

Talking Together

Delivered by BHT Early Education and Training from June 2015 – November 2024

Talking Together, developed by Bradford-based BHT Early Education and Training, is designed to improve the home learning environment for children aged 2 who are at risk of language development delay.

How it was delivered

The project has three main elements:

- A Talking Together screening; a universal validated language assessment for all 2-year-olds, completed as a home visit.
- The Talking Together programme; a targeted 6-week home-based intervention to those identified as at risk for weak or delayed language development.
- The Talking Together + programme; additional support identified after the 6-week intervention, tailored to individual family need.

This has been complemented with Owlets, a friendly group for families with children 18 months to 3 years with focused support for children's language through play.

The project assessed well over

5000

children for home-based language support and 40% were referred into the programme



78%

of families referred went on to participate in the programme

78%

of participants completed the 6-week programme



72%

of participants completed the Talking Together + programme

Why this project was developed

Children from more deprived backgrounds have consistently been found to demonstrate delayed language development, and this can be seen even before the children's 2nd birthday.

Children growing up in poverty are likely to be spoken to less often and to have a less stimulating home learning environment. These determinants of children's language skills are important targets for intervention, as changing these aspects of children's early experience could help to reduce the impacts of deprivation.

The project set out to:

- Improve children's vocabulary and language skills
- Help more children develop age-appropriate language skills
- Improve parental/carer sensitivity, engagement and verbal stimulation within early parent-child interactions
- Improve children's behaviour
- Increase parents'/carers' confidence in interacting with their children
- Link parents up with further appropriate services

Impact and findings*

- The project has become widely recognised and respected by families and professionals across the Bradford district and is a key element of the Talking Bradford pathway.
- Many children have received onward referrals to other services including Speech and Language Therapy, audiology, Family Hubs, other Better Start Bradford projects and nursery places. In some cases, this has led to a paediatrician referral and an additional needs assessment has commenced.
- There is a significant need for Talking Together in Bradford and the evaluation shows it is feasible to deliver and acceptable to families.
- It shows promise in improving the parent-child relationship and increasing children's vocabulary. This is key for achieving school readiness.
- There is opportunity to establish effectiveness via a full-scale Randomised Control Trial, but this will require further district funding for the project to continue.
- Owlets is currently commissioned through Start for Life with referrals via Health Visitors.

*This section includes information from both the evaluation report/s and project

