

Last reviewed: January 2019

Intervention website: <https://speechandlanguage.org.uk/>

GUIDEBOOK INTERVENTION INFORMATION SHEET

Early Talk Boost

Please note that in the ‘Intervention Summary’ table below ‘child age’, ‘level of need’, and ‘race and ethnicities information is **as evaluated in studies**. Information in other fields describes the intervention as **offered/supported by the intervention provider**.

Intervention summary	
Description	Early Talk Boost is a preschool-based intervention for children with delayed language development aged between 3 and 4 years. It is delivered by early years practitioners to children in groups of six to eight children. The intervention aims to improve children’s oral language development.
Evidence rating	2
Cost rating	1
Child outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhancing school achievement & employment - Improved speech, language and communication.
Child age (population characteristic)	3 to 4 years
Level of need (population characteristic)	Targeted Indicated
Race and ethnicities (population characteristic)	No information

Foundations Guidebook – Intervention information sheet

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Intervention summary	
Type (model characteristic)	Group
Setting (model characteristic)	Children's centre or early years setting
Workforce (model characteristic)	Early years teacher or early years practitioner
UK available?	Yes
UK tested?	Yes

Model description

Early Talk Boost is a preschool-based intervention for children with delayed language development aged between 3 and 4 years. Children are selected by early years practitioners.

It is delivered by trained early years practitioners to children in groups of six to eight children in nursery or pre-school. The practitioner provides three weekly sessions of 15 to 20 minutes each, over nine weeks (27 sessions).

During the sessions, the practitioner uses practical activities, games, songs, rhymes, and story books, supported by a planning board, song cards, toys, and other resources. The activities are aimed at developing:

- Children's attention and listening skills through group work
- Vocabulary acquisition, through definition of new words and opportunities to use them
- Sentence building, through a system of colour-coding sentence parts
- Social communication skills, through building children's confidence and giving opportunities for them to retell stories.

The practitioner can model language through these activities, which are enjoyable and engaging for the children. The Early Talk Boost story books are given to parents so they can also read them with children at home.

The intervention aims to improve children's oral language development, and consequently social and emotional development and school readiness.

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Target population

Age of child	3 to 4 years
Target population	Children in nursery or pre-school who are identified as having delayed language development

Please note that the information in this section on target population is as **offered/supported by the intervention provider**.



Theory of change

Why		Who	How	What		
Science-based assumption	Science-based assumption	Science-based assumption	Intervention	Short-term outcomes	Medium-term outcomes	Long-term outcomes
Delays in early language development, including reduced vocabulary and expressive language skills, can persist throughout school and negatively impact academic achievement.	Early language development is an important part of children's school readiness, and contributes to social and emotional development.	Family disadvantage negatively impacts parents' ability to provide an enriching home learning environment, including for language learning.	Early years practitioners work with groups of children to increase their understanding and talking, through rhymes, songs, stories, and games, focusing on attention and listening, learning vocabulary, and building sentences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved child language and communication • Improved child confidence and curiosity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased child school readiness • Reduced social and emotional difficulties. 	Increased child school achievement.



Implementation requirements

Who is eligible?	Children identified by early years practitioners as having delayed language development
How is it delivered?	Early Talk Boost is delivered in 27 sessions of 15 to 20 minutes' duration each by a practitioner, to groups of six to eight children.
What happens during the intervention?	<p>Early Talk Boost group sessions complement or replace group or circle time in a nursery or pre-school setting.</p> <p>The sessions consist of practical activities, games, songs, rhymes, and story books.</p> <p>The practitioner uses a planning board, song card, toys, and other resources to support learning.</p> <p>The activities are aimed at developing children's attention and listening skills, sentence building, vocabulary acquisition, and social communication skills.</p>
Who can deliver it?	The practitioner who delivers this intervention is an early years practitioner with QCF-3 level qualifications.
What are the training requirements?	The practitioners have 5 hours of intervention training. Booster training of practitioners is not required.
How are practitioners supervised?	Supervision of practitioners is not required.
What are the systems for maintaining fidelity?	<p>Intervention fidelity is maintained through the following processes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training manual • Other printed material • Other online material • Video or DVD training.
Is there a licensing requirement?	No



Implementation requirements (Cont.)

*Contact details	Organisation: Speech and Language UK Email address: info@speechandlanguage.org.uk Website: https://speechandlanguage.org.uk/ *Please note that this information may not be up to date. In this case, please visit the listed intervention website for up to date contact details.
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Evidence summary

Early Talk Boost's most rigorous evidence comes from an RCT which was conducted in the UK.

This study identified statistically significant improvements in language and communication skills.

Early Talk Boost has preliminary evidence of improving a child outcome, but we cannot be confident that the intervention caused the improvement.

Search and review

	Number of studies
Identified in search	3
Studies reviewed	1
Meeting the L2 threshold	1
Meeting the L3 threshold	0
Contributing to the L4 threshold	0
Ineligible	2



Individual study summary: Study 1

Study 1	
Study design	Cluster RCT
Country	UK
Sample characteristics	85 children aged 3 to 4 years identified as having delayed language development
Race, ethnicities, and nationalities	No information
Population risk factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children identified by early years practitioners as having delayed language development Schools were in disadvantaged areas.
Timing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baseline Post-intervention.
Child outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved language understanding (Child assessment) Improved expressive language (talking) (Child assessment).
Other outcomes	None
Study Rating	2
Citation	Reeves, L., Hartshorne, M., Black, R., Atkinson, J., Baxter, A. & Pring, T. (2018) Early Talk Boost: A targeted intervention for three-year-old children with delayed language development. <i>Child Language Teaching and Therapy</i> . 34 (1), 53–62.

Brief summary

Population characteristics

This study involved a sample of 85 children across 15 nurseries in deprived areas of the North and North East of England, UK. Children aged approximately 3 to 4 years old were identified by early years practitioners as having delayed language development.



The study did not report information about ethnicity or gender. Four children had special educational needs, and one child had English as an additional language.

Study design

Eight nurseries were randomly assigned to the Early Talk Boost group (45 children) and seven to a wait-list control group (40 children). There were substantial differences between groups in baseline measures.

The wait-list control group received Business as Usual and received the Early Talk Boost intervention when the intervention group had finished.

Measurement

Assessments took place at baseline (pre-intervention) and at post-intervention (after nine weeks).

- **Child assessment** measures included the Preschool Language Scale-4 (administered by independent Speech and Language Therapists and Therapist students).

Study retention

The study does not report information on retention.

Results

Data-analytic strategy

A three-factor mixed ANOVA was used, with group as a between-participant factor, and time and sub-scale as within-participant factors; group by time and sub-scale by time interactions were included in the model. The analysis did not account for the clustered design.

Findings

The study observed statistically significant benefits favouring the Early Talk Boost children, including improvement in children's language and communication skills (language understanding and talking).

Limitations

The conclusions that can be drawn from this study are limited by methodological issues pertaining to the treatment condition not being modelled at the level of assignment, and the fact that the equivalence of groups is insufficiently demonstrated, hence why a higher rating is not achieved.

Study 1: Outcomes table

Outcome	Measure	Effect size	Statistical significance	Number of participants	Measurement time point
Child outcomes					



Outcome	Measure	Effect size	Statistical significance	Number of participants	Measurement time point
Language understanding	Pre-School Language Scale-4 (auditory/receptive abilities)	Not reported	Yes	85	Post-intervention
Expressive language (talking)	Pre-School Language Scale-4 (expressive abilities)	Not reported	Yes	85	Post-intervention

Other studies

The following studies were identified for this intervention but did not count towards the intervention's overall evidence rating. An intervention receives the same rating as its most robust study or studies.

Forest Way Teaching School Alliance. (2017) *Early Talk Boost (I CAN) intervention: Improving communication and language in disadvantaged 3-4 year olds*.

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Note on provider involvement: This provider has agreed to Foundations' terms of reference (or the Early Intervention Foundation's terms of reference), and the assessment has been conducted and published with the full cooperation of the intervention provider.