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## Educational outcomes of children born preterm

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## The long term consequences of preterm birth

- Preterm birth may affect multiple areas of a child's development
- Most research has focused on very preterm born children, but effects may be seen after birth at all preterm gestations
- Inverse association between gestational age at birth and long term outcomes
- Developmental problems may be evident in infancy and may persist through adulthood
- Cognitive and social-emotional difficulties are more common than physical disabilities
- Special constellation of problems – the preterm phenotype

May take longer to  
perform mental tasks



May have difficulty  
holding & processing  
information in mind,  
for brief periods

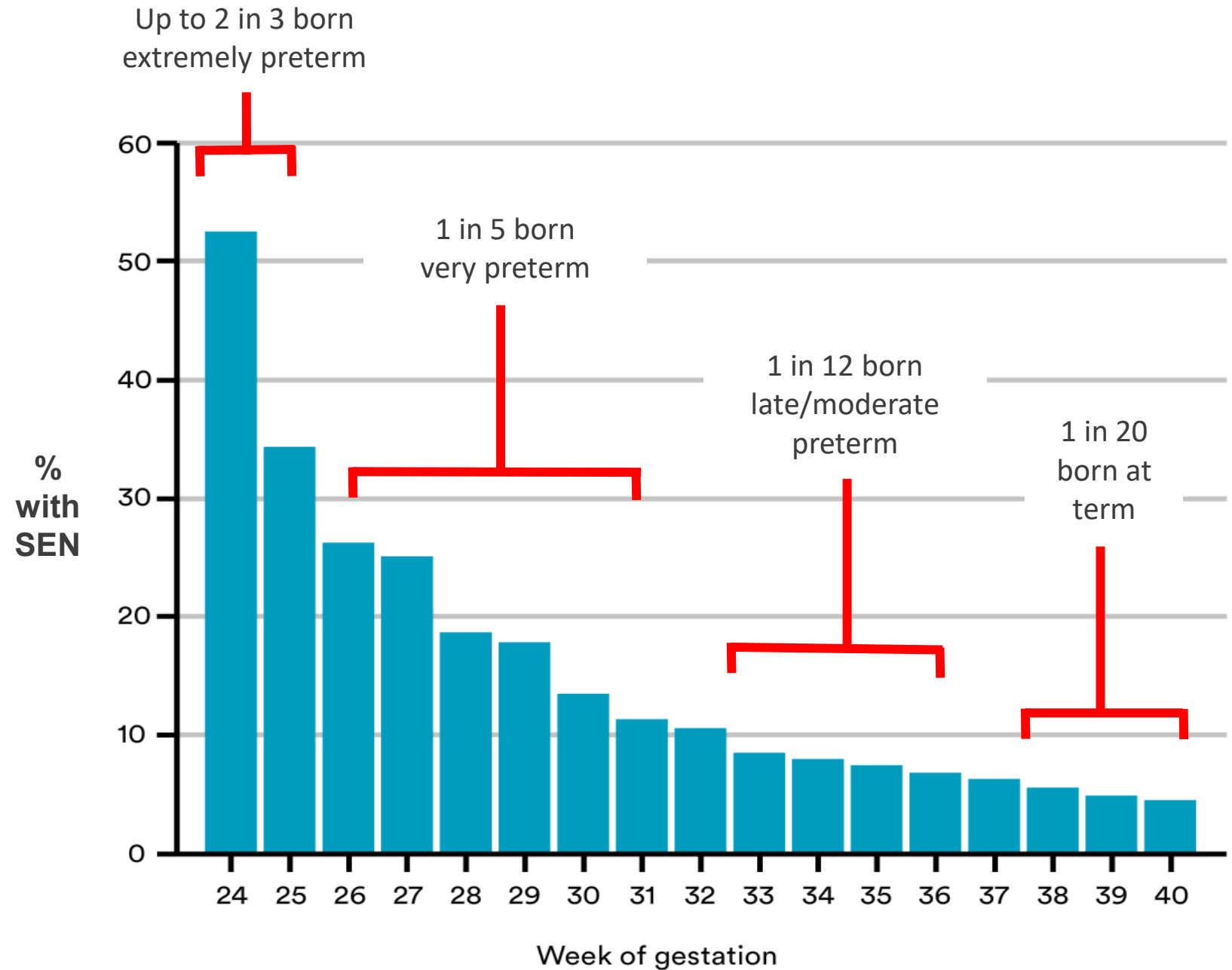
May have difficulty  
handling objects,  
or have poor hand-  
eye coordination

May be anxious or withdrawn;  
have difficulty with social  
interaction; higher risk of autism;  
more likely to be bullied

May have learning  
difficulties, especially  
in mathematics

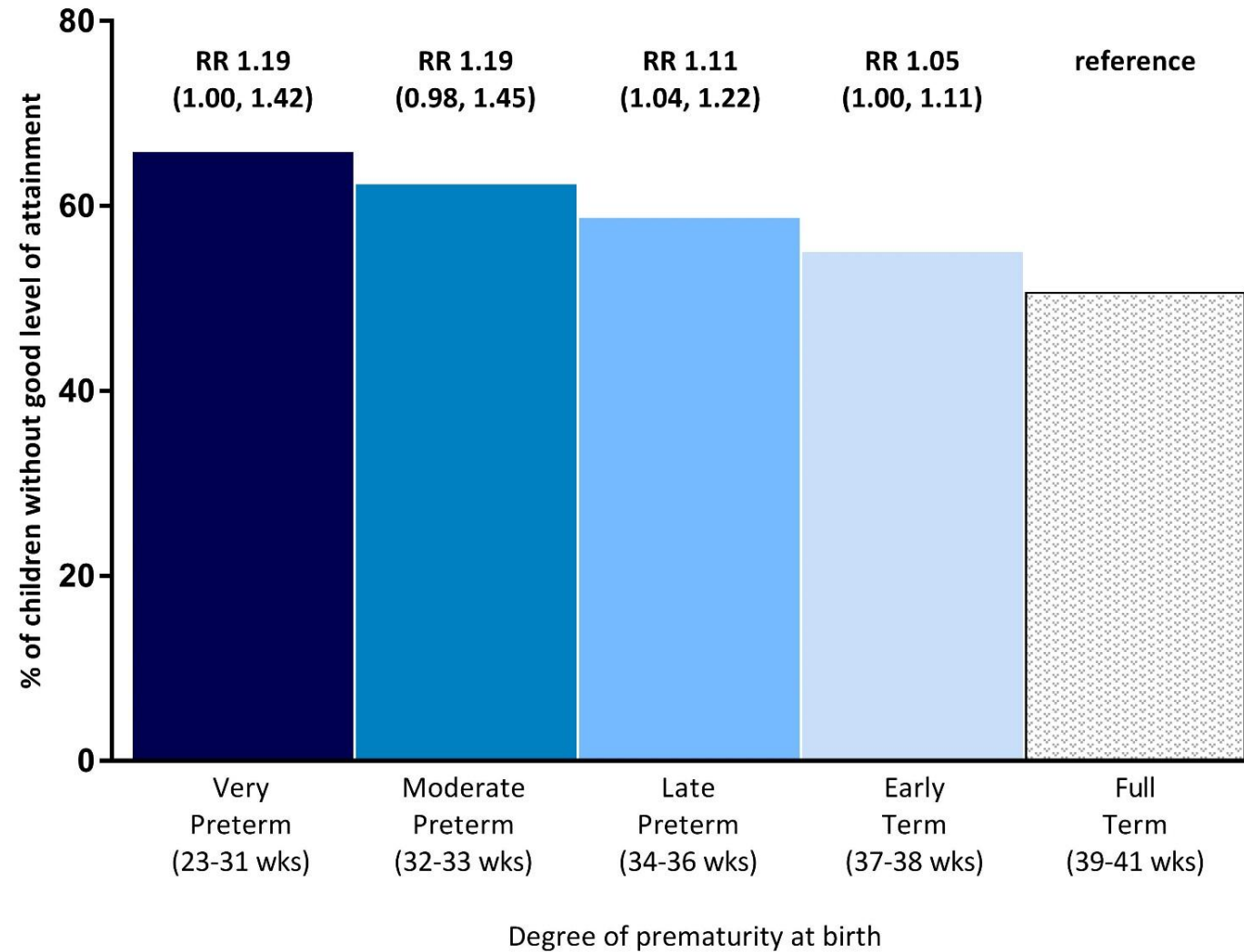
May have difficulty with  
attention or concentration;  
higher risk of ADHD

## Special educational needs

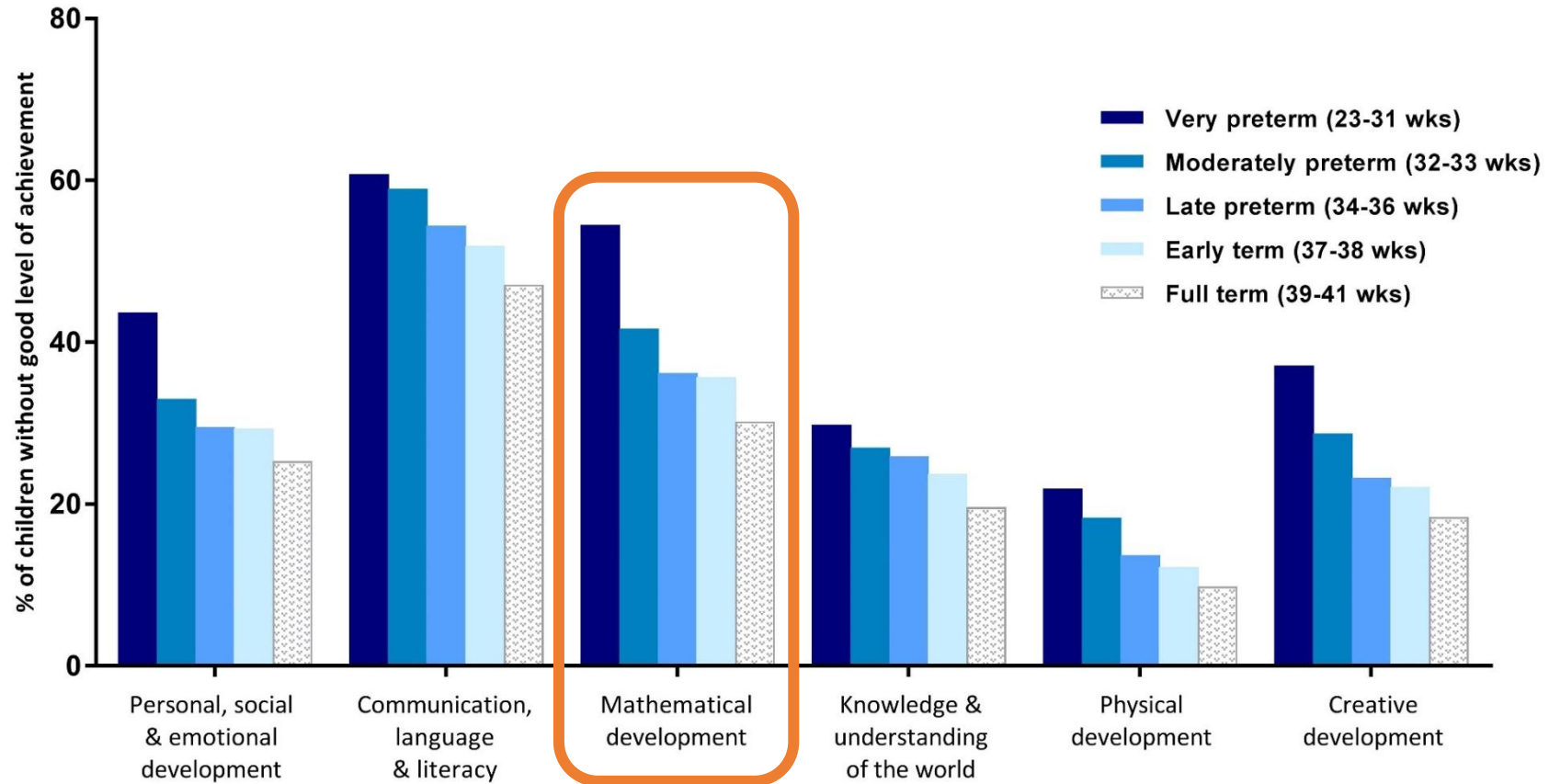




# Attainment in the Early Years Foundation Stage



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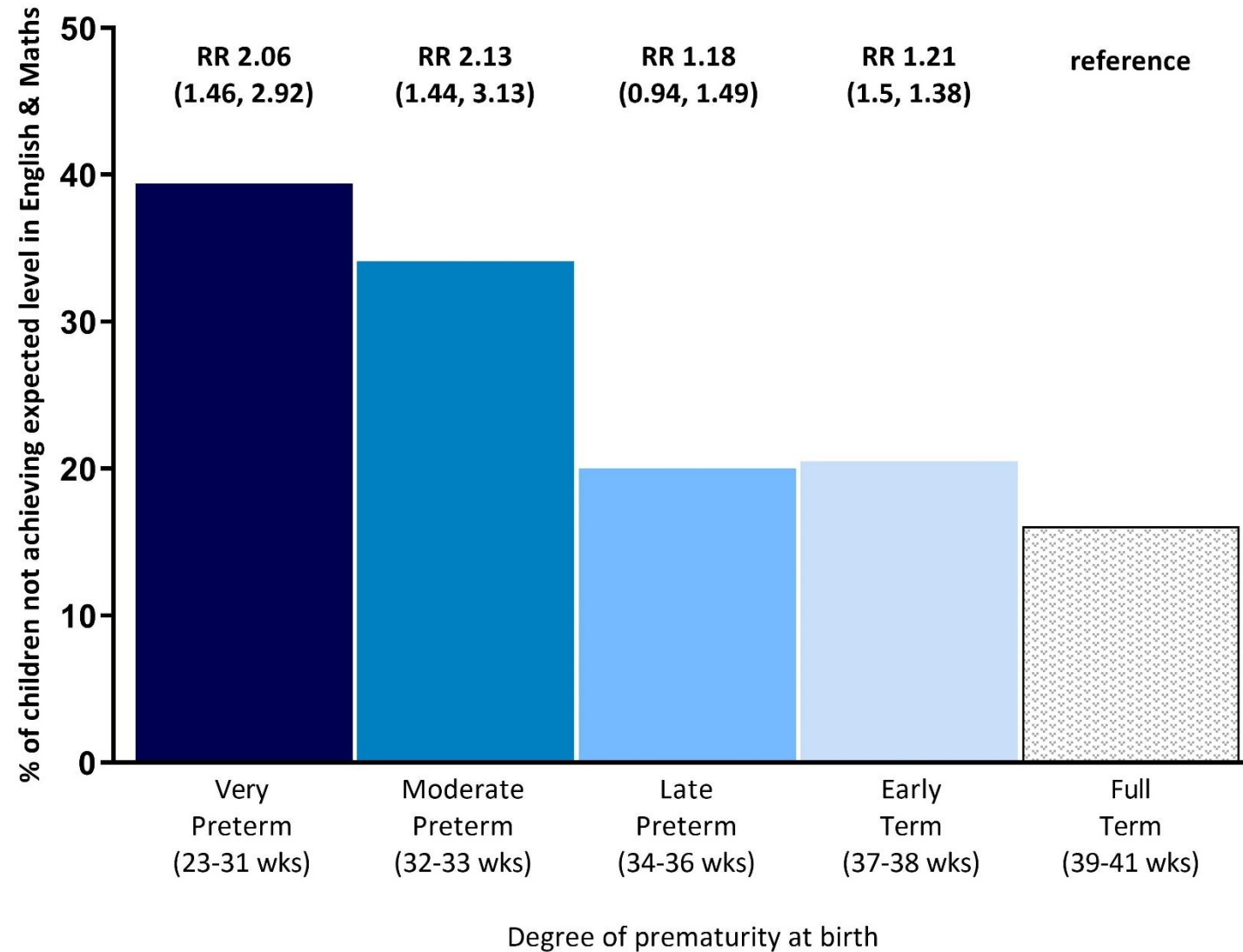


Foundation Stage Profile areas of learning (age 5)



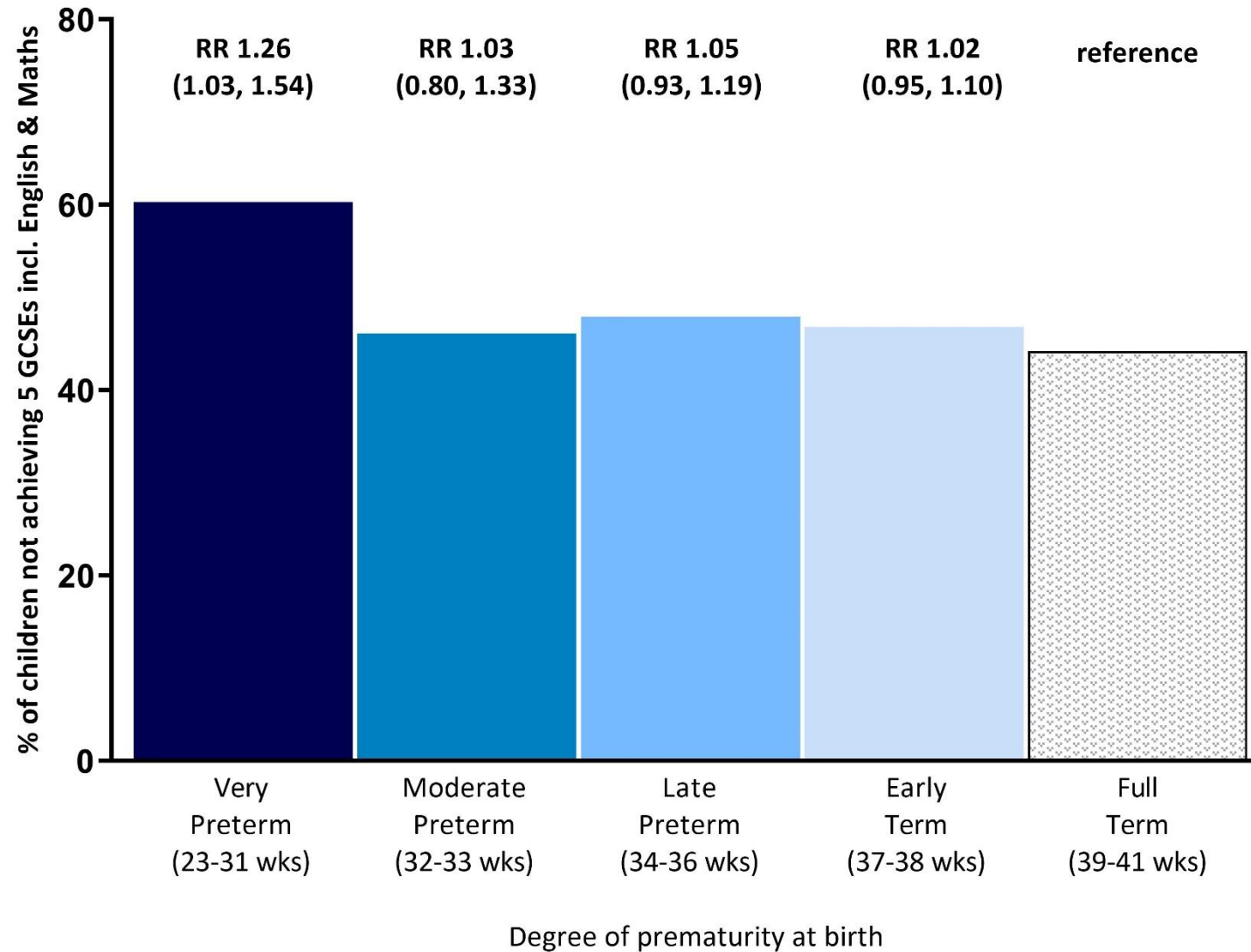
**“It’s OK, they’ll catch up . . .”**

# Attainment in Key Stage 2 (age 11)





# Attainment in GCSE's (age 16)





**How can we support preterm children in education?**

# Routine neonatal follow-up

- In 2017, NICE recommended:
  - Follow-up to 24 months of age for children born < 30 weeks of gestation
  - Follow-up at 4 years of age for children born before 28 weeks of gestation, with a focus on educational planning
- Children without severe disabilities are discharged from neonatal care at 2 years of age
- Late and moderately preterm born children are unlikely to receive any follow-up
- No routine sharing of information between health and education services
- **Identification and provision of support for children with developmental difficulties is increasingly falling to education services – need to be aware & ready to support if needed**

# Listening to parents

## 1) Consequences of the preterm phenotype

“My 6 year old was very preterm but because he has no behavioural issues, we have had real difficulties getting his differences acknowledged and understood by his teachers.”





# Listening to parents

## 1) Consequences of the preterm phenotype

“My 6 year old was very preterm but because he has no behavioural issues, we have had real difficulties getting his differences acknowledged and understood by his teachers.”

## 2) Lack of awareness in childcare and education

“The comment I had from my daughter’s reception teacher when I told her she was born at 30 weeks was, “Ah, OK, born early” as she wrote “born early” in her notebook. I knew then that she had no idea at all of the challenges that could bring. I should have known then that I’d be fighting for what she needed from that day forward.”



## Preterm Birth Information for Education Professionals

Welcome to the Preterm Birth Information for Education Professionals home page. These six learning resources have been developed to improve your knowledge and confidence in supporting prematurely born children in the classroom and in preschool settings.

Please navigate through the resources by selecting each image below.



### 1. What is preterm birth? [↗](#) [opens in new window]

Learning outcomes:

- To define preterm birth
- To understand that the more preterm a baby is born, the greater the risk of developmental problems later in life



### 2. Educational outcomes following preterm birth [↗](#) [opens in new window]

Learning outcomes:

- To understand that children born preterm are at risk of special educational needs and poor academic attainment
- To identify which school subjects children born preterm are most likely to struggle with



### 3. Cognitive and motor development following preterm birth [↗](#) [opens in new window]

Learning outcomes:

- To understand that children born preterm may have difficulties with IQ, processing speed, working memory, and hand-eye coordination
- To understand how these difficulties may impact on learning



### 4. Behavioural, social and emotional outcomes following preterm birth [↗](#) [opens in new window]

Learning outcomes:

- To understand that children born preterm may be withdrawn, anxious, and inattentive, and have difficulties developing relationships with their peers
- To understand that children born preterm don't tend to be disruptive so their needs may be overlooked in the classroom



### 5. How can education professionals support preterm children? [↗](#) [opens in new window]

Learning outcomes:

- To understand what kind of strategies might be helpful for supporting children born preterm
- To understand that preterm birth is a risk factor and an individual assessment is always necessary to provide appropriate support



### 6. Supporting children and families in the preschool years [↗](#) [opens in new window]

Learning outcomes:

- Understand how preterm birth can affect children and families in the preschool years.
- Know how parents and professionals can support preterm born children before they start school.

Now you've completed this training, why not apply for your school or setting to receive the Prem Aware Award?





The Smallest Things

# PREM AWARE AWARD

In three simple steps

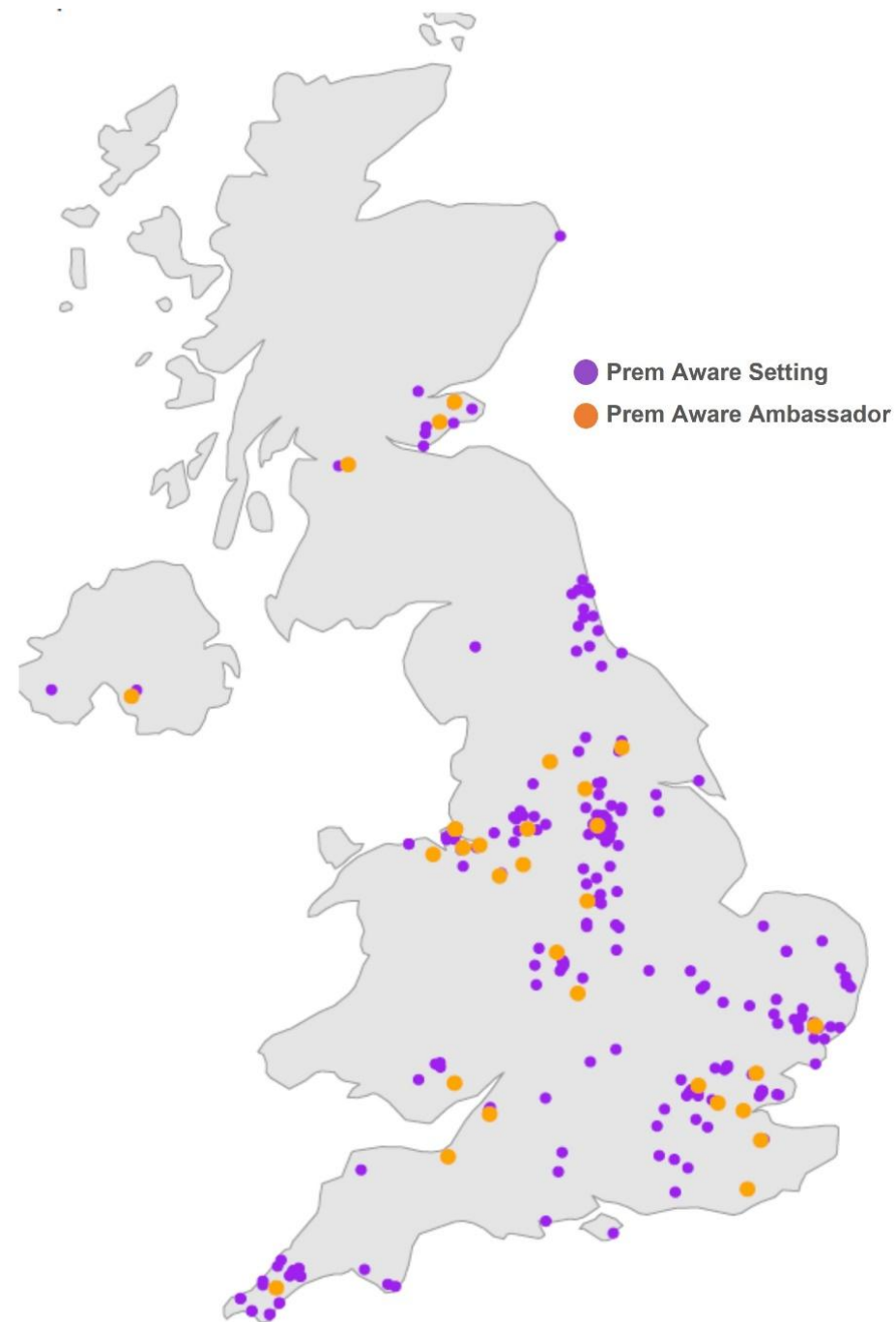




**258 awarded in the UK**  
214 working towards the award  
**+ 30 'Prem Aware Ambassadors'**

Is the school  
ready for my  
premature  
child?

Which school in  
my area is  
Prem Aware?





# How can neonatal healthcare professionals support children and families?

- **Use the PRISM training** to learn how preterm birth can affect children and families in the long term. Use this information when counselling parents about the potential needs their child may have, remembering that not all preterm-born children will have difficulties
- **Encourage parents to use the PRISM training** to help them understand what needs their preterm child may have and to help them advocate for their child in education
- **Include a link to the PRISM training in clinic letters**, especially on discharge from follow-up, and encourage parents to share this with their health visitor, early years setting and school
- **Tell parents about the Prem Aware Award** and encourage them to ask schools or early years settings if they have it
- **Encourage parents to share their child's birth history** with early years settings or schools, if they feel comfortable
- With parental consent, identify opportunities to **share information between health and education services** to ensure education settings have the most up to date information about the child's development and to avoid parents having to retell their story, which can be difficult and upsetting for them



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