

Early Words Together

National
Literacy
Trust

A targeted literacy programme for families with children aged two to five that empowers parents to support their children's early communication and literacy development.

“The success of this programme in engaging the hard to reach families... is exactly the sort of evidence that Ofsted are looking for.”
Head Teacher, St Patrick's RC Primary School, Rochdale

Significantly improving children's early literacy and communication

Evidence of impact

The National Literacy Trust delivered Early Words Together in 13 areas across England during 2013-15, in partnership with 120 children's centres and early years settings. The programme was funded by the Department for Education, the Benoy Foundation and had support from Pearson Publishing. Its benefits and impact have been praised by parents, practitioners, volunteers and Ofsted inspectors. Independent evaluation by Coventry University of 776 pre- and post-test surveys showed significant impact:



» Huge improvements for those most in need

- Families who started the programme with the lowest levels of enjoyment of sharing stories showed a 77% increase in reading enjoyment
- Families who started with lowest frequency of book sharing showed a 91% increase in reading frequency

» Increase in children's understanding of spoken language

- Measured using the Pearson Preschool Language Scale, children's average standardised scores were 77 at pre-test, below the normal range for their peers, indicating a cause for concern. After four months average scores increased to 83, bringing them significantly closer to the normal range of 85 or above. Girls, in particular, showed improvements

» Increase in children's enjoyment of sharing books, songs and rhymes

- 87% families reported high levels of enjoyment in sharing books (previously 72%)
- 88% families reported high levels of enjoyment in joining in with songs and rhymes (previously 76%)
- 80% parents reported improvements in their children's ability to listen and join in with stories

» Improvement in home learning environment

- 86% parents reported they now talked more to their children
- Two-thirds of parents (66%) felt more confident about sharing books with their child
- 89% families were more likely to buy or borrow books, increased library visits being a key factor
- 73% parents now read with their child every day (previously 53%)
- 99% parents would recommend Early Words Together to others

To view the full report visit www.literacytrust.org.uk/ewt/impact



Benefits:

1. Improves children's early language, literacy and communication to increase school readiness
2. Improves parental involvement with early literacy activities to enhance children's home learning environment
3. Builds relationships with targeted parents and enables parental engagement with education settings
4. Provides volunteering opportunities and development of peer education skills for parents in their local community

In the words of...

Ofsted

“Some activities, such as Early Words Together, focus very specifically on promoting children’s communication and language development, and tracking shows that good progress is being made.”

Ofsted Report, Staffordshire: Lichfield District Group, May 2014

“The sessions are particularly effective for Portuguese and other groups who speak English as an additional language.”

Lambeth Ofsted inspection, Stockwell, July 2014

Local Authority Commissioners

“This programme is ideal at building volunteering capacity and skills both within the workforce and amongst our citizens so that we can support other members of the community.”

Stella Clarke, Associate Director, Commissioning, London Borough of Lambeth

Schools and settings

“Early Words Together has meant that not only have the pupils and their families benefitted from much needed support, but this has had the desired ‘knock on’ effect in the classroom in raising standards. Families now have the necessary skills to support their child’s learning development.”

Head Teacher, Ankermoor Primary School

“Children [who participated in Early Words Together] on entry to nursery have been observed to be significantly more ‘nursery ready’ – concentrating effectively, being able to listen, having greater confidence, speaking in sentences, having a wider vocabulary, understanding and having confidence to engage with stories.”

Head of Early Years Foundation Stage, Hemlington Hall Academy, Middlesbrough

Parents

“Get more programmes like this. I think it is great, focus on the kids and get them to where they need to be.”
(Sutton)

“We are [now] members of the library, we have taken the kids a few times now, which has been fun, all six of them coming out with ten books.”
(North Yorkshire)

“I needed help as a parent, and found [that with] the help with the sessions and the volunteers I am feeling confident and happy.”
(Croydon)

Watch a short video showing the benefits of Early Words Together at www.literacytrust.org.uk/ewt/about



**National
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Trust**

To deliver Early Words Together in your school or setting contact
ewt@literacytrust.org.uk or call 0207 820 6278.

To find out more, visit **www.literacytrust.org.uk/ewt**