



## **“Let’s talk about the Early Years Conversation Project”**



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*I have been working in nurseries for 25 years or so. I’ve been at Barnet Early Years Alliance for the last eight years working as an early years educator. During this time, I have worked with 3- and 4-year-olds and am currently with the 2-year-olds. This my third year working with this age group - I’m learning a lot and enjoying it. - Alberto Listo*



*A conversation with an EYCP Champion*

***“I felt fine about being criticised in a positive way and having my practice analysed.”***

Alberto Listo, EYCP Champion.

This blog is a part of a series focussing on the experiences of participants in The Early Years Conversation Project. The [Early Years Conversation Project](#) (EYCP) is a programme designed and delivered by the [East London Research School](#) (ELRS) and funded by the [Education Endowment Foundation](#) (EEF) and the DfE through [A Brighter Start - East London’s Early Years Stronger Practice Hub](#). It aims to develop the interactions of practitioners with children, to improve the communication and language skills of two and three year olds.

Alberto Listo an EYCP Champion. As a champion, Alberto is the practitioner in his setting who advocates for and leads the EYCP programme.

I wanted to get a feel of Alberto’s participation in the EYCP programme.

We talked ...

***Can you say something about your experience as EYCP champion, Alberto?***

My experience as EYCP champion has been very positive. I have been persuaded by it!

I think that the programme has been interesting and useful both for the children that have taken part and me. Being part of it has allowed me to develop my practice further.

***What aspect of your practice have you been mainly working on?***

I have enjoyed learning more about how to establish opportunities for dialogue with the children. These conversations start with showing a genuine interest in their retelling of stories, play interests and experiences. It's the [first strategy of the ShREC approach](#): sharing attention. I feel this allows me to help create a special space between the child and myself and, at the same time, deepen my level of communication with them.

***You mention using the ShREC approach, Alberto. Can you talk about your work with a child where this has been effective?***

I was particularly happy to use ShREC with a child who has a speech delay. I think it helped them feel more relaxed when interacting with me. Knowing that I was tuning into his communicating and trying to build a conversation with him, it helped him feel he could communicate with sounds and gesture. I also saw this child beginning to pronounce some words.

Most of all I felt very happy to see him as a confident communicator, even though he found it difficult to speak.

***You sound confident about your developing interactions with children. How did the EYCP help you with this?***

I found it useful to use video recordings and analyse them. My colleagues and I do this, along with our mentor. I felt fine about being criticised in a positive way and having my practice analyzed.

I have tried to help my colleagues feel the same as I know that often people feel uncomfortable when they are recorded and discussed. I think this worked – everyone got used to it and seemed to benefit from it, being helpful and reassuring to each other.

***Though interactions are central to the programme, can you say something about any other area you have been developing?***

We have made some changes to our book area, home corner and snack table. The space is now better for enabling interactions and to making the books more accessible.

We have also made [interactive book reading](#) part of our daily routine, allocating time to it every morning and afternoon, targeting those children who need more exposure to reading.

I have seen my colleagues doing interactive book reading and practising the ShREC approach during interaction with children.

# Now's your chance to share one final thing about the EYCP- what would you like it to be?

There's so much I could say!

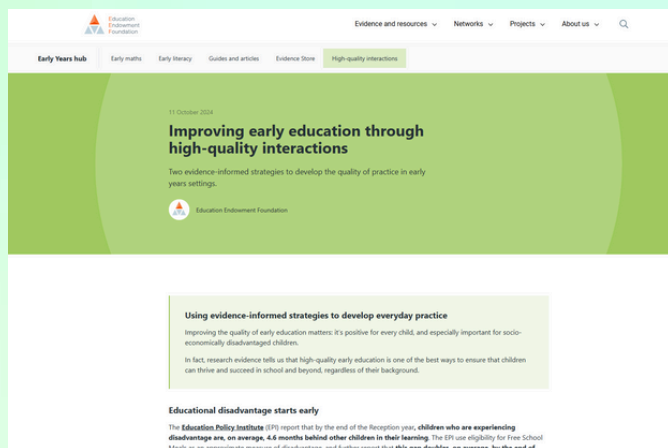
I think it's been so interesting to see that most of the 2-year-olds who participated in the project continue to show a great interest in books and reading in the 3s and 4s provision. This has been very noticeable.

We strongly believe it is the result of their exposure and participation in the EYCP.

**By Caroline Vollans**

## Further reading:

### [Improving early education through high-quality interactions](#)



### [Video of the ShREC approach:](#) EEF and Sheringham Nursery School and Children's Centre

