



# Summary of Early Talk Boost Research

## PURPOSE AND AIMS

Disadvantaged children are entering FWTSA primary schools in reception year with much lower than Age Related Expectations than their peers, in the areas of speech language and communication development (SLCN,) as reported through school and local authority data. Research shows that these pupils continue not to meet targets throughout their primary school years. Forest Way Teaching School Alliance (FWTSA) has worked closely with the local Private Voluntary and Independent (PVI) early years (0-4) settings for the last few years to try to address this and other issues (e.g. by training PVI key staff to become Elklan qualified and become designated Early Learning Language Practitioners, however the problem persisted.

Therefore this year FWTSA looked for more possible strategies and interventions to address this need and have worked in partnership with the Laurel Trust – [laureltrust.org.uk](http://laureltrust.org.uk) – which provided funding of £5,000. This was matched by FWTSA. ICAN charity – [www.icancharity.org.uk](http://www.icancharity.org.uk) – provided free advice, training and support on an Early Talk Boost (ETB) research project. Early Talk Boost had proved successful when piloted in other areas of the country and had shown that children's language development could move on 6 months in 3. FWTSA colleagues wanted to trial this and to replicate it if possible. If successful it could be rolled out to a much wider group of children, so a sustainable model was sought from the outset. ICAN were able to offer a 'train the trainer' model for 6 suitably qualified teachers and speech and language therapists to train other staff to deliver the programme and provided a useful tracker to monitor children's progress.

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## IMPLEMENTATION: INNOVATION, EVIDENCE, RISKS & ISSUES

By using ICAN's evidence based, 'Early Talk Boost' (ETB) language intervention, the project has investigated the impact on children's development in 4 areas communication and personal and emotional development. ETB, a 9 week programme, is designed for 3-4 year old children who have a language delay in aspects such as listening and attention, understanding language & limited vocabulary. The support from the Laurel Trust has given FWTSA a fantastic research opportunity for North West Leicestershire. The only barrier was ensuring that children got all 9 sessions of the intervention as many did not attend their PVI on consistent days. Staff worked hard to ensure that no child was missed.

The professional community around the project has included local settings who undertook the role of 1 active and 2 waiting control groups. Practitioners attended an ETB training session, which then was delivered to their target group of children with a range of pre-prepared, user and child friendly resources for settings to keep after the training to use with more children in the future. The project also promoted partnership working with parents and other professionals such as speech and language therapists and an LA Early Years advisor.

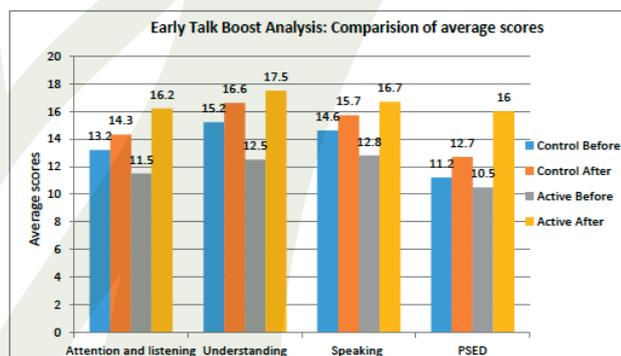


To evidence that the ETB intervention impacts on children at risk of delay in communication and narrows the gap between them and their peers, both qualitative and quantitative data was collated. Some children were in a 'waiting control group' so that we could measure the impact of the ETB over the period of the intervention. The intention was to close the gap between disadvantaged children and their peers.

### IMPACT

The implementation of ETB has been extremely successful and has mirrored the impact of previous ICAN research. Children made great strides in language development. Those in the research group made twice the progress of those in the waiting control group as measured by the tracker.

See table below:



FWTSA are now able to offer the ETB training across the PVI sector and enable more children to develop their skills at an accelerated rate so enabling them a smooth and successful entry into school.

### DISSEMINATING IMPACT & SYSTEM LEARNING

The project is being rolled out to a wider group of PVI settings and schools, led by the 6 trainers trained by ICAN at the beginning of the project.

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Sharing our Research

### DISSEMINATION HAS TAKEN PLACE THROUGH:

A FWTSA celebration event for Primary schools and settings

User friendly report for PVI, schools and families

Shared with other TSAs in Leicestershire, East Midlands and nationally. (6 Early Tears Teachers from a TSA in Portsmouth visited for a day to learn about the impact of ETB)

Report in FWTSA newsletter and on website

Presentation at the Laurel Trust Conference in London in July 2017

A research report written for publication by the Laurel Trust

