruptive child behaviour when compared to the control group. These results are mirrored by Sanders et al. (2014) who found Triple P Online alone to be effective in reducing disruptive child behaviour and increasing positive parenting for 97 parents of children displaying early onset disruptive behaviour in New Zealand, with results sustained at six-month follow-up. Furthermore, Baker et al. (2017) found a potential delayed treatment effect on child behaviour, for self-directed online parenting programmes at nine-month follow-up, which had not been apparent at post-test follow-up. Two hundred parents of children aged two to nine years displaying signs of disruptive behaviour in Australia, were allocated to either a five module Triple P Online intervention group or a wait list control. Post-test

follow-up found that intervention group parents had significantly improved parenting and confidence over control group parents which was maintained at nine-month follow-up. At post-test follow-up no significant treatment effect on child behaviour was found, however at nine-month follow-up there were significantly fewer parent reported behaviour problems. Therefore, it is possible that a self-directed method of delivery online parenting programmes has a delayed treatment effect, which would not be apparent in research conducted using only a post-test follow-up.

#### **4.1.4 Challenges of Home-School Relationships**

Although there is currently limited research into the implementation and effectiveness of behavioural interventions for both home and school, there is some research into the more general difficulties faced by schools in engaging parents. Research shows that parental engagement in learning in the home is key to children's success at school (Harris & Goodall, 2008). However, schools often face difficulty when attempting to engage parents and equally parents report finding schools 'hard to reach' (Harris & Goodall, 2008). A small-scale study examining the experience of 11 primary schools in the UK, in relation to parental engagement, by Hornby and Blackwell (2018) found that schools mostly had a positive attitude towards parental involvement in schools, but this was predominantly focused on activities and events in the school. Although schools in this study reported parents becoming increasingly engaged in wanting to be informed about their child's

schooling, several barriers to engagement were reported. These included negative preconceptions about school, parental low-level English language and literacy skills, miscommunication or friction between specific teachers and parents, and a general lack of time in general experienced by both parents and teachers.

Although schools may face difficulties in engaging parents for a variety of reasons, Goodall (2018) suggests that many of these may be overcome when schools are encouraged to conceptualise parental engagement as support given by parents in the home environment rather than specifically whether or not parents attend school events. A toolkit provided to schools by Goodall (2018) facilitated this change in attitude, as well as providing scaffolding to support schools in positively engaging with parents through better understanding and support for parents' individual needs. The research also showed that parental engagement was most successful when it was led by senior leaders driving a whole school approach.

Watt (2016) also examined positive parental engagement through a small study of five schools in deprived areas of Stoke-on-Trent, England, which had all been rated as 'outstanding' by the schools' inspector Ofsted. This study found that attitudes of teachers in these schools were more in tune with the idea that parents' sense of efficacy in their child's development and learning was more important than their physical presence at school events and activities. Similarity to other studies barriers were seen to be parents' negative attitudes towards

school and the value of education, due to their own experiences of schooling. However, although barriers existed schools in this study overcame them through strategies such as having a dedicated family support worker to focus solely on parental engagement and support, supporting parents through direct and indirect training/coaching programmes and maintaining regular and open communication between home and school.

#### **4.1.5 Origin of the SKILLS programme**

SKILLS (Support for Kids in Learning and Language Strategies) is an online programme developed at the Centre for Evidence Based Early Intervention at Bangor University. Based on 'The Little Parent Handbook' (Hutchings, 2013), the programme was initially developed as a web based parenting programme under the name COPING (CONfident Parent INternet Guide) (Owen, Griffith, & Hutchings, 2017; Owen & Hutchings, 2017; Hutchings, Owen & Williams, 2018) and was later adapted for use by school support staff under the name SKILLS (Jones et al., 2019). Results from studies into the effectiveness of both COPING and SKILLS show potential for successful learning and implementation of key principles from the programmes, through self-directed online learning. The COPING programme has been shown to significantly reduce poor quality commands given by parents and significantly increase praise in intervention groups when compared to control (Owen, Griffith, & Hutchings, 2017; Owen & Hutchings, 2017; Hutchings, Owen & Williams, 2018). A feasibility study of the five-

chapter version of SKILLS for use by classroom support staff, found that most participants showed a reduction in question asking and an increase in praise during interactions with pupils. The online programme was also shown to significantly increased teaching assistants' sense of competence and efficacy in their role (Jones et al., 2019).

#### **4.1.6 Aim of the Present Study**

As this is a feasibility study there are no specific hypotheses. However, the study aims to determine whether:

- i) it is possible to recruit school support staff and parents
- ii) school support staff and parents jointly engage with the programme

A further aim of this study related to user satisfaction will be examined in more detail in chapter 5.

## **4.2 - Method**

### **4.2.1 Design**

The design of this study mirrors that of previous research examining the COPING and SKILLS programme (Owen, Griffith, & Hutchings, 2017; Owen & Hutchings, 2017; Hutchings, Owen & Williams, 2018; Jones et al., 2019), with all participants assessed before access to the programme and three months later. This is a quantitative study using video observation to assess the effectiveness of the online delivery method and self-report measures to assess outcomes related to child behaviour and parental and classroom support staff wellbeing.

### **4.2.2 Participants**

To be included in this study participants needed to work with, or be a parent of, a child aged under seven years. School support staff were required to either work with the child, or be willing to work with the child, on a 1:1 basis for at least 10 minutes every day. Both parents and school support staff were required to take part for participants to be eligible, therefore if a classroom support assistant wanted to take part but the parent of the child they worked with did not, then the classroom support assistant was not eligible to take part in this study. Participating schools also had to agree to allocate an hour a week to any members of staff taking part in the study to complete the programme during their normal working hours. Primary schools across North Wales were contacted with the assistance of North Wales Regional



Effectiveness Service (GwE). Interested schools ( $n=6$ ) were then visited or telephoned by the researcher to discuss the project further. Of the six schools expressing interest one declined to take part due to safeguarding concerns; one was ineligible due to staffing changeover; and two were unable to recruit parents. Two schools were eligible to take part and able to recruit participants, one school recruited two parent participants and one school recruited four, of whom one did not respond to request to collect consent by researcher and so was ineligible to take part. Although specific socio-economic information was not collected in this study, according to the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2014 (Welsh Government, 2014) coastal regions of Denbighshire are in the top 10% of the most deprived areas of Wales.

Table 4.1.

*Parent demographic information*

<b>Age</b>	<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>Total Number of Children</b>	<b>Age of child Participating in study (in months)</b>	<b>Participating Child Referred to Paediatrician?</b>	<b>Participating Child's Gender</b>
38	Single	4	72	Yes	M
41	Single	1	74	Yes	M
43	Cohabiting	3	77	No	M
39	Separated	2	44	Yes	M
33	Married	3	48	Yes	F

Table 4.2.

*Classroom support staff demographic information*

Age	Role	Class Working in	Years of Experience	Number of Schools Worked in	Highest Level of Education
25	Teaching Assistant	Nursery	1	1	Level 2 Teaching Assistant
21	Teaching Assistant	Nursery	1	2	BA Photography Level 2 Teaching Assistant
21	Teaching Assistant	Year 2	1	1	Level 3 Teaching Assistant
24	Learning Support Assistant	Year 1	<1	1	BA Education and Childhood Studies
49	Teaching Assistant	Year 1	12	1	BTEC HND Applied Sciences

**4.2.3 Intervention**

The SKILLS programme comprises six 'chapters', designed to be completed one per week over a six-week period. The chapters are;

Chapter 1 – Strengthening Relationships

Chapter 2 – Praising Positive Behaviour

Chapter 3 – How to Give Effective Instructions

Chapter 4 – Teaching New Behaviours

Chapter 5 – Promoting Language Skills

Chapter 6 – Summary

Each chapter contains a video presentation, followed by a short multiple-choice quiz. Each video contains a mixture of narrated slides and video examples of children interacting with adults in both home and

school settings. The programme has been adapted for this project so that the same version can be used by both parents and school support staff. Examples are intended to be general enough that they can be applied to both a home and school setting. For more detailed information about the SKILLS programme, see chapter 3.

#### **4.2.4 Procedure**

Parent participants were given verbal information about the SKILLS programme by schools along with a note of interest form (see appendix 1) to consent to their contact details being passed to the researcher. Parents were then contacted by telephone, text message, or email by the researcher to arrange to visit them in their own home to discuss the study further. During home visits parents were given detailed verbal and written (see appendix 3) information about the research project and the SKILLS programme. When they were happy to do so parents completed a consent form (see appendix 5) before completing self-report measures. At the end of the visit the researcher arranged a convenient time to go back to complete the baseline video observations and give instructions on how to complete the SKILLS programme. Only when parental consent to take part had been collected did the researcher visit schools to collect consent and baseline measures from classroom support staff. For school support staff video observations were collected during the same visit as self-report measures and detailed information about how to access the SKILLS programme was given both verbally and in writing (see appendix 4). Two visits were

necessary for parent participants to allow for more time to discuss the programme without children present. For schools on the other hand, a single visit was preferable due to time constraints. All participants were given the contact details of the researcher and told to get in touch if they encountered any technical difficulties. A single prompt text reminder was sent to all participants who had not logged into the programme within three weeks of the initial visit and technical assistance was provided to two parent participants. All participants were visited again three months after the final baseline visit to obtain follow-up measures. As with baseline, parents received two separate visits to discuss their experience of the programme and collect self-report measures, and to record video observation data. School based classroom support staff received one visit during which all measures were taken. All participants were given a copy of *The Little Parent Handbook* (Hutchings, 2013) as a thank you for taking part, and all children received a book from the *Usborne Farmyard Tales* series (Amery & Cartwright, 2005).

#### **4.2.5 Measures**

A demographic questionnaire was completed by all participants at baseline alongside self-report measures and video observations. At follow-up all participants also completed a satisfaction survey, the results of which are reported in chapter 5.

In order to establish the effectiveness of the SKILLS programme and in line with previous research into SKILLS and COPING (Owen, Griffith, & Hutchings, 2017; Owen & Hutchings, 2017; Hutchings, Owen & Williams, 2018; Jones et al., 2019), video observations were conducted at baseline and at three-month follow-up. All participants were filmed during a 20-minute adult child interaction, comprising of 10 minutes in a reading activity and 10 minutes play. To ensure consistency, all participants were given the same book to read with children during the observation. This book was different for baseline and follow-up and for parents and classroom support staff, resulting in children having read a total of four books. Books were taken from the Usborne Farmyard Tales series (Amery & Cartwright, 2005), chosen for their ample potential for child-led interaction and adult coaching. For the play observation adults were instructed to allow the child to choose the activity as far as possible within the usual limits of the environment. Video observations were later analysed using Dyadic Parent-child Interaction Coding System (DPICS) designed to measure the quality of adult-child social interactions that has been used in many parenting programme trials (Hutchings et al., 2007). DPICS categories for the present project were chosen to ensure best fit with the desired outcomes of the SKILLS programme, such as increased praise and descriptive commenting, and decreased negative strategies and questioning. Different categories were coded for the reading and play observations due to the differing nature of instructions given in the SKILLS programme for each activity.

See appendix 15 and appendix 16 for full list of DPICS coding categories. Videos were double coded by a primary coder with previous training and experience in DPICS and a secondary coder who was trained in DPICS by the primary coder, for this study. Some categories were combined in the final analysis to ensure at least 80% reliability was achieved between coders. These categories were; labelled and unlabelled praise; and academic, social-emotional, and problem-solving coaching.

Although the main purpose of the present study was to assess the feasibility of the SKILLS programme for simultaneous use by parents and school staff, data on the impact of the programme on individual users was also collected to allow for the possibility of future data pooling. Collection of impact data for both parents and school support staff also allows a more detailed exploration of the effectiveness of the programme for different individuals. To ensure that data collected was uniform and in line with previous research into the effectiveness of the SKILLS programme (Jones et al., 2019) the same self-report measures were used. Child behaviour outcomes were measured using the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ; Goodman, 1997; appendix 10; appendix 11), completed by parents and school support staff at baseline and follow-up. The SDQ assesses adult perceptions of child behaviour through 25 questions answered on a three-point Likert scale, which are scored to assess total level of difficulty and pro-social behaviour, as well as four difficulty sub-scales; emotional symptoms;

conduct problems; hyperactivity; and peer problems. The SDQ has a high level of reliability, with a mean Cronbach's alpha = 0.73 across all subscales (Goodman, 2001). The SDQ has also been used in several previous studies examining the effectiveness of parenting programmes (Hutchings et al., 2007; Scott, Briskman & O'Connor, 2014; Gray, Totsika, & Lindsay, 2018).

Parent and school staff sense of competence was measured, at baseline and follow-up, using Parental Sense of Competence (Johnston & Mash, 1989; appendix 12) and School Support Staff Sense of Competence – adapted from the Parental Sense of Competence scale (Johnston & Mash, 1989; appendix 13) during the initial testing of the five chapter SKILLS programme for school support staff (Jones et al., 2019). The Parental Sense of Competence is a 17-item questionnaire using a six-point Likert scale to assess individuals' overall sense of competence. It has two subscales measuring parents' levels of efficacy and role satisfaction, with high scores in each relating to high levels of satisfaction. In the teacher adapted version the meaning of all questions remains the same, but the wording is amended to reflect the different relationship between pupil and school staff compared to parent and child. The Parental Sense of Competence measure has a good level of reliability with Cronbach's alpha for total scores ranging from 0.46 and 0.82 and 0.70 for the efficacy subscale (Gibaud-Wallston & Wandersman, 1978).

Parent and school support staff stress was measured at baseline and follow-up using the Parenting Stress Index-short form (PSI; Abidin, 1990) and Teacher Stress Inventory (TSI; Fimian, 1984; appendix 14). The TSI was used with changes made for previous research into the effectiveness of the SKILLS programme (Jones et al., 2019) to reflect the role of classroom support staff. The TSI comprises 20 questions rated on a five-point Likert scale with high ratings relating to high levels of overall stress that includes five sub-scales; workload; student misbehaviour; professional recognition; classroom resources; and poor colleague relations. The PSI has been used in other parenting programme studies (Hutchings et al., 2007; Webster-Stratton, Rinaldi, & Jamila, 2011) assess levels of stress related to parenting and parent child interaction to predict problematic parenting and child behaviour. The PSI has a strong reliability with Cronbach's alpha of 0.78 to 0.88 for the child subscale and 0.75 to 0.87 for the parent subscale (Abidin, 2012). The PSI short form has 36 questions and includes four subscales; defensive responding; parental distress; parent-child dysfunctional interaction; and difficult child, alongside an overall stress rating.

#### **4.2.6 Analysis**

Due to the small sample size, no inferential statistical analysis was possible. However, descriptive statistics for observational data and self-report measures were explored in order to examine any individual differences between baseline and follow up between participant groups.



As the main objective of the current study was to assess the feasibility of recruiting and engaging both school support staff and parents, descriptive statistics were also used to explore completion rates. Qualitative data analysis was also used to further explore the extent to which parents and school staff jointly engaged in the programme, which is examined in chapter 5.

## **4.3 - Results**

### **4.3.1 Participant Retention**

Of the 10 participants who completed baseline self-report measures, one classroom support assistant and two parents were lost to follow-up. One parent disengaged between the initial home visit to collect self-report measures and the follow-up visit to record video observations, and one parent could not be contacted at follow-up and did not log in to the skills programme. The two parents lost to follow up had a slightly higher level of reported overall stress at baseline, compared to other parent participants, but had lower levels of stress related to their child, although reported levels of child behaviour on the SDQ matched those of other parent participants. Parents lost to follow up also reported a lower sense of competence at baseline than other participants. One classroom support assistant was lost to follow-up due to being redeployed within the school shortly after baseline measures were taken. This resulted in only two of the original five parent, classroom support staff dyads having completed sets of both baseline and follow-up data. The comparative results of these are presented below as case studies A and B.

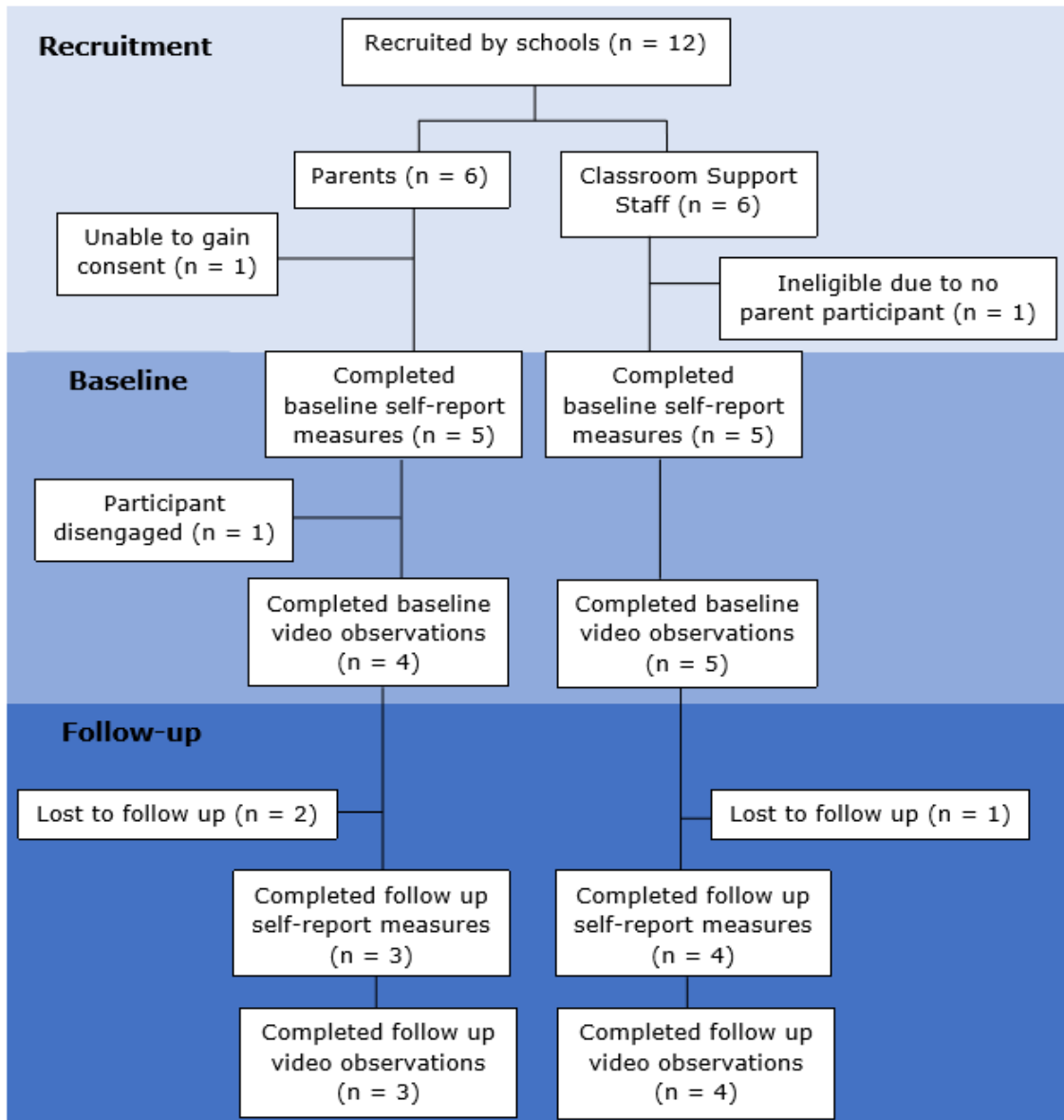


Figure 4.1 Participant flow diagram

#### 4. 3.2 Completion Rates

All participants who were lost to follow-up also failed to access the SKILLS programme and therefore did not complete any chapters. All participants who accessed the programme completed at least half of the chapters, with the majority of participants completing the entire programme.

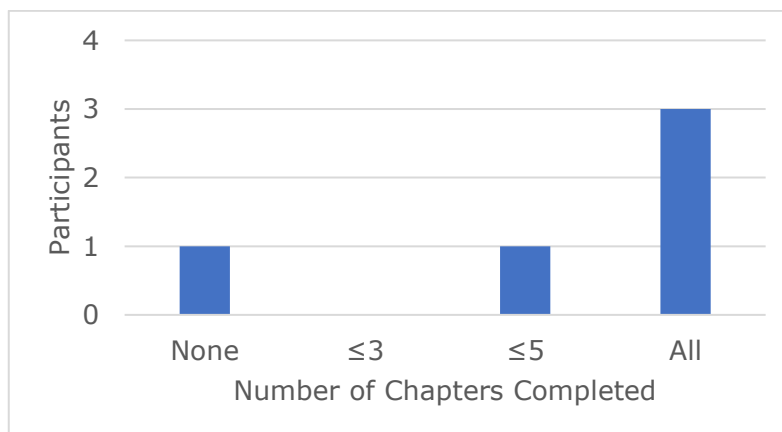


Figure 4.2 Classroom support staff SKILLS programme completion rate

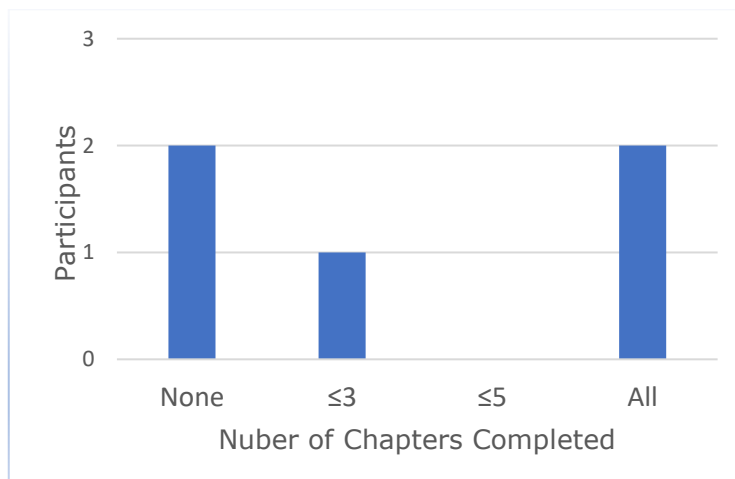


Figure 4.3 Parent SKILLS programme completion rate

Table 4.3  
*Video observations descriptive statistics*

	<b>Parents (n=3)</b>				<b>Classroom Support Staff (n=4)</b>			
	<b>Baseline</b>		<b>Follow up</b>		<b>Baseline</b>		<b>Follow up</b>	
	<b>M</b>	<b>(SD)</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>(SD)</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>(SD)</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>(SD)</b>
<b>Reading Video Observations</b>								
Coaching	60.00	(18.73)	59.33	(4.04)	59.25	(23.60)	46.50	(13.18)
Asking Questions	1.33	(1.53)	2.33	(4.04)	5.00	(5.22)	2.00	(1.63)
Encouragement	11.33	(6.43)	14.33	(7.64)	9.75	(5.85)	5.25	(4.50)
Praise	9.00	(8.66)	6.00	(3.46)	7.00	(4.69)	11.50	(10.34)
Reflection/Expansion	9.00	(4.58)	9.33	(7.77)	14.25	(10.01)	14.75	(8.96)
Negative Strategies	4.67	(4.51)	1.00	(1.73)	3.00	(5.35)	0.50	(0.58)
<b>Play Video Observations</b>								
Asking Questions	39.33	(21.36)	21.00	(10.54)	64.00	(12.88)	31.75	(22.63)
Verbal Labelling/Commenting	24.00	(17.58)	14.00	(14.80)	16.50	(5.80)	15.50	(15.07)
Encouragement	1.33	(0.58)	8.67	(8.02)	4.00	(2.71)	5.25	(2.22)
Praise	3.67	(2.52)	15.33	(6.81)	5.75	(2.99)	7.50	(6.14)
Reflection/Expansion	10.00	(13.00)	9.00	(2.65)	23.25	(3.78)	13.75	(12.84)
Negative Strategies	9.00	(14.73)	0.33	(0.58)	0.25	(0.50)	1.75	(2.87)

Table 4.4  
Self-report measures descriptive statistics

	<b>Parents (n=3)</b>				<b>Classroom Support Staff (n=4)</b>			
	<b>Baseline</b>		<b>Follow up</b>		<b>Baseline</b>		<b>Follow up</b>	
	<b>M</b>	<b>(SD)</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>(SD)</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>(SD)</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>(SD)</b>
<b>Parental Stress Index</b>								
Total	98.33	(20.50)	85.33	(24.38)	-	-	-	-
Defensive Responding	15.33	(7.09)	14.33	(6.51)	-	-	-	-
Parental Distress	26.67	(12.01)	26.00	(10.15)	-	-	-	-
Parent-Child Dysfunctional Interaction	23.67	(6.51)	22.67	(4.16)	-	-	-	-
Difficult Child	48.00	(9.54)	36.67	(11.72)	-	-	-	-
<b>Teacher Stress Index</b>								
Total	-	-	-	-	19.50	(5.92)	17.50	(11.36)
Workload	-	-	-	-	3.00	(0.00)	2.00	(2.83)
Student Misbehaviour	-	-	-	-	5.00	(1.41)	5.25	(1.89)
Professional Recognition	-	-	-	-	3.25	(2.06)	2.75	(1.26)
Classroom Resources	-	-	-	-	0.75	(0.96)	1.00	(0.82)
Poor Colleague Relations	-	-	-	-	1.50	(1.73)	0.75	(0.50)
<b>Sense of Competence</b>								
Total	68.67	(7.51)	77.33	(3.51)	73.75	(12.76)	74.25	(10.69)
Efficacy	28.00	(5.00)	33.00	(2.00)	31.00	(6.68)	33.00	(6.22)
Satisfaction	35.00	(4.00)	38.33	(2.89)	38.00	(5.35)	37.50	(6.35)
<b>Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire</b>								
Emotional Symptoms	6.00	(3.00)	5.33	(3.79)	0.75	(1.50)	1.50	(1.29)
Conduct Problems	6.33	(1.53)	4.33	(4.16)	2.25	(0.96)	3.00	(1.41)
Hyperactivity	9.67	(0.58)	9.00	(1.00)	7.50	(2.38)	6.00	(3.37)
Peer Problems	3.67	(2.08)	3.00	(3.61)	4.25	(2.22)	4.25	(1.71)
Total Difficulties	25.67	(6.43)	21.67	(11.24)	14.75	(3.20)	14.75	(4.19)
Prosocial	6.33	(2.08)	7.33	(2.08)	2.50	(2.08)	3.00	(2.00)

### **4.3.3 Parent and Classroom Support Staff baseline comparison**

#### **4.3.3.1 Sense of Competence**

Although worded differently, the Parental and School Support Staff Sense of Competence measures, are both based the Parental Sense of Competence scale (Johnston & Mash, 1989) and are scored in the same way. This allows for some comparison between the perspective of parents and classroom support staff a baseline. As shown in table 4.4, both groups of participants had similar levels of overall sense of competence, efficacy and satisfaction. On average classroom support staff had a slightly higher sense of competence in their role than parents.

#### **4.3.3.2 Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire**

Perceptions of child behaviour were measured using the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) for both parents and classroom support staff, therefore an accurate comparison between the perception of each group can be made. On average parents viewed their children's behaviour difficulties to be more severe than classroom support staff in all categories with the exception of peer problems, where classroom support staff viewed children's difficulties to be higher than parents. Parents also scored their children higher on average for prosocial skills than classroom support staff did.

#### **4.3.3.3 Video Observations**

During baseline video observations classroom support staff had notably higher rates of questioning and reflection/expansion of expressions made by the child, than parent participants. Parents had higher observed rates of negative strategies during play than classroom support staff. Observed rates of interaction in all other categories did not differ markedly between participant groups at baseline.

#### **4.3.4 Parent and Classroom Support Staff Follow-Up Comparison**

##### **4.3.4.1 Sense of Competence**

Both parents and classroom support staff reported an increased sense of competence from baseline to follow-up. At baseline classroom support staff's reported sense of competence was higher than that of parents however, at follow-up parent participants had higher total confidence and satisfaction scores.

##### **4.3.4.2 Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire**

There was no marked difference between baseline and follow-up scores on the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire for either participant group. Parents reported a small decrease in total difficulties, but this was not reflected in classroom support staff's scores. However, as at baseline, classroom support staff tended to report lower levels of difficulty than parents.

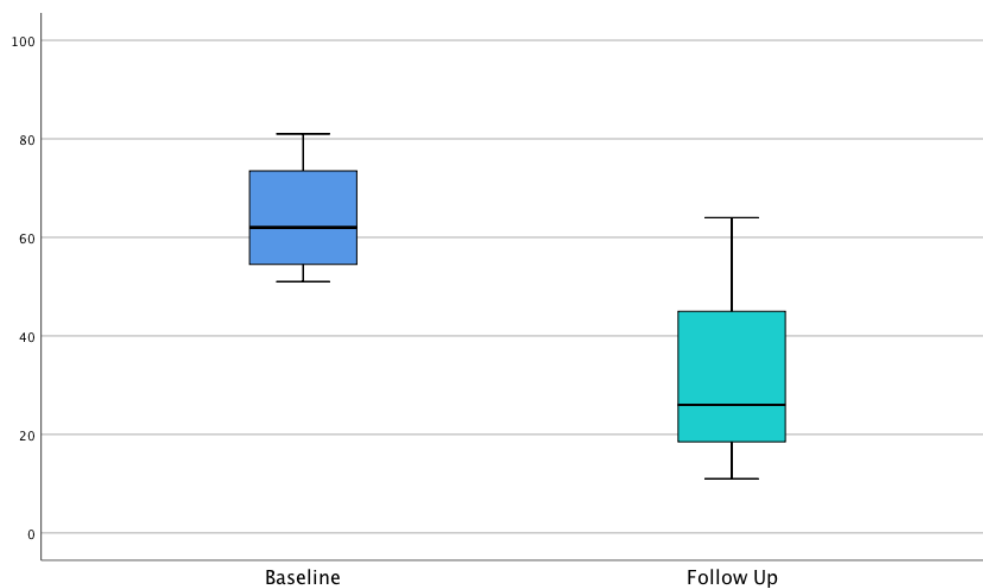


#### 4.3.4.3 Stress

Although measures used to determine participants level of stress are not comparable, both sets of participants reported a slight decrease in overall stress from baseline to follow-up. Parents reported a decrease in stress related to having a difficult child, but classroom support staff a small increase in stress related to student misbehaviour.

#### 4.3.4.4 Video Observations

Classroom support staff demonstrated a marked decrease in questioning from baseline to follow-up, which brought their recorded frequency more in line with that of parents.



*Figure 4.4* Classroom support staff play observation questioning frequency

Observations showed an increase in praise and encouragement frequency from both parents and classroom support staff during play.

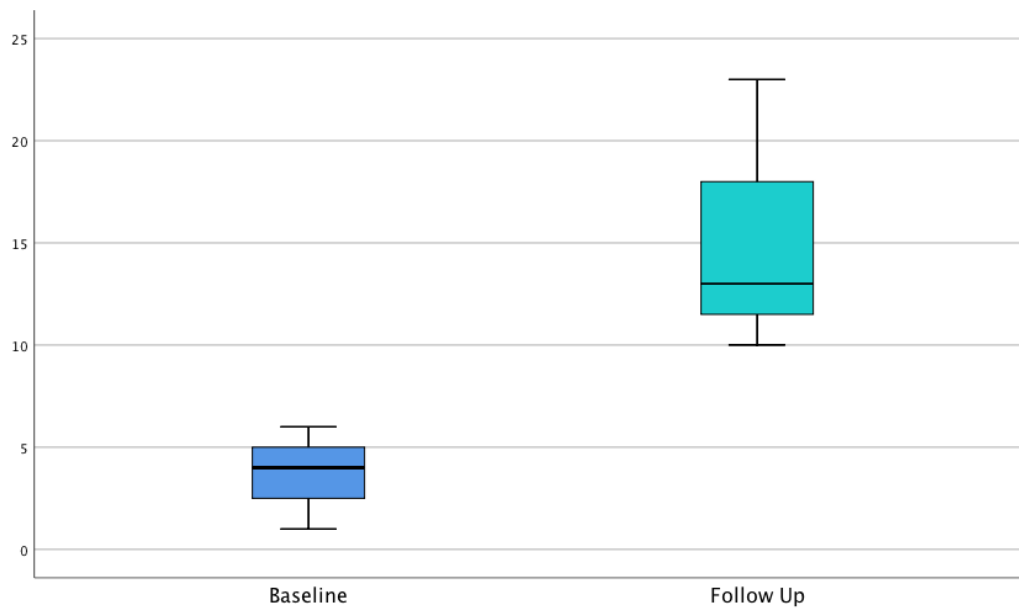


Figure 4.5 Parent play observation praise frequency

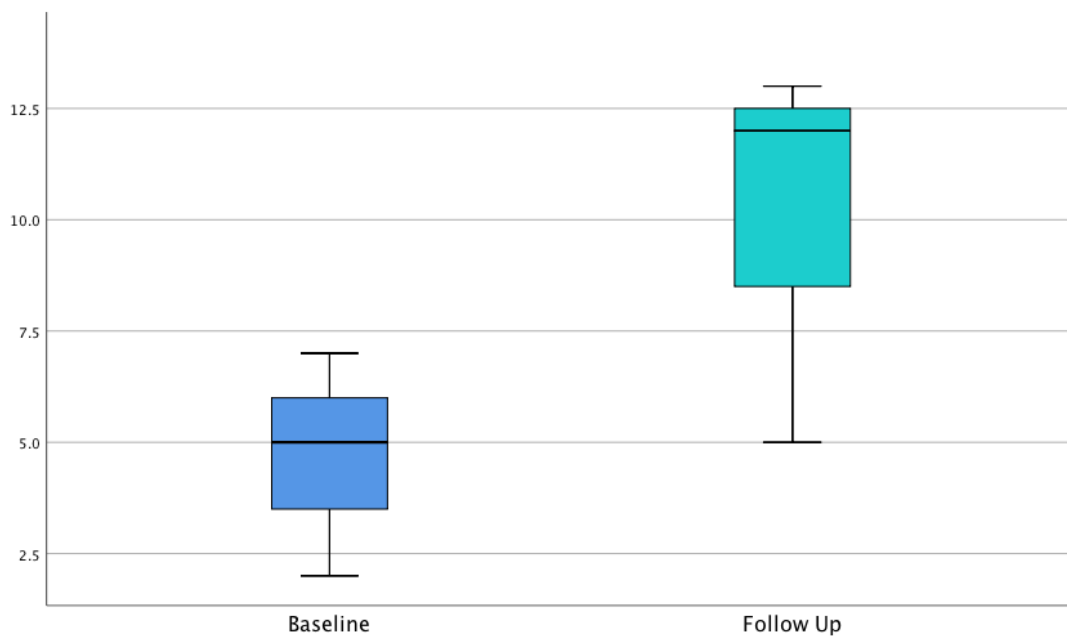


Figure 4.6 Classroom support staff ( $n=3$ ) play observation praise frequency

### 4.3.5 Case Study A

Case study A compares the completion rate and outcomes for a parent participant and classroom support staff participant of a child aged 44 months, in the school nursery class, at the beginning of the study. The classroom support staff participant in Case Study A had one year's work experience, had worked with the child of the parent participant for just over half a term at baseline and was employed as a general teaching assistant, supporting multiple children on a 1:1 and group basis as well as providing general support to the class teacher.

#### 4.3.5.1 Completion Rate

Neither the parent participant, nor the classroom support staff participant in case study A completed the entire SKILLS programme. The classroom support staff participant completed slightly more of the programme than the parent. Both participants completed one less quiz than the total number of chapters completed.

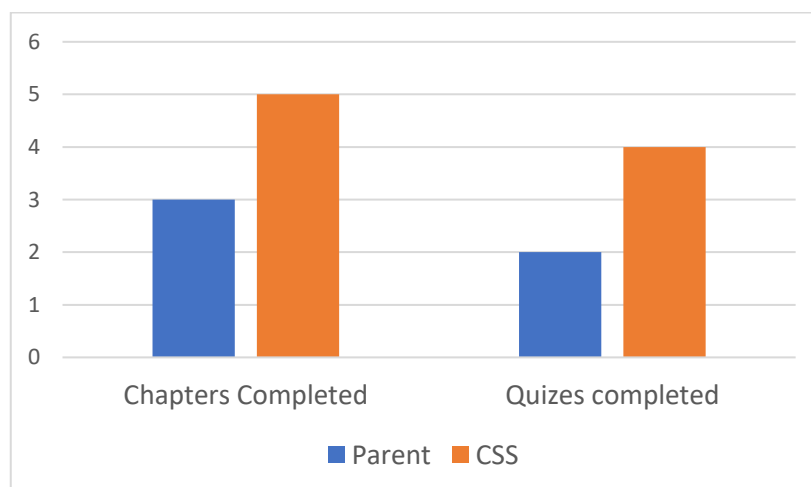


Figure 4.7 Case study A completion rates

#### 4.3.5.2 Video Observations

At baseline, during the reading video observation, the classroom support staff participant displayed lower levels of coaching, questioning, and encouragement, than the parent participant, and higher levels of praise, reflection/expansion, and negative strategies.

Between baseline and follow-up there was a decrease in coaching, reflection/expansion, and negative strategies for both participants and an increase in encouragement and praise. Questioning during the reading activity increased from baseline to follow up for the classroom support staff participant, but decreased for the parent participant.

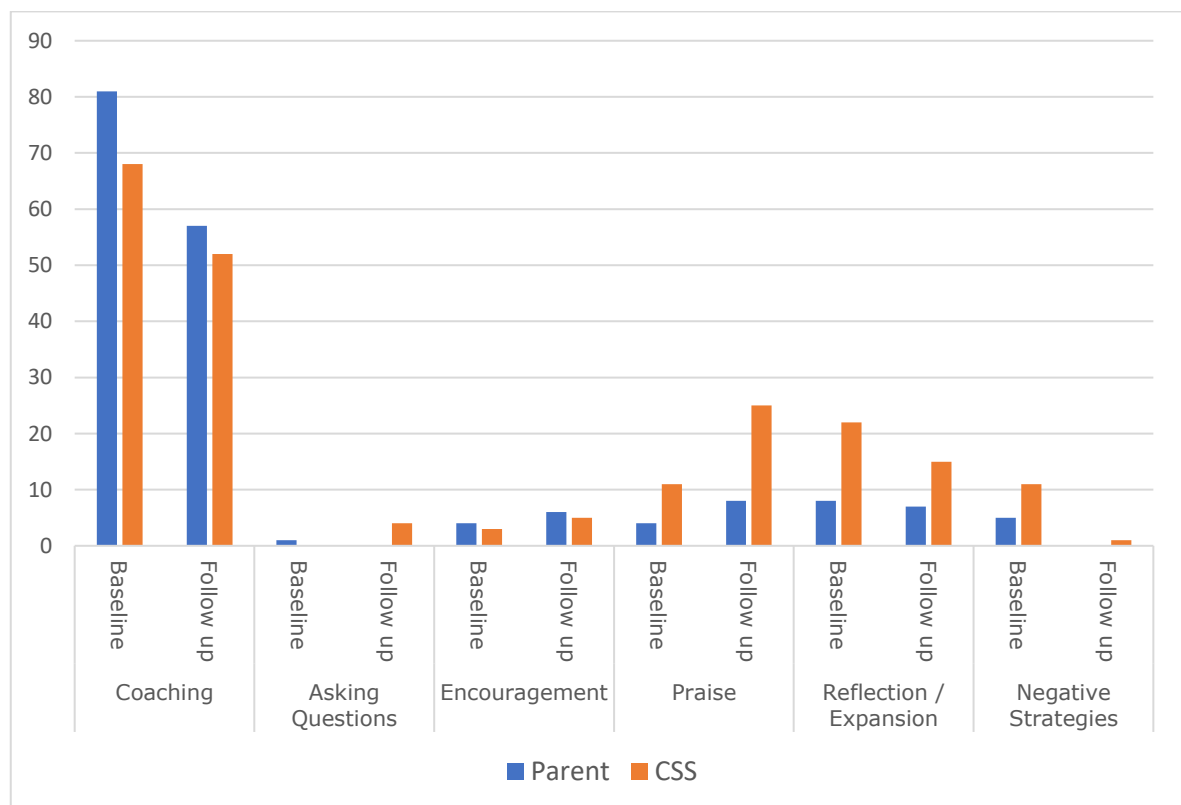


Figure 4.8 Case study A reading video observations

At baseline, during the play activity, there was a higher frequency of questioning, verbal labelling/commenting, encouragement, and praise, by the classroom support staff participant than the parent participant, and a lower frequency of reflection/expansion. Baseline levels of negative strategies were the same for both participants during the play video observation.

Between baseline and follow-up, a decrease in questioning and verbal labelling/commenting, and an increase in praise, was observed for both participants during the play activity. The relationship between baseline and follow-up play video observations differed for case study A participants in all other categories. The frequency of encouragement and reflection/expansion increased for the classroom support staff participant from baseline to follow up, however there was a decrease in both of these categories for the parent participant. Levels of negative strategies during the play video observation remained the same for the parent participant from baseline to follow-up, but increased for classroom support staff participant.

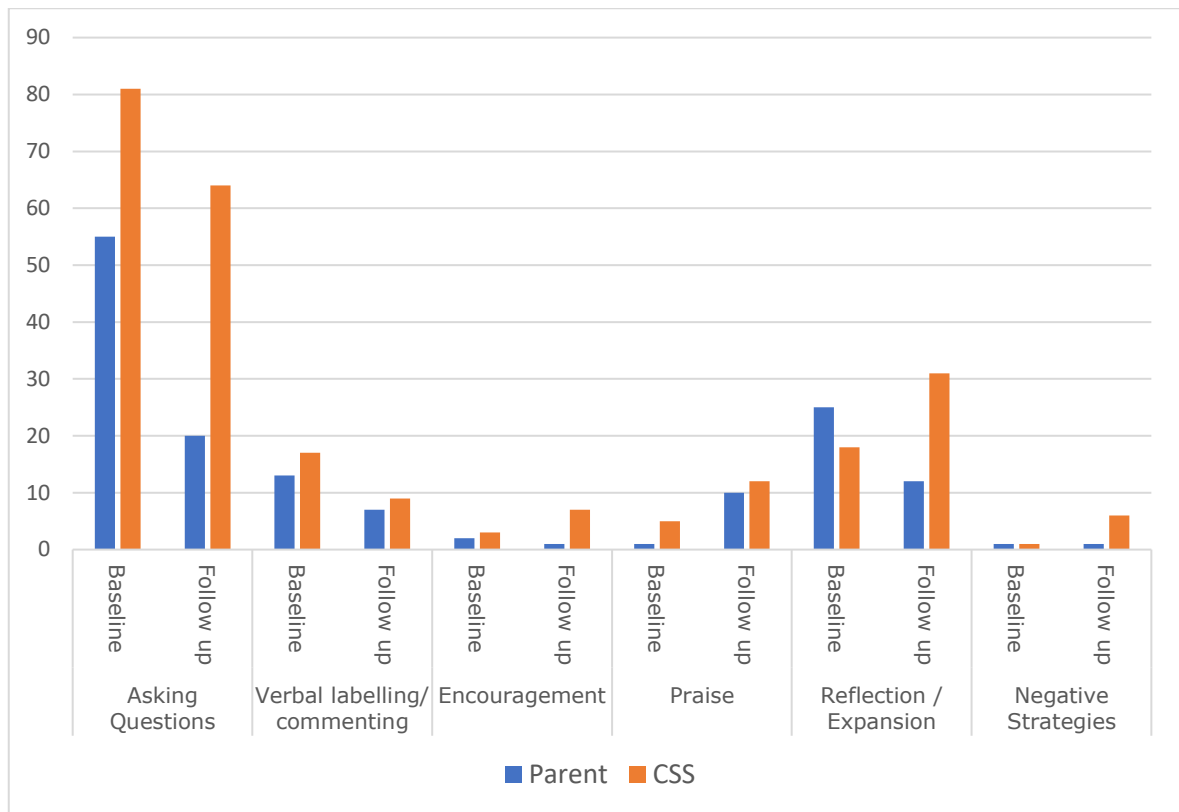
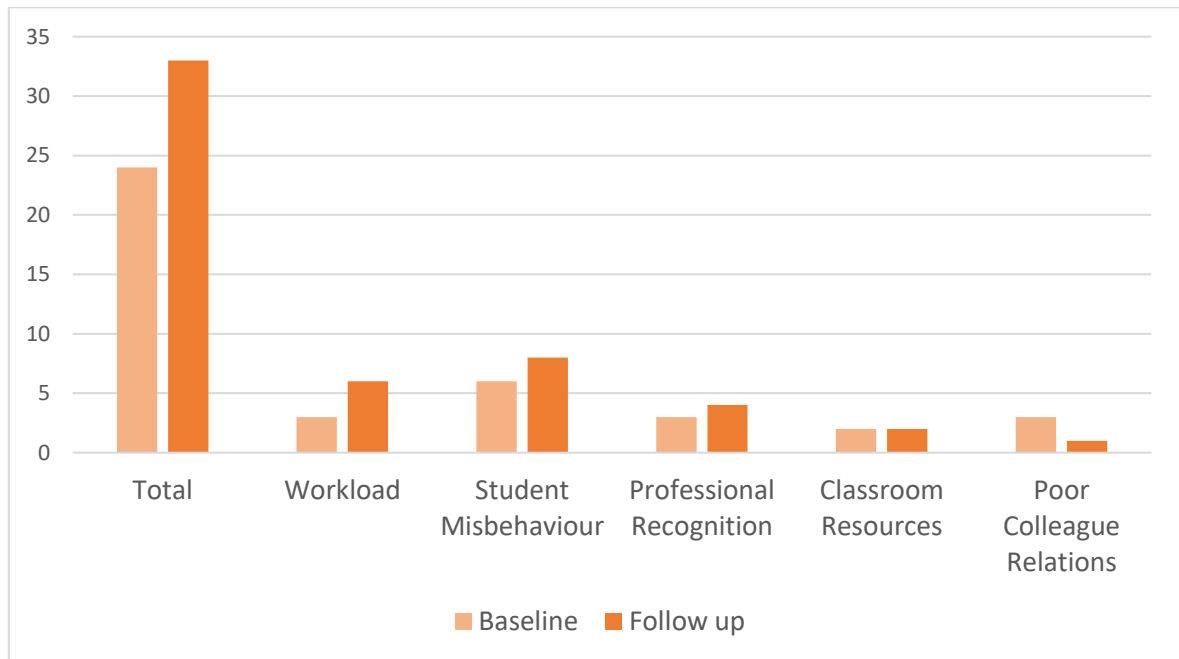


Figure 4.9 Case study A play video observations

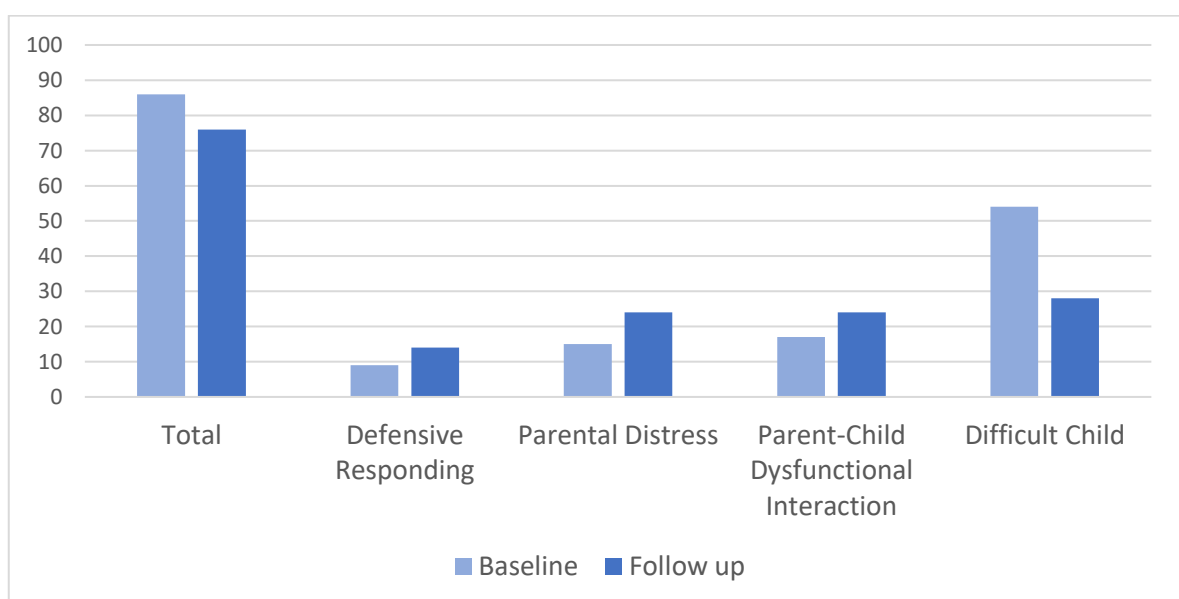
#### 4.3.5.3 Self-report Measures

The measures used to assess stress levels in parent and classroom support staff participants do not use the same scoring or scale and are therefore not directly comparable. However, it is possible to compare the impact of the SKILLS intervention on stress levels in each participant group by examining the change in measures of stress from baseline to follow-up. The classroom support staff participant in Case Study A reported an increase in total stress levels from baseline to follow-up, as well as an increase in sub-scales related to workload, student misbehaviour, and professional recognition. A slight decrease in stress related to poor colleague relations was reported and stress

related to classroom resources remained the same from baseline to follow-up. For the parent participant total stress levels decreased from baseline to follow-up, however stress increased for all subscales with the exception of difficult child, which decreased from baseline to follow up and accounted for the overall total reduction.



*Figure 4.10* Case study A classroom support staff stress



*Figure 4.11* Case study A parent stress

There was an increase in total sense of competence, and both the efficacy and satisfaction sub-scales for both participants in Case Study A from baseline to follow-up. A slightly larger increase in total satisfaction and efficacy was reported by the classroom support staff participant than the parent participant.

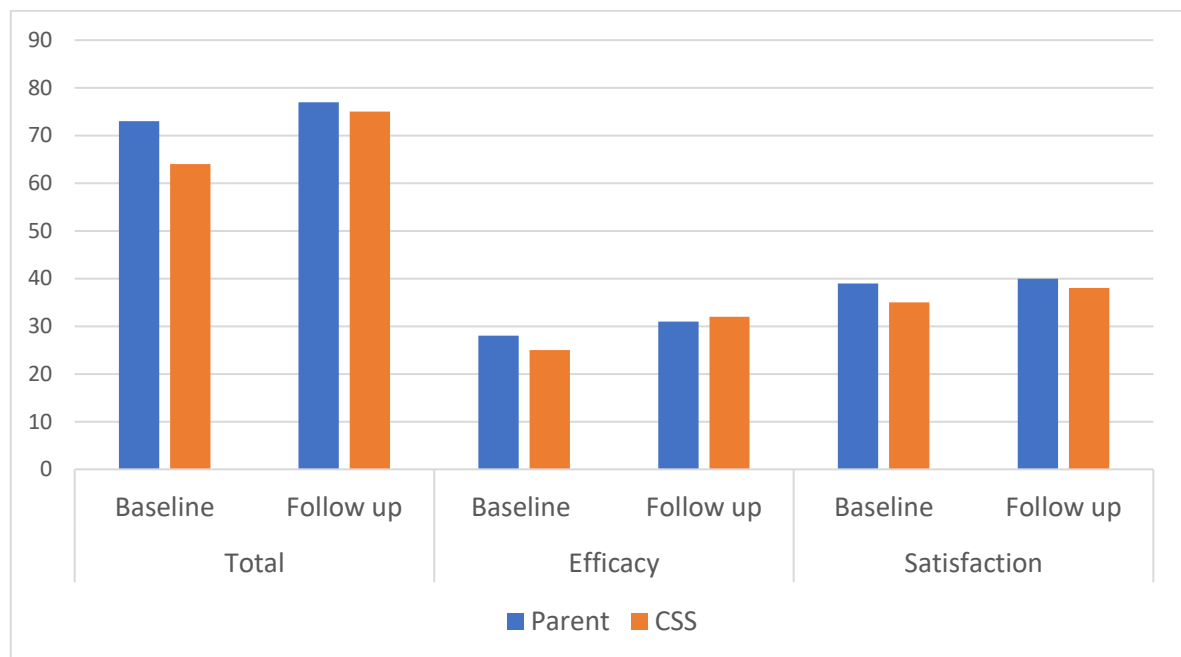


Figure 4.12 Case study A sense of competence

At baseline the parent participant in Case Study A viewed their child to have higher levels of total difficulties, emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity, and prosocial skills, and lower levels of peer problems, than the classroom support staff participant. Both participants in Case Study A reported a decrease in child total difficulties and hyperactivity from baseline to follow-up on the SDQ measure, and no change in pro-social behaviours. For all other categories the relationship between baseline and follow-up reports



differed for parent and classroom support staff, for example; parent reports of emotional symptoms decreased from baseline to follow-up, while classroom support staff reports of emotional symptoms increased.

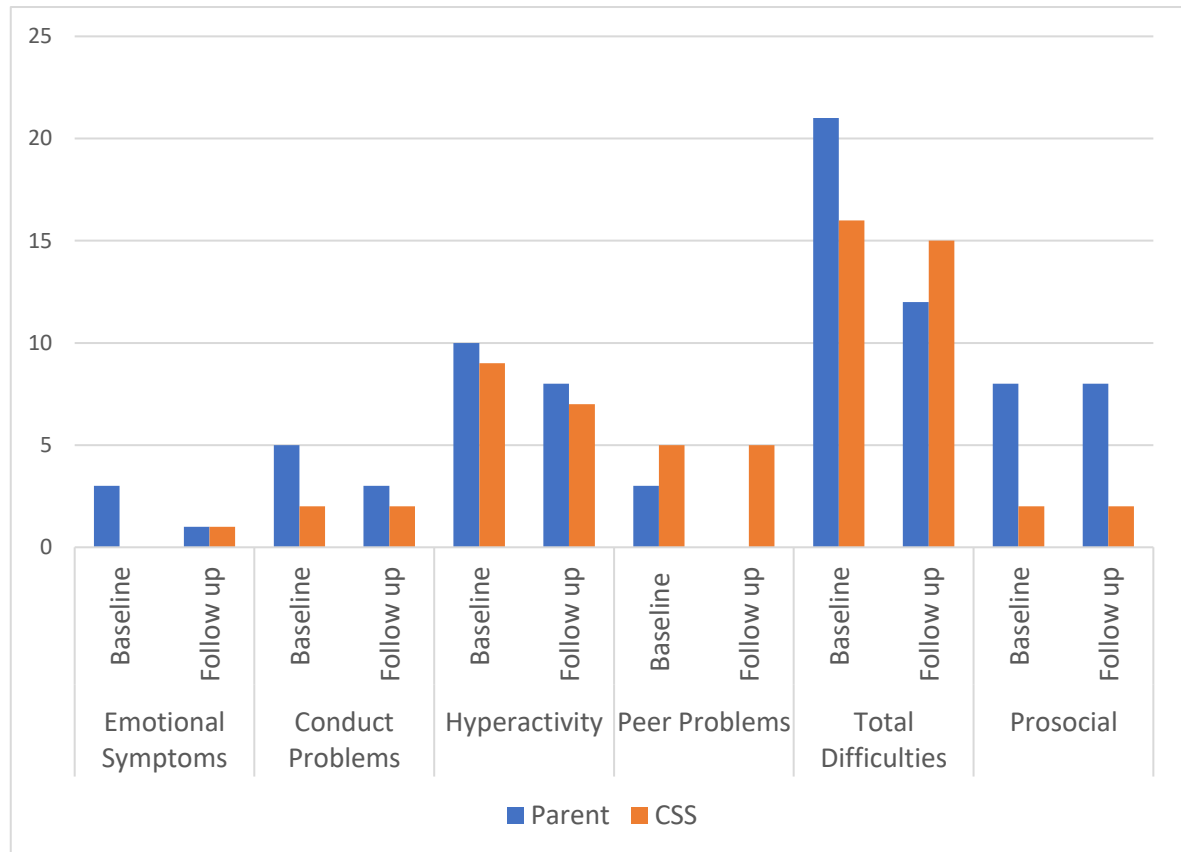


Figure 4.13 Case study A reported child behaviour (SDQ)

#### 4.3.6 Case Study B

Case study B compares the completion rate and outcomes for a parent participant and classroom support staff participant of a child aged 74 months, in a year 1 class, at the beginning of the study. The classroom support staff participant in Case Study B had one month's work experience, had not previously worked with the child of the parent participant prior to taking part in the study and was assigned to work with another child for most of the school day.

#### 4.3.6.1 Completion Rate

Both participants in case study B had completed all 6 chapters and 5 quizzes of the SKILLS programme by follow-up.

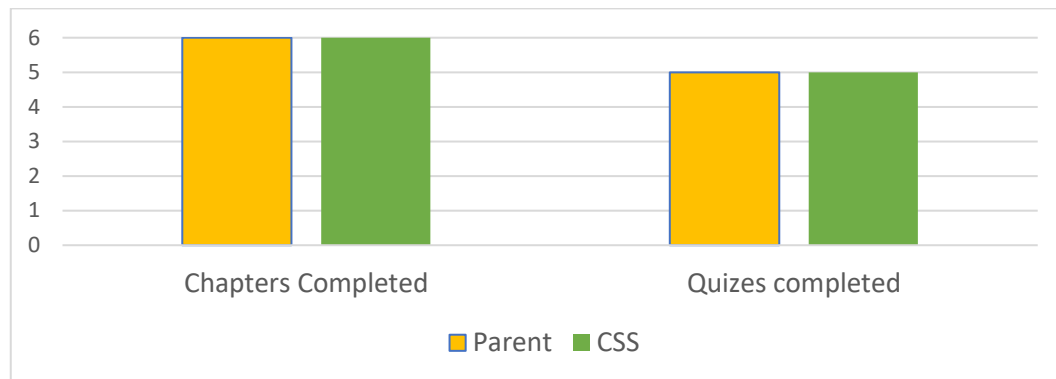


Figure 4.14 Case study B completion rate

#### 4.3.6.2 Video Observations

During reading video observations at baseline, the classroom support staff participant in Case Study B demonstrated a higher level of coaching, questioning, and reflection/expansion, and a lower level of encouragement, praise, and negative strategies, than the parent participant.

At follow-up both participants in Case Study B had a decreased frequency of negative strategies during the reading activity. For all other categories participants differed in the relationship between their baseline and follow-up results. The classroom support staff participant decreased in frequency in all measures with the exception of praise, where the follow-up frequency was the same as at baseline. The parent participant had an increase in coaching, questioning, and reflection/expansion from baseline to follow-up, a slight decrease in

praise (which was low for both participants at baseline) and the same frequency of encouragement.

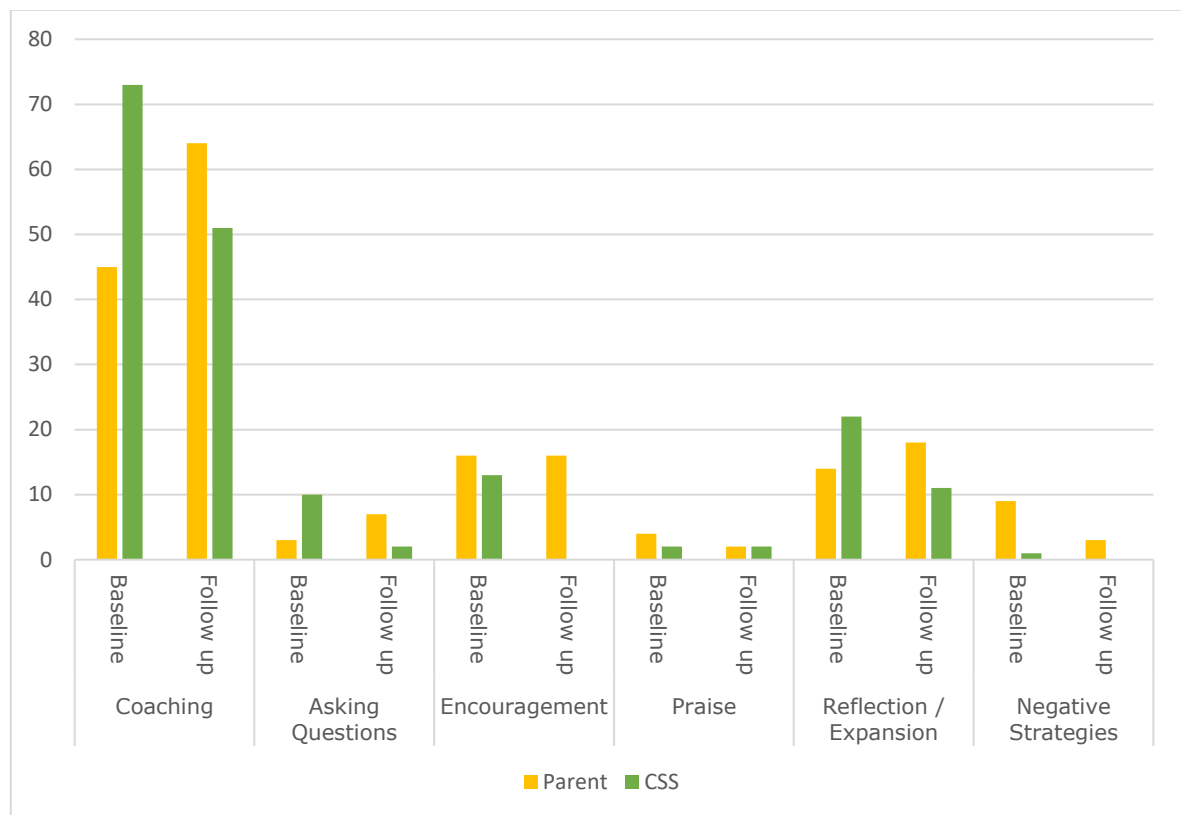


Figure 4.15 Case study B reading video observations

During the baseline play video observation, the classroom support staff participant in Case Study B had a higher frequency of questioning, encouragement, praise, and reflection/expansion, and a lower level of verbal labelling/commenting and negative strategies than the parent participant.

Both participants had a decreased frequency of questioning and verbal labelling/commenting, at follow-up when compared to baseline. For encouragement, praise, and reflection/expansion the parent participant in Case Study B had an increased frequency at follow-up compared to

baseline, and the classroom support staff participant had a decreased frequency. Negative strategies decreased dramatically from 26 at baseline to zero at follow-up for the parent participant, but increased slightly from zero to one for the classroom support staff participant.

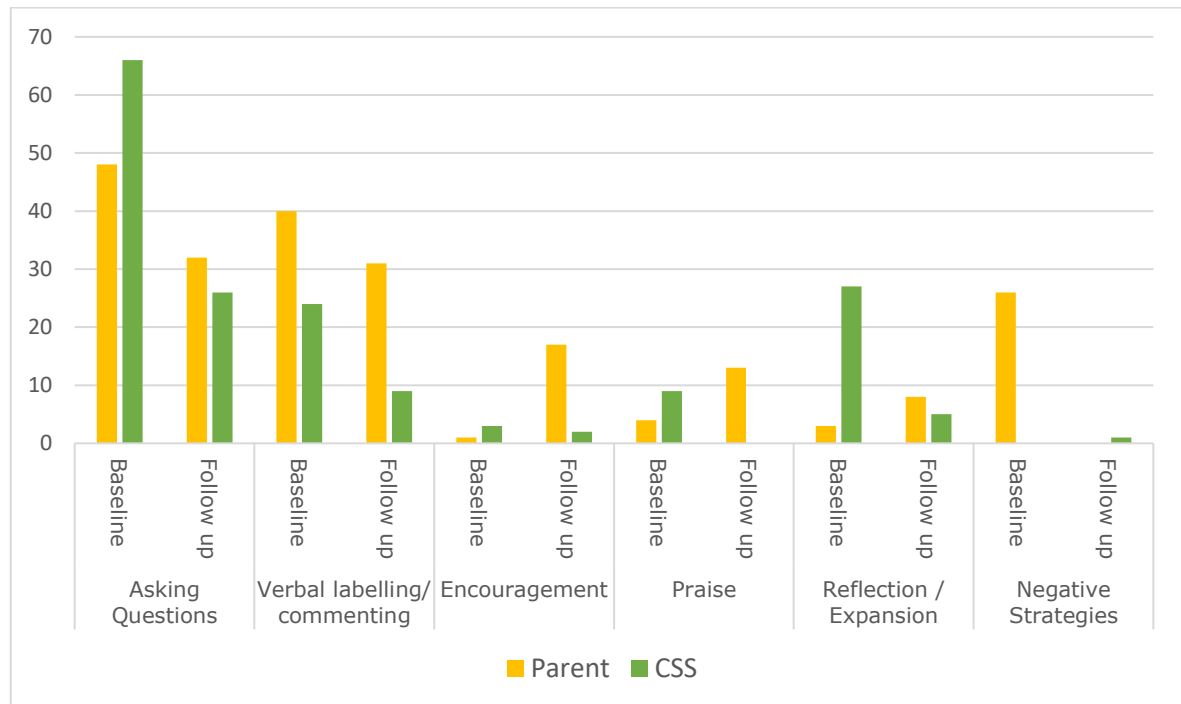


Figure 4.16 Case study B play video observations

#### 4.3.6.3 Self-report Measures

At follow-up both participants in Case Study B reported lower levels of total stress than at baseline. The parent participant also reported reductions in all stress related sub-scales at follow-up compared to baseline. The classroom support staff participant reported decreased levels of workload stress, but increased levels of stress related to student misbehaviour and classroom resources at follow-up, compared to baseline.

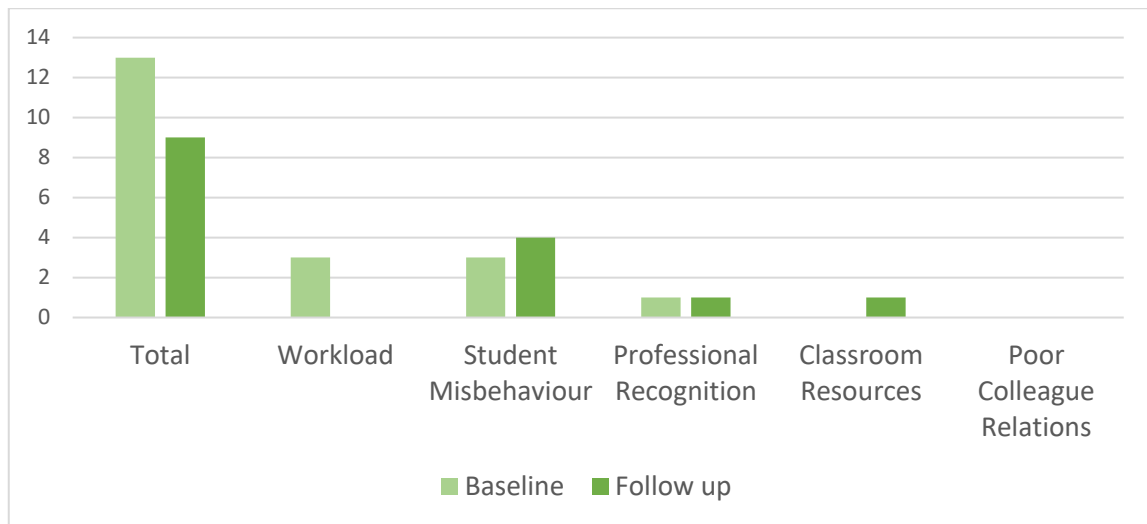


Figure 4.17 Case study B classroom support staff stress

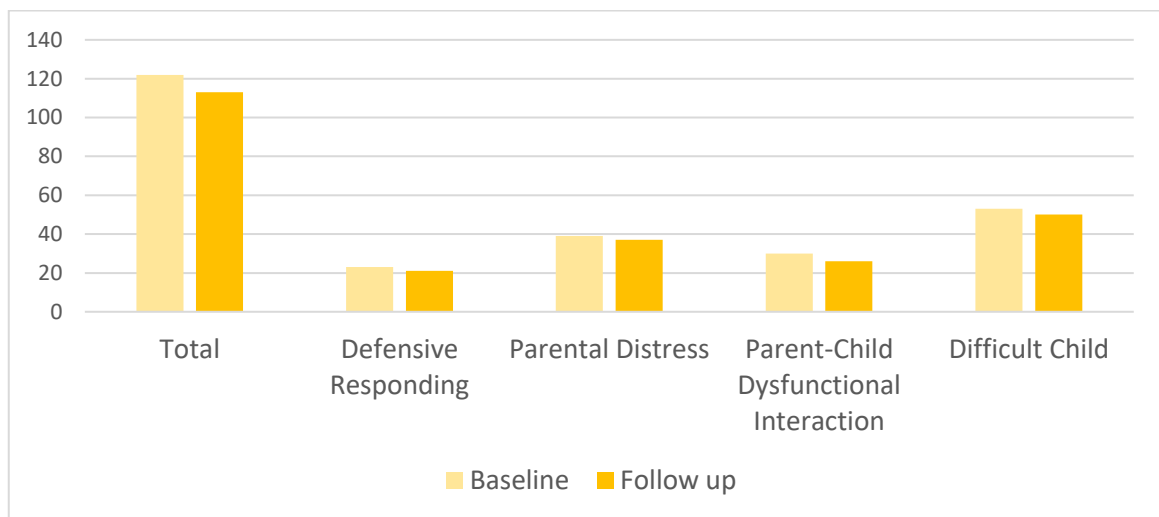


Figure 4.18 Case study B parent stress

At follow up the parent participant of Case Study B reported a higher level of total sense of competence, efficacy and satisfaction than at baseline. However, for the classroom support staff participant in Case Study B the opposite was true, with a slight reduction in the total score and the efficacy and satisfaction sub-scale scores, at follow-up compared to baseline.

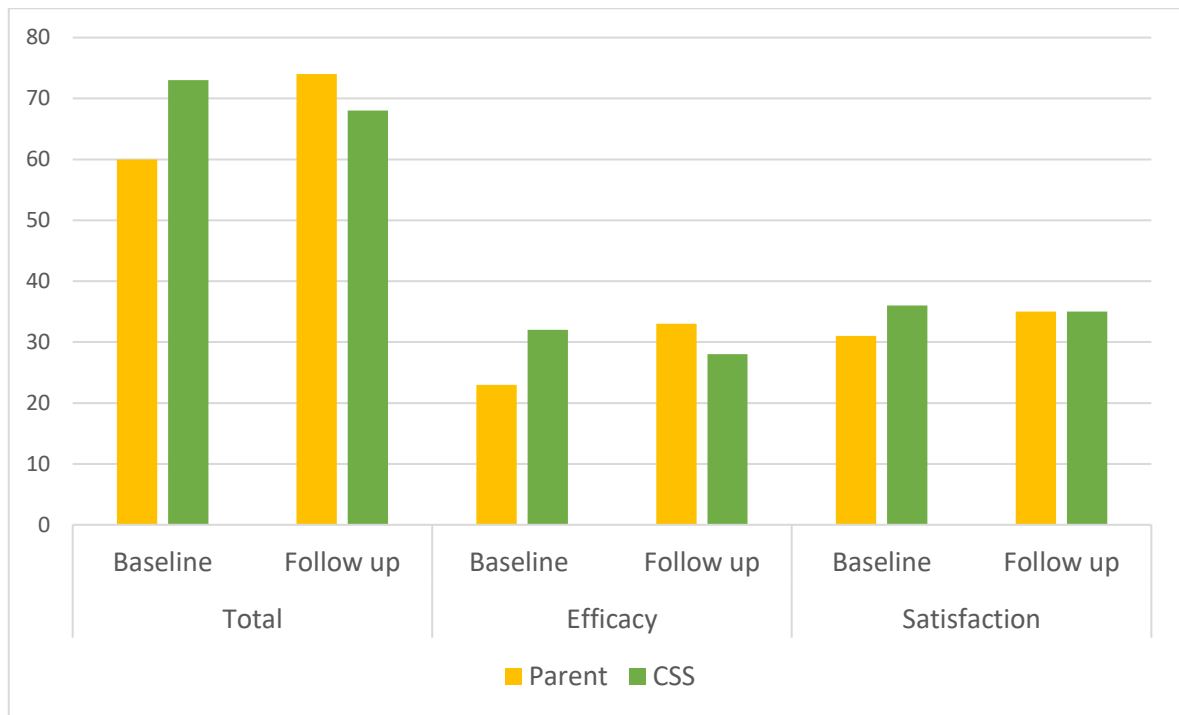


Figure 4.19 Case study B sense of competence

Both participants in Case Study B reported slight increases in child conduct problems, peer problems, and total difficulties at follow-up compared to baseline, and no change in child hyperactivity. The classroom support staff participant also reported no change in child emotional symptoms, and a decrease in prosocial behaviour at follow-up compared to baseline. For these categories the parent participant reported a decrease in child emotional symptoms and an increase in prosocial behaviour from baseline to follow-up.

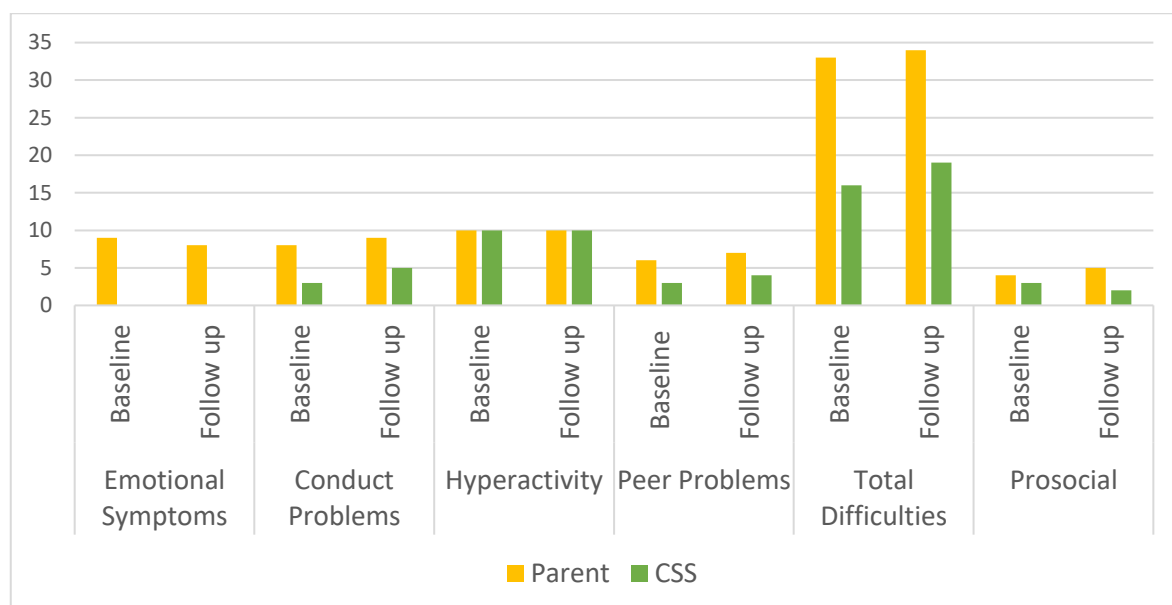


Figure 4.20 Case study B reported child behaviour (SDQ)

## **4.4 – Discussion**

The aim of the present study was to determine whether:

- i) it is possible to recruit school support staff and parents
- ii) school support staff and parents jointly engage with the programme

In answer to the first aim, this study has found that while it is possible to recruit school support staff and parents there are several challenges which must be overcome in order to do this successfully. However, with more tailored support it is likely that schools could be supported in recruiting parents for a similar study in the future as both parents and school support staff showed an equal level of enthusiasm for the SKILLS programme once engaged.

In answer to the second aim, this study has found that although both parents and school support staff engage independently with the SKILLS programme, they do not communicate and work through the programme together. There were marked differences between reports of child behaviour and observed adult-child interactions for the parent and classroom support staff participants at baseline, which in general persisted at follow-up. As a key overall aim of adapting the SKILLS programme for use by both parents and school support staff is to enhance home-school relationships and consistency for the child, it is important that future research more overtly encourages joint



engagement. This question is examined further through the evaluation questionnaire and interviews with participants discussed in Chapter 5.

#### **4.4.1 Recruitment**

Only six North Wales schools expressed interest in the study following the initial response to an email, and of these only two went on to participate. Common feedback from enquiring schools was an assumption that parents would be difficult to engage and recruit, which was also reported by two schools that had classroom support staff willing to take part but were unable to recruit any parent participants. There are multiple possible factors behind schools' inability to engage parents including social and economic circumstances of parents, and schools' misguided preconceptions about parental engagement. As found by Hornby and Blackwell (2018) it is possible that schools approached for participation in the present study conceptualised parental engagement as parents' physical presence within the school. Therefore, it is possible that parents who did not frequently attend school events would be seen as difficult to engage. Parents of children with additional learning needs and likely disruptive behaviour may already have a fractious relationship with school or other parents making it less likely that they would attend school events than other parents. Therefore, it is important that future studies explore ways in which to support schools more directly through the recruitment process. This could require supporting schools to have a better understanding of parents' perspectives and individual needs, that has been shown to be

successfully in previous research (Watt, 2016; Goodall, 2018), as well as providing more practical support with communication such as conducting parents meetings.

#### **4.4.2 Participant Retention**

Overall participant retention for this study from baseline to follow-up was 70%. For parents' retention was 60% and for classroom support staff it was 80%. Although the small sample size makes direct comparison to other studies difficult, these figures are in line with previous research into online parenting interventions, which have attrition rates of up to 48%, particularly in low-socioeconomic areas (Carralejo & Rodriguez, 2018).

Of the participants who were lost to follow up the two parents reported overall higher levels of stress than other parents at baseline as well as lower levels of parental competence. However, these participants also reported generally lower levels of stress related to their children when compared to other participants. Therefore, it may be that they were not motivated to participate due to a combination of other life stressors and a more positive perception of their child than for other participants. However, the fact that baseline SDQ scores were in line with other parent participants indicate that the intervention could have been potentially beneficial to them and so future research should consider methods to retain similar participants, such as motivational interviewing

which has proven effective in previous studies (Ehrensaft et al., 2016; Sanders, Baker, & Turner, 2012).

One classroom support staff participant was lost to follow up due to being relocated within the school and not informing the researcher until contacted at follow-up. Although staff turnover and redeployment is common and unavoidable, the poor communication from school to researcher is reflective of a wider issue encountered more generally during the recruitment stage of this study. Furthermore, as previous research has suggested a barrier to parental engagement is poor communication from schools (Harris and Goodall, 2008). This makes it important that further research is conducted to explore this further and support is given to schools to improve their communication with both parent and outside agencies.

Overall parent completion rates were lower than those of classroom support staff, with both a lower number of chapters completed, and more participants being lost to follow up. However, 66% of parents did complete the entire six-chapter SKILLS programme, which is reflective of results from previous studies (Baker et al., 2017; Day & Sanders, 2018). There was a high completion rate amongst classroom support staff with 100% of participants retained at follow-up having completed five or more chapters, and 60% having completed all six. This is a higher completion rate than previous online parenting programme studies (Baker et al., 2017; Day & Sanders, 2018), but in line with research into the effectiveness of online delivery of training to school

support staff (Pollard et al., 2014). This is most likely due to the fact that classroom support staff completed the programme as part of their usual working day, whereas parent participants in this and previous studies had to complete programmes in their own time. Higher completion rates among classroom support staff may also be due to a difference in stigma attached to training as part of employment and for parenting. It is routine to be offered training while in work, but a parent of a child with behavioural challenges may feel social stigma attached to being invited to participate in a parenting programme. Further research into this area would be beneficial in order to identify barriers to recruitment as well as increase completion rates for all participants.

#### **4.4.3 Parent and Classroom Support Staff Joint Engagement**

##### **4.4.3.1 Baseline Comparison**

At baseline both groups of participants had similar levels of overall sense of competence, efficacy and satisfaction. However, classroom support staff participants had slightly higher scores in every category, with the biggest difference seen in total sense of competence and role satisfaction. This may be due to the different roles of classroom support staff and parents. As the classroom support staff are acting in a professional capacity, they are more likely to be able to compartmentalise any feelings related to the role and not associate

them with their own personal identity. In contrast parents are likely to feel that being a parent is a strong part of their identity and therefore may have higher expectations of themselves in relation to their competence within the role. Furthermore, classroom support staff all had some level of professional training either within their role or previously, enabling them to judge themselves against a certain level of professional standards. Few parents on the other hand had received any training in parenting practices prior to involvement in this study and therefore may have been more likely to judge themselves against false perceptions of ideal parenting.

At baseline parent participants perceived their children's behaviour in an overall more negative way than classroom support staff, scoring their children's total difficulties, hyperactivity, conduct problems, and emotional symptoms higher than classroom support staff on the SDQ measure. However, interestingly parents also scored their children more highly on the prosocial sub-scale than classroom support staff. Classroom support staff reported a slightly higher level of peer problems than parents. This could be due to the difference in children's behaviour across environments. Classroom support staff are more likely to see children interacting with their peers than parents and so may have a different perception of difficulties in relation to social interactions. Classroom support staff may also have a wider view of typical behaviour for children of the same age than parents, and so may have more realistic expectations for children's prosocial skills than

parents. The difference in reports of behaviour at baseline may also be due to the fact that classroom support staff participants in this study had not worked with the children for more than six weeks prior to baseline measures being taken, with some participants having never previously worked on a 1:1 basis with the child. However, it is more likely due to the differing nature of the home and school environment and the added challenges faced by parents related to the daily routine, such as bedtime.

#### **4.4.3.2 Follow-Up Comparison**

If techniques taught in the SKILLS programme were implemented with high fidelity, participants would be expected to display an increase in praise, reflection/expansion, encouragement, coaching and verbal labelling/commenting during adult-child interactions, alongside a decrease in negative strategies and questioning. Therefore, the fact that classroom support staff participants demonstrated a reduction in questioning and an increase in praise from baseline to follow-up, indicates the potential benefit of the SKILLS programme that warrants further investigation in a larger study. However, the fact that there were no clear results for other categories may mean some changes to the programme, or delivery method are necessary. Particularly in the case of negative strategies it could be that the SKILLS programme conflicts with an existing behaviour policy within a school. This question is examined in more detail in chapter 5. The fact that questioning by classroom support staff decreased consistently but verbal

labelling/commenting and reflection/expansion did not consistently increase, could mean that classroom support staff took on board the message of the importance of allowing the child to direct the activity, but that the messages surrounding language development were not effectively conveyed. It is important, therefore, that future research examines this issue, so that the importance of descriptive commenting and reflective language as strategies to promote children's communication skills are highlighted effectively to participants. There was a slight increase in child behaviour problems reported by classroom support staff on the SDQ measure, and a slight reduction in child hyperactivity. This could be due to the impact of the SKILLS programme, but is more likely due to the fact that participants had not spent a great deal of time working with the children prior to this study, and may not have had an accurate picture of their behaviour at baseline.

Although no firm conclusions can be drawn from such a small sample, results from parent-child video observations indicate a potentially greater benefit from the programme than demonstrated by classroom support staff. Parents demonstrated an increase in praise, and a slight decrease in questioning and use of negative strategies during play, along with a slight increase in encouragement and decrease in negative strategies during the reading activity. However, the fact that, as with results from classroom support staff, there was no consistent change in reflection/expansion, coaching or verbal labelling/commenting from

baseline to follow-up, may indicate the need for adaptations to be made to the SKILLS programme to make clear the importance of surrounding children in positive language. Participants may also benefit from some tailored feedback or advice during the SKILLS programme in order to achieve a higher level of skill use, as demonstrated in previous studies which included the addition of weekly telephone calls to online programmes (Day & Sanders, 2018).

Unlike classroom support staff, parents did report a slight decrease in total stress and stress related to having a difficult child as well as an increase in total sense of competence, efficacy and satisfaction. Parents also reported a slight increase in child prosocial skills from baseline to follow-up and, like classroom support staff, reported a slight decrease in child hyperactivity. The differences between parent and classroom support staff, suggest a different impact on child behaviour in home and school settings. Although classroom support staff highlight child behaviour as a significant issue within their role (see chapter 1), perhaps it is one of many that have an impact upon their feelings of competence and work-related stress including broader aspects of the school environment. However, for parents a difficult child has a direct impact on how they feel as a person and so externalising behaviour by a child may be conceptualised by parents as an internal issue of their own. Therefore, even slight decreases in child behaviour issues as well as being equipped with strategies to manage behaviour may have a greater impact on parental feelings of competence and stress than they



do for classroom support staff. It is also possible either that short-term benefits fade or that a delayed treatment effect exists and therefore future research would benefit from longer-term follow-up assessments.

One interesting finding of this study is that whilst at baseline classroom support staff reported higher levels of role competence than parents, at follow-up the reverse was true. Both groups reported increases in the sense of competence measure from baseline to follow-up, but for parents the increase was greater leading to an overall higher average level of competence than school support staff. Although it is not possible to draw firm conclusions from a small-scale study such as this, this finding again points to a difference in impact on parents and school support staff that could potentially be explained by their role differences. As classroom support staff act in a professional capacity they may already have some level of general knowledge or training that impacts upon their personal sense of competence. However, parents are unlikely to have any formal training related to their role as parent and may therefore judge their level of competence against unrealistic expectations. Therefore, a programme such as SKILLS, which gives participants a balanced view of what should realistically be expected from children, may have a greater impact upon parents' sense of competence than school support staff.

#### **4.4.4 Case Studies**

Case studies A and B explore in more detail the results from the only two parent/classroom support staff dyads for which both full baseline and follow-up data were collected. Case Study A examines the classroom support staff and parent of child aged 44 months in a school nursery class. The child subject of Case Study B is 74 months old, in a year one class at school. As well as having children in different ages the case studies also differ with regards to the level of experience and role of the classroom support staff participants. Case Study A reports on a general teaching assistant with one years' work experience and half a term working with the child, where as in Case Study B the classroom support staff participant is a 1:1 support assistant assigned to a child other than the study child for the majority of their day, with only one month's work experience and no prior experience of working with the study child.

Although each case study explores the results of a classroom support staff and parent completing the programme with the same child, the results do not differ greatly from that of the general parent and classroom support staff comparisons. Furthermore, reports of child behaviour on the SDQ measure are no closer for either case study at follow-up than they were at baseline. This indicates that although both participant groups completed the programme simultaneously, they did so in isolation without collaborating to create a smooth transition from home to school for the child, as was a key aim of the programme. This

lack of interaction between parents and classroom support staff is confirmed through participant answers to programme evaluation interviews examined in chapter five.

Despite measures relating to the child not coming into line at follow-up, parent and classroom support staff ratings for sense of competence in each case study were more similar at follow-up than baseline. This suggests that the programme had a similar impact on both participant groups and highlights the importance of encouraging more collaboration between parents and classroom support staff in future studies. This could be done through group meetings at the beginning and end of the intervention; amendments to the delivery of the programme to include an online messaging board; or prompts throughout the programme for participants to collaborate on homework tasks or share progress information.

#### **4.4.5 Limitations**

This was a small-scale feasibility study focusing on two schools in the same region of North Wales, therefore the results may not generalise to a wider population. Future research using a larger and geographically wider participant base is necessary to draw any firm conclusions as to the effectiveness of both the SKILLS programme and the online self-directed delivery method. Participants were not followed up beyond post-test and therefore it is not possible to assess the long-term effectiveness of the SKILLS programme, future research would benefit

from a longitudinal design to fully assess the impact of the programme. As all measures relating to child behaviour were self-report there was no objective measure of the extent of impact of the SKILLS programme on child behaviour, therefore further research may benefit from observations focusing on child behaviour as well as adult implementation of strategies from the SKILLS programme.

A further limitation of this study was the low number of participants due to problems with recruitment. All primary schools in North Wales were contacted via the North Wales Regional Effectiveness Service (GwE), however, only a small number responded to this initial contact. Furthermore, of those who did respond the majority declined to participate in the study, largely due to concerns related to the requirement that they recruit parent participants. Schools that did agree to participate faced challenges related to recruiting parent participants resulting in two schools being unable to take part due to lack of parent participants. Future research should address these issues by giving schools more support in recruiting parent participants such as running presentations for parents in schools, leaflets explaining the programme that are targeted directly at parents, or more structured advice on how to engage parents directly rather than sending general letters home.

## **4.5 - Conclusion**

This study has examined the feasibility of a self-directed online training programme for use by parents and school support staff of the same child, in terms of recruitment, programme engagement and interaction between parents and school support staff during the programme. Existing research points to an enhanced treatment effect on child outcomes, when both parents and school staff follow the same intervention. As intensive interventions of this form may prove too costly for schools and local authorities to consider in the current financial climate, an online self-directed programme has the potential to deliver a similar level of benefit with less associated cost. Therefore, although small in scale, this study begins to address a gap in research with regards to the effectiveness of using the same online delivered intervention with both parents and school staff.

Although only a small sample was recruited, the results of this study point to the potential benefit and effectiveness of an entirely self-directed programme when used by both parents and school support staff. Decreases in questioning were found in all classroom support staff after completing the programme, and most also demonstrated an increase in child praise. Parents who completed some or all of the SKILLS programme also demonstrated an increase in praise towards their children. Furthermore, there were small positive changes in other observed categories associated with a good retention of knowledge from

the programme in both participant groups. There were also some slight changes in feeling of efficacy and stress for many participants.

Alongside the potential benefit of an online delivered intervention for both school and home, this study highlights several challenges associated with recruitment and retention across these environments. Poor communication from schools in general, a belief that parents would not engage, as well as poor home-school relationships all present challenges with implementing programmes where school staff and parents would benefit from working alongside each other. Further research is necessary to examine negative preconceptions of school staff towards parents and vice-versa to fully understand and overcome these barriers to recruitment. Further research should also address ways to retain parents experiencing high levels of general stress, but moderate levels of concern around their child's behaviour, engaged in the programme as this was seen to be a possible factor in participant drop out during the present study.

This study also aimed to examine the extent to which parents and school support staff jointly engaged with the intervention. Although only a small sample, the fact that there was very little communication or joint engagement between parents and their child's school support staff highlights a need for adaptations to both the research design and the SKILLS programme itself for future studies. As parents and school support staff did not naturally engage with one another during the present study, future research should both explore the reasons for this

and more overtly encourage joint engagement and communication between school staff and parents.

## **Chapter 5 – SKILLS User Satisfaction**

### **5.1 - Background**

#### **5.1.1 Introduction**

It is important that interventions are predominantly measured by their impact on child outcomes rather than the satisfaction of parents who take part in them. This is because high levels of satisfaction do not always equate to high level outcomes. The Fort Bragg project, an integrated mental health intervention for children and families, was highly successful in terms of satisfaction, but had no impact on child outcomes (Weisz, Han, & Valeri, 1997). Furthermore, while most participants reported being satisfied with the Cambridge-Somerville Youth Study, longitudinal results showed that the intervention increased, rather than decreased, rates of offending. However, if interventions do not achieve high levels of user satisfaction then they are unlikely to engage or retain participation. In the case of parenting interventions, if a parent is apprehensive or has a negative view of the programme they are unlikely to engage with it (Hutchings, Gardner, & Lane, 2004). Therefore, although the most important factor of an intervention must be its evidence-based content, it is also important that it has a good level of user satisfaction so as to engage and retain the participants.



A study comparing user satisfaction with an individual and group CBT based parent training programme, for children with hyperkinetic disorder, found high levels of satisfaction in both participant groups (Heubeck, Otte, & Lauth, 2016). Correlations were also found for both groups between satisfaction related to the group leader and individual achievements and between satisfaction with group leader and overall satisfaction. Although these findings may not generalise to other interventions, the link between satisfaction with group leaders and parental achievements highlights the potential impact of delivery style on the effectiveness of parenting programmes.

Seabra-Santos, et al. (2011) examined user satisfaction with the Incredible Years (IY) parenting programme. One hundred and twelve parents of children aged three to six years completed the IY programme, in clinical and non-clinical groups, with clinical groups comprising parents of children presenting with signs of ADHD. Both groups were found to have high levels of overall programme satisfaction with average values for each group being above six on a seven-point scale. The only slight exception was with satisfaction related to difficulty of implementing methods and strategies, for which average satisfaction was still above five for both groups. The non-clinical group had slightly lower levels of satisfaction related to buddy calls (calls between parents to support one another) and role-play during programme delivery, than the clinical group. In terms of programme content, the clinical group reported lower levels of satisfaction with

ignoring techniques, but higher levels of satisfaction with time out than the non-clinical group. However, even with differences between groups, both clinical and non-clinical group average scores for all categories were above five indicating a positive experience of the intervention by all participants.

Examinations of user satisfaction with web-based parenting programmes have also found high levels of user satisfaction. Suárez, Byrne, and Rodrigo (2018) assessed satisfaction levels of 148 parent participants who completed the Spanish online parenting programme *Educación en Positivo* (The Positive Parent). Results showed high overall levels of satisfaction with the programme, which was greater for individuals who had accessed some of the more interactive elements, such as online forum participation, diary entry, and setting of personal goals. Although participants in this study were self-selected, mostly well educated, and may not be representative of wider populations, the results again highlight the potential impact of delivery style on overall satisfaction.

High levels of user satisfaction have also been found among professional participants in parenting programme studies. Silva, da Fonseca Gaspar, and Anglin (2016) found high levels of satisfaction among 27 residential care centre staff who took part in the IY parenting programme. In weekly reports and the final overall satisfaction questionnaire, participants reported high levels of satisfaction related to the programmes content, delivery and impact. In terms of content,

highest levels of satisfaction were reported with content related to promoting positive behaviour and handling misbehaviour. Video modelling and role-play were rated most highly in relation to programme delivery components. Callejas, Byrne, and Rodrigo (2018) found similarly high levels of overall satisfaction among 249 parents and 350 health professionals who completed the web-based positive parenting programme 'Gaining Health and Wellbeing from Birth to Three'. Professionals reported greater satisfaction related to programme accessibility, but for satisfaction related to content and impact there was no significant difference between groups.

Participants who completed the original version of the SKILLS programme, developed by Jones et al. (2019), reported similarly high levels of satisfaction. Seventy-five per cent of the teaching assistants who took part in the study completed the evaluation questionnaire, and of these 72% rated the SKILLS programme positively. Constructive criticism of the programme during this study, including that video content could be more relevant with the addition of children with disabilities, has been incorporated into the development of SKILLS for the present study.

### **5.1.2 Aim of the Present Study**

Given the importance of evaluating user satisfaction when examining the overall effectiveness of parenting programmes, and with the benefit of feedback from previous research into the SKILLS programme, the

aim of the present study is to assess overall user satisfaction with the programme in its current form and to explore more deeply the experience of users of the programme. The research questions for this study are:

1. Do all users have a shared experience of the SKILLS programme?
2. How do the experiences of classroom support staff and parents differ, in relation to completion and implementation of the SKILLS programme?

## **5.2 - Method**

### **5.2.1 Design**

This is a mixed methods study employing both quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative element uses a self-report questionnaire (See appendix 11 and appendix 12) to assess overall levels of satisfaction with the SKILLS programme. The qualitative element of this study examines the experience of participants in richer detail, from a subjective critical realist perspective, using semi-structured interviews conducted after completion of the SKILLS programme. Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the School of Psychology Ethics review panel at Bangor University.

### **5.2.2 Participants**

Participants for this study are all those who completed the SKILLS programme as part of the wider feasibility study and were available for interview at follow-up. For more detailed information with regards to participant recruitment see chapter 4.

Table 5.1.

*Participant demographic information*

<b>Participant number</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Classroom Support Staff (CSS) or Parent</b>	<b>Age of child Participating in study (in years)</b>	<b>Number of Chapters Completed</b>
1	41	Parent	6	6
2	39	Parent	3	3
3	33	Parent	4	6
4	21	CSS	3	5
5	21	CSS	6	6
6	24	CSS	6	6
7	49	CSS	6	6

**5.2.3 Materials**

All participants received a participant information sheet and completed a consent form during a baseline visit conducted as part of the wider SKILLS project (see appendix 3, appendix 4, appendix 5 and appendix 6). Participants completed an evaluation questionnaire (see appendix 11 and appendix 12) and semi-structured interviews were conducted during a follow-up visit conducted as part of the wider SKILLS project. Interviews followed the same schedule (see appendix 13) and were recorded using a digital voice recording device to enable later transcription.

### **5.2.4 Procedure**

Interviews were conducted by the researcher at the beginning of a home or school visit before the follow-up self-report measures were completed. Interviews lasted between four and twelve minutes and were conducted in a quiet room within the school workplace or home of the participant. Participants were informed, verbally prior to commencing the interview, that taking part was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any point or refuse to answer any questions with which they did not feel comfortable. Paper consent forms (see appendix 5 and appendix 6) were collected at initial baseline visits as part of the wider SKILLS project, which included explicit consent to take part in follow-up interviews, additional verbal consent was gained before commencing interviews.

The interview guide was based on the best practice advice for qualitative interviewing as given by Arksey and Knight (1999). Questions were open ended and additional questions were asked by the researcher where it was felt more clarity was needed or when participants initiated a topic not addressed by the interview guide. Questions covered topics related to participants' experience of the SKILLS programme, including; the accessibility of the programme; barriers to completion or implementation of the programme; the impact of the programme on themselves and the child; and ideas for further development of the programme. Audio recordings of interviews were transcribed verbatim for analysis, with all identifiable information

removed to ensure the anonymity of all participants. Once interviews had been conducted participants were asked to complete the SKILLS evaluation questionnaire (appendix 11 and appendix 12) alongside other self-report measures taken as part of the wider research project.

### **5.2.5 Measures**

The SKILLS evaluation questionnaire (appendix 12) was developed and used in the testing of the original version of the SKILLS programme (Jones et al., 2019). The same version of the questionnaire was used for classroom support staff in the present study as in previous studies; for parents the wording was altered to reflect their experience of using the programme in a home environment (see appendix 11), but the overall meaning of each question remained the same. No amendments were made to the questionnaire to ask about feedback for the sixth revision chapter to maintain consistency with previous research as no new content was introduced in this chapter. The questionnaire aimed to gain an overview of each participant's level of satisfaction with the programme and each individual element and comprised of 17 questions using a five-point LIKERT scale, where 1=Strongly Disagree and 5=Strongly Agree, and seven open answer questions.

### **5.2.6 Analysis**

Deductive thematic analysis was conducted to analyse interview transcripts and answers to open answer questions on the SKILLS evaluation questionnaire, following the procedure as laid out by Braun



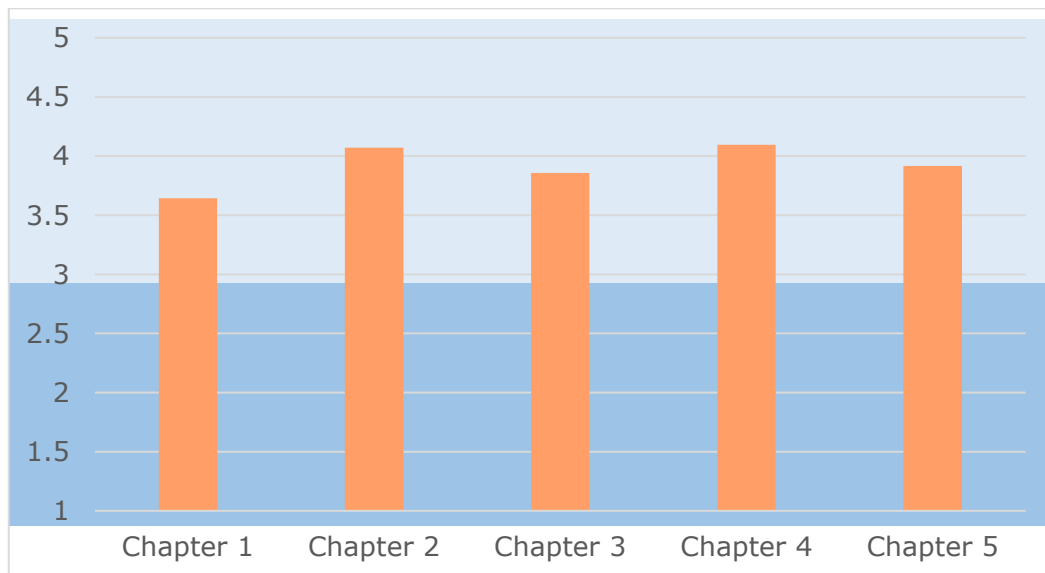
and Clarke (2006). Common and stand out themes related to participants' experience of the SKILLS programme in terms of its content, delivery, and perception of effectiveness were extracted. Only explicit meaning was considered when analysing participants answers and themes were identified until the point of saturation as far as was possible within the time restraints of the present study (Morris 1995; 2000).

Quantitative aspects of participant satisfaction questionnaires were explored using descriptive statistics to examine overall trends and similarities between parents and classroom support staff. No inferential statistical analysis was possible due to the small sample size.

## **5.3 - Quantitative Results**

### **5.3.1 Overall Results**

Overall participants reported a high level of satisfaction with the programme. The highest average level of satisfaction among all participants was with chapters 2 and 4, and the lowest level of satisfaction was with chapter 1. For chapter 1 – Strengthening Relationships, 57% of participants agreed or strongly agreed, 29% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 14% disagreed, that it had a positive impact on their interactions with children. For Chapter 2 – Praising Positive Child Behaviour, 71% of participants agreed or strongly agreed, and 29% neither agreed nor disagreed that it had a positive impact on their interactions with children. For Chapter 3 – How to Give Effective Instructions, 71% of participants agreed, and 29% neither agreed nor disagreed that it had a positive impact on their interactions with children. For Chapter 4 – Teaching New Behaviours, 100% of participants agreed that it had a positive impact on their interactions with the children. One participant did not respond to questions related to Chapter 5 – Promoting Language Skills, of those who did respond 67% agreed, and 33% neither agreed nor disagreed that Chapter 5 had a positive impact on their interactions with children.



*Figure 5.1 Overall participant satisfaction by chapter*

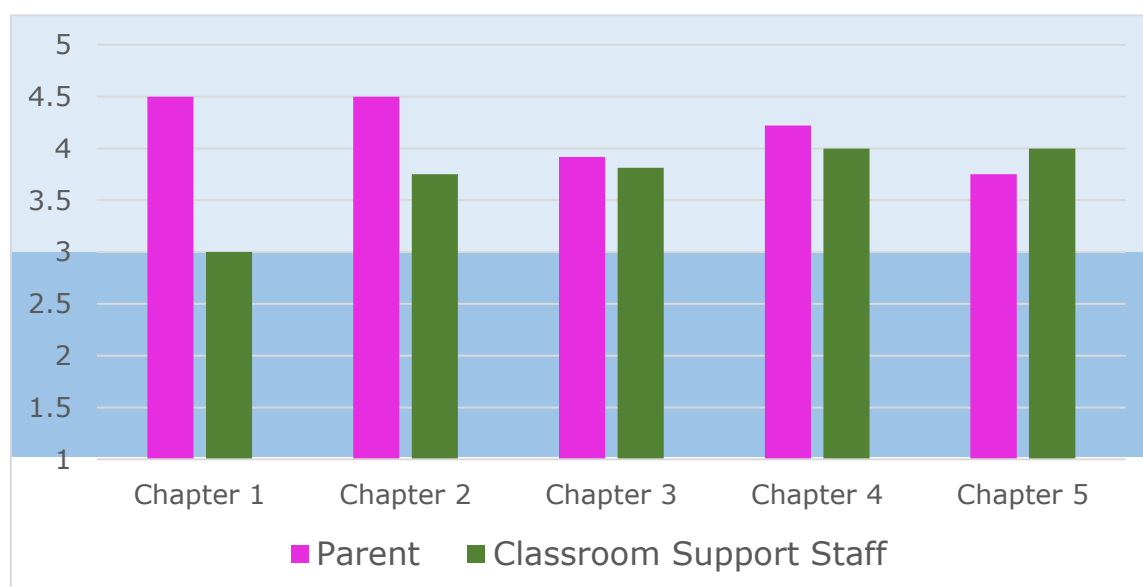
All participants agreed or strongly agreed that the SKILLS programme had helped them to increase their use of praise; improved the clarity with which they gave instructions; and given them new skills in teaching new behaviours. One participant did not respond to questions related to the overall SKILLS programme, however, of those who did, all participants agreed or strongly agreed that; strategies in the programme were easy to implement; examples given in video clips were useful; and that the programme overall had been useful. In response to whether participants believed a welsh language version of the programme would be useful 83% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 17% disagreed.

Table 5.2  
*User satisfaction descriptive statistics*

	<b>Parents (n=3)</b>		<b>Classroom Support Staff (n=4)</b>	
	<b><i>M</i></b>	<b><i>(SD)</i></b>	<b><i>M</i></b>	<b><i>(SD)</i></b>
<b>Chapter 1</b>				
Impact on relationship with child	4.67	(0.58)	3.00	(1.41)
Increased levels of child led play	4.33	(1.15)	3.00	(1.41)
<b>Chapter 2</b>				
Increased use of praise	4.33	(0.58)	4.00	(0.00)
Reduction in negative attention	4.67	(0.58)	3.50	(0.58)
<b>Chapter 3</b>				
Improved clarity of instruction giving	4.33	(0.58)	4.25	(0.50)
Decrease in instruction giving	3.67	(0.58)	4.00	(0.00)
Decreased instruction frequency	3.67	(0.58)	3.50	(0.58)
Decreased negotiation with children	4.00	(0.00)	3.50	(0.58)
<b>Chapter 4</b>				
Modelling behaviour	4.33	(0.58)	4.00	(0.82)
Teaching new tasks	4.33	(0.58)	4.25	(0.50)
Breaking down tasks	4.00	(0.00)	3.75	(0.50)
<b>Chapter 5</b>				
Language development skills	3.50	(0.71)	4.00	(0.00)
Labelling and describing feelings	4.00	(0.00)	4.00	(0.82)
<b>Overall Programme</b>				
Ease of implementation of strategies	5.00	(0.00)	4.25	(0.50)
Examples used in video clips	5.00	(0.00)	4.50	(0.58)
Usefulness of programme	4.50	(0.71)	4.25	(0.50)
Desire for a Welsh language version	3.00	(0.00)	2.75	(0.50)

**5.3.2 Classroom Support Staff and Parent Results Comparison**

Both classroom support staff and parents reported high levels of satisfaction with the programme. However, parents reported a higher level of satisfaction with all chapters than classroom support staff with the exception of Chapter 5. For Chapter 1, 67% of parents strongly agreed that the chapter had improved their interactions with their child, while 33% neither agreed nor disagreed; and 50% of classroom support staff agreed that the chapter was useful, while 25% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 25% disagreed. For Chapter 2, all parents agreed or strongly agreed that the chapter had improved their interactions with their child; and 50% of classroom support staff agreed that the chapter was useful, while 50% neither agreed nor disagreed. For Chapter 3, all parents agreed that the chapter had improved the way they gave instructions to their child; and 50% of classroom support staff found the chapter useful, while 50% neither agreed nor disagreed. For Chapter 4, all parents and all classroom support staff agreed that the chapter had improved the way they taught new behaviour to their children. For Chapter 5, 50% of parents who responded agreed that the chapter was useful, while 50% neither agreed nor disagreed; and 75% of classroom support staff agreed that the chapter had improved their skills in assisting children's language development, while 25% neither agreed nor disagreed.



*Figure 5.2* Classroom Support Staff and Parent Average Satisfaction by Chapter

All parents agreed or strongly agreed that the programme had helped them to; build a positive relationship with their child; increase their use of praise; reduce the amount of negative attention they gave to their child; improve the clarity with which they gave instructions; decrease the amount of negotiating they did with their child; improve their skills in modelling behaviour, teach new tasks and break down tasks; and increase their confidence in labelling and describing feelings.

All classroom support staff agreed or strongly agreed that the programme had helped them to; increase their use of praise; improve the clarity with which they gave instructions; decrease the amount of instructions given to children and improve their skills in teaching new tasks; and had given them new strategies for improving children's language development.

## 5.4 – Qualitative Findings

In general participants gave a very positive account of their experience of the SKILLS programme, both in terms of the programme itself and its impact on themselves and their children. Three main themes were chosen to reflect the research questions as well as the general flow of discussions with participants. Although the main themes are reflective of questions asked to participants during interviews, they have been chosen as they provide clear and distinct overall headings for the sub-themes, which represent the patterns and commonalities in participants answers.

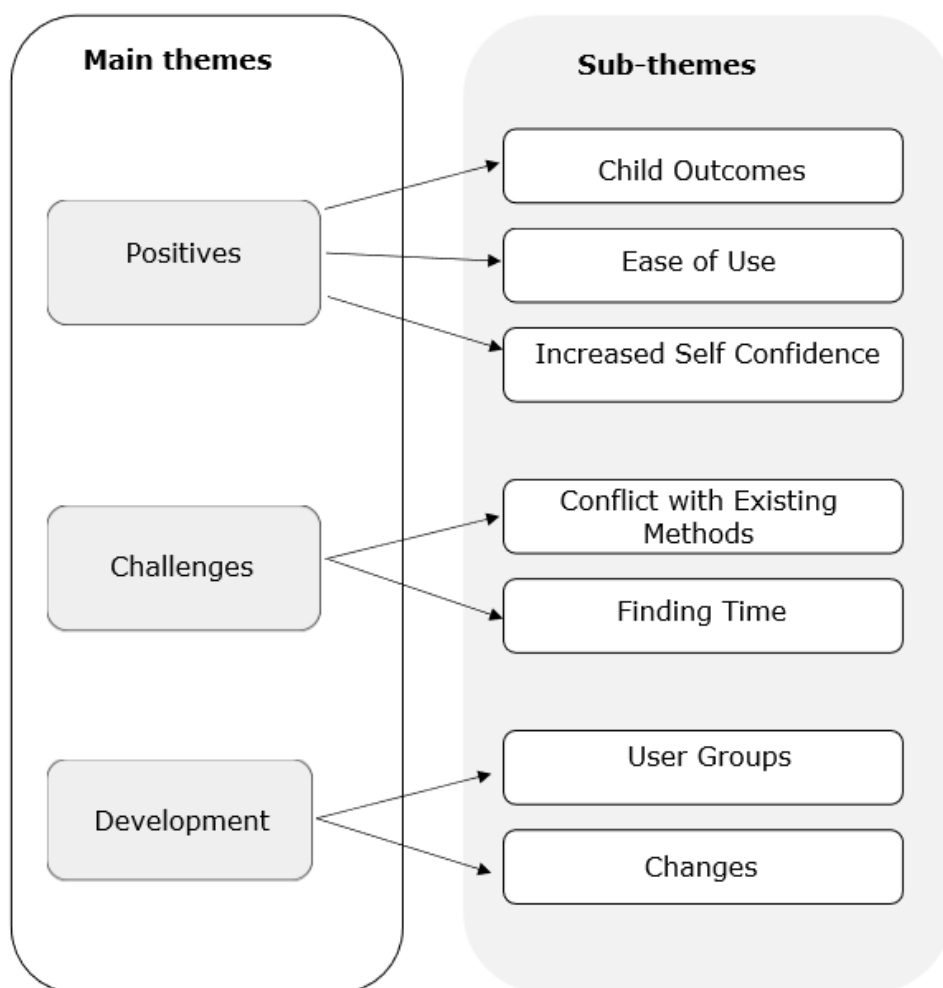


Figure 5.3 User satisfaction interviews thematic map

### **5.4.1 Theme 1 - Positives**

All participants talked about the SKILLS programme in a very positive light, giving several examples of why they believed the programme was beneficial. All participants described the content and the delivery of the programme positively and parents related this to positive outcomes for their child. Several participants also stated that they would recommend the programme to colleagues or friends.

#### **5.4.1.1 Child Outcomes**

All parent participants and one classroom support staff participant spoke of seeing a noticeable positive impact of the SKILLS programme on their child.

For the classroom support staff participant, the most positive impact of the SKILLS programme was to improve the child's literacy skills:

*When I did the online practice and it told you to do different techniques, different tones of voice or different ways to present yourself, when we sat down, I was trying to be more enthusiastic and his reading came on and he was more interested.*

(Participant 4, classroom support staff, working with child aged 3 years)

All three parents expressed the view that the SKILLS programme had positively improved their child's behaviour:



*Her behaviour is just coming down and down and down. (Participant 3, parent of child aged 4 years)*

*When I do get the chance to pick up [child] from school it's just positive feedback now. (Participant 2, parent of child aged 3 years)*

*I think, umm, yeah, like, he's improved a lot, hasn't he? I like the, you know the special time? That's what I enjoy most...because it calms him down, and he looks, he looks forward to it. (Participant 1, parent of child aged 6 years)*

Two participants also described seeing the positive impact of the programme on their other children:

*Especially with the other two children, some things that they like to do all the time, and you know no matter how many times you say not to do it...so more, instead of saying not to do that, distract them out of it, and just completely ignore what they're doing and not supposed to. (Participant 3, parent of child aged 4 years)*

*Seeing the difference in the kids, when I do spend quality time with them, more eye contact, things like saying their name and umm. Having an effective*

*relationship with them, whereas perhaps before we were banging heads a lot of the time. (Participant 2, parent of child aged 3 years)*

#### **5.4.1.2 Ease of Use**

All participants reported finding the programme easy to access and use:

*Yeah fine, it was all fine, yeah. No problems connecting to the website. (Participant 6, classroom support staff, working with child aged 6 years)*

*I found it really easy, I think that the sheet that we got how to go on it the first time, that was helpful. And then it was the same every time then, which was nice, it wasn't something different every week, I knew where it would be and it was easy to find it. (Participant 5, classroom support staff, working with child aged 6 years)*

For two participants ease of access was improved through being able to access the programme on their smartphone:

*I've only just done it on my phone. I've got an iPad mini, but I tend to hide it from the kids, so I don't get it out very often. (Participant 2, parent of child aged 3 years)*

*Oh easy, yeah, I just do it on my phone...it's only like a normal phone, and umm, and it, you just turned it like that way and then you could do it and watch the video and then answer the questions. (Participant 1, parent of child aged 6 years)*

Classroom support staff mostly accessed the programme in school on a PC or laptop:

*Little laptops, not sure what you'd call the things. I don't have a computer, so I have to do it in work.*

(Participant 7, classroom support staff, working with child aged 6 years)

*On a tablet and the computer in the classroom, just depending on where's best to do it. (Participant 4, classroom support staff, working with child aged 3 years)*

#### **5.4.1.3 Increased Self Confidence**

Many participants spoke of the SKILLS programmes as a refresher, and a way of increasing confidence in applying existing knowledge in practice:

*It was really informative, really really good. I mean I've done most of that kind of thing before, so for me*

*it was more of a refresher and just a reminder.*

(Participant 3, parent of child aged 4 years)

*And there are things on there that you do already know, but you think; 'oh I can use it in that way'.*

*So, I've really enjoyed using it.* (Participant 5, classroom support staff, working with child aged 6 years)

*It's been quite a nice refresher in a way, because some of the things are things that you probably made sense, but you sort of forget them in day to day life, don't you.* (Participant 7, classroom support staff, working with child aged 6 years)

For two parent participants the SKILLS programme gave them strategies and confidence to be the parent they had aspired to be before having children:

*It's all the things I wanted to be before having kids. The parent you want to be, before you actually have the children...it's been, a good reminder of how to do it, rather than not to do it.* (Participant 2, parent of child aged 3 years)

For one parent taking part in the SKILLS programme validated her existing beliefs around her child's treatment in school, and gave her the

confidence to arrange a meeting with school to challenge some of the practices used with her child:

*But I think, like with doing this course it has given me more confidence to say, umm; 'I'm not happy with it'...So, we are getting on a bit better, me and school. (Participant 1, parent of child aged 6 years)*

### **5.4.2 Theme 2 – Challenges**

Although all participants spoke positively of the SKILLS programme, many also spoke of the challenges they faced in trying to complete and implement the programme. Challenges featured slightly more consistently among classroom support staff participants experience, than parents, however for all participants most challenges were easily overcome.

#### **5.4.2.1 Conflict with existing methods**

Three participants expressed initial difficulties with aligning the 'special time' technique described in the SKILLS programme, with an existing school behavioural policy:

*Yeah, so the colour system that's already in place in the school. It's like a behaviour one, so if they're on a red card we couldn't do anything because other children see, saw that as a reward. (Participant 6,*

classroom support staff, working with child aged 6 years)

*The only things we've struggled to have with our policy, our 'good to be green' policy, if they get a red card they have to take some time out, the only thing is, with them having that, I don't want them to feel that they are then being rewarded having their own time with me...but then, we have to sort of see it as they've had that red card, they've done that now, and that's over...so we've sort of taken that approach to it so they still get their time as well...So it was just trying to keep them both separate. (Participant 5, classroom support staff, working with child aged 6 years)*

One participant described the challenge of grandparents' views conflicting with not only the content of the SKILLS programme, but the concept of parenting programmes all together:

*[Grandparents] really don't umm, appreciate any training, 'why would you need training to parent a child', it's more, umm, yeah, they don't understand that at all. If you need training to parent a child in their eyes then you're not a very good parent.*

(Participant 3, parent of child aged 4 years)

#### 5.4.2.2 Finding Time

Many participants spoke of how having a busy work or home life had made it difficult to find time to complete the SKILLS programme:

*You know, you kept thinking 'I'll do it later', 'I'll do it later'... because I'm so busy. (Participant 3, parent of child aged 4 years)*

*I found it hard to find the time, to fit it in with the class, but I found the time slot on a Wednesday to do it and then I practiced after I did it, so straight after so there was no gap, and I found it, fresh in my mind and just go do it. (Participant 4, classroom support staff, working with child aged 3 years)*

Some participants also spoke of how having a busy or hectic life made implementing some strategies difficult in practice:

*It is difficult sometimes when you're in the heat of the moment, and you're trying to get them out of the door for school...to remember, how to get through the routine in a positive way... life, has its hectic moments, and that gets in the way. (Participant 2, parent of child aged 3 years)*

*Unfortunately, in practice it's not really possible to do that all the time, but that's just something you have*

*to be resigned to, isn't it, with 30 children.*

(Participant 7, classroom support staff, working with child aged 6 years)

### **5.4.3 Theme 3 –Development**

All participants believed the SKILLS programme was beneficial and would recommend it for use by other individuals working with or caring for children. Some participants also had suggestions for changes that could be made in the delivery of the SKILLS programme.

#### **5.4.3.1 User Groups**

All participants believed the SKILLS programme would benefit classroom support staff and parents:

*Definitely teaching assistants, it would be really useful for them, all of them to have that kind of training. Because at least they know what to do with the children and they're all working from the same page. (Participant 3, parent of child aged 4 years)*

*When I spoke to [child's parent], she's found it beneficial because she's been doing it umm, trying to involve what she's learnt at home, and she's found it beneficial, from what I've heard anyway. So I think to continue it with parents, so, because some parents aren't aware, and some parents are, but just to put it*



*out there, for other parents, let them know.*

(Participant 4, classroom support staff, working with child aged 3 years)

Many participants also believed other members of school staff would benefit from the programme:

*Do you know what I think it would be a good thing for everybody maybe to try. I think maybe if you were a teaching assistant try it first, but it would be good for teachers to try, because we all forget things don't we...Because it would be nice for everybody to be able to say; 'well we'll implement that because', you know, so we're all doing it and we're all following it, and then it's consistency isn't it.* (Participant 5, classroom support staff, working with child aged 6 years)

For two participants encouraging fathers to access the programme was viewed as important:

*I think, yeah, to be honest, when you're having parents doing this, I think it is important if both can do it. Because, then they're both singing from the same page. So, they can both have access I think that's important.* (Participant 3, parent of child aged 4 years)

Many participants expressed the view that the programme should be completed by anyone involved with the care of children, so that a universal approach was consistent across environments:

*Yeah, I think it's beneficial to everyone, because like you can always learn. Like there's always different ways that you can, like expand on your knowledge, so I think everybody.* (Participant 6, classroom support staff, working with child aged 6 years)

*I can't see who it wouldn't benefit for really. I think it's across the board.* (Participant 7, classroom support staff, working with child aged 6 years)

Most participants expressed a belief that the programme would benefit all children, but that children with challenging behaviour would benefit the most:

*But I think anyone who needs a bit of extra help and support it's a good thing. Even if like, the child was like, what they call 'normal', if the parents needed a bit of help and support, it's a good thing to have isn't it. Even if the school didn't do it, the parents could just do it couldn't they. Bit of help. And it like, reassures you doesn't it.* (Participant 1, parent of child aged 6 years)

*Challenging behaviour children probably children. It might help parents to understand why they're doing that certain behaviour, because I can imagine it would be stressful, you know not understanding, but it could be, it's beneficial I think for every parent to possibly do, but more so for the challenging behaviour children. (Participant 5, classroom support staff, working with child aged 6 years)*

#### **5.4.3.2 Changes**

One participant expressed a desire for a more structured delivery to help with completing the programme alongside a busy schedule:

*I think for me, if we had it more structured, you needed to do by, on a certain day. It would have been easier...for me that would have helped, would have been better. (Participant 3, parent of child aged 4 years)*

For one participant adding an interactive element, where parents and school staff could share information about the same child, was viewed as a beneficial development to the programme:

*If they were doing it and then you were doing it, but you can't see each other's, maybe you could like ask questions to the ta or the teacher and they could, if*

*they have a problem with him, they could say something couldn't they, like that maybe.*

(Participant 1, parent of child aged 6 years)

One participant expressed a desire for physical paper copies of information to accompany the online programme:

*Maybe paper copies of, you know, of your PowerPoints, like of the slides. Because that was just, it was just handy to have them isn't it. So, just with, because it was so jam packed with information, maybe just a copy of the PowerPoints.* (Participant 6, classroom support staff, working with child aged 6 years)

## **5.5 - Discussion**

As with the findings of research into participant satisfaction with parenting interventions, this study has shown that both classroom support staff and parents had a shared positive experience in using and implementing the SKILLS programme. Overall quantitative results from the SKILLS evaluation questionnaire indicated a high level of satisfaction with the programme, with chapters 2 and 4 being viewed most positively by participants on average. Parental and classroom support staff views of the programme did not differ significantly. However, on average parents viewed the first chapters related to building relationships and praising children more positively than classroom support staff. Conversely, classroom support staff viewed content related to promoting language development in chapter 5 more positively than parents. This slight difference in perception between groups is most likely due to the environment and context within which they each implemented the programme. For parents, spending time with their children in a home environment, the emphasis on play and praise most likely fits better with their expectations of how their child can be best supported, than more academic skills such as language development. In contrast, classroom support staff by nature of the school environment have a more academic focus to their interactions with children and therefore would most likely find academic related topics such as language development more useful. Future developments of the programme could address this difference in user

groups by including more explanation and examples of why nurturing techniques such as play and praise are as important in the school environment as they are in the home, as well as more home related examples of the importance of language development skills.

When the quantitative results from the present study are viewed alongside those for self-report measures and video observations as examined in chapter 4, an interesting comparison can be drawn between participants perception of the impact of the SKILLS programme and actual changes to their own and their children's behaviour. Overall it appears that participants perceived the programme to have had a more significant impact on both their own and their children's behaviour than the results from video observations and self-report measures would suggest. The question of why positive feelings towards the SKILLS programme did not appear to translate into significant behaviour change is an important one for future research to explore. This could be done by conducting longer-term follow-up assessments with participants to assess whether positive feelings about the programme translate into behaviour change at a later stage.

The qualitative findings from this study reflect the quantitative results, with all participants describing their experience of the SKILLS programme in largely positive terms. Both parent and classroom support staff had a shared experience of the programme in terms of its positive impact on themselves and their children, as well as its ease of use. The fact that participants were able to access the programme on a

variety of devices and in home and work environments indicates that changes made to the SKILLS programme for the present study were effective in increasing the programmes accessibility. Parent and classroom support staff also had shared experiences of challenges related to SKILLS in terms of finding time to complete and implement the programme. Therefore, it is important that future development of the programme address this issue by providing time management strategies or incentives to complete the programme at a certain time each week, as suggested by one participant in the present study. Conflict with existing strategies for managing behaviour were mostly related to school-based policy, however one participant also expressed a concern related to older family members views on parenting. All participants spoke highly of the SKILLS programme and all believed that more participant groups should be encouraged to use the programme in the future, particularly wider school staff and family members. Three participants also gave suggestions about ways in which the delivery of the programme could be further improved in the future.

Unlike the findings of Jones et al. (2019), participants in the present study did not believe that a welsh language version of the programme would be useful. However, this was most likely due to the fact that, although the study was conducted in Wales, none of the participants in the present study were welsh speakers, rather than being directly related to the SKILLS programme itself. Also, unlike participants in Jones et al. (2019), participants in the present study reported a high

level of satisfaction with the video examples used in the programme, suggesting that the addition of more examples of children with disabilities in the present version had improved user experience.

Furthermore, both parent and classroom support staff in the present study rated the overall content of the video examples and programme highly, indicating that adaptations to the content, to make it more relevant to children with a wider range of developmental challenges, were successful.

A general aim for the development of the SKILLS programme for use by home and school was to improve home-school links, as well as to provide consistency in different environments for children. Therefore, one surprising finding of the present study is the lack of communication between parents and classroom support staff completing the programme simultaneously. Only two out of the total five parent-classroom support staff dyads had spoken to one another directly about the programme, and in both cases only briefly. One classroom support staff and parent had spoken briefly about the programme but had not fully discussed the impact or implementation of strategies for the child. One parent had engaged with school more actively due to discovery, via feedback from the child, that the programme was not being implemented as anticipated in school. Although this participant described her relationship with school as improved due to this contact, she still appeared to be unaware as to how much of the programme was being implemented in school, indicating a lack of clear dialogue between



the classroom support staff and parent. For the other three dyads no communication between parent and school support staff had occurred during the six-week programme and there appeared to be a lack of knowledge as to whether the other participant had completed the programme. Therefore, it is important that future developments of the SKILLS programme include ways to encourage communication between home and school. One suggested change by a parent participant in the present study was to include a messaging facility between school and parent within the programme and this might prove to be a useful tool to achieve this. Furthermore, the significance of positive home-school relationships could be incorporated into the content of the programme itself to highlight to both parents and school staff the importance of proactive engagement with one another.

A secondary issue highlighted by the present study is that of the challenges presented by some current school behavioural policies for children with additional learning needs. In the present study this was brought to light by the conflict with implementation of 'special time' and existing school behavioural policy based on punishment by removal of free time. The apparent difficulty of classroom support staff to understand the importance of building a positive relationship with a child, in the context of a school behaviour policy focused on punishing unwanted behaviour, highlights a potential challenge for engaging schools in more positive strategies for managing children's behaviour. Furthermore, the perceived detrimental impact of an existing

behavioural policy in one school on children with additional learning needs, as described by a parent participant in the present study, is an area which should be investigated in more detail in future research. If school behavioural policies are not only ineffective, but also detrimental to certain groups of children, particularly those with additional learning needs, then it is important that these issues are addressed in order to achieve a fully inclusive classroom environment for all children.

## **5.6 - Conclusions**

The present study has explored the experience of classroom support staff and parents in completing and implementing the online self-directed positive parenting programme, SKILLS. All participants reported high overall levels of satisfaction with the programme and spoke highly of both its content and ease of accessibility during qualitative interviews. Although a motivating factor behind the present development of the SKILLS programme, for use by parents and school staff, was to improve home-school links, results from the present study suggest that this goal has not been achieved. Although two parent-classroom support staff dyads did talk to one another about the programme this interaction was only brief, and for the other the interaction only arose due to increased home-school conflict. For all other parent-classroom support staff dyads there was no communication about SKILLS, or the child's progress, throughout the programme. Therefore, it is important that future development of SKILLS address the need for a positive collaborative home-school relationship more explicitly than in the current version of the programme.

As this was only a small-scale feasibility study it is not possible to say whether the experience of the participants is reflective of a wider population. However, the high level of acceptability across all participants of both the delivery method and content indicate the

possibility that this type of programme could be effective in addressing a knowledge gap for both parents and school staff when it comes to children's challenging behaviour. Future research using a larger number of participants and addressing challenges such as poor home-school relations, and participant time management, is necessary to assess the full impact of a self-directed online positive parenting programme for both parents and school staff.

## **Chapter Six – Conclusion**

This project has explored the current state of knowledge and training available to school support staff working with children with ALN in Wales as well as the relationship between the parents of these children and schools, through the lens of a feasibility study of a self-directed online training programme based on social learning theory derived parenting programmes. The experiences of five members of school classroom support staff, working in two schools in North Wales, were explored through qualitative interviews. Classroom support staff were found to have a shared experience of challenges surrounding child behavioural problems and time pressures, as well as limited role related training opportunities. These findings gave context to the wider study which implemented the online training programme SKILLS with the same five classroom support staff, plus the parents of pupils they supported on a 1:1 basis. The aim of the SKILLS programme was to give both parents and classroom support staff strategies for supporting children based on positive parenting programmes, due to the strong evidence base that this approach has a positive effect on reducing child behavioural problems. A further aim of the SKILLS programme was to facilitate a collaborative approach between home and school, for the benefit of the child.

All participants for whom follow-up data was collected rated their experience of the SKILLS programme highly. Both parents and

classroom support staff expressed a view that they had found the programme both easy to use and informative. Participants also reported having a stronger sense of competence in their role as parent or classroom support staff after completing the SKILLS programme. However, observations of adult-child interactions revealed only slight changes in adult participants behaviour, with the exception school staff questioning and parent praise. Furthermore, self-report measures showed limited change in participants well-being or reported changes in child behaviour.

A key aspect of the feasibility study was to assess the extent to which parents and school support staff jointly engaged in the programme. Results showed that only two out of a total of five parent classroom support staff dyads completed both baseline and follow-up measures, with one classroom support staff and two parents being lost to follow-up and having not completed any of the SKILLS programme. Furthermore, both parents and school support staff spoken to at follow-up appeared unaware as to whether or not their respective dyad partner had completed the programme and had had little to no interaction with them throughout the study. This indicates a need to develop the programme to more actively encourage joint engagement between parents and school support staff in any future studies. Although, due to the small sample size, no firm conclusions can be drawn from this study, the fact that parents of children with ALN did not appear to have any direct contact with the school support staff who worked with their

children on a daily basis is a cause for concern. Since evidence suggests the benefit of a strong home-school relationship and consistency between environments for positive child outcomes, best practice would be for parents to have regular contact with staff working on a 1:1 basis with their child, as well as general open and clear dialogue between home and school. Further research is necessary to ascertain how typical the present study is of the wider situation across Wales in order to inform necessary policy changes.

Although participant drop out decreased the amount of follow-up data, the predominant reason for a small sample size in this study was due to challenges during the recruitment phase. Initial contact with schools was made towards the end of the school year, which was not an ideal time due to uncertainty over the following years staffing and pupil arrangements. Furthermore, the SKILLS programme was run in the autumn term, which again was not timed well for schools due to the initial settling in phase for younger pupils, and the preparations for Christmas concerts and other seasonal activities. Therefore, future research would benefit from a timetable which allowed initial contact with schools to be made during the autumn term, and for the project to be run during the spring term to fit better with school timetables.

Another challenge faced during the recruitment phase was the reluctance of schools to engage parents to participate in the study. As a key aim of the development of the SKILLS programme for this project was to facilitate home-school collaboration by running the programme

with both parents and school-based staff, the reluctance on the part of schools to engage parents is a cause of concern. Schools who expressed initial interest in the project, but then declined to take part expressed a belief that they would not be able to recruit any of the parents of children who received 1:1 support in their school.

Furthermore, of the schools who agreed to take part two became ineligible due to being unable to recruit any parent participants. Given the evidence of the added benefit of interventions targeting both home and school, it is important that future research is conducted to explore the apparent difficulties experienced by schools in engaging the parents of their most vulnerable pupils. Future research wishing to recruit both school and parent participants should also explore ways to support schools with parent recruitment. This could be through more face to face visits with schools, parent directed materials for schools to use during recruitment, or by attempting to recruit parents directly through other organisations who may already have some involvement with children at home and school, such as speech and language therapists or school nurses.

A final issue raised by the present study is that of the potentially inappropriate behavioural policies currently being implemented by primary schools in Wales. One parent and two classroom support staff raised the issue of a 'traffic light' behavioural policy conflicting with the relationship building element of the SKILLS programme. As building a positive relationship with a child is the foundation for all social learning



theory derived parenting programmes, negating this step due to conflict with existing school policy undermines the entire programme.

Furthermore, for the parent in this study the use of a punishment based behavioural policy was not only ineffective, due to her child always being 'on red', but also detrimental to her child's mental health. Many schools recognise the challenges faced by pupils and are trying to address them but face difficulties with time and resources due to increasing pupil numbers and funding cuts. Therefore, it is important that good quality, cost effective, evidence-based tools are made available to schools so that they can support all of their pupils to achieve the best possible outcomes. Due to the small sample size further research is needed to establish the extent to which school behaviour policies across Wales are rooted in evidence-based practice. If the challenges faced by schools in the present study are reflective of a wider issue then it is imperative that schools are supported, perhaps through policy changes at a national level, to ensure that practices used to manage child problem behaviour and promote positive behaviour are rooted in evidence-based research so that they achieve the most positive results for both schools and pupils.

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## Appendix 1 – Parent Note of Interest Form

COLEG GWYDDORAU IECHYD AC YMDDYGIAD  
COLLEGE OF HEALTH & BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCES

YSGOL SEICOLEG  
SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY



**Development and evaluation of an online programme for parents and school support staff**

**PARENT NOTE OF INTEREST**

If you have discussed the research project with your child's school and are willing to learn more about this exciting research opportunity, please complete and sign this form and hand it back to the staff member.

Name of School:	
Parent Name:	
Child Name:	
Address:	
Postcode:	
Telephone (Landline):	
Telephone (Mobile):	
First Language:	
Best Time to Contact:	

**I consent for my child's school to forward my contact details to the research team at Bangor University.** I understand that I will be contacted and provided with additional information about the study and the possibility of participating in the project at which time I will have the opportunity to decide whether or not to participate.

Signature:	Date:
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Version 1 21/03/2018

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**Datblygiad a dadansoddiad pellach o raglen ar y we sy'n targedu rhieni a staff cefnogi ysgol**

**NODYN O DDIDDORDEB I RIENI**

Os ydych wedi trafod y prosiect ymchwil gydag ysgol eich plentyn ag eisiau gwybod mwy am y cyfle ymchwil cyffroes hwn, cwblwheuwch a llofnodwch y ffurflen hon a'i ddychwelyd i'r aelod staff os gwelwch yn dda.

Enw'r Ysgol:	
Enw Rhiant:	
Enw Plentyn:	
Cyfeiriad:	
Côd post:	
Ffôn (Cartref):	
Ffôn (Symudol):	
Iaith Cyntaf:	
Amser Gorau i Gysylltu:	

**Rwyf yn caniatáu i ysgol fy mhleintyn yrru fy manylion cyswllt ymlaen i'r tîm ymchwil ym Mhrifysgol Bangor.** Rwyf yn deall y bydd rhywun yn cysylltu â mi ag yn rhoi gwybodaeth ychwanegol am yr astudiaeth a'r posibilrwydd o gymryd rhan yn y prosiect a byddaf yn cael cyfle i benderfynu os wyf am gymryd rhan neu beidio.

Llofnod:	Dyddiad:
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## Appendix 2 – School Support Staff Note of Interest Form

COLEG GWYDDORAU IECHYD AC YMDDYGIAD  
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YSGOL SEICOLEG  
SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY



**Development and evaluation of an online programme for parents and school support staff**

**SCHOOL SUPPORT STAFF NOTE OF INTEREST**

If you have discussed the research project with the school and are willing to learn more about this exciting research opportunity, please complete and sign this form and hand it to back to the school.

Name of School:	
Staff Name:	
Child Name:	
School Address:	
Postcode:	
Telephone (Landline):	
First Language:	
Staff Email:	

**I consent for the school to forward my contact details to the research team at Bangor University.** I understand that I will be contacted and provided with additional information about the study and the possibility of participating in the project at which time I will have the opportunity to decide whether or not to participate.

Signature:	Date:
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**Datblygiad a dadansoddiad pellach o raglen ar y we sy'n targedu rhieni a staff cefnogi ysgol**

**NODYN O DDIDDORDEB I STAFF CEFNOGI YSGOL**

Os ydych wedi trafod y prosiect ymchwil gyda'r ysgol ag eisiau gwybod mwy am y cyfle ymchwil cyffroes hwn, cwblwheuwch a llofnodwch y ffurflen hon a'i ddychwelyd i'r aelod staff os gwelwch yn dda.

Enw'r Ysgol:	
Enw Aelod Staff:	
Enw Plentyn:	
Cyfeiriad yr Ysgol:	
Côd post:	
Ffôn (Cartref):	
Iaith Cyntaf:	
Ebost Staff:	

**Rwyf yn caniatáu i'r ysgol yrru fy manylion cyswllt ymlaen i'r tîm ymchwil ym Mhrifysgol Bangor.** Rwyf yn deall y bydd rhywun yn cysylltu â mi ag yn rhoi gwybodaeth ychwanegol am yr astudiaeth a'r posibilrwydd o gymryd rhan yn y prosiect a byddaf yn cael cyfle i benderfynu os wyf am gymryd rhan neu beidio.

Llofnod:	Dyddiad:
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## Appendix 3 – Parent Participant Information Sheet

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### PARENT INFORMATION SHEET

#### **Development and evaluation of an online programme for parents and school support staff**

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve.

A member of the research team will go through the information with you and answer any questions you may have.

Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with your family and the school if you wish. If anything is unclear, or you would like more information, you are welcome to ask us any questions.

#### ***What is the purpose of this study?***

At the School of Psychology in Bangor we have been developing online programmes for parents and school staff. The purpose of this study is to take this work forward and undertake a trial of an online programme for parents and school support staff. The programme is designed for school support staff and parents of children aged 3-7 years with additional learning needs. It aims to teach parents and school support staff strategies that address common behavioural challenges and promote language and communication skills. In this study we are recruiting school support staff and parents of the same child to undertake the programme to see whether parents and school support staff like the programme and whether it leads to changes in parents', school support staff's, and children's behaviour.

#### ***Why have I been asked to take part?***

You have been invited to take part because you have a child aged 3-7 years who receives some 1:1 support in school and your child's school support worker has agreed to also take part in the trial. With your permission, the school has forwarded your details to the research team.

#### ***What does the study involve?***

A researcher will visit you within the next month and again two months later. At each visit, the researcher will ask you to complete some questionnaires about yourself and your child. She will also ask you and your child to interact together as you normally would so that she can observe how you and your child interact during a short play and reading session. This observation will be video recorded so that it can be coded at a later time. You will also be invited to take part in an interview after completing the online programme to get your feedback on the programme. The interview will be audio recorded for later transcribing. All names, places etc will be anonymised. The initial visit will last about 30 minutes and the final visit with the interview will last no more than one hour. If you consent to take part in exchange for your time and effort, after the

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final data collection visit, we will give you a copy of the 'Little Parent Handbook' on which the online programme is based and an age appropriate book for your child.

Once the initial home visit is complete, you will be given a username and password to access the online programme. The programme consists of six sessions, one to be completed each week, and can be accessed from a laptop computer, tablet, or mobile phone.

***Are there any benefits or risks in taking part?***

The benefits of taking part will be the opportunity to complete a six-week online programme to learn new skills that could potentially help you support your child. It could also strengthen your relationship with your child's school. There are no obvious risks in taking part in this study. If you agree to take part in the study, you will be asked to complete questionnaires and a 20-minute video recorded observation session in a home visit by a researcher (10 minutes of reading and 10 minutes of play). You will also be invited to take part in an interview after completing the programme to get your opinions on the programme. These are the only possible inconvenience. A researcher will only visit with your permission and at a time that is convenient for you.

***What will happen to my data?***

All the information about you and your child collected by the researcher will remain strictly confidential and will be kept at the Centre for Evidence Based Early Intervention, Bangor University in a locked cabinet. The videos from the observations will be kept on a University, encrypted laptop and only the research team will have access to them.

Our procedures for handling, processing, storage and destruction of data are compliant with the Bangor University policies and procedures.

When the results of this study are reported, information provided by school support staff and families taking part will be reported as a group and not as individuals. At the end of the project, we will send a letter to all of the school support staff and families who participated outlining the results of the study. We will ensure confidentiality unless we have cause for concern regarding the child's safety. If any child protection issues arise, the researchers will inform the primary supervisor who will pass on the information to the relevant service providers.

***What if I don't want to take part?***

It is up to you whether or not you decide to take part in this research project. We will explain the study and go through this information sheet with you. If you do decide to take part, we will then ask you to sign a consent form. You will be given a copy of the information sheet and the signed consent form to keep for your records. You are free to withdraw from the research at any time and you do not need to give a reason. This will not affect your or your child's access to other services.

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***Who do I contact about the study?***

If you would like any further information about this study you could contact:

Name: Dr Margiad Elen Williams (Research Officer)  
Email: [margiad.williams@bangor.ac.uk](mailto:margiad.williams@bangor.ac.uk); Tel: 01248 383627

***Who do I contact with any concerns about the study?***

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you should ask to speak to the researchers who will do their best to answer your questions (tel: 01248 383627).

If you are unhappy with the conduct of this research and wish to complain formally, you should contact:

Name: Mr Huw Ellis (School Manager, School of Psychology, Bangor University)  
Email: [huw.ellis@bangor.ac.uk](mailto:huw.ellis@bangor.ac.uk); Tel: 01248 383229

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## TAFLEN WYBODAETH I RIENI

### Datblygiad a dadansoddiad pellach o raglen ar y we sy'n targedu rhieni a staff cefnogi ysgol

Rydych yn cael eich gwahodd i gymryd rhan mewn astudiaeth ymchwil. Cyn i chi benderfynu mae'n bwysig i chi ddeall pam mae'r ymchwil yn cael ei gynnal a beth fydd yn ei olygu.

Bydd aelod o'r tîm ymchwil yn mynd drwy'r wybodaeth gyda chi ag yn ateb unrhyw gwestiynnau fydd gennych.

Cymerwch amser i ddarllen y wybodaeth canlynol yn ofalus a'i drafod gyda'ch teulu neu'r ysgol os dymunwch. Os oes unrhyw beth yn aneglir, neu os oes ydych eisiau mwy o wybodaeth, mae croeso i chi ofyn unrhyw gwestiynnau.

#### ***Beth yw pwrpas yr astudiaeth hwn?***

Yn yr Ysgol Seicoleg ym Mangor rydym wedi bod yn datblygu rhaglenni ar y we ar gyfer rhieni a staff ysgol. Pwrpas yr astudiaeth yw i barhau gyda'r gwaith a gwneud dadansoddiad o raglen ar y we ar gyfer rhieni a staff cefnogi ysgol. Mae'r rhaglen wedi'u datblygu ar gyfer staff cefnogi ysgol a rhieni plant 3-7 mlwydd oed gydag anghenion dysgu ychwanegol. Nod y rhaglen yw i ddysgu strategaethau i rieni a staff cefnogi ysgol sy'n mynd i'r afael â sialensau ymddygiadol cyffredin ag i hybu sgiliau iaith a chyfathrebu. Yn yr astudiaeth hwn, rydym yn recriwtio staff cefnogi ysgol a rhieni yr un plentyn i wneud y rhaglen er mwyn gweld os yw rhieni a staff cefnogi ysgol yn hoffi'r rhaglen ag os yw'n arwain at newidiadau mewn ymddygiad rhieni, staff cefnogi ysgol, a plant.

#### ***Pam ydw i wedi cael fy ngwahodd?***

Rydych wedi cael gwahoddiad i gymryd rhan oherwydd mae gennych blentyn 3-7 mlwydd oed sy'n derbyn rhywfaint o gymorth 1:1 yn yr ysgol a mae'r aelod staff sy'n cefnogi'ch plentyn wedi cytuno i gymryd rhan yn y treial. Gyda'ch caniatad, mae'r ysgol wedi gyrru eich manylion i'r tîm ymchwil.

#### ***Beth fydd yn digwydd os na'i gymryd rhan?***

Bydd ymchwilydd yn ymweld â chi o fewn y mis nesaf ag eto dau fis yn ddiweddarach. Yn ystod pob ymweliad, bydd yr ymchwilydd yn gofyn i chi gwblhau holiaduron amdano chi a'ch plentyn. Byddai hefyd yn gofyn i chi a'ch plentyn ryngweithio gyda'ch gilydd fel yr ydych yn arfer wneud er mwyn iddi gael arsylwi sut yr ydych yn rhyngweithio yn ystod sesiwn chwarae a darllen byr. Bydd yr arsylwad yn cael ei recordio er mwyn gallu ei sgorio yn hwyrach ymlaen. Byddech hefyd yn cael eich gwahodd i gymryd rhan mewn cyfweiliad ar ôl cwblhau'r rhaglen i gasglu eich barn am y rhaglen. Bydd y cyfweiliad yn cael ei recordio (llais yn unig) ar gyfer ei trawsgrifio yn ddiweddarach. Ni fydd unrhyw enwau, llefydd ayyb yn cael eu cyhoeddi. Bydd yr

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ymweliad cychwynnol yn para oddeutu 30 munud a'r ymweliad olaf gyda'r cyfweliad yn para dim mwy nag un awr. Os ydych yn cytuno i gymryd rhan yn gyfnewid am eich amser ag ymdrech, ar ôl casglu y data dilynol, byddem yn rhoi copi o'r 'Llawlyfr Bach Rhieni' sef sylfaen y rhaglen ar y we i chi a llyfr o oedran addas i'ch plentyn. Unwaith bydd yr ymweliad cartref cychwynol wedi'i gwblhau, byddwch yn derbyn enw defnyddiwr a cyfrinair ar gyfer y rhaglen ar y we. Mae'r gan y rhaglen chwe sesiwn, un i'w gwblhau bob wythnos, a gallwch gael mynediad i'r rhaglen gyda laptop, tablet, neu ffôn symudol.

#### ***Oes unrhyw fuddion neu risgiau o gymryd rhan?***

Y buddion o gymryd rhan yw'r cyfle i gwblhau rhaglen chwe-wythnos ar y we i ddysgu sgiliau newydd a all eich helpu i gefnogi eich plentyn. Gall hefyd gryfhau eich perthynas gydag ysgol eich plentyn. Nid oed unrhyw risgiau amlwg o gymryd rhan yn yr astudiaeth hon. Os ydych yn cytuno i gymryd rhan, byddwch yn cael eich gofyn i gwblhau holiaduron a sesiwn arsylwi 20-munud sy'n cael ei recordio ar fideo mewn ymweliad cartref gan yr ymchwilydd (10 munud o ddarllen a 10 munud o chwarae). Byddech hefyd yn cael eich gwahodd i gymryd rhan mewn cyfweliad ar ôl cwblhau'r rhaglen i gasglu eich barn am y rhaglen. Rhain yw'r unig anghyfleustra posibl. Bydd ymchwilydd ond yn ymweld gyda'ch caniatad ag yn ystod amser sy'n gyfleus i chi.

#### ***Beth fydd yn digwydd i fy data?***

Bydd yr holl wybodaeth fydd yr ymchwilydd yn ei gasglu amdano chi a'ch plentyn yn aros yn gwbl gyfrinachol ag yn cael ei gadw yng Nghanolfan Ymyrraeth Gynnar ar Sail Tystiolaeth, Prifysgol Bangor mewn cwpwrdd dan glo. Bydd y fideos o'r arsylwadau yn cael eu cadw ar laptop Prifysgol wedi'i amgryptio a dim ond y tîm ymchwil fydd efo mynediad iddynt hwy.

Mae ein gweithdrefnau ar gyfer trin, prosesu, storio a dinistrio data yn cydymffurfio â pholisïau a gweithdrefnau Prifysgol Bangor.

Pan fydd canlyniadau'r astudiaeth yn cael eu cyhoeddi, bydd gwybodaeth gan staff cefnogi ysgol a theuluoedd sy'n cymryd rhan yn cael eu adrodd fel grŵp a ddim fel unigolion. Ar ddiwedd y prosiect, byddwn yn gyrru llythyr i'r holl staff cefnogi ysgol a theuluoedd wnaeth gymryd rhan yn amlinellu canlyniadau'r astudiaeth. Byddwn yn sicrhau cyfrinachedd os nag oes unrhyw bryder am ddiogelwch eich plentyn. Os fydd unrhyw amheuan gydag amddiffyn plant yn codi, bydd yr ymchwilydd yn dweud wrth eu Prif Oruchwyliwr a fydd yn rhannu y wybodaeth gyda'r gwasanaethau priodol.

#### ***Beth os nad wyf eisiau cymryd rhan?***

Mae i fynu i chi os ydych chi eisiau cymryd rhan yn y prosiect ymchwil hwn neu beidio. Bydd yr ymchwilydd yn esbonio'r astudiaeth ag yn mynd drwy'r daflen wybodaeth hon gyda chi. Os ydych yn penderfynu cymryd rhan, byddem yn gofyn i chi arwyddo y daflen caniatad. Cewch gopi o'r daflen wybodaeth a'r daflen caniatad sydd wedi'i arwyddo i'w cadw ar gyfer eich cofnodion. Rydych yn rhydd i dynnu'n ôl o'r

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ymchwil ar unrhyw adeg a nid oes rhaid i chi roi rheswm. Ni wnaeth hyn effeithio eich defnydd chi na'ch plentyn o wasanaethau eraill.

***Gyda pwy ddybwn i gysylltu ynglŷn â'r astudiaeth?***

Os ydych eisiau mwy o wybodaeth am yr astudiaeth hon cysylltwch â:

Enw: Dr Margiad Williams (Swyddog Ymchwil)

Ebost: [margiad.williams@bangor.ac.uk](mailto:margiad.williams@bangor.ac.uk); Ffôn: 01248 383627

***Gyda pwy ddybwn i gysylltu ynglŷn â phryderon am yr astudiaeth?***

Os oes gennych bryderon am unrhyw agwedd o'r astudiaeth hon, dylwch ofyn i gael siarad gyda'r ymchwilwyr a wneith eu gorau i ateb eich cwestiynau (ffôn: 01248 383627).

Os ydych yn anhapus gyda sut mae'r ymchwil yn cael ei redeg ag eisiau cwyno yn swyddogol, dylwch gysylltu â:

Enw: Mr Huw Ellis (Rheolwr Ysgol, Ysgol Seicoleg, Prifysgol Bangor)

Ebost: [huw.ellis@bangor.ac.uk](mailto:huw.ellis@bangor.ac.uk); Ffôn: 01248 383229

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## Appendix 4 – School Support Staff Participant Information Sheet

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### SCHOOL SUPPORT STAFF INFORMATION SHEET

#### **Development and evaluation of an online programme for parents and school support staff**

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve.

A member of the research team will go through the information with you and answer any questions you may have.

Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with your family and the school if you wish. If anything is unclear, or if you would like more information, you are welcome to ask us any questions.

#### ***What is the purpose of this study?***

At the School of Psychology in Bangor we have been developing online programmes for parents and school staff. The purpose of this study is to take this work forward and undertake a trial of an online programme for parents and school support staff. The programme is designed for school support staff and parents of children aged 3-7 years with additional learning needs. It aims to teach parents and school support staff strategies that address common behavioural challenges and promote language and communication skills. In this study we are recruiting school support staff and parents of the same child to undertake the programme to see whether parents and school support staff like the programme and whether it leads changes in parents', school support staff's, and children's behaviour.

#### ***Why have I been asked to take part?***

You have been invited to take part because you support a child aged 3-7 years on a 1:1 basis in school. With your permission, the school has forwarded your details to the research team.

#### ***What does the study involve?***

A researcher will visit you in school within the next month and again two months later. At each visit, the researcher will ask you to complete some questionnaires about yourself and the child you support. She will ask you and the child to play together so that she can observe how you and the child interact during a short play and reading session. This observation will be video recorded so that it can be coded at a later time. She will also ask you to take part in two interviews, one before accessing the programme to ask about prior training and one after completing the programme to gain your feedback on the programme. Both interviews will be audio recorded for later transcribing. All names will be anonymised. Each visit will last no more than one hour.

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If you consent to take part in exchange for your time and effort, after the second data collection, we will give you a copy of the 'Little Parent Handbook' on which the online programme is based.

Once the initial school visit is complete, you will be given a username and password to access the online programme. The programme consists of six sessions, one to be completed each week, and can be accessed from a laptop computer, tablet, or mobile phone.

***Are there any benefits or risks in taking part?***

The benefits of taking part will be the opportunity to complete a six-week online programme to learn new skills that could potentially help you in your work supporting children. There are no obvious risks in taking part in this study. If you agree to take part in the study, you will be asked to complete questionnaires and a 20-minute video-recorded observation in a school visit by a researcher (10 minutes of reading and 10 minutes of play). You will also be asked to take part in two interviews, one before accessing the programme and one after completing the programme. These are the only possible inconvenience. A researcher will only visit with your permission and at a time that is convenient for you.

***What will happen to my data?***

All the information about you and the child you support collected by the researcher will remain strictly confidential and will be kept at the Centre for Evidence Based Early Intervention, Bangor University in a locked cabinet. The videos from the observations will be kept on a University, encrypted laptop and only the research team will have access to them.

Our procedures for handling, processing, storage and destruction of data are compliant with the Bangor University policies and procedures.

When the results of this study are reported, information provided by school support staff and families taking part will be reported as a group and not as individuals. At the end of the project, we will send a letter to all of the school support staff and families who participated outlining the results of the study. We will ensure confidentiality unless we have cause for concern regarding the child's safety. If any child protection issues arise, the researchers will inform the primary supervisor who will pass on the information to the relevant service providers.

***What if I don't want to take part?***

It is up to you whether or not you decide to take part in this research project. We will explain the study and go through this information sheet with you. If you do decide to take part, we will then ask you to sign a consent form. You will be given a copy of the information sheet and the signed consent form to keep for your records. You are free to

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withdraw from the research at any time and you do not need to give a reason. This will not affect your or your child's access to other services.

***Who do I contact about the study?***

If you would like any further information about this study you could contact:

Name: Dr Margiad Elen Williams (Research Officer)  
Email: [margiad.williams@bangor.ac.uk](mailto:margiad.williams@bangor.ac.uk); Tel: 01248 383627

***Who do I contact with any concerns about the study?***

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you should ask to speak to the researchers who will do their best to answer your questions (tel: 01248 383627).

If you are unhappy with the conduct of this research and wish to complain formally, you should contact:

Name: Mr Huw Ellis (School Manager, School of Psychology, Bangor University)  
Email: [huw.ellis@bangor.ac.uk](mailto:huw.ellis@bangor.ac.uk); Tel: 01248 383229

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## TAFLEN WYBODAETH I STAFF CEFNOGI YSGOL

### Datblygiad a dadansoddiad pellach o raglen ar y we sy'n targedu rhieni a staff cefnogi ysgol

Rydych yn cael eich gwahodd i gymryd rhan mewn astudiaeth ymchwil. Cyn i chi benderfynu mae'n bwysig i chi ddeall pam mae'r ymchwil yn cael ei gynnal a beth fydd yn ei olygu.

Bydd aelod o'r tîm ymchwil yn mynd drwy'r wybodaeth gyda chi ag yn ateb unrhyw gwestiynnau fydd gennych.

Cymerwch amser i ddarllen y wybodaeth canlynol yn ofalus a'i drafod gyda'ch teulu a'r ysgol os dymunwch. Os oes unrhyw beth yn aneglir, neu os oes ydych eisiau mwy o wybodaeth, mae croeso i chi ofyn unrhyw gwestiynnau.

#### ***Beth yw pwrpas yr astudiaeth hwn?***

Yn yr Ysgol Seicoleg ym Mangor rydym wedi bod yn datblygu rhaglenni ar y we ar gyfer rhieni a staff ysgol. Pwrpas yr astudiaeth yw i barhau gyda'r gwaith a gwneud dadansoddiad o raglen ar y we ar gyfer rhieni a staff cefnogi ysgol. Mae'r rhaglen wedi'u ddatblygu ar gyfer staff cefnogi ysgol a rhieni plant 3-7 mlwydd oed gydag anghenion dysgu ychwanegol. Nod y rhaglen yw i ddysgu strategaethau i rhieni a staff cefnogi ysgol sy'n mynd i'r afael â sialensau ymddygiadol cyffredin ag i hybu sgiliau iaith a chyfathrebu. Yn yr astudiaeth hwn, rydym yn recriwtio staff cefnogi ysgol a rhieni yr un plentyn i wneud y rhaglen er mwyn gweld os yw rhieni a staff cefnogi ysgol yn hoffi'r rhaglen ag os yw'n arwain at newidiadau mewn ymddygiad rhieni, staff cefnogi ysgol, a plant.

#### ***Pam ydw i wedi cael fy ngwahodd?***

Rydych wedi cael gwahoddiad i gymryd rhan oherwydd rydych yn cefnogi blentyn 3-7 mlwydd oed ar sail 1:1 yn yr ysgol. Gyda'ch caniatad, mae'r ysgol wedi gyrru eich manylion i'r tîm ymchwil.

#### ***Beth fydd yn digwydd os na'i gymryd rhan?***

Bydd ymchwilydd yn ymweld â chi yn yr ysgol o fewn y mis nesaf ag eto dau fis yn ddiweddarach. Yn ystod pob ymweliad, bydd yr ymchwilydd yn gofyn i chi gwblhau holiaduron amdano chi a'r plentyn rydych yn cefnogi. Byddai'n gofyn i chi a'r plentyn ryngweithio gyda'ch gilydd er mwyn iddi gael arsylwi sut yr ydych yn rhyngweithio yn ystod sesiwn chwarae a darllen byr. Bydd yr arsylwad yn cael ei recordio er mwyn gallu ei sgorio yn hwyrach ymlaen. Byddai hefyd yn gofyn i chi gymryd rhan mewn dau gyfweiliad, un cyn cael mynediad i'r rhaglen i holi am unrhyw hyfforddiant blaenorol ag un ar ôl cwblhau'r rhaglen i holi am eich barn o'r rhaglen. Bydd y cyfweiliadau yn cael eu recordio (sain yn unig) ar gyfer eu trawsgrifio yn ddiweddarach. Bydd pob ymweliad yn para dim mwy nag un awr. Os ydych yn cytuno i gymryd rhan yn gyfnewid am eich

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amser ag ymdrech, ar ôl casglu y data dilynol, byddem yn rhoi copi o'r 'Llawlyfr Bach Rhieni' sef sylfaen y rhaglen ar y we i chi.

Unwaith bydd yr ymweliad ysgol cychwynol wedi'i gwblhau, byddwch yn derbyn enw defnyddiwr a cyfrinair ar gyfer y rhaglen ar y we. Mae'r gan y rhaglen chwe sesiwn, un i'w gwblhau bob wythnos, a gallwch gael mynediad i'r rhaglen gyda laptop, tablet, neu ffôn symudol.

#### ***Oes unrhyw fuddion neu risgiau o gymryd rhan?***

Y buddion o gymryd rhan yw'r cyfle i gwblhau rhaglen chwe-wythnos ar y we i ddysgu sgiliau newydd a all eich helpu gyda'ch gwaith cefnogi plant. Nid oed unrhyw risgiau amlwg o gymryd rhan yn yr astudiaeth hon. Os ydych yn cytuno i gymryd rhan, byddwch yn cael eich gofyn i gwblhau holiaduron a sesiwn arsylwi 20-munud sy'n cael ei recordio ar fideo mewn ymweliad ysgol gan yr ymchwilydd (10 munud o ddarllen a 10 munud o chwarae). Byddwch hefyd yn cael eich gwahodd i gymryd rhan mewn dau gyfweiliad, un cyn cael mynediad i'r rhaglen ag un ar ôl cwblhau'r rhaglen. Rhain yw'r unig anghyfleustra posibl. Bydd ymchwilydd ond yn ymweld gyda'ch caniatad ag yn ystod amser sy'n gyfleus i chi.

#### ***Beth fydd yn digwydd i fy data?***

Bydd yr holl wybodaeth fydd yr ymchwilydd yn ei gasglu amdano chi a'r plentyn rydych yn cefnogi yn aros yn gwbl gyfrinachol ag yn cael ei gadw yng Nghanolfan Ymyrraeth Gynnar ar Sail Tystiolaeth, Prifysgol Bangor mewn cwpwrdd dan glo. Bydd y fideos o'r arsylwadau yn cael eu cadw ar laptop Prifysgol wedi'i amgryptio a dim ond y tîm ymchwil fydd efo mynediad iddynt hwy.

Mae ein gweithdrefnau ar gyfer trin, prosesu, storio a dinistrio data yn cydymffurfio â pholisïau a gweithdrefnau Prifysgol Bangor.

Pan fydd canlyniadau'r astudiaeth yn cael eu cyhoeddi, bydd gwybodaeth gan staff cefnogi ysgol a theuluoedd sy'n cymryd rhan yn cael eu adrodd fel grŵp a ddim fel unigolion. Ar ddiwedd y prosiect, byddwn yn gyrru llythyr i'r holl staff cefnogi ysgol a theuluoedd wnaeth gymryd rhan yn amlinellu canlyniadau'r astudiaeth. Byddwn yn sicrhau cyfrinachedd os nag oes unrhyw bryder am ddiogelwch eich plentyn. Os fydd unrhyw amheuan gydag amddiffyn plant yn codi, bydd yr ymchwilydd yn dweud wrth eu Prif Oruchwyliwr a fydd yn rhannu y wybodaeth gyda'r gwasanaethau priodol.

#### ***Beth os nad wyf eisïau cymryd rhan?***

Mae i fynu i chi os ydych chi eisïau cymryd rhan yn y prosiect ymchwil hwn neu beidio. Bydd yr ymchwilydd yn esbonio'r astudiaeth ag yn mynd drwy'r daflen wybodaeth hon gyda chi. Os ydych yn penderfynu cymryd rhan, byddem yn gofyn i chi arwyddo y daflen caniatad. Cewch gopi o'r daflen wybodaeth a'r daflen caniatad sydd wedi'i arwyddo i'w cadw ar gyfer eich cofnodion. Rydych yn rhydd i dynnu'n ôl o'r

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ymchwil ar unrhyw adeg a nid oes rhaid i chi roi rheswm. Ni wnaeth hyn effeithio eich defnydd chi na'ch plentyn o wasanaethau eraill.

***Gyda pwy ddylwn i gysylltu ynglŷn â'r astudiaeth?***

Os ydych eisiau mwy o wybodaeth am yr astudiaeth hon cysylltwch â:

Enw: Dr Margiad Williams (Swyddog Ymchwil)  
Ebost: [margiad.williams@bangor.ac.uk](mailto:margiad.williams@bangor.ac.uk); Ffôn: 01248 383627

***Gyda pwy ddylwn i gysylltu ynglŷn â phryderon am yr astudiaeth?***

Os oes gennych bryderon am unrhyw agwedd o'r astudiaeth hon, dylwch ofyn i gael siarad gyda'r ymchwilyr a wneith eu gorau i ateb eich cwestiynnau (ffôn: 01248 383627).

Os ydych yn anhapus gyda sut mae'r ymchwil yn cael ei redeg ag eisiau cwyno yn swyddogol, dylwch gysylltu â:

Enw: Mr Huw Ellis (Rheolwr Ysgol, Ysgol Seicoleg, Prifysgol Bangor)  
Ebost: [huw.ellis@bangor.ac.uk](mailto:huw.ellis@bangor.ac.uk); Ffôn: 01248 383229

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## Appendix 5 – Parent Consent Form

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Rhif Adnabod Cyfranogwr ar gyfer y treial:

**FFURFLEN CANIATAD RHINI**

Teitl y prosiect: Datblygiad a dadansoddiad o raglen ar y we i rieni a staff cefnogi ysgol

Enw yr Ymchwilydd:

Llythrennwch y bocs plis

1. Rwyf yn cadarnhau fy mod wedi darllen y daflen wybodaeth, dyddiad ..... (fersiwn ..... ) ar gyfer yr astudiaeth uchod. Rwyf wedi cael cyfle i ystyried y wybodaeth, i ofyn cwestiynau ag wedi cael atebion boddhaol i'r rhain. ☐
2. Rwyf yn deall fod fy nghyfranogiad yn wirfoddol ag rwyf yn rhydd i dynnu yn ôl ar unrhyw adeg heb roi rheswm, ag heb gael unrhyw effaith ar fy ngofal meddygol nag fy hawliau cyfreithiol. ☐
3. Rwyf yn deall y bydd cymryd rhan yn golygu cyflawni rhaglen chwe-wythnos ar y we y fydd hefyd yn cael ei gwblhau gan aelod staff ysgol sy'n cefnogi fy mhientyn. ☐
4. Rwyf yn deall y bydd yr ymchwilydd yn recordio fideo o arsylwad 20-munud o minnau a fy mhientyn yn ystod ymweliad cartref. ☐
5. Rwyf yn deall y byddaf yn cael cynnig cymryd rhan mewn cyfweiliad am fy marn ar ôl cwblhau'r rhaglen. ☐
6. Rwyf yn deall y bydd fy holl wybodaeth yn cael ei gadw yng nghyfrinachol oni bai fydd unrhyw fater(ion) amddiffyn plant yn codi. ☐
7. Rwyf i yn cytuno i gymryd han yn yr astudiaeth uchod. ☐

Enw Cyfranogwr

Dyddiad

Llofnod

Enw y Person sydd  
yn cymryd caniatad

Dyddiad

Llofnod

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Participant Identification Number for this trial:

### PARENT CONSENT FORM

Title of Project: Development and evaluation of an online programme for parents and school support staff

Name of Researcher:

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read the information sheet dated..... (version.....) for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily. ☐
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason, without my medical care or legal rights being affected. ☐
3. I understand that participation will entail completing a six-week online course that will also be completed by my child's classroom support staff worker. ☐
4. I understand that the researcher will video record a 20-minute observation of myself and my child during a home visit. ☐
5. I understand that I will be asked to take part in an audio recorded interview about my opinions after completing the course. ☐
6. I understand that all information will be kept confidential unless any matter(s) regarding child protection issues arise. ☐
7. I agree to take part in the above study. ☐

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Person  
taking consent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

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## Appendix 6 – School Support Staff Consent Form

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Participant Identification Number for this trial:

### SCHOOL SUPPORT STAFF CONSENT FORM

Title of Project: Development and evaluation of an online programme for parents and school support staff

Name of Researcher:

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read the information sheet dated..... (version.....) for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily. ☐
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason, without my medical care or legal rights being affected. ☐
3. I understand that participation will entail completing a six-week online course that will also be completed by the parent of the child I support in school. ☐
4. I understand that the researcher will video record a 20-minute observation of myself and the child I am supporting in the school. ☐
5. I understand that I will be asked to take part in two audio recorded interviews, one before accessing the programme and one after completing the programme. ☐
6. I understand that all information will be kept confidential unless any matter(s) regarding child protection issues arise. ☐
7. I agree to take part in the above study. ☐

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Person  
taking consent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

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COLEG GWYDDORAU IECHYD AC YMDDYGIAD  
COLLEGE OF HEALTH & BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCES  
YSGOL SEICOLEG  
SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY



Rhif Adnabod Cyfranogwr ar gyfer y treial:

### FFURFLEN CANIATAD STAFF CEFNOGI YSGOL

Teitl y prosiect: Datblygiad a dadansoddiad o raglen ar y we i rieni a staff cefnogi ysgol

Enw yr Ymchwilydd:

Llythrennwch y bocs plis

1. Rwyf yn cadarnhau fy mod wedi darllen y daflen wybodaeth, dyddiad ..... (fersiwn ..... ) ar gyfer yr astudiaeth uchod. Rwyf wedi cael cyfle i ystyried y wybodaeth, i ofyn cwestiynau ag wedi cael atebion boddhaol i'r rhain. ☐
2. Rwyf yn deall fod fy nghyfranogiad yn wirfoddol ag rwyf yn rhydd i dynnu yn ôl ar unrhyw adeg heb roi rheswm, ag heb gael unrhyw effaith ar fy ngofal meddygol nag fy hawliau cyfreithiol. ☐
3. Rwyf yn deall y bydd cymryd rhan yn golygu cyflawni rhaglen chwe-wythnos ar y we y fydd hefyd yn cael ei gwblhau gan riant y plentyn rwy'n cefnogi yn yr ysgol. ☐
4. Rwyf yn deall y bydd yr ymchwilydd yn recordio fideo o arsylwad 20-munud o minnau a'r plentyn rwyf yn gefnogi yn yr ysgol. ☐
5. Rwyf yn deall y caff y ngwahodd i gymryd rhan mewn dau cyfweiliad (recordio llais yn unig), un cyn cael mynediad i'r rhaglen ag un ar ôl ei gwblhau. ☐
6. Rwyf yn deall y bydd fy holl wybodaeth yn cael ei gadw yng nghyfrinachol oni bai fydd unrhyw fater(ion) amddiffyn plant yn codi. ☐
7. Rwyf i yn cytuno i gymryd han yn yr astudiaeth uchod. ☐

Enw Cyfranogwr

Dyddiad

Llofnod

Enw y Person sydd  
yn cymryd caniatad

Dyddiad

Llofnod

Version 3 18/09/2018

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## Appendix 7 – Parent Demographic Questionnaire



ID number:

**Demographic Questionnaire****1. Background Information**Parental Age \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: M ☐ F ☐Child D.O.B \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: M ☐ F ☐

Relationship to the child:

Biological parent ☐Step-parent ☐Adoptive parent ☐Foster parent ☐Partner's partner (living together) ☐Other ☐ Please specify \_\_\_\_\_

How many children do you have? \_\_\_\_\_

How old are your children? \_\_\_\_\_

How old were you when you had your first child? \_\_\_\_\_

Does the child have any diagnoses? \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Marital Status**

Are you currently?	Tick the box which applies to you
Single, never married	<input type="checkbox"/>
Married	<input type="checkbox"/>
Widowed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Separated	<input type="checkbox"/>
Divorced	<input type="checkbox"/>
In a relationship, but living apart	<input type="checkbox"/>
In a relationship and living together	<input type="checkbox"/>

Partner's relationship to the child \_\_\_\_\_

Version 1 04/10/2018



ID number:

<b>Employment Status:</b>	Mother    ✓	Father/ Partner    ✓
Employed for wages		
Self-employed		
Out of work and looking for work		
Out of work but not currently looking for work		
A Student		
Military		
Retired		
Unable to work		

### 3. Parent's Education

How old were you when you left school? \_\_\_\_\_

Did you receive any qualifications at school? \_\_\_\_\_

Did you receive any further education after you left school? (If so, please specify)

\_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 8 – School Support Staff Demographic Questionnaire

Demographic Questionnaire

1. Participant I.D number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Age \_\_\_\_\_

3. Gender M / F

4. Participant's email address \_\_\_\_\_

4. Level of qualifications	GCSE/A-levels	Further Education	Higher Education
	_____	_____	_____

5. No. of years working as school support staff \_\_\_\_\_

6. No. of schools in which you have worked \_\_\_\_\_

7. No. of months/ years working with the child you are currently supporting \_\_\_\_\_

8. What is your first language? \_\_\_\_\_

9. What is the child's first language \_\_\_\_\_

10. In which language do you communicate most with the child you are currently supporting? \_\_\_\_\_

11. Has 1:1 support for the child been decided upon following a) an educational statement ☐

b) school's decision ☐

12. Have you completed any similar in-house training programmes prior to this (e.g. Webster-Stratton Classroom Dinosaur School programme)? *If 'yes' please specify below;*

<i>Name of training</i>	<i>Provider/ Organiser</i>
_____	_____
_____	_____

If any, please could you tell us below about the challenges you experience as part of your work or training:

## Appendix 9 – School Support Staff Interview Schedule

1. What challenges do you face in your role as a TA?
2. What do you feel are the most important skills you need to be a TA?
3. Can you tell me about your experience of any training you have had for this or a similar previous role as a TA?
4. In what areas do you feel you would benefit from more training?
5. Is there anything else you would like to say or are there any questions you would like to ask?

## Appendix 10 – SDQ 2-4

## Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire

2-4

For each item, please mark the box for Not True, Somewhat True or Certainly True. It would help us if you answered all items as best you can even if you are not absolutely certain or the item seems daft! Please give your answers on the basis of the child's behaviour over the last six months or this school year.

Child's Name .....

Male/Female

Date of Birth.....

	Not True	Somewhat True	Certainly True
Considerate of other people's feelings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Restless, overactive, cannot stay still for long	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Often complains of headaches, stomach-aches or sickness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shares readily with other children (treats, toys, pencils etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Often has temper tantrums or hot tempers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rather solitary, tends to play alone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Generally obedient, usually does what adults request	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Many worries, often seems worried	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Helpful if someone is hurt, upset or feeling ill	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Constantly fidgeting or squirming	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has at least one good friend	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Often fights with other children or bullies them	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Often unhappy, down-hearted or tearful	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Generally liked by other children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Easily distracted, concentration wanders	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nervous or clingy in new situations, easily loses confidence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kind to younger children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Often argumentative with adults	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Picked on or bullied by other children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Often volunteers to help others (parents, teachers, other children)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can stop and think things out before acting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can be spiteful to others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gets on better with adults than with other children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Many fears, easily scared	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sees tasks through to the end, good attention span	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Signature .....

Date .....

Parent/Playgroup leader/Nursery teacher/Other (please specify:)

Thank you very much for your help

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## Appendix 11 – SDQ 4-17

**Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire**

For each item, please mark the box for Not True, Somewhat True or Certainly True. It would help us if you answered all items as best you can even if you are not absolutely certain or the item seems daft! Please give your answers on the basis of the child's behaviour over the last six months or this school year.

Child's Name .....

Male/Female

Date of Birth.....

	Not True	Somewhat True	Certainly True
Considerate of other people's feelings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Restless, overactive, cannot stay still for long	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Often complains of headaches, stomach-aches or sickness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shares readily with other children (treats, toys, pencils etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Often has temper tantrums or hot tempers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rather solitary, tends to play alone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Generally obedient, usually does what adults request	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Many worries, often seems worried	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Helpful if someone is hurt, upset or feeling ill	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Constantly fidgeting or squirming	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has at least one good friend	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Often fights with other children or bullies them	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Often unhappy, down-hearted or tearful	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Generally liked by other children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Easily distracted, concentration wanders	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nervous or clingy in new situations, easily loses confidence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kind to younger children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Often lies or cheats	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Picked on or bullied by other children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Often volunteers to help others (parents, teachers, other children)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thinks things out before acting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Steals from home, school or elsewhere	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gets on better with adults than with other children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Many fears, easily scared	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sees tasks through to the end, good attention span	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Signature .....

Date .....

Parent/Teacher/Other (please specify:)

**Thank you very much for your help**

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## Appendix 12 – Parental Sense of Competence

Participant ID: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Parental Sense of Competence**

This is a questionnaire about your attitudes and feelings that relate to parenting.

Please circle the answer that most closely resembles how you feel.

*There are no right or wrong answers.*

	Strongly agree	Agree	Mildly agree	Mildly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The problems of taking care of a child are easy to solve once you know how your actions affect your child – an understanding I have acquired.	6	5	4	3	2	1
Even though being a parent can be rewarding, I am frustrated now while my child is at his/her present age.	6	5	4	3	2	1
I do not know why it is, but sometimes when I'm supposed to be in control, I feel more like the one being manipulated.	6	5	4	3	2	1
Being a parent is manageable, and any problems are easily solved.	6	5	4	3	2	1
Being a parent makes me tense and anxious.	6	5	4	3	2	1
I would make a fine model for a new parent to follow in order to learn what they need to know to be a good parent.	6	5	4	3	2	1
I go to bed the same way that I wake up in the mornings: feeling like I have not achieved very much.	6	5	4	3	2	1
My parents were better prepared to be good parents than I am.	6	5	4	3	2	1
A difficult problem in being a parent is not knowing whether you're doing a good job or a bad one.	6	5	4	3	2	1

**Please turn over to complete the questions on the other side**

I meet my own personal expectations for expertise in caring for my child.	6	5	4	3	2	1
If anyone can find the answer to what is troubling my child, I am the one.	6	5	4	3	2	1
Sometimes I feel like I'm not getting anything done.	6	5	4	3	2	1
Considering how long I've been a parent, I feel thoroughly familiar with this role.	6	5	4	3	2	1
My talents and interests are in other areas – not being a parent.	6	5	4	3	2	1
If being a parent were only more interesting, I would be better motivated to do a better job as a parent.	6	5	4	3	2	1
I honestly believe I have all the skills necessary to be a good parent to my child.	6	5	4	3	2	1
Being a good parent is a reward in itself.	6	5	4	3	2	1

## Appendix 13 – Teaching Assistant Sense of Competence

Participant ID: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Teaching Assistant Sense of Competence**

This is a questionnaire about your attitudes and feelings that relate to working as a teaching assistant.

Please circle the answer that most closely resembles how you feel.

*There are no right or wrong answers.*

	Strongly agree	Agree	Mildly agree	Mildly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The problems of taking care of a child are easy to solve once you know how your actions affect the child – an understanding I have acquired.	6	5	4	3	2	1
Even though being a teaching assistant can be rewarding, I often feel frustrated.	6	5	4	3	2	1
I do not know why it is, but sometimes when I'm supposed to be in control, I feel more like the one being manipulated.	6	5	4	3	2	1
Being a teaching assistant is manageable, and any problems are easily solved.	6	5	4	3	2	1
Working with children sometimes makes me tense and anxious.	6	5	4	3	2	1
I would make a fine model for new teaching assistants to follow in-order to learn what they need to know to be good teaching assistants.	6	5	4	3	2	1
I go to bed the same way that I wake up in the mornings: feeling like I have not achieved very much.	6	5	4	3	2	1
I feel that my colleagues were better prepared to be good teaching assistants than I am.	6	5	4	3	2	1
A difficult problem in being a teaching assistant is not knowing whether you're doing a good job or a bad one.	6	5	4	3	2	1

**Please turn over to complete the questions on the other side**

I meet my own personal expectations for expertise in caring for children.	6	5	4	3	2	1
If anyone can find the answer to what is troubling a child, I am the one.	6	5	4	3	2	1
Sometimes I feel like I'm not getting anything done.	6	5	4	3	2	1
Considering how long I've been a teaching assistant, I feel thoroughly familiar with this role.	6	5	4	3	2	1
My talents and interests are in other areas – not being a teaching assistant.	6	5	4	3	2	1
If being a teaching assistant were only more interesting, I would be better motivated to do a better job.	6	5	4	3	2	1
I honestly believe I have all the skills necessary to be a good teaching assistant.	6	5	4	3	2	1
Being good at my job as a teaching assistant is a reward in-itself.	6	5	4	3	2	1

## Appendix 14 – Teaching Assistant Stress Inventory

## Teaching Assistant Stress Inventory

Participant I.D number:

Please circle the most appropriate answer for you.

		0	1	2	3	4
	<b>As a teaching assistant, how great a source of stress are these factor to you?</b>	None	Mild	Moderate	Much	Extreme
1	Poor career structure (poor promotion prospects)	None	Mild	Moderate	Much	Extreme
2	Difficult child	None	Mild	Moderate	Much	Extreme
3	Lack of recognition for good teaching support	None	Mild	Moderate	Much	Extreme
4	Responsibility for the pupil (e.g. exam/assessment stress)	None	Mild	Moderate	Much	Extreme
5	Noisy pupils	None	Mild	Moderate	Much	Extreme
6	Too short rest periods (mid-morning or mid-day break)	None	Mild	Moderate	Much	Extreme
7	Pupil's poor attitude to work	None	Mild	Moderate	Much	Extreme
8	Inadequate salary	None	Mild	Moderate	Much	Extreme
9	Too much work to do (lesson preparation)	None	Mild	Moderate	Much	Extreme
10	Having a large class	None	Mild	Moderate	Much	Extreme
11	Maintaining class discipline	None	Mild	Moderate	Much	Extreme
12	Administrative work (e.g. Filling in forms)	None	Mild	Moderate	Much	Extreme
13	Pressure from parents	None	Mild	Moderate	Much	Extreme
14	Ill-defined syllabuses (e.g. Not detailed enough)	None	Mild	Moderate	Much	Extreme
15	Lack of time to spend with individual parents	None	Mild	Moderate	Much	Extreme
16	Shortage of equipment and poor facilities	None	Mild	Moderate	Much	Extreme
17	Attitudes and behaviour of other staff	None	Mild	Moderate	Much	Extreme
18	Pupils' impolite behaviour or cheek	None	Mild	Moderate	Much	Extreme
19	Pressure from head-teacher and education officers	None	Mild	Moderate	Much	Extreme
20	Having extra students because of absent staff members	None	Mild	Moderate	Much	Extreme

Any other comments?

Please check that all questions have been answered.

**Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.**

## Appendix 15 – Reading Observation DPICS Coding Sheet

SKILLS Study number:

Reading

Baseline / Follow up

Prim/ Sec Coder initials: \_\_\_\_\_

A	D	Behaviour	Frequency
		Academic Coaching	
		Social-emotional Coaching	
		Problem-solving Coaching	
		Asking questions	
		Encouragement	
		Unlabelled Praise	
		Labelled Praise	
		Reflection / Expansion	
		Negative Strategies	

Notes:

Version 2 18/2/2019

## Appendix 16 - Play Observation DPICS Coding Sheet

SKILLS Study number:

Play

Baseline / Follow up

Prim/ Sec Coder initials: \_\_\_\_\_

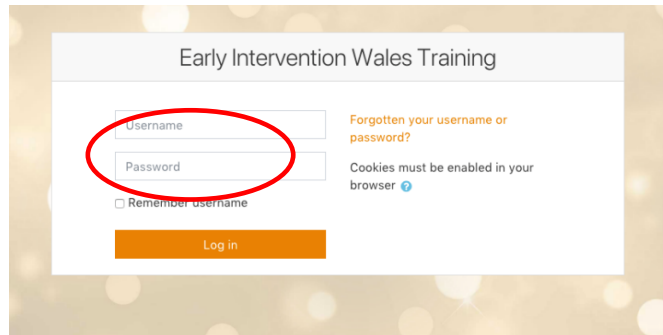
A	D	Behaviour	Frequency
		Asking questions	
		Verbal labelling/commenting	
		Encouragement	
		Unlabelled Praise	
		Labelled Praise	
		Reflection / Expansion	
		Negative Strategies	

Notes:

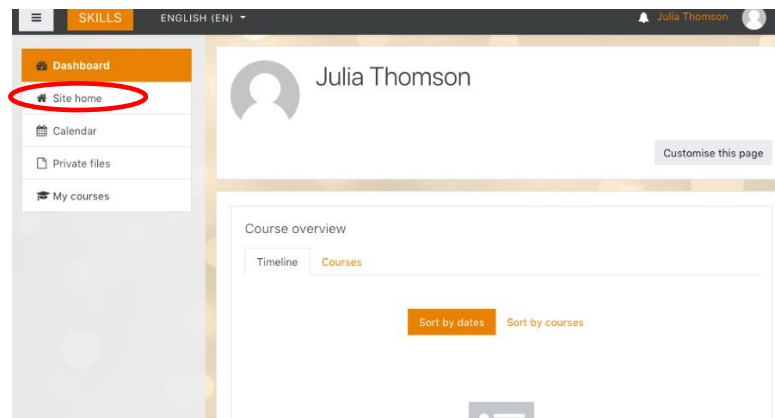
## Appendix 17 – SKILLS Online Access Information Sheet

### How to Log into the SKILLS Online Programme

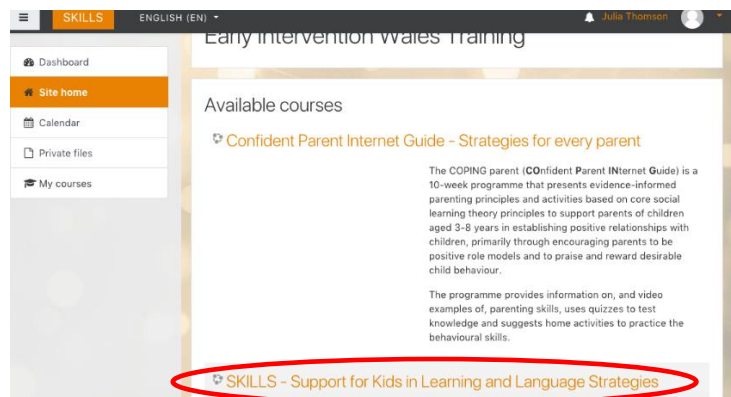
Go to <https://lphclassroom.moodle.school/>



Enter the username and password you have been given in the boxes and click 'Log in'

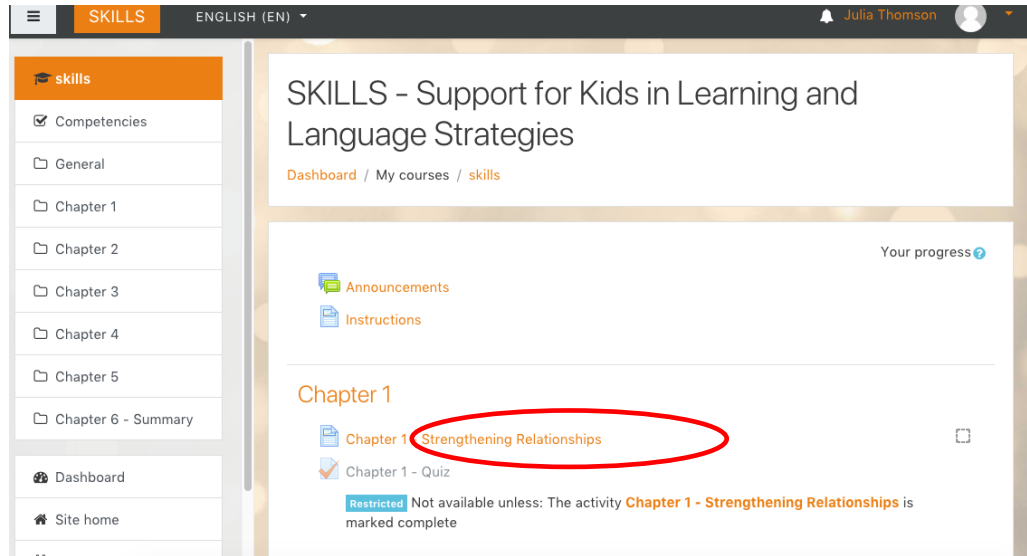


Click on 'Site home' from the left-hand navigation bar

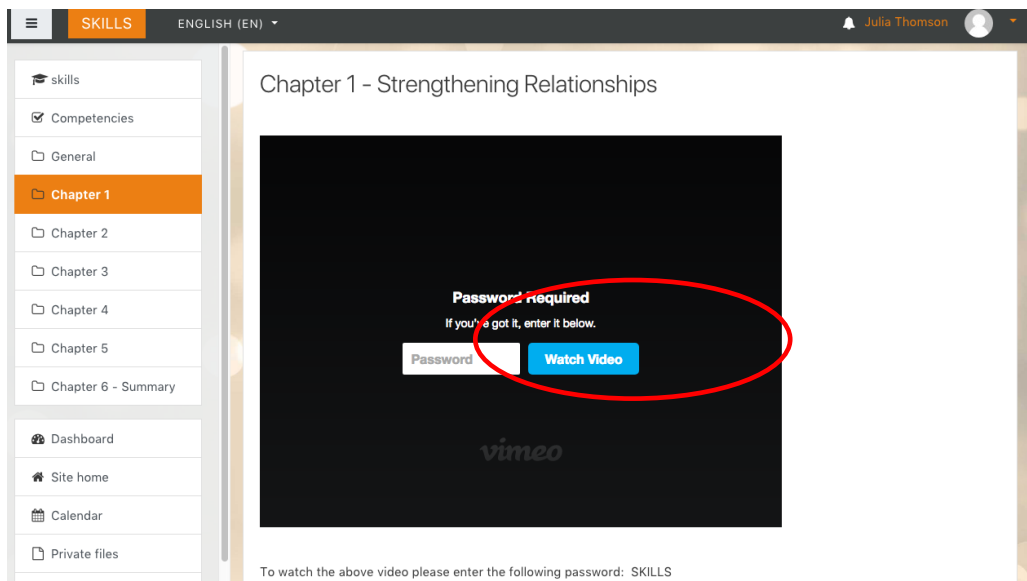


Scroll down and click on the orange heading 'SKILLS – Support for Kids in Learning and Language Strategies'

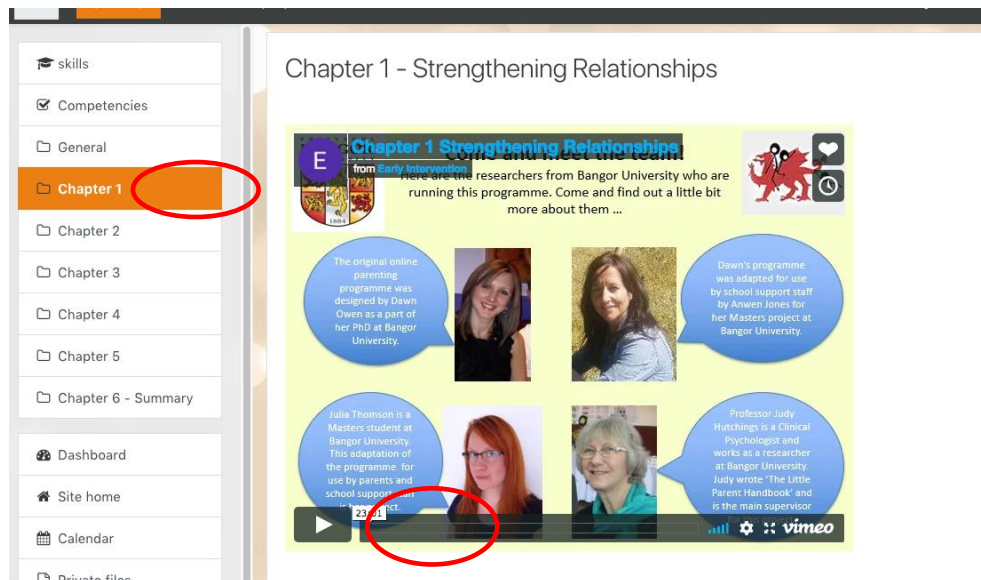




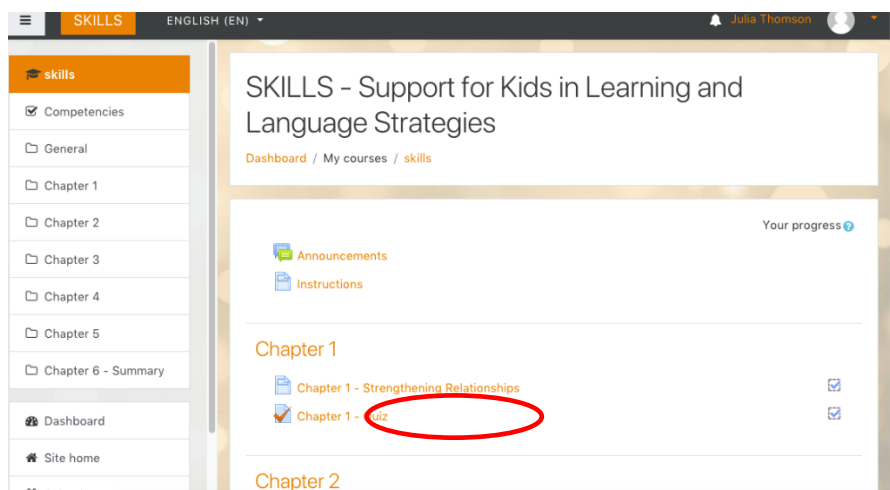
Click on the subheading 'Chapter 1 – Strengthening Relationships'



Enter the password 'SKILLS' in the box and click 'watch video'



Click the play icon and watch the video, when the video is finished click on 'Chapter 1' from the side menu



Chapter 1 – Quiz will now be available for you, click on the link and this will take you to the quiz page

Question 10  
Not yet answered  
Marked out of 1.00  
Flag question

Which of the following would NOT be an ideal special time activity

Select one:

- ☐ a. Doing a jigsaw together
- ☐ b. Building something with LEGO
- ☐ c. Watching a DVD together

◀ Chapter 1 - Strengthening Relationships    Jump to...    Chapter 2 - Praising Positive Behaviour ▶    **Finish attempt ...**

There are 10 questions in the quiz, click on the answer for each question and scroll down. When you have answered every question click on 'Finish attempt'

7 Not yet answered  
8 Not yet answered  
9 Not yet answered  
10 Not yet answered

Return to attempt  
**Submit all and finish**

◀ Chapter 1 - Strengthening Relationships    Jump to...    Chapter 2 - Praising Positive Behaviour ▶

Click on 'submit all and finish'. You will now be taken to a review page where you will be given feedback on your answers. After you have read the feedback you can log-out. Repeat these instructions next week for 'Chapter 2'. If you experience any problems please contact Julia Thomson by email: jlt18pgj@bangor.ac.uk or mobile: 07725883158

## Appendix 18 – Parent SKILLS Evaluation Questionnaire

COLEG GWYDDORAU IECHYD AC YMDDYGLAD  
COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCES  
YSGOL SEICOLEG  
SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY



Please be as honest as possible when answering these questions. We would greatly appreciate your feedback so as to further develop similar training resources in the future.

1. Did you complete the whole programme? Yes/ No  
(If not, how many of the chapters did you manage to complete?) \_\_\_\_\_
2. Did you experience any problems that made it difficult to complete the programme?  
(Please be as specific as possible).  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**The content covered in Chapter 1 (Strengthening Relationships)**

3. Has helped me build a positive relationship with my child  
*Strongly disagree      Disagree      Neutral      Agree      Strongly agree*
4. Has increased the amount of child – led play I engage in with my child  
*Strongly disagree      Disagree      Neutral      Agree      Strongly agree*

**The content covered in Chapter 2 (Praising Positive Child Behaviour)**

5. Has increased my use of positive commenting and praise  
*Strongly disagree      Disagree      Neutral      Agree      Strongly agree*
6. Has reduced the amount of negative attention I give my child  
*Strongly disagree      Disagree      Neutral      Agree      Strongly agree*

**The content covered in Chapter 3 (How to Give Effective Instructions)**

7. Has helped me become better at giving clearer instructions  
*Strongly disagree      Disagree      Neutral      Agree      Strongly agree*
7. Has helped me give out fewer instructions to my child  
*Strongly disagree      Disagree      Neutral      Agree      Strongly agree*
8. Has reduced the frequency I repeat the same instructions to my child  
*Strongly disagree      Disagree      Neutral      Agree      Strongly agree*
9. Has reduced the amount of time spent negotiating with my child  
*Strongly disagree      Disagree      Neutral      Agree      Strongly agree*

**The contents covered in Chapter 4 (Teaching New Behaviours)**

10. Has helped me model positive behaviour to my child  
*Strongly disagree      Disagree      Neutral      Agree      Strongly agree*

COLEG GWYDDORAU IECHYD AC YMDDYGIAD  
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 YSGOL SEICOLEG  
 SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY



11. Has helped me recognise the best way to teach certain tasks (Modelling, Prompting, Shaping)

*Strongly disagree*      *Disagree*      *Neutral*      *Agree*      *Strongly agree*

12. Has helped me break down tasks into goals my child will find achievable

*Strongly disagree*      *Disagree*      *Neutral*      *Agree*      *Strongly agree*

**The contents covered in Chapter 5 (Promoting Language Skills)**

13. Has taught me useful strategies to help develop language skills

*Strongly disagree*      *Disagree*      *Neutral*      *Agree*      *Strongly agree*

14. Has increased my confidence to help my child identify feelings by labelling and describing

*Strongly disagree*      *Disagree*      *Neutral*      *Agree*      *Strongly agree*

**Overall programme**

15. The strategies addressed in the programme are easy to implement

*Strongly disagree*      *Disagree*      *Neutral*      *Agree*      *Strongly agree*

16. The examples shown in the video clips are useful

*Strongly disagree*      *Disagree*      *Neutral*      *Agree*      *Strongly agree*

18. I found the behaviour management-training programme beneficial

*Strongly disagree*      *Disagree*      *Neutral*      *Agree*      *Strongly agree*

19. It would be useful to have a Welsh language version of the programme

*Strongly disagree*      *Disagree*      *Neutral*      *Agree*      *Strongly agree*

21. Which chapter did you find most useful?

22. What did you like most about the program?

23. What did you like least about the program?

24. How could the program be improved to help you more?

25. Any additional comments?

**Thank you for taking the time to complete this feedback form.**

## Appendix 19 – School Support Staff SKILLS Evaluation Questionnaire

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Please be as honest as possible when answering these questions. We would greatly appreciate your feedback so as to further develop similar training resources in the future.

1. Did you complete the whole programme? Yes/ No

(If not, how many of the chapters did you manage to complete?) \_\_\_\_\_

2. Did you experience any problems that made it difficult to complete the programme?

(Please be as specific as possible).

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**The content covered in Chapter 1 (Strengthening Relationships)**

3. Has helped me build a positive relationship with the child I am currently supporting

*Strongly disagree*    *Disagree*    *Neutral*    *Agree*    *Strongly agree*

4. Has increased the amount of child – led play I engage in with the child I am currently supporting

*Strongly disagree*    *Disagree*    *Neutral*    *Agree*    *Strongly agree*

**The content covered in Chapter 2 (Praising Positive Child Behaviour)**

5. Has increased my use of positive commenting and praise

*Strongly disagree*    *Disagree*    *Neutral*    *Agree*    *Strongly agree*

6. Has reduced the amount of negative attention I give the child I am currently supporting

*Strongly disagree*    *Disagree*    *Neutral*    *Agree*    *Strongly agree*

**The content covered in Chapter 3 (How to Give Effective Instructions)**

7. Has helped me become better at giving clearer instructions

*Strongly disagree*    *Disagree*    *Neutral*    *Agree*    *Strongly agree*

7. Has helped me give out fewer instructions to the child I am currently supporting

*Strongly disagree*    *Disagree*    *Neutral*    *Agree*    *Strongly agree*

8. Has reduced the frequency I repeat the same instructions to the child I am currently supporting

*Strongly disagree*    *Disagree*    *Neutral*    *Agree*    *Strongly agree*

9. Has reduced the amount of time spent negotiating with the child I am currently supporting

*Strongly disagree*    *Disagree*    *Neutral*    *Agree*    *Strongly agree*

**The contents covered in Chapter 4 (Teaching New Behaviours)**

10. Has helped me model positive behaviour to the child I am currently supporting

*Strongly disagree*    *Disagree*    *Neutral*    *Agree*    *Strongly agree*

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 YSGOL SEICOLEG  
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11. Has helped me recognise the best way to teach certain tasks (Modelling, Prompting, Shaping)

*Strongly disagree*      *Disagree*      *Neutral*      *Agree*      *Strongly agree*

12. Has helped me break down tasks into goals the child will find achievable

*Strongly disagree*      *Disagree*      *Neutral*      *Agree*      *Strongly agree*

**The contents covered in Chapter 5 (Promoting Language Skills)**

13. Has taught me useful strategies to help develop language skills

*Strongly disagree*      *Disagree*      *Neutral*      *Agree*      *Strongly agree*

14. Has increased my confidence to help the child I am currently supporting identify feelings by labelling and describing

*Strongly disagree*      *Disagree*      *Neutral*      *Agree*      *Strongly agree*

**Overall programme**

15. The strategies addressed in the programme are easy to implement in the classroom

*Strongly disagree*      *Disagree*      *Neutral*      *Agree*      *Strongly agree*

16. The examples shown in the video clips are useful

*Strongly disagree*      *Disagree*      *Neutral*      *Agree*      *Strongly agree*

18. I found the behaviour management-training programme beneficial

*Strongly disagree*      *Disagree*      *Neutral*      *Agree*      *Strongly agree*

19. It would be useful to have a Welsh language version of the programme

*Strongly disagree*      *Disagree*      *Neutral*      *Agree*      *Strongly agree*

21. Which chapter did you find most useful?

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22. What did you like most about the program?

---

23. What did you like least about the program?

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24. How could the program be improved to help you more?

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25. Any additional comments?

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**Thank you for taking the time to complete this feedback form.**

## Appendix 20 – SKILLS Evaluation Interview Schedule

1. How have you found the SKILLS programme?
2. What has been the most beneficial element of the SKILLS programme for you?
3. Have you experienced any challenges during the SKILLS programme?
4. How accessible have you found the process of completing the programme online?
5. Who do you think would benefit from a programme like SKILLS?
6. Do you have any further comments or questions?



## Appendix 21 – School Support Staff Interview Transcripts

### **Participant 1**

Researcher: So the first question is what challenges do you face in your role as a teaching assistant or 1:1 support assistant?

Participant 1: Umm, behavioural challenges, depending on how the child is feeling on the day of coming in. Umm, they sometimes kick out, when she tries, if she's frustrated, she'll try and hit and kick out. So, you've got to try to avoid that and deal with that.

Researcher: So physical behaviour?

Participant 1: Yeah

Researcher: Any other challenges, more in general, not specifically that challenge?

Participant 1: Within the teaching assistant role the challenge of trying to keep the children focused on activities, sometimes it's a bit of a struggle. Trying to keep them on one activity that you're trying to do with them. Umm, and then figuring out what, umm, what suites them best, so if you're trying to do a group activity, find a way that's going to suite them all equally rather than just focusing on, sort of, one. Finding their strengths really.

Researcher: So, what do you feel are the most important skills that you need to be a teaching assistant?

Participant 1: Patience. A lot of patience. Umm, have understanding, compassion. Having a bit of understanding and compassion, and yeah, patience, having a lot of patience.

Researcher: Can you tell me about your experience of any training you've had either in this role, or a previous role, or just your course that you've had to do to come to do this role?

Participant 1: Within my teaching assistant course I've been doing, for a years placement, so obviously had experiences within the classroom that I was in, with a very experienced teacher. I gained a lot of knowledge from that, and a lot more experience from that. Umm, with the one to one support I've not really had much with that, but I have had umm, a close friends child looking after them with autism, add, they've given me an awful lot of training as well.

Researcher: So you've had informal experience, from helping your friend?

Participant 1: Yeah

Researcher: But you've not been sent on any specific training since you started  
[working as a one to one]?

Participant 1: Not yet, no, no

Researcher: But you only just started in September?

Participant 1: Just started a disability course yes, so that should hopefully.

Researcher: So was that something that you chose to do or something that school  
recommended?

Participant 1: I've chosen to do that one yeah.

Researcher: So, in what areas do you feel that you might benefit from more training?

Participant 1: Probably with behavioural side for the one to one support, I could do  
with a bit more understanding of it, and how I can better myself within it,  
and helping the children. Obviously in case of the breakouts and all the,  
the kick offs and stuff like that, I need to know ways to control it really. I  
have so far managed [laughs] but I need to know perhaps the correct  
ways, and ways that I could probably improve on what I already know. So  
probably just mainly with that one.

Researcher: So, anything else, more in general?

Participant 1: Umm, maybe with the teaching assistant, just having more of an, sort of  
a wider understanding of it all, to know what I have to plan for the day and  
what I can do throughout the day for bettering the children, for the  
activities and stuff like that. But I suppose that might come in my course  
[teaching assistant course], I'm not too sure yet.

Researcher: So you said that you've started the level three, or you're about to?

Participant 1: I'm starting that in January I think it is, end of January that starts

Researcher: So you're just finishing the level 2 and your about to start the level 3.

Participant 1: Yeah

Researcher: So, just lastly is there anything else you'd like to say about your role as a  
teaching assistant or any questions that you have?

Participant 1: Umm, it's really rewarding. I mean you do have little mini break  
throughs throughout the day, you do feel like actually I have helped

somebody today, it is positive to have that, at the end of the day when you feel like [sighs], when you walk in and you see the, sometimes you see the bad behaviour and you think, 'oh no, it's gonna be a tough day', but then you have little mini break throughs throughout the day and you just, you do walk away feeling like you have accomplished something today, it's a really rewarding job.

## **Participant 2**

Researcher: Ok, so the first question is, what challenges do you face in your role as a teaching assistant?

Participant 2: Behaviour. Umm, a lot this year, sharing, we've got a lot of kids that are fighting or they're pushing or they're hitting, like retaliating back. Umm, keeping a structure, making sure that the children sort of have a routine, because we find this dose come up, sort of like change of time, they're like 'no we're not doing this' or I think it's just the challenge every day is different.

Researcher: So the children's behaviour...

Participant 2: Is a big thing this year, compared to last year.

Researcher: And you work in nursery, is that the age group you worked in before?

Participant 2: Yeah, I did half last year, so the first two terms I did in Reception, and the last two terms I did in nursery.

Researcher: Ah, ok. So have you found it more challenging in nursery with the behaviour, or is it just in general?

Participant 2: I think just in general across different years. The behaviour coming through has changed.

Researcher: So, next question. What do you feel are the most important skills you need to be a teaching assistant?

Participant 2: Umm, good communication, patience, I think patience is a huge thing. A lot of rewards, a lot of enthusiasm, to make sure the kids know that a different tone, whether they are needing to stop doing something or if they need a reward or a certificate, stickers, just to give them that border, or boundary, of what they can do and what they can't do, I think that's really important.

Researcher: Umm, so, now, can you tell me about your experience of any training you've done, for this role or a similar role as a teaching assistant?

Participant 2: Apart from the teaching assistant course?

Researcher: Well, you can, that, and what you've done on top of that.

Participant 2: Ok. With the teaching assistant course, I only did two years ago, and we had to go on a behavioural unit for that, and we had to go around different schools. Umm, and look at different behaviour in different year groups and so obviously from where they're starting school, this one was up to year two, and look at how different teachers have different techniques like traffic light systems, or they have a sticker reward chart, or some people had a jar and every time somebody did well in class they put some magic glitter it was, and when it built up to a set level they could have a reward. So that was good. Umm, we also looked at the resources that they could use outside, using their imagination, that's what I did on the TA course. And looking at what the children need to be learning at different age groups, what development stage they should be at. Umm that's basically what the course involved. I felt we needed more work experience, more on the job stuff, rather than, they did a lot in the classroom, it was two days in the classroom and only one day on experience.

Researcher: Ok, and did you do that at college?

Participant 2: I did that at college yeah, but I felt when you're on the job you learn a lot more than sort of being in a classroom. I know it's difficult and you do have to do the paperwork of it, but just being in it, after two years, this will be my second year, and I've learnt a hell of a lot, just from doing it, as well when I did the course and I came out I was like this is a lot different from what, do you know what I mean, you need more, umm, but they don't, they didn't feel it was necessary to do more days. So I think that's a big, a big difference and it needs to be sort of looked at, or whether you can do sort of an apprenticeship and learn it as you go, and do the paperwork alongside. Because I think I'd have different answers to what I actually wrote in my coursework.

Researcher: And have you done any training since being here, or working in another school?

Participant 2: Umm, I did Read Write Inc training umm, but apart from that I haven't done anything, no.

Researcher: Umm, so, what areas do you feel that you would benefit from more training? Are there any training courses you'd like to go on or are there any skills you think that you would benefit from more training in?

Participant 2: Not that I've found at the minute, but I don't think I've got enough experience to sort of say I need this or I need that, because I've got my first aid, and you see a lot of bumps and cuts and everything in class. But I haven't found anything that I need, as of yet. But I may do if I'm in higher years, I might find that I haven't done, but no, not yet.

Researcher: And are there any skills that you feel you don't feel as confident in, or things that you think are a bit more challenging that you wish you knew a different way to tackle, or do you feel that you're prepared...

Participant 2: That just comes down to my English, it's just umm, having a bit more time, rather than somebody saying can you go and read this, or can you go and do this work, I like to sort of look over, or pre-read, I dunno, a pack of the books they've got there, so I know and I feel confident reading them. There's nothing worse when you're stuck, when you're in front of the class. I know this age group doesn't really understand if you make a mistake, but I've gone to year 4, year 5 and read a book, and then they sort of pick up on it. But that's just my confidence I think, I think that's just, rather than being put on the spot. But that's the only bit I struggle in really.

Researcher: And just lastly, is there anything else you'd like to say about your job as a teaching assistant, or any questions you need to ask?

Participant 2: No, I don't think so.

### **Participant 3**

Researcher: Ok, so first question is, what challenges do you face in your role as a teaching assistant?

Participant 3: From pupils, or?

Researcher: Just in general, what do you, is there any challenges that you face

Participant 3: Umm, we have, lots of like different things to do, and different things to work with, with children. So, it's finding time really, to be able to have that time with certain children, I think. As well as doing other jobs within the classroom. Umm, that's one of the big things, is just time, having time

to be able to sit with certain children, because they have all different needs, so it's sitting down with every child with the certain needs and things, so that is the big one I would say.

Researcher: And what do you feel are the most important skills that you need to be a teaching assistant?

Participant 3: Umm, well you need to have a lot of patience. Umm, you need to be able to have different ways of being aware of how children learn, so they're all gonna learn in a different way, so being able to accommodate, accommodate those needs. Umm, you need to, let me think, umm, it's tricky. Yes patience, you need to be able to accommodate different needs, umm, you need to be able to adapt to different, I think when you get a certain task from your teacher, you need to be able to be aware that, it might need to be slightly different for each child, based on ability, or the way they do learn, so having to adapt that, adapting to situations. Umm, but being aware as well, as obviously your own children, being aware of all the other children you've got, because it is a big school, so being aware of the other children and their needs as well.

Researcher: Ok, now, can you tell me about any experience of training you've had, um, either in this role, or in any other similar role as a teaching assistant?

Participant 3: Training as?

Researcher: So, any training you've been on, that the school have sent you on, or that you did to become a teaching assistant in the first place.

Participant 3: Ah, ok, so you do your level 1 and 2 when you're training to be a teaching assistant, and then obviously its optional, you can do your level 3, it's up to you, I have done my level 3. Umm, some staff training days, we do have umm, online umm, modules, to sort of go over, umm, and it's usually you watch a video and then you'll be able to umm, tick the right, the right options. Umm, we have done one on autism, which was nice, and we did that as, all of us did that, so everyone one of us is trained, you know, in that. So that's nice to have. Not just a couple of people that are trained in different areas, but we're all trained in that, which is nice, and better as well, isn't it? Umm, so that's usually what we will do on a staff training day, and then we will review it every so often, just so that we're aware.

Researcher: And how often do you have staff training days?

Participant 3: It just depends really, it does just depend, umm, I know there is next one after Christmas, that is our next one.

Researcher: Umm, so, in what areas do you feel that you would benefit from more training?

Participant 3: Umm, maybe with umm, what sort of areas I would like? Hmm, maybe with challenging behaviour a little bit more, umm and just different ways of you know, being able to deal with that. Because, you know, maybe there's lots of reasons why children are challenging, do have challenging behaviour, and I think that strategies, different ones, I would find beneficial, especially with certain children, so I am interested in, in having that. And you know, not just challenging behaviour, but behavioural issues and things like that.

Researcher: Ok, umm, so, just finally, is there anything else you'd like to say about working as a teaching assistant or any questions you have?

Participant 3: Umm, I don't think so, no.

#### **Participant 4**

Researcher: Ok, so, the first question is What challenges do you face in your role as a teaching assistant?

Participant 4: I'm a 1:1 teaching assistant, so I just have one child in particular, that I have to look after. But when for instance they're not in, or whatever, I'm left in the classroom as a TA, so it's a bit different to a normal TA, so my day changes daily.

Researcher: So what challenges do you face in that role, with regards to working 1:1 with children

Participant 4: Just his medical needs. They're the challenges I face, because every day is different with the child.

Researcher: Ok, umm, so, what do you feel are the most important skills that you need to do your job?

Participant 4: You need to be able to like, communicate with the children, they all communicate differently, so you've got to have different ways of

communication. You need to be really patient. And just bubbly, to like get them to do things. And quite persuasive at times [laughs].

Researcher: So, can you tell me about your experience of any training that you've had in this role or for some other role, so training you might've had to become a TA in the first place, or that you've been sent on by this school, or another school.

Participant 4: I've done a degree in Education and Childhood studies, so I studied for three years, and all my placements were in, primary based school, so that's all the training I've got.

Researcher: And you've not been sent on any training, you've not done any training days...

Participant 4: Not through here no. But I've only been here like six weeks.

Researcher: Ah Ok, so, are there any areas that you feel that you would benefit from training in?

Participant 4: Umm, yeah, probably, because I'm quite new to the job so I'm open to any training, any ways of different things I'm happy to take on. Like anything to help me.

Researcher: Is there anything specifically that you feel like you would benefit the most from training in?

Participant 4: I think it's just like, you know, Read Write Inc, and stuff that they do. Just being able to do the sounds, being trained in that properly. And just things like that.

Researcher: So finally, anything else that you'd like to say about your role and your feelings of being a teaching assistant or any questions that you have?

Participant 4: Nope

## **Participant 5**

Researcher: Ok so, the first question is, what challenges do you face in your role as a teaching assistant?

Participant 5: I suppose behaviour's quite a big one as they're coming up now, there's more and more disruption in the class. I'd say this year not as bad as last



year, but last year was worse. Umm, and then just time really, trying to fit everything in, is an ongoing, with cuts, just an ongoing thing really. You know you should be supporting somebody, but you need to be doing this, so you're pulled and pushed one way and the other.

Researcher: So do you feel you have, umm, an increased workload, or just a decrease in hours or, what's causing it?

Participant 5: Both, umm, we were decreased on our hours, and I think it's just a more demanding, with the behavioural, with children with learning, there's not as many support staff any more as we used to have, if there was a child with a hearing loss they'd generally have a support worker, if there was a child with a disability, that's not the case anymore. So, it generally falls on one or the other person.

Researcher: So, do you work always one to one with a child, or do you work as a general classroom assistant?

Participant 5: I'm a general TA, so I will do sometimes, but not always, and probably not as much as I'd, I'd quite like to, but you just can't have that time any more to devote to one.

Researcher: Umm, so what do you feel are the most important skills that you need to be a teaching assistant?

Participant 5: I suppose patience. You've got to have an understanding of the child, as a whole, you can't just expect them all to be at the same level, or respond in the same way. You know. Because you've been here a long time I suppose you know the families more, so it's quite nice to have a bit of knowledge about the child, what's going on. So if there's a bereavement it's nice that you know that, that could affect the child's day to day, or the whole week, or maybe not this week but the week after. And obviously, a certain, to have a passion about something would be great. So I love cooking with them, so, you feel that when you're doing something you like doing they get more out of it I think, whether that's true from their point of view I don't know, but I certainly feel that you enjoy it more. So to have an interest and a passion in something I think is good, anything really, I don't think it matters pretty much what it is.

Researcher: So now, can you tell me about any experience you have of training, either in this role or in a similar previous role as a teaching assistant?

Participant 5: Training in what sense?

Researcher: Well, any training that you've been on...

Participant 5: I do Childline counselling. So, I do ongoing training with them, and that's all sorts of things, from domestic abuse to forced marriage to mentoring. There's a whole heap of different ones that you sort of do. So, you aim to do a couple every year. And then I'm on a youth working course at the moment, level 3, so there is an element of training in that, we do some.

Researcher: So that's external from your role here?

Participant 5: Yes, yeah.

Researcher: So, have you been on any training as part of this job?

Participant 5: As part of this job we did some welsh training, we've done a bit of outdoors, you know outdoor classroom sort of training. Umm, I think we've done Makaton a few years ago, we had a child who struggled with speech. But again, the sort of skills that if you don't keep them up they slip, especially welsh I'd say. Because this is not a welsh medium school, so it's a shame, but it's one of those things. You know, it only really works if you're doing it day in day out. Yeah I can't think of other things, there must be other things, Makaton, oh we did umm, ELCLAN, which is like speech and language thing, just to give you an insight, not to overload them if they're process, and all that, to break things down for them. So yeah, over the years, done a few things.

Researcher: And in what areas do you feel that you would benefit from more training?

Participant 5: Mmm, I think probably my IT given my age, I'm not the best at IT, that's a bit poor when you look to the children to help you. But maybe that's a good thing for them, because then they've got responsibility, but, probably IT I'd say. Umm, as I said, the welsh I could do, but if you're not keeping it up it is a little bit pointless, I don't want to sound mean to the welsh, but unless they're going to force us to do it all the time I can't see it making much of a difference.

Researcher: So there's no training courses that you've seen that you've thought you might go to, or any skills as TA that you feel you would benefit from more training in?

Participant 5: No, no, not at the moment I haven't. I think sometimes when you've been in a role a long time, in the same place, you can probably think, well I've done this I've done that, you feel like you've ticked all the boxes.

Which is, probably not a great idea, you should probably rejig yourself, but certain things you've maybe had enough of, in a certain sense. So we did the outdoor forest school, we did it for years and years, but it got a little bit 'samey samey samey'. Because you're up against the fact that you've not got the resources you want to do it, so you just stop wanting to do it really. But no, nothing else apart from the IT really, that's the one that sort of stands out for me, I know I'm not good at it, I'm not a computer sort of person, but I think that's my age. Or that's just a very good excuse for me! [laughs]

Researcher: and do you have to use a lot of IT?

Participant 5: Not a great deal, but it would be nice to, I feel like I waste time, you know? I feel there must be an easier way, they frustrate me more than they should, its just a time thing I think for that.

Researcher: and so, just lastly, is there anything else you'd like to say about your role as a teaching assistant, or any questions you have?

Participant 5: No, I don't think so, no. I like the year group I'm in, I do think that makes the difference. I think the lower down is harder to feel like you're doing the job, perhaps, I think you're pulled in a hundred directions the lower down you get, so this is, this is nice. I'm in a middle room so I have my own area, and I work with smaller groups, I like that, I think it makes the job easier. But maybe that's just a personal preference, from me, I don't know, I've never worked in nursery, I can't imagine it's much fun [laughs], I shouldn't say anything, I may end up there one day!

## Appendix 22 – SKILLS Evaluation Interview Transcripts

### **Participant 1**

Researcher: Right, so the first question is, how have you found the SKILLS programme?

Participant 1: Very good. I think, umm, yeah, like, he's improved a lot hasn't he? I like the, you know the special time? That's what I enjoy most, and he enjoys it. We're still struggling, but at least he enjoys his little special time, and yeah, and informative isn't it?

Researcher: Yeah, good. And was there any, was it things that you hadn't maybe thought of before? Or was it things you'd heard before and just reminding you of it?

Participant 1: Bit of both.

Researcher: Bit of both, yeah.

Participant 1: Yeah. Like you know you should spend time with them, don't you? Like that. But then when you get it into your head, right come on we'll have a little bit of special time, it's nice that now, and he loves it so. That would do that, but yeah, other things we knew, but its nice to go over it and things isn't it, so. Yeah.

Researcher: Yeah, so, what's been the most beneficial element of the programme for you? Which bit did you find the most useful?

Participant 1: Umm, probably the special time. Because it calms him down, and he looks, he looks forward to it, so probably that, yeah. 10, 15 minutes of doing what he wants, or if he, sometimes he wants to go for a bike ride, or everything. But yeah, I'd say that's the most.

Researcher: And you've seen it does have an effect on him, it helps him to

Participant 1: yeah, it calms him down I think. And he looks forward to it, like he'll say 'can we do this tonight?'. So, he does look forward to it. So it's nice, yeah.

Researcher: Oh good, that's really lovely to hear.

Participant 1: And you can do it in the house can't you, so if the weather's bad it's not a worry. So yeah.

Researcher: Did you experience any challenges during the SKILLS programme?

Participant 1: With [child]?

Researcher: Umm, just with the programme, or implementing it, anything that you felt didn't work, or that you thought was at odds with what you already did or didn't?

Participant 1: Umm, not really no. I thought it was all, yeah, it was nice, good.

Researcher: And what about, you said there was a problem with the school?

Participant 1: Oh, school, yeah. They couldn't, did they agree to you that they were going to do the 10 minutes every day?

Researcher: yeah.

Participant 1: Well, umm, have I got his yellow book? They couldn't do his 10 minutes every day they said, because umm, I've put it all under here somewhere. Oh there. [gets out child's home-school book] Right, so they were doing it, as in just when he's on green he gets the umm, 10 minutes, so I was saying to him 'have you had your special time today [child]?', and he was like 'no'. So, I was writing it in here, umm, '[child] said he didn't have his time with [classroom support staff] today', so I've wrote that a few times; '[child] said he didn't have his time with [classroom support staff] today'. Then his teacher's wrote; '[classroom support staff] will spend time with [child] when he is next on green.' So I just put; 'the session'. I probably shouldn't of put it this, but I put; 'the sessions were to see if [child] behaviour improved with 1:1 special time, 10 minutes a day. Not as a reward for when he's on green'. Because, that was what I thought it was kind of thing. So then, I don't know what happened after that, I don't know if he had it or not, I don't think he had it every day then I think. But now, we've had a few problems with him anyway, so we're not doing green, yellow, red, anymore. They've decided now they've stopped that.

Researcher: Ah ok, so the school have decided that they'll stop it with him?

Participant 1: Yeah, just with him. Because, umm, well I don't know if I told you this or not. Umm, he got upset one, I said to him; 'come on now lets do your teeth', and he got upset and said he hates his life and umm, he wants to be dead, because he's always on red and naughty. So, he's got red and naughty from them, because I don't use green yellow red. So, I went to the doctors and told them, about it, and told school. I said; 'I'm not having his mental health being effected by this green yellow red, it's not working', it's like a year and a half later, I give it a chance haven't I, a year and a half. Umm, so we had a meeting, and then it still carried on for about two weeks, so I went back in again and I spoke to the head teacher and I said; 'I'll keep him off school if I think that's effecting his mental health, and I've told CAMHS about it'. So, I've told CAMHS about, umm, this green yellow red, and it not working. She said right; 'from this moment on we won't use it with [child]', so that's good, so now we don't. He did try and say like 'he's green' and things, but we don't do the other

colours. Because I was saying to them, it's not, it's not working because when I come and pick him up and he says 'mum I'm on green' I'm not bothered what colour he's on, as long as he doesn't, as long as he doesn't hit or hurt children, that's my goal, not green yellow red. It's not working is it, and he can't ever get the, they have a teddy, you have to be on this green five days to win the teddy. He can't ever get that, he always goes on about that at night. So, I thought no, I'm not, it's effecting his head isn't it, so. But they have stopped that now. Oh sorry to ramble. But that's to do with school.

Researcher: Yeah, but so, that was, the challenge of them not implementing it, umm, but it did, do you think it, having this programme gave you more confidence to go and challenge their use of the traffic lights?

Participant 1: Well I felt a bit annoyed, because, I thought it, because it, I said to the head teacher, it needs to be consistent doesn't it, it was supposed to be school and me doing it, so if I was doing my part they needed to do their part. But then,

Researcher: So do you think if you hadn't been doing the SKILLS programme, do you think you still would have gone and challenged the traffic lights, or do you think maybe this made you think

Participant 1: Well I've always challenged it. I've challenged it since he was in reception, because it was when I said, I said; '[child] if you get green I'll get you a car', because cars are his favourite thing. So I said 'every time you get green, I'll get you a car'. Just to see if he could get a week on green, and he still couldn't do it, so I thought well obviously he can't do it, because he would because that's his favourite thing. So, I've always said to them; 'this isn't working for him, this green yellow red'. But I think, like with doing this course it has given me more confidence to say, umm; 'I'm not happy with it' and you can see it's more like, I can't have it effecting his mental health, really, because he's young now, but what about when he's older, I've got to think of that. They won't know him when he's older, but I've got to think of his future haven't I, and not just [child] as now. So, we are getting on a bit better, me and school. Bless them. I think they have a lot, to deal with, but, it's the same in any job though, I couldn't, I look after adults with learning difficulties, and I couldn't do some of the things that they do, so they, that's their job, they need to do their job don't they. Or they should've said to you in the first place; 'no we can't do that, we can only do it when he's on green' and then it would've been, but, I think a few fibs get told don't they, that's why I write everything down.

Researcher: So, how accessible have you found the process of doing the programme online? So, has it been ok?

Participant 1: Oh easy, yeah, I just do it on my phone.

Researcher: On your phone, yeah. Have you tried to do it on a computer or a tablet, or just only on your phone.

Participant 1: Just on my phone yeah.

Researcher: On your phone, and it worked fine, you didn't have any problems at all?

Participant 1: No, I could, it's only like a normal phone, and umm, and it, you just turned it like that way and then you could do it and watch the video and then answer the questions.

Researcher: Oh perfect. So it worked perfectly fine, and that's just the normal smart phone.

Participant 1: Yeah, just a normal smart phone, you didn't need like a big one, or a tablet or anything, like it's just on that.

Researcher: Good, good, good. Umm, so, who do you think would benefit from doing this sort of programme, like SKILLS?

Participant 1: At schools?

Researcher: Ah, SKILLS, so this programme, sorry.

Participant 1: Oh SKILLS, well like parents I do, and in fact I think like families as well, like I was showing my mum and, you know because like things with ADHD, you think they don't believe you really, when they're a lot older, do they, because it wasn't, well it probably was, but it wasn't dealt with now is it, as it is now. So like umm, families, they'd be good to have like an insight into things, and school, and the TAs especially. Yeah, I think, the teacher, it depends how nice the teacher is as well, doesn't it, because his teacher's lovely, so she'll, if I said to her, she'd do it, where as some of them are stuck in their ways aren't they, but I think it would, the teacher, the teaching assistant, and the parent, and the family, it'd be perfect wouldn't it, if everyone did the same across.

Researcher: And do you think it would be beneficial for all children, or just for children have a few issues at school, or challenging behaviour?

Participant 1: I think more just the challenging behaviour, do you? And umm, because, I know, this was only yesterday I noticed this, the difference in [child] to like his classmates now, I've never noticed it before, and in year 1, and they seem so like, mature, and he's, he seems proper babyish and that's probably to do with, because there's a few, there's about 4 boys in the class, and they're all, yeah, some of them are so mature, and I think 'god' now you're starting to notice like how, so, so I don't

think they'd need it, because they've got their, haven't they. But I think anyone who needs a bit of extra help and support it's a good thing. Even if like, the child was like, what they call 'normal', if the parents needed a bit of help and support, it's a good thing to have isn't it. Even if the school didn't do it, the parents could just do it couldn't they. Bit of help. And it like, reassures you doesn't it, because you can read it again, you can go back and read it, and so it is.

Researcher: And so did you go back and read bits, or did you make notes, or anything like that on it so far?

Participant 1: No, not really, I did go back and read a bit of it, but not, not much. I don't have much time to be honest.

Researcher: No, no that's fine, I was just wondering because you said that

Participant 1: But it is good, it is.

Researcher: Good. Umm, So just finally anything else you want to say about the programme or any questions about it?

Participant 1: No, I think it's good, it, is it going into schools?

Researcher: umm, so we're trying to develop it so that it could be in the future, but it's obviously at the early stages at the moment so, you're like one of the first people to do it.

Participant 1: So they have like a log in and I have a log in

Researcher: Yeah, everybody has a separate log in, so no one can see what you're doing on it, but it looks exactly the same when they log in as it looks for you.

Participant 1: It's good that isn't it. And like umm, and the thing is sometimes you think, because I think I'd like to know, like what, you know like how he deals at school, like how, and I suppose that's what parents evening is for, but you don't get a lot of time do you.

Researcher: So, like do you mean if there was some way to write messages to the teacher? Or just a way to see how they're doing it as well?

Participant 1: Yeah, something like that, because if they were doing it and then you were doing it, but you can't see each others, maybe you could like ask questions to the ta or the teacher and they could, if they have a problem with him, they could say something couldn't they, like that maybe.

Researcher: Yeah, in relation to each module maybe.

Participant 1: Kind of go through like that, yeah it's really good, thanks.



Researcher: Thank you.

## **Participant 2**

Researcher: Ok, so how have you found the SKILLS programme?

Participant 2: Very educational. Umm. Because I've been doing the Solihull approach in school, which is a completely different thing, but trying to get the same, umm, results if you like. The SKILLS programme, it's basically telling you what not to do and what to do. Which is what I think I needed. Rather than, the Solihull approach is all about how our feelings, and then it, it beats around so many bushes it doesn't really get to the point. But the SKILLS programme cut straight to it, so I found it fascinating, because it, you know, you're bumbling along and you think you're doing the best you can, umm and the things are so obvious in the SKILLS programme, what's right and wrong. But it's, you realise how far off the mark you've been. If that makes sense. So yeah, I've found it very useful. Yeah.

Researcher: And has it fit in with things that you were already doing, was there anything in it that have been things you already knew, or reminded you of things you might have previously been told?

Participant 2: Well yes, it's all the things I wanted to be before having kids. The parent you want to be, before you actually have the children, and then when the children come along, umm, because you've still got to carry on with life, and then you almost revert back to how you were brought up, which had its faults. So yes, it's been, a good reminder of how to do it, rather than not to do it.

Researcher: So how has it fit within your daily routine and what you would usually do with the children?

Participant 2: It's made me realise that I do need to sit and play with them more often. Because, I do seem to find other things to do instead. Which, which I love playing with the kids and everything, but then there's always a million and one things to do, and then you, it's made me realise that that stuff's always going to be there and it doesn't matter if the house is a little bit messy or, you know you don't have to Hoover every day, but playing every day is something you have to do, because that's why you have kids isn't it? To be with them. Yeah.

Researcher: Ok, thank you. Umm so for you what has been the most beneficial element of the programme?

Participant 2: umm, realising where I was going wrong to be honest. Umm, and seeing the difference in the kids, when I do spend quality time with them, more eye contact, things like saying their name and umm. Having an effective relationship with them, whereas perhaps before we were banging heads a lot of the time.

Researcher: Umm, so what in particular do you think, just being reminded to spend time with them and play with them, or any particular techniques or strategies that you feel have helped with that, building that relationship?

Participant 2: Yeah, well spending time with them more, umm, and getting down to their level on the floor more often, umm, I've found that I was giving them too much choice and asking them questions rather than giving them instructions. So, I was being a bit ambiguous with them a lot of the time, which then I found it frustrating that they weren't towing the line sort of thing, so that's been really helpful.

Researcher: So, seeing that positive change from just adapting that a little bit.

Participant 2: yeah

Researcher: Great, so have you experienced any challenges during the SKILLS programme?

Participant 2: Umm, lots and lots and lots, I can't think of one in particular.

Researcher: I know you've had lots in your personal life, with like moving and...

Participant 2: well yeah, we've moved house obviously.

Researcher: but in relation to the SKILLS programme, was there anything, did anything, you come across, you found difficult to implement, or maybe you thought 'I'm not sure I agree with that'?

Participant 2: Oh no, there's nothing that I don't agree with. Umm, it is difficult sometimes when you're in the heat of the moment, and you're trying to get them out of the door for school, and they're not playing along, to remember, how to get through the routine in a positive way, without shouting 'please just get your shoes on for the last time'. Umm so yeah, life, has its hectic moments, and that gets in the way. But I'm sure over time and it will become habit, rather than something I have to think about, umm, yeah.

Researcher: And what about the school, did you, have you talked to school about how they were implementing the programme, or

Participant 2: umm, to be honest I haven't really seen anyone at school, because I've been, I kind of drop off at the breakfast club and pick up at the after-school club, so I rarely see a teacher. Umm, but I've, when I do get the chance to pick up [child] from

school it's just positive feedback now. Umm, the only problems he's encountered is when he's defending himself, so he's not creating any problems anymore, but he is retaliating. So, his behaviour has improved, but they haven't said anything about the programme, because we don't have time to chat properly, sorry.

Researcher: no, that's ok. Umm, so how accessible did you find the process of completing it online?

Participant 2: Apart from moving house and not having internet for two months, fine. Umm, its, yeah, easy to log-on, easy to watch the videos, easy to do the quizzes, the quizzes are great, I love quizzes.

Researcher: And have you just done it on your phone, or did you try it on a tablet or a computer?

Participant 2: Yeah, I've only just done it on my phone. I've got an iPad mini, but I tend to hide it from the kids, so I don't get it out very often, unless I have got a substantial amount of time to myself in the house, and then I'll just use it to play the radio!

Researcher: So you've just done it on your phone and you've found it works perfectly?

Participant 2: Yeah, perfectly fine.

Researcher: Ok, thank you. Umm, so who do you think would benefit from a programme like SKILLS?

Participant 2: There are, umm, in the group in the school, that do the Solihull approach, possibly, most of the parents that started the course could probably benefit from this, but unfortunately I think a lot of them have multiple children, say four. And they have, more behavioural problems perhaps than [child] and there are medical problems, and family situations that are quite intense, and unfortunate, so it might be difficult for them to complete it.

Researcher: And other than parents do you think any other members of the public or professionals or family members might benefit from it?

Participant 2: Yeah, my husband could definitely do with doing this.

Researcher: So like Dads and

Participant 2: Yes, definitely. Umm, everybody would benefit. So, schools, teachers, umm, social workers, umm, even down to paediatric nurses, yeah.

Researcher: So, do you think it would be better if everybody was, had, the same like knowledge, or the same approach?

Participant 2: Yeah, yeah.

Researcher: umm, and just finally have you got any other comments on the programme or any questions?

Participant 2: No.

Researcher: Ok, lovely.

Participant 2: Cool.

### **Participant 3**

Researcher: Ok, so the first question is just, how did you find the SKILLS programme?

Participant 3: It was really informative, really really good. I mean I've done most of that kind of thing before, so for me it was more of a refresher and just a reminder. But for parents that've not done it before, it's perfect. Absolutely perfect.

Researcher: So, was there anything that you hadn't heard of or thought of before, or was it all just refreshing what you already knew?

Participant 3: It's more refreshing what I've already done to be fair. But umm calling yourself a reporter rather than umm, I've done more of like a therapy based one where you more very specific of what they're doing, so if they're really scribbling really hard, you'll say 'oh your using that crayon really hard' so slightly different take on what I've already learnt, but yeah, brilliant.

Researcher: Ah ok, so still the same idea

Participant 3: yeah, still the same idea.

Researcher: So for you what was the most beneficial element of the programme?

Participant 3: Just a refresher of it to be honest and I think the fact that the school were doing it alongside it, that meant that [child] had the continuity of school doing it and me doing it at home.

Researcher: And was there anything in particular that maybe it was a refresher but that you thought 'oh that would work more' or was it all things you were already doing anyway?

Participant 3: More of the distraction. Umm, especially with the other two children, some things that they like to do all the time, and you know no matter how many times you say not to do it, or you say 'right its time out because you're still doing it' they

constantly do it. So more, instead of saying not to do that, distract them out of it, and just completely ignore what they're doing and not supposed to. Because they know they're not supposed to do it and they're probably just doing it to wind me up really. So, it's just more of a distraction, just to reinforce that I should just really focus on the distraction out of it.

Researcher: And you said it was good that they were doing it at school too, did you talk to the staff at school about it?

Participant 3: I don't even know what staff were doing it with them at school, so I don't know. There was a big change over of staff at the time. They brought a lady in towards the end of the Christmas term, before Christmas, and umm, she stayed with [child] now, and is absolutely amazing. But I don't, don't think she did the course with her. I don't know who it was.

Researcher: Ok. So, have you experienced any challenges during the SKILLS programme?

Participant 3: No. Her behaviour is just coming down and down and down.

Researcher: Ah ok, fantastic. And so, you said it was all things you were already doing or knew, so there was nothing you thought that was a bit different to what you do, or would get in the way of what you do already?

Participant 3: No, it's already some of it we already do. We've done a lot of therapeutic parenting training beforehand. The strategies were all very similar to what you would do as a therapeutic parent, with that training.

Researcher: As ok. So, how accessible did you find the process of completing it online?

Participant 3: Really easy. Really easy. I think for me, if we had it more structured, you needed to do by, on a certain day. It would have been easier, because I, you know, you kept thinking 'I'll do it later', 'I'll do it later'. If you needed to do it on a certain time or a certain day I think that would have been more structured for me, because I'm so busy, for me that would have helped, would have been better.

Researcher: And did you access it on a computer, laptop, on your phone?

Participant 3: iPad

Researcher: On your iPad, and did you just do each module and then move on, forward, or did you make notes or go back and look at anything?

Participant 3: No, just moved forwards.

Researcher: Ok, wonderful, thank you. So, who do you think would benefit from a programme like SKILLS?

Participant 3: Parent's that are struggling. Parents that haven't got, umm, like grandparents, or who've well, you know, parents that they might not have them or they're not very, umm. Good background, if you know what I'm saying. So they've not had a very good upbringing, so they need somebody to try to reinforce what actually should be done, rather than what was done in the past for them. Umm, parents that struggle, to know how to parent really, because of that. Does that make sense?

Researcher: Yes, yes.

Participant 3: Yes. I think that's what it would really benefit those people.

Researcher: And what do you feel about, like umm, other professionals, like teachers, or in schools, or other professionals, that might be working with children? Anybody like that?

Participant 3: Teaching assistants.

Researcher: Ok.

Participant 3: Definitely teaching assistants, it would be really useful for them, all of them to have that kind of training. Because at least they know what to do with the children and they're all working from the same page. You know, with children and you've got 1:1s or teaching assistants, they're constantly changing, and there's no continuity when that's happening. You know, at least if they did that kind of training there'd be some sort of continuity.

Researcher: Ok. So have you found that you have different members of staff working

Participant 3: Until [current 1:1] came in there were so many different members of staff constantly coming in, changing, umm, I didn't know who was working with [child] from one day to the next. But now I know [current 1:1] comes in every morning and she takes her out of the class and has 5 minutes, 10 minutes quite time, before going into class. So, the whole class is quiet beforehand, and she has a really good day in school then.

Researcher: Ah ok, fantastic. So just finally, any other comments on the SKILLS programme or any questions?

Participant 3: It's a really good programme. Really really good programme. And I think, as I said, parents that haven't had any skills given to them in the past or anyone to help them, support them, it would really benefit them.

Researcher: Oh, and I know your husband, I gave him access. Did he complete it?

Participant 3: He has, I'm not sure he's completed all of it. But he has, I know done at least three modules.

Researcher: And did you find that useful, having both of you knowing the same thing.

Participant 3: Yeah. He hasn't done anywhere near the training I've done. So having him doing it so that it was really helpful, because you could see him coming home when he's done it and you know implementing it at home.

Researcher: And do you think, why do you think he hasn't done any before? Is it because when the training is, or do they only offer it to you?

Participant 3: Work commitments.

Researcher: Ah ok. So something like this was easier for him, because it was

Participant 3: to access, yeah, he's umm, he works six full days a week. And he's self-employed, and his parents really don't umm, appreciate any training, 'why would you need training to parent a child', it's more, umm, yeah, they don't understand that at all. If you need training to parent a child in their eyes then you're not a very good parent. And so, that's not really, umm, how it is, you know children have so many different needs, especially the children I have, they're all very complex children, and having a massive bucketful of ideas, umm, you can just pull out your head to try and fix, or help the situation, is immensely important.

Researcher: Ah ok, so do you think that he saw it as training, or do you think that he saw it as he was looking at it just to see what you were doing?

Participant 3: I think as training. He would look at it as training, yeah.

Researcher: and he was still willing to do it?

Participant 3: Yep.

Researcher: ok, brilliant. Ok, I think that's everything thank you.

Participant 3: I think, yeah, to be honest, when you're having parents doing this, I think it is important if both can do it. Because, then they're both singing from the same page. So, they can both have access I think that's important.

#### **Participant 4**

Researcher: Firstly, how have you found the SKILLS programme?

Participant 4: I've really enjoyed it, I've found it quite useful, because it recaps what we did on our course and sort of brings back, I only did it two years ago, but just certain things you think; 'yeah I'll try that technique again'. and it has, some of the techniques have worked with him, some of them haven't, but obviously it depends on the child, because he just won't sit still. So, when we were talk, umm, talked about this tone of voice, we tried that with him, but when he, when his attention just goes, you just need that short snap to say, and then he's sort of back with you. But I've really enjoyed it.

Researcher: When you say it was similar to your course, do you mean your teaching assistant course that you did, previously?

Participant 4: Yeah, so some of their techniques that they told us to use, overlapped with this. So when I was going over I thought; 'oh yeah I remember doing that' and just bringing it back in.

Researcher: Ok. Umm, so, what has been the most beneficial element of the SKILLS programme for you?

Participant 4: The online course I'm putting it into practice. I found it hard to find the time, to fit it in with the class, but I found the time slot on a Wednesday to do it and then I practiced after I did it, so straight after so there was no gap, and I found it, fresh in my mind and just go do it. I did it one day where I had a big gap, and then I, obviously in class and then everything else goes and then I think; 'what was I needing to focus on today', so I tried to do the activity of which session I was on to try and focus on that to see him progress that way.

Researcher: So did you, you weren't given extra time to do it? You just had to fit it into your normal day? Your normal hours?

Participant 4: yeah

Researcher: So, what element of the programme, so which particular aspect of the module, or which skills spring to mind, that have been the most useful to you?

Participant 4: The 10 minutes of reading. For, it wasn't based on the modules to do 10 minutes of reading, but when I did the online practice and it told you to do different techniques, different tones of voice or different ways to present yourself, when we sat down I was trying to be more enthusiastic and his reading came on and he was more interested. We did do, 2 or 3 books within the 10 minutes, because he just, he just wanted to keep going, but that's the side I liked. Ten minutes with just 1:1 and him pointing at things, or me asking what's that animal or, can you tell me what noise that animal makes, and, that side of it, that's what I enjoyed. Because you don't get to do 1:1 reading, it's just, at school, it's just 100 miles an hour.



Researcher: So what have you, you said you've seen his, you saw an immediate improvement

Participant 4: yeah, he was more interactive with the book rather than me sort of, just flicking through it, he was, I was asking him more questions and he was more interested in the, in the story.

Researcher: Ok, so you found it easier to engage him?

Participant 4: Yeah. I was watching the online videos, thinking I probably don't do that, I probably just read the story and want to flick to the next page and probably don't ask them enough of what's in the picture. That's probably my fault as well, but I picked up on it, and then we did that.

Researcher: Ok, good. So you found the actual videos useful, to, to properly explain

Participant 4: yeah, to visualise it, yeah.

Researcher: Oh, brilliant, Ok, so, have you experienced any challenges during the SKILLS programme?

Participant 4: Umm, just, him not wanting to do it, it was sort of in his time, if I tried to take him out, he just, to have a bit of a strop; 'no, no! I'm playing with friends'. Like you couldn't take him out of what he was doing. Because it wasn't, the same time slot all the time, it wasn't like a routine for him, it was just, when we had time, one day we said it was going to be a two o'clock, but if he was in an activity he didn't, he didn't really want to pull out of it. So we tried to get it when he first came in in the afternoon, sit down and do it before his head was, elsewhere, but it depends what he's done in the morning before, he's come in and what mood he's come in.

Researcher: Yeah, because he's only in the afternoon here? So, you only see him from after lunch isn't it?

Participant 4: Yeah, after lunch until 3.

Researcher: Ok. Umm, and has there been any other more general challenges, like does it fit in, the content of the programme, does that fit in with what you already do in nursery, or has there been any clashes or

Participant 4: There hasn't been any clashes, he has had a 1:1 temporary. So, she has been doing what, the 10 minutes of reading, 10 minutes of games, and trying to put it into practice as well, so he had more, more from it. Umm, but he's got a review this week, so I'm not, she hasn't referred back to me of what's happened that way. So, I think he's just, he's had more practice with that, so he's sort of had double the time and that's been nice as well.

Researcher: So, the new 1:1 that's been with him has been using some of the techniques?

Participant 4: Yeah, she had a look at my notes. That I've took from the sessions, and she's just gone over it and gone yeah 'well we do this' and 'we don't do that' and she just sat and done some games and bits with him.

Researcher: Ah, ok. So just giving him a bit more 1:1 attention to build that relationship, ok, fantastic. So how accessible have you found the process of completing the programme online? What you have done online, so have you found it easy enough to access?

Participant 4: Oh yeah, very easy to access. Straight, from the email link I just go straight in, and then it's away. Once I'm on and it's nice that it runs all through. Because I did the session and the quiz straight after and then I was fine then and just wrote my notes as I went along.

Researcher: Ok, and so you, no technical problems with

Participant 4: no nothing at all, everything worked.

Researcher: and have you done it on a phone or a tablet, or a computer, or what?

Participant 4: a bit of both really. On a tablet and the computer in the classroom, just depending on where's best to do it.

Researcher: Ok, and have you looked back on it at all, like when you've been at home, or just later on in the week? Or have you just done the module and then

Participant 4: I've done the module and, umm, gone away and done the task from my notes, and then just moved onto the next module the following week.

Researcher: Ok, brilliant. So, who do you think would benefit from a programme like SKILLS?

Participant 4: Behaviour. Definitely behavioural.

Researcher: Ok, so children's behaviour.

Participant 4: Yeah. People that just generally needing that 1:1 attention, it's nice for them to have the 1:1, as where sometimes, other, maybe the quieter children as well in the classroom, that just want that bit of a comfort. Because, naughty children sort of, probably, shouldn't use 'naughty', the behavioural children in the classroom, that just need that bit of attention, categorise, you sort of put them together to do it. But then the people that are, children who are a little bit quieter, maybe come up to you and go 'oh can you read this, can you read that', you want to give them the time. So

maybe, maybe not categories it, maybe do it, and just see what children in the class will benefit. Benefit from it, because there is another girl at the minute and she has been coming along and wants to be involved. And she's really quite, but I think it will improve her, umm, vocabulary as well, because she hasn't got very good communication skills, quite shy, there's, I wanna keep her away, but then when we read a story she comes out of herself and she points and answers questions, so I think it will work for her as well.

Researcher: Ok, umm, so, do you think any other professionals, or adults would benefit from the taking the, like doing the training? So, umm, parents or teachers, or head teachers, social workers, any other

Participant 4: well when I spoke to [child's parent], she's found it beneficial because she's been doing it umm, trying to involve what she's learnt at home, and she's found it beneficial, from what I've heard anyway. So I think to continue it with parents, so, because some parents aren't aware, and some parents are, but just to put it out there, for other parents, let them know.

Researcher: Ok, and do you think that you talked to [child's parent] more, umm, than you maybe would have done, because you were both doing the programme?

Participant 4: Yeah, she just sort of filled me in as she went along, and I probably wouldn't have said; 'oh how's he reading at home', because it's not the sort of topic I've spoken about with parents before. But because we were both doing it she asked me how he was in school when we did it, and vice versa, and I asked her how he was at home, so those probably yeah, more communication between us and the parents as well.

Researcher: Good, ok. Umm, so, just finally, anything else you want to say about the programme, or any questions you have?

Participant 4: I found it hard with the time that we started with Christmas concerts and, it maybe, now we've come other side of Christmas, and we've got that break from now until Easter, I'm a little bit quieter in class. Before Christmas it was just, mad, so maybe if I was to do it again I'd probably do it at this point in the year [spring term], rather than when we had it at Christmas, but apart from that, everything else was fine.

Researcher: Ok, lovely, thank you very much.

## **Participant 5**

Researcher: Ok, so first of all, how have you found the SKILLS programme?

Participant 5: I've really enjoyed it actually, going online. I think it's quite accessible for all, so you can use the computer, or you can you know, use your iPad, watch the videos, which were really good as well. For example, they're not too long either, they're only about 20, 25 minutes, and I think it's not too long to sit down and to watch something. And there are things on there that you do already know, but you think; 'oh I can use it in that way'. So I've really enjoyed using it, and I think it's a good thing for, not just for teaching assistants to do, but for everybody to do, because it's only a six week course and it's not asking too much, it's only 20 minutes isn't it. So I've really enjoyed doing it personally for me.

Researcher: Oh good, ok, so for you what has been the most beneficial element of the programme?

Participant 5: Umm I think having something to go back to, umm, along, so obviously alongside doing it with [child], but having that online thing to go to. Because I can, you can always go back as well, which is nice, and they always review things as well, so you're still constantly getting reminded of little things, and that's quite beneficial. Because, for each week, you do, you do sometimes forget things, and you think; 'oh yeah I've got that', so it's nice to have the reminders and the examples in there, they were really good as well.

Researcher: And is there anything in particular, anything that you've learnt through the programme been more helpful than other things, like new skills or

Participant 5: Umm, maybe to possibly let the child lead more, and see what they do, take a step back, maybe. Because, we're used to sort of leading things aren't we, and saying; 'right this is what we're going to do', but letting them do it has been quite helpful and sort of, being there but letting them be in control, I've found that really useful.

Researcher: Umm, so have you experienced any challenges during the SKILLS programme?

Participant 5: Umm, I don't think so. I would say I've had more, like positive, umm, things. The only things we've struggled to have with our policy, our 'good to be green' policy, if they get a red card they have to take some time out, the only thing is, with them having that, I don't want them to feel that they are then being rewarded having their own time with me, if that makes sense. So that's, but then, we have to sort of see it as they've had that red card, they've done that now, and that's over, and that's finished, so we've sort of taken that approach to it so they still get their time as well.

Researcher: So, can you just explain what the 'good to be green' is?

Participant 5: So, it's a policy, so umm, we all start on green. Umm, and then if they do, you know if they're being unkind or saying unkind things, they would then possibly get a yellow, or if they are hitting or unkind playing they would get a red then. So, if they get a yellow they miss 5 minutes of their break, if they get a red they miss completely. And we have golden time at the end of the week on a Friday, where they get to choose what they would like to do. If they've had yellow in that week then they just miss 5 minutes of that, if they've had a red then they don't get to. So it was just trying to keep them both separate, and trying to make them understand that they're having their time with me, not, you know, they're still having it because that's separate, you know, their good to be green is separate. So just making them aware I think is important, that, you know, that they still get to have that, and that's not because they've been, you know, they've had a red or a yellow, it's something different. That's the only thing yeah.

Researcher: Ok, and was there any challenges, with the actually accessing of the programme?

Participant 5: No I found it really easy, I think that the sheet that we got how to go on it the first time, that was helpful. And then it was the same every time then, which was nice, it wasn't something different every week, I knew where it would be and it was easy to find it.

Researcher: Oh good. So, similar to that, so how accessible did you find completing the programme?

Participant 5: Yeah, very straightforward, like I said it was the same, so it wasn't anything completely different, so yeah, I thought it was quite easy, for me to access it and umm, I did it through a laptop at home. But you could use like computers, it wasn't you needed to use one thing to be able to use it, you could use it, you know, over a couple of like different devices, that's good.

Researcher: So, who do you think would benefit from a programme like SKILLS, so more generally, who do you think would be

Participant 5: Adults and children, or just

Researcher: Umm, so from people who would actually do it, so adults primarily

Participant 5: yeah, do you know what I think it would be a good thing for everybody maybe to try. I think maybe if you were a teaching assistant try it first, but it would be good for teachers to try, because we all forget things don't we, we've all got a lot to think about. And I think, you know, it's only 20 minutes and its only for six weeks isn't it, its not, you don't have to do something every day, you can just do one a week. So, whether we get say, a certain amount to do it first, and then we swap it

after they've done that six weeks. Because it would be nice for everybody to be able to say; 'well we'll implement that because', you know, so we're all doing it and we're all following it, and then it's consistency isn't it. Yeah, so I think you know, everybody could learn from doing it.

Researcher: And where do you think outside of school, is there anybody who you think

Participant 5: Definitely parents would, because it's only a six week thing, it's, we're not asking to do, I know it's they've got a lot on as well, but we're not asking for a lot of time, just 20 minutes isn't it. Yeah.

Researcher: And do you think, what type of children do you think it would most benefit?

Participant 5: Challenging behaviour children probably children. It make help parents to understand why they're doing that certain behaviour, because I can imagine it would be stressful, you know not understanding, but it could be, it's beneficial I think for every parent to possibly do, but more so for the challenging behaviour children, for them to understand why they are doing what they are doing. Because you do forget don't you, you know. Yeah, definitely.

Researcher: Oh good, thank you. Umm. Ok, so, it's just, any other comments that you have on the programme, or any questions about it?

Participant 5: Umm, I don't think so. I do think it is something, I've had a really positive experience from it. I do think if other people could do it, I would definitely encourage them to do it. You do learn a lot, you know, and it's something you can take away with you, and you can use in all years now. It's not necessarily for the younger children, you can use it going up when they get older as well. So, I've got that now, you know, so that's really good, yeah. And it's nice to go back, I can always go back can't I, it's always going to be there, yeah, I've enjoyed it, yeah.

Participant 5: Good, thank you.

## **Participant 6**

Researcher: Ok, so the first question is; how have you found the SKILLS programme?

Participant 6: It was interesting. Umm, yeah, it was interesting, like reading all the like, you know like the PowerPoints. And like different ways to speak to children, and

different like, tactics to pick up, that you can use. And then it was interesting to see how it did affect the child.

Researcher: And what about the access wise, so the technology, how did you find that aspect of it?

Participant 6: yeah fine, it was all fine, yeah. No problems connecting to the website.

Researcher: Ok, so what do you think has been the most beneficial element of the programme for you?

Participant 6: I enjoyed the PowerPoints, but that's because I'm more, that way. So, I enjoyed like reading them and then putting them into practice.

Researcher: So, anything in particular that you found particularly useful?

Participant 6: Just the different ways in which you'd break things down. And like different ways of dealing with different situations.

Researcher: OK, so, have you experienced any challenges during the programme? So that would probably be as you were saying about the colour system, so if you could explain that.

Participant 6: Yeah, so the colour system that's already in place in the school. It's like a behaviour one, so if they're on a red card we couldn't do anything because other children see, saw that as a reward. But if they had a yellow card he had 5 minutes, instead of the 10. Because the, with the yellow they only miss 5 minutes of play, so he missed 5 minutes of my time, but if they're on red they miss whole play, so he missed whole of interactions.

Researcher: So how do they get on the different colours, on the colour system?

Participant 6: That's just like shouting out, not listening, umm, just like unkind hands, and things like that.

Researcher: And does it reset every day?

Participant 6: Yes.

Researcher: So, every day they move on, and then in the morning they'll come back to green?

Participant 6: Depending on when they got the card, if it's a red and they get it between dinner time and home time, then they miss first play of the day after.

Researcher: And once they've missed the play does it then go back to green, so they start again?

Participant 6: Yes.

Researcher: Ok, thank you. Ok, so then, how accessible did you find the process of completing it online?

Participant 6: yeah, fine, it was all fine. I took notes, I wrote it all down, because I found it really helpful.

Researcher: And, did you use a computer or a laptop or a tablet

Participant 6: A laptop.

Researcher: A laptop

Participant 6: yeah.

Researcher: Umm, so, who do you think would benefit the most from a programme like this?

Participant 6: Umm. I'd say, myself, because I've not really seen a change, but I've managed to pick up new ways to like help. So, I'd say more, so, the teaching assistant, than the child.

Researcher: OK. And do you think anybody else, like other teachers, social workers, parents, do you think anyone else would benefit from also completing the programme?

Participant 6: Yeah, I think it's beneficial to everyone, because like you can always learn. Like there's always different ways that you can, like expand on your knowledge, so I think everybody, like, would be, like inclined to like, look at it. Because, I've got a folder, so I've said anyone can look at it, because I've wrote everything down. So yeah.

Researcher: So, do you think it would be useful to have like anything written down with it, because of course it's all online.

Participant 6: Maybe paper copies of, you know, of your PowerPoints, like of the slides. Because that was just, it was just handy to have them isn't it. So, just with, because it was so jam packed with information, maybe just a copy of the PowerPoints.

Researcher: Ok. Umm, so just any other questions or comments on the programme at all?

Participant 6: No.

Researcher: No, ok, wonderful, thank you very much.



## **Participant 7**

Researcher: Ok, so just firstly, how have you found the SKILLS programme?

Participant 7: It's been quite a nice refresher in a way, because some of the things are things that you probably made sense, but you sort of forget them in day to day life, don't you. So, sort of slip into bad habits I suppose.

Researcher: Ok, so do you, it's, was it things that you thought you might have learnt on training before or

Participant 7: Yeah, some things, because I've done the LCLAN, so the things about watching, you know how you communicate with your language and make it into sort of bite size chunks and giving instructions, things like that, you know, but because you've done like years ago and then you've worked with different children and you roll changes different ages, you forget sometimes where you are exactly, and who you're speaking to, because you do so many different things that you do, quite a nice reminder actually.

Researcher: Oh ok. Umm, so, for you, what has been the most beneficial element of the programme?

Participant 7: The, that taking the time to think about what it is, and that thing about problem behaviour, it's them trying to communicate isn't it. So any behaviour is a communication. And it's, how you communicate back to them and how you understand their communication, so that time to build the nice relationship. Unfortunately, in practice it's not really possible to do that all the time, but that's just something you have to be resigned to, isn't it, with 30 children. But it's quite nice when you do take the time to make that, and you see how affective it can be.

Researcher: So, is it, was there any, new skills or new points of view or information you hadn't heard before?

Participant 7: I think that thing about me not taking charge too much, is what I've got to watch. So, to facilitate rather than to lead isn't it, it's that, it's quite a fine line. And I think, having worked with young kids for a long time, you just naturally sort of rush them along maybe, and it's not really a good idea overall. So, it's nice to think about letting them be a bit more in charge than me. But, difficult concept, but

Researcher: So, have you experienced any challenges whilst doing the programme?

Participant 7: It's just finding the time, is the truth. Because, as you can see we, we don't just do one thing anymore, the job has become so you're doing so many different things, it's hard sometimes to focus and give them that little bit of extra time. And [child] being the sort of child he is, he's quite, he likes things in order and

as it's supposed to be. So if I've said that we're going to work together and then suddenly something comes up, then he's quite; 'we haven't worked together', and 'I know [child]' and then I find it's difficult, I can't explain to him it's because this has happened and that has happened, it just doesn't make sense to him, just have to go 'I know [child], I know' I can't really say more than that. So, that's been maybe I shouldn't have picked a child who was quite so, focused on, on what it was that you tell him, but.

Researcher: And so do you, have you found anything in the programme clashes, or was at odds with, what you already do in class, or has it fitted in well when

Participant 7: It does fit in well, it does, it's just the time element is the only constraint really. Otherwise it fits in perfectly with him, it makes sense and you know when you, when you do get the chance to speak to him you can remember all those things about encouraging them and introducing things bit by bit and, but no, it's just the time, which is nothing to do with anybody, but the children need more.

Researcher: So, how accessible have you found the process of completing it online?

Participant 7: It's been ok actually. Because it is just a, its not even an hour to be honest, so you just put the, you find the quite spot and put it on and it just works quite easily.

Researcher: And did you do it on a computer, laptop, tablet,

Participant 7: Those ones that you saw, you know, I don't know what they're called

Researcher: Ah ok, so the little laptops

Participant 7: Yeah, little laptops, not sure what you'd call the things. I don't have a computer, so I have to do it in work.

Researcher: Ok, so you didn't access it at home, or

Participant 7: I don't have a computer unfortunately, I mean I can get to the library, but that's about the only thing I can do. I'm not sure how you listen to, whether they've got headphones in the library to be honest, I haven't thought about that.

Researcher: So, you didn't try, you haven't got a smartphone or a tablet?

Participant 7: My phone is very small, I don't think it'd probably work to be honest, because I've tried stuff like that before, accessing, umm, key skills and stuff, and it, the response is very slow one, your phone it doesn't really tend to work.

Researcher: Ok

Participant 7: So, I hadn't even bothered trying this time.

Researcher: That's fine, ok. So, who do you think would benefit from a programme like SKILLS?

Participant 7: As in, children or as in staff?

Researcher: Both, like, who do you think it's beneficial for

Participant 7: I can't see who it wouldn't benefit for really. I think it's across the board. Obviously the higher up you go, the less, the less sort of play you have with them in a sense, they want to play more with their peers than with you, so depending on the children, some want to play with you forever don't they, but most of them want, they want to go off. But that building still, still there's important things about building a solid relationship with them, that goes across doesn't it. And you can tell which staff are good at that and take the time to do that and it does make a difference, you can always see that if you don't have that first step all the other good work you can do sometimes can just go by the wayside, because you haven't got a great relationship with them. And for all children really, it just that you have to be aware of some of the issues. If you say you're going to do it every day, and you let them down, that's quite a hard for some of them to handle that, which makes you feel guilty, which is not a great thing to feel either.

Researcher: And so, staff wise, or other adults outside of school, who do you think would benefit from taking a

Participant 7: I think parents actually, I think the parents is a great idea, because the things you just, especially if you're a first time, this is your eldest child, whose going through that, you maybe haven't picked those skills up, or haven't even. We get taught different things, don't we, when we grow up, and we think that's what constitutes bringing children up, which you just can't help repeating the patterns that you know, it's normal. So I would have liked that when my kids came to school, I think that would have been great. To, just slow it down, because some times it can feel very much of a rush when they're in school, and you want them, you just comparing them with different children and maybe siblings. So just to break it down and focus on the child, and what they can manage and how you interact with them, is great I think.

Researcher: And, did you talk to [child's] parent?

Participant 7: I didn't unfortunately, I haven't spoken to his mum, no. Just because it, I suppose, he's not in my class, and then it's just been quite. Again it's work, we've had a teacher off, we've had their TA hasn't been in for three weeks, it's very much of a, just puts things back on me then, and I can't do that little extra bit that I said I'd do. He had a bit of a melt down the other week, and then I sort of, I spoke to

her then, but it was more about just, about, trying to support him, and he was having a bit of melt down, and it was actually a Wednesday, 'kick it', he wanted to do 'kick it' and she said it couldn't, and he was absolutely sobbing his heart out. I don't know why he thought he was doing it, I'm not sure, and I'm normally quite careful that I don't encourage him if he thinks he's doing it, I always say; 'well check with mum'. But he completely in his head was doing it. It is just, you, what can you say, but mum's very patient. Did she enjoy the course?

Researcher: I haven't spoken to her yet

Participant 7: You haven't spoken to her, yeah.

Researcher: Umm, so just finally, is there any other questions or comments about the SKILLS programme?

Participant 7: No, no, I thought it was lovely, it was more, it's more just us implementing it to be honest, and that's time constraints, which is nothing to do with you is it. But the handbook will be great, I shall, I shall definitely pass that around. I want to put my name in it, because I've learnt not to give things out, they disappear, it's very annoying.

Researcher: Thank you.