

# Talk Boost Key Stage 1

Review: January 2019

**Note on provider involvement:** This provider has agreed to EIF's terms of reference, and the assessment has been conducted and published with the full cooperation of the programme provider.

**Talk Boost Key Stage 1 (TalkBoost KS1) is an intervention for children with delayed language. It is a targeted programme for children between the ages of 4 and 7. It is delivered in the school setting by teaching assistants, and aims to improve children's core language skills, as well as academic attainment and social/emotional difficulties in the longer term.**

Children taking part in the programme have all been identified by teachers as having delayed language (developing in the same way as typically developing children, though slower). The children do not have an identified special educational need. This may include children with English as an additional language.

Each Talk Boost Key Stage 1 group session consists of a mixture of fun, interactive activities: group games, worksheets, role play, and practical activities such as colouring according to specific instructions.

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Evidence  
rating: 2

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Cost rating: 1

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## EIF Programme Assessment

Talk Boost Key Stage 1 has **preliminary evidence** of improving a child outcome, but we cannot be confident that the programme caused the improvement.

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Evidence  
rating: **2**

### What does the evidence rating mean?

**Level 2** indicates that the programme has evidence of improving a child outcome from a study involving at least 20 participants, representing 60% of the sample, using validated instruments.

This programme does not receive a rating of 3 as its best evidence is not from a rigorously conducted RCT or QED evaluation.

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## Cost rating

A rating of 1 indicates that a programme has a low cost to set up and deliver, compared with other interventions reviewed by EIF. This is equivalent to an estimated unit cost of less than£100.

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Cost rating: **1**

# Child outcomes

According to the best available evidence for this programme's impact, it can achieve the following positive outcomes for children:

## Enhancing school achievement & employment

**Improved expressive vocabulary (with respect to information provided in sentences)**

Based on study 1

**Improved expressive vocabulary (with respect to grammar in sentences)**

Based on study 1

**Improved expressive discourse skills (with respect to grammar, information provided and sentence length when telling a story)**

Based on study 1

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# Key programme characteristics

## Who is it for?

The best available evidence for this programme relates to the following age-groups:

- Preschool
- Primary school

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## How is it delivered?

The best available evidence for this programme relates to implementation through these delivery models:

- Group

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## Where is it delivered?

The best available evidence for this programme relates to its implementation in these settings:

- Primary school

The programme may also be delivered in these settings:

- Primary school

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## How is it targeted?

The best available evidence for this programme relates to its implementation as:

- Targeted indicated
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## Where has it been implemented?

Australia, England, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales

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## UK provision

This programme has been implemented in the UK.

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## UK evaluation

This programme's best evidence includes evaluation conducted in the UK.

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## Spotlight sets

EIF includes this programme in the following Spotlight sets:

- programmes for children with recognised or possible special education needs
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# About the programme

## What happens during delivery?

### How is it delivered?

- The child-focused component of Talk Boost Key Stage 1 is delivered in three sessions per week (up to 30–40 minutes in duration each) for 10 weeks, by one teacher assistant to groups of children.
- There is also a class-focused component for the whole class, which is delivered once a week in sessions up to 30 minutes long.
- Finally, there is also an optional home-based component, for each child, which involves home activities once a week lasting up to 20 minutes in duration.

### What happens during the intervention?

- Each Talk Boost Key Stage 1 group session consist of a mixture of fun, interactive activities: group games, worksheets, role play, and practical activities such as colouring according to specific instructions.
- Each session focuses on the key components of language: listening and attention, vocabulary, sentence building, storytelling and conversations.
- The sessions aim to introduce, teach and practise language skills so that children understand why, as well as how, to communicate effectively.

## What are the implementation requirements?

### Who can deliver it?

- The practitioners who delivers this programme are a teaching assistant with QCF-3 level qualifications, and a teacher with QCF-6 level qualifications.

## What are the training requirements?

- Practitioners have five hours of programme training each. Booster training of practitioners is not required.

## How are the practitioners supervised?

- Supervision is not required.

## What are the systems for maintaining fidelity?

Programme fidelity is maintained through the following processes:

- Training manual
- Other printed material
- Other online material
- Video or DVD training.

## Is there a licensing requirement?

There is no licence required to run this programme.

## How does it work? (Theory of Change)

### How does it work?

- Children with good early language skills in the early school years make good progress academically, socially and emotionally.
- Talk Boost Key Stage 1 sessions, reinforced by whole-class activities, teach and consolidate core language skills important for learning and social/emotional development: sentence building, storytelling, listening and attention, conversations and vocabulary.
- In the short term, children's core language skills improve significantly.
- In the longer term, children take a more active part in learning, contributing to class discussions. They have improved self-esteem and confidence. Ultimately the risk of poor academic attainment and social/emotional difficulties that are associated with language difficulties will be reduced.

## **Intended outcomes**

Enhancing school achievement & employment

## **Contact details**

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<https://icancharity.org.uk/talk-boost-ks1-homepage>[www.ican.org.uk](http://www.ican.org.uk)



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## About the evidence

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

This study identified statistically significant positive impact on a number of child outcomes.

This programme is underpinned by one study with a level 2 rating, hence the programme receives a level 2 rating overall.

### Study 1

**Citation:** Lee & Pring, 2015

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**Design:** RCT

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**Country:** United Kingdom

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**Sample:** 180 children between 4 and 7 years old, where most children had significant language delays.

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**Timing:** Post-test

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**Child outcomes:**

- Improved expressive vocabulary (with respect to information provided in sentences)
  - Improved expressive vocabulary (with respect to grammar in sentences)
  - Improved expressive discourse skills (with respect to grammar, information provided and sentence length when telling a story)
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**Other outcomes:**

- None measured
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**Study rating:** 2

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Lee, W., & Pring, T. (2016). Supporting language in schools: Evaluating an intervention for children with delayed language in the early school years. *Child Language Teaching and Therapy*, 32(2), 135-146.

Available at <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0265659015590426>

### **Study design and sample**

The first study is an RCT.

This study involved random assignment of children to a TalkBoost group and a wait-list control group.

This study was conducted in the UK with a sample of children between 4 and 7 years old, where most children had significant language delays.

### **Measures**

Expressive vocabulary (with respect to information provided in sentences) was measured using the information scale of the Renfrew Action Picture Test (direct assessment).

Expressive vocabulary (with respect to grammar used in sentences) was measured using the grammar scale of the Renfrew Action Picture Test (direct assessment).

Expressive discourse skills (with respect to grammar, information provided and sentence length when telling a story) was measured using the Bus Story (direct assessment).

### **Findings**

This study identified statistically significant positive impact on a number of child outcomes.

This includes:

- Expressive vocabulary (with respect to information provided in sentences)
- Expressive vocabulary (with respect to grammar used in sentences)
- Expressive discourse skills (with respect to grammar, information provided and sentence length when telling a story).

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

## Other studies

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

I CAN (2012). Talk Boost Interim Report: The development phase - **This reference refers to a pre-post study, conducted in the UK.**

I CAN (2013). A Chance to Talk: A national pilot programme – a scalable model for improving children's communication skills at primary school.

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## Guidebook

The EIF Guidebook provides information about early intervention programmes that have at least preliminary evidence of achieving positive outcomes for children. It provides information based on EIF's assessment of the strength of evidence for a programme's effectiveness, and on detail about programmes shared with us by those who design, run and deliver them.

The Guidebook serves an important starting point for commissioners to find out more about effective early interventions, and for programme providers to find out more about what good evidence of impact looks like and how it can be captured. As just one of our key resources for commissioners and practitioners, the Guidebook is an essential part of EIF's work to support the development of and investment in effective early intervention programmes.

Our assessment of the evidence for a programme's effectiveness can inform and support certain parts of a commissioning decision, but it is not a substitute for professional judgment. Evidence about what has worked in the past offers no guarantee that an approach will work in all circumstances. Crucially, the Guidebook is not a market comparison website: ratings and other information should not be interpreted as a specific recommendation, kite mark or endorsement for any programme.

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[How to read the Guidebook](#)

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[EIF evidence standards](#)

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[About the EIF Guidebook](#)

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## EIF

The Early Intervention Foundation (EIF) is an independent charity and a member of the What Works network. We support the use of effective early intervention for children, young people and their families: identifying signals of risk, and responding with effective interventions to improve outcomes, reduce hardship and save the public money in the long term.

We work by generating evidence and knowledge of what works in our field, putting this information in the hands of commissioners, practitioners and policymakers, and supporting the adoption of the evidence in local areas and relevant sectors.

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