

Early Talk Boost FAQ

1) General

What is Early Talk Boost?

Early Talk Boost is a targeted intervention aimed at 3–4½ year old children with speech and language difficulties, boosting their language skills to help narrow the gap between them and their peers.

Early Talk Boost has been designed by specialist speech and language therapists and a highly experienced nursery teacher. The intervention's design is based on strong evidence of what is known to support language development in the early years.

What does Early Talk Boost cover?

Early Talk Boost supports:

- Attention and listening as a foundation skill for speaking and listening
- Developing vocabulary; as research shows that children with weaker vocabularies are at risk of difficulties with reading.
- Building sentences; putting words together is a vital skill for having conversations and telling stories

What evidence is there to show that Early Talk Boost works?

Early Talk Boost was piloted between September 2014 and September 2015 to evaluate its impact on children's early language development. The evaluation framework was designed with the support of Professor Tim Pring at City University London to be as close as possible to a randomised controlled trial, considered to be the gold standard of research methods.

After *Early Talk Boost*:

- Children make statistically significant progress in their early language development.
- On average, children make six months' progress after the nine-week intervention, helping them to narrow the gap between them and other children their age. This is twice the rate of progress of children not having the intervention.
- 95% of parents felt that *Early Talk Boost* had made a difference to their children's language and communication. Parents felt they had learnt something by being involved in the programme, and would change how they talked to their child.
- 76% of children said that they were happy telling stories (compared with 31% before the intervention).
- Samples of children's talking showed they used longer and more complicated sentences.
- After *Early Talk Boost* training, all early years practitioners surveyed felt more confident in supporting children's language, and 94% said it would change the way they worked.

Which children will benefit from Early Talk Boost?

Early Talk Boost is designed for children with speech and language difficulties due to reduced opportunities to develop language and communication skills in their early years. Studies show that children from areas of deprivation are over twice as likely to have poor language development in the early years. *Early Talk Boost* aims to give children who have missed out on these early communication opportunities the boost they need to catch up in their language development.

How can Early Talk Boost be used with children with special educational needs (SEN)?

We do not recommend *Early Talk Boost* for children with identified SEN because this intervention was designed for children with speech and language difficulties. The pace and design of the activities may not be appropriate for children with special educational needs who may need smaller step and more targeted intervention more frequently and over a much longer time period than 9 weeks.

With appropriate Speech and Language Therapy support, it may be possible to adapt some of the materials however you would not see the same rate of progress for this group of children.

Is Early Talk Boost suitable for children with English as an additional language (EAL)?

Early Talk Boost was not designed for children with EAL, however in the pilot study we had a number of EAL children. At this time we have not been able to analyse their results separately from the English speaking cohort. However we have reports from the early years professionals in their settings that the children made good progress and responded well to the intervention. *Early Talk Boost* would be appropriate for children with EAL who are showing some delay in both home language and English. However children's home language skills should be always be assessed first to determine whether they have an underlying language difficulty.

What is the minimum / maximum number of children required in a group?

Early Talk Boost has been designed and piloted with a group of 6-8 children.

What level of intervention is Early Talk Boost?

Early Talk Boost is a wave 2 targeted intervention. It is carried out by a trained early years practitioner. It comes with the *Early Talk Boost Tracker* (which allows before and after measures to be taken to identify which children would benefit most from the intervention and to measure progress).

What is the Early Talk Boost Tracker?

The *Early Talk Boost* tracker is based on typical developmental stages for children aged between 3 and 4½ years. It uses a combination of observation and elicited responses to estimate a child's level of language and communication development. It allows you to identify which children would best benefit from *Early Talk Boost* and to measure their progress after the intervention.

There is an online scoring system which will calculate before and after scores for each child and graph them so that you can download a report for use with senior management, governors, Ofsted etc.

Using the online tracker will also support us to ensure the continued efficacy of *Early Talk Boost* by using anonymised data to measure progress of children across the UK.

What is the difference between Early Talk Boost and Early Talk 0-5?

Early Talk 0-5 is the name given to the suite of SPEECH AND LANGUAGE UK early years resources. This includes training and accreditation programmes to support communication development across a range of early years settings and services working with children from birth to five years.

Early Talk Boost is a language intervention designed to narrow the gap between 3-4½ year olds with speech and language difficulties and their peers.

How does Early Talk Boost support Ofsted?

Ofsted identify the most successful settings have a focus on developing skilled staff. *Early Talk Boost* can be provided using Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) to create a skilled workforce and knowledgeable parents, known to be essential in supporting communication development during a child's early years.

Does this programme involve parents?

Early Talk Boost has been designed to include parents in the intervention. There are parent workshop sessions to share the content of the intervention activities and Top Tips on sharing stories with their child. The *Early Talk Boost* intervention has a set of 8 story books which parents share with their child at home as part of reinforcing the language skills learned during the sessions in the setting.

2) Training

What training is required to deliver Early Talk Boost?

Early Talk Boost training is a one day (5 hours) course delivered in your work place. If you are a small setting you might wish to consider grouping your staff together with other settings for the training and sharing the costs between yourselves. We have a regional team of Licensed Tutors who also deliver *Early Talk Boost* training

What is the cost of Early Talk Boost?

We have a regional team of Licensed Tutors who deliver training (often to smaller groups). *Early Talk Boost* Intervention Pack (Intervention Manual, Parent Training, Tracker Tool, Toolkit and 10 x 8 Jake and Tizzy story books) are purchased from Speech and Language UK at a cost of £500 per person + the cost of the Licensed Tutor delivering your training.

Who can be trained in Early Talk Boost?

Any early years practitioner working within a preschool setting with children aged 3-4 years can be trained to use the *Early Talk Boost* intervention.

How long does Early Talk Boost training take?

The training takes one day (approx 5 hours).

What are the maximum numbers of people allowed to be trained in one session?

Training is for early years practitioners. The maximum number of course participants would be 20 people.

Please note: this training course is for practitioners who will be using the *Early Talk Boost* intervention with groups of children. It is focussed on using the intervention and practitioners will need to use all the training resources ideally with one pack each.

In exceptional circumstances we will agree to a maximum of 4 members of staff sharing one pack.

Where is Early Talk Boost training held?

Early Talk Boost training can be delivered in the pre school setting which purchases the intervention, or schools/settings can link up and be trained together. Settings can also choose to be trained remotely.

Can setting staff trained in the Early Talk Boost intervention train other staff?

No, training in *Early Talk Boost* can only be delivered Speech and Language UK Licensed *Early Talk Boost* Tutors. This is because it is an evidenced intervention and fidelity to the programmes is essential in order to maintain the good results. Training cannot be cascaded to other staff members.

3) Resources

How many intervention kits does my setting need?

You need 1 kit for every 8 children who are undertaking the intervention.

How are Early Talk Boost resources ordered?

Early Talk Boost resources can be ordered from the Speech and Language UK website

Can I just buy the resources without the training?

No – you must be trained to use the *Early Talk Boost* intervention

Can additional staff attend Early Talk Boost training without purchasing the intervention pack?

Guidelines on the number of *Early Talk Boost* Intervention pack for settings are as follows:

Note: Speech and Language UK highly recommend that one Intervention pack is used by each practitioner trained or shared as a pair. However, we allow 4 members of staff (maximum) per intervention pack who can attend the training. So if you want to train 5-8 members of staff you will need to buy 2 intervention packs; if you want to train 9-12 you will need to buy 3 packs.

4) Online Tracker

Are there electronic copies of the Tracker?

Yes, if you need additional copies you can download the Tracker from the speech and language UK website or from the tracker itself under the Resources section.

How do we use the Tracker?

Follow the instructions in the manual titled Using the Tracker.

- Section 1: Attention and listening and Section 4: Personal, social and emotional skills are completed from your observations and knowledge of the child.
- Section 2: Understanding of language and Section 3: Speaking involve: – checking the child's ability to respond to instructions

Do we need to send the Tracker data we collect to Speech and Language UK

No, but if you want to use the online Tracker this will share information with us.

Can I use the Tracker on EAL children?

There are sections of the Tracker that do not rely on language skills but overall the Tracker looks at children's progress using English. You can use this with children who are learning English as an additional language but it will not give you an overall picture of their language skills.

The scoring relates to children whose first language is English so you will not get a red/amber/green rating. Instead you can use the Tracker to check children's starting points and progress in learning English.

How should I score a child who's 3 years and 7 months?

The tracker provides scoring guidance in 2 age ranges for children aged 3 years 0 months up to 3 years 6 months and 3 year 6 months up to 4 years.

A child aged 3 years 7 months would be scored in the 3years 6 months to 4 years table.

Why are the sections in the Tracker different to Development Matters in the EYFS?

The EYFS is the curriculum for English settings. Speech and Language UK works across the UK so the Tracker needs to be broad enough to include curriculum differences. The sections of the Tracker relate to the Prime Areas and you can use your knowledge of Development Matters to complete it.

Alternatively, if you are tracking children using Development Matters already you may want to use this information to decide which children would benefit from *Early Talk Boost*.

5) Licensed Tutors

Is the programme only delivered by Speech and Language UK trainers or can SLTs become local trainers?

Speech and Language Therapists and Early Years Practitioners who hold Qualified Teacher Status can be licensed to deliver *Early Talk Boost* training. You will need to apply online to become a licensee at www.speechandlanguage.org.uk

What are the costs of becoming a Licensed Tutor?

- The one day training course for Early Talk Boost is £420.
- All Licensed Tutors also need to pay an annual licence fee of £50+VAT.

Where is Early Talk Boost Licensed Tutor training held?

Training courses are publicised on the website and delivered remotely via Zoom.

How do trained staff access the evaluation form?

Following training, all staff need to evaluate online at www.speechandlanguage.org.uk, where a certificate will be sent.