

Early Talk Boost research study – common questions

Questions about sign-up

1. Is the study assessing us as practitioners or our settings?

No, the study is to evaluate the impact of Early Talk Boost, it is not assessing practitioners or settings.

2. Can settings from all over the country take part in the evaluation?

Only settings in the stated local authorities will be able to take part in the study:

South West England: Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole, Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Plymouth, and Torbay.

East of England: Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, Peterborough, Suffolk, Southend-on-Sea and Essex.

3. If we are already running interventions to support children's talking and understanding in our setting, does this mean we can't take part in the study?

If you meet all the eligibility criteria please do go ahead and sign the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and let us know any programmes you use as part of your 'business as usual' practice.

4. Our setting is currently using Wellcomm for assessment and intervention activities. Would it be ok to run alongside?

If you meet all the eligibility criteria please do go ahead and sign the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and let us know that you are using Wellcomm as part of your 'business as usual' practice. The evaluation will be asking settings not to use the Wellcomm as a screening tool in the Autumn term.

5. I don't know if I will have enough children in order to meet your criteria as I don't know the needs of all the children joining me in September as yet.

We appreciate that lots of settings don't yet know full details around their cohort for September – if you meet all the other eligibility criteria and would like to take part, we're happy for you to sign up to the Memorandum of Understanding to secure a place. You can do this here: <https://forms.office.com/e/JmFDzjSEp5>.

If it becomes clear that you won't have the minimum of 8 children by September, please do let us know as soon as possible and we will allocate the place to another setting.

6. We have high levels of children with speech and language challenges but many would be too complex for the programme, can we still take part?

See answer 5 above.

7. We are a small setting and children have different patterns of attendance – what happens after screening if we don't have 8 children to run 3 sessions a week?

We're asking that to sign up for the study, you have 8 children aged between 3 – 4 years. If you meet this criteria, please do go ahead and sign up for the study.

Our guidance is for the Early Talk Boost groups to run with 6 – 8 children. If you are a small setting, it may be that the Early Talk Boost groups in your setting are slightly smaller after screening.

Questions about control settings

8. If we are a control setting, does this mean we will do the intervention with a different group of children in the second year?

Yes that's right. All the control settings will receive their Early Talk Boost training in Autumn 2024 and then run groups with children who will not be part of the research study.

9. If the children do not do the intervention until Autumn 2024 (control group) some will be transitioning into Reception – can they take part?

The control settings will be trained and able to deliver the intervention in Autumn 2024 when the evaluation has finished. Early Talk Boost is designed for pre-school children aged 3 – 4 but some settings do use the materials with reception aged children. Please note, the tracker does not currently extend to children older than 4 years and 6 months.

10. What interventions can be used if we are chosen to be in the control group as these children may need some support with their talking and understanding?

It is fine to continue with any 'business as usual' strategies and interventions, this will be captured as part of the study.

11. Would we receive the resources by Spring 2024, even if we're in the control group?

No, control settings will receive the resources in Autumn 2024.

12. Could you confirm what a control group and intervention group are?

The study is designed to have settings who deliver Early Talk Boost (active groups) and settings who continue with business as usual (control groups). This allows the evaluation team to compare the impact of Early Talk Boost against what would have happened if we had changed nothing.

In practical terms, all settings – active and control – will take part in the research activities in year 1 (academic year 2023/24). Active groups will receive training and run Early Talk Boost in Spring 2024. Control groups will receive Early Talk Boost training in Autumn 2024 (year 2).

13. If we are a control setting, will there be any research activities in year 2 when we are delivering Early Talk Boost?

The control settings will only take part in research activities in the academic year 2023 – 24. There will not be any research activities in the second year (academic year 2024 – 25). Control settings will receive the training and deliver Early Talk Boost in their settings.

14. The control group gets resources later or they do not get them at all?

The control groups will all get the training and resources in Autumn 2024.

15. When will we know which group we are in?

The active and control groups will be confirmed in December 2023.

16. Will the control settings receive exactly the same reimbursement as active settings?

Yes, all settings will receive exactly the same funding regardless of whether they are doing the intervention in the Spring or Autumn term. Control settings will receive their payment related to training in the Autumn term 2024.

Questions about training

17. How is the training delivered?

The training is delivered live by a Speech and Language UK Advisor. It is online over 5 hours.

18. Do the 2 practitioners need to attend the training at the same time?

No, the 2 practitioners can attend training sessions at different times. The sessions are online and we will offer a range of days and times.

19. Will there be a chance to network with other settings?

Yes, there will be opportunities to share practice with other settings, details will be confirmed in the Autumn term.