

Lisburn Nursery Schools give speech & language a boost

5 nurseries in Lisburn have introduced an **Early Talk Boost** programme, which supports language delayed children, aged 3 - 4 years of age to make progress with their language and communication skills. **Early Talk Boost** is delivered by a trained early year's practitioner and has shown to make significant progress in children's early language by an average of six months after a nine week intervention.



Staff from five nurseries in the Lisburn area trained in the Early Talk Boost Programme to develop speech and language

This fantastic opportunity was made possible by the Early Intervention Lisburn Partnership led by the Resurgam Trust by identifying speech & language development as a priority in Lisburn. The Early Intervention Lisburn Project was initiated by the Resurgam Trust in 2011 to improve outcomes for children, young people and families in deprived areas of Lisburn.

Mr Adrian Bird, Director of the Resurgam Trust, said, 'Research carried out in 2013 in primary schools in Lisburn highlighted 32% of our children were

entering primary school with a mild to moderate speech & language problem. We have worked closely with the SEHSCT Speech & Language department and agreed that both of these programmes were the best approach to help improve this shocking statistic in Lisburn.

Research shows that early language skills, in particular vocabulary, are a key indicator of academic success. Without core skills in speech, language and communication young children will not be ready to start school, to make friends and to develop their self-esteem.

Gail Malmo, Health and Social Wellbeing Improvement Manager with the Public Health Agency in the South Eastern area, said 'Early Intervention is a priority for the PHA and we recognise that speech & language is the most important skill children will learn during their early schooling and has far-reaching implications for life-long confidence and wellbeing'.

Mrs Catherine Milne Principal of St Aloysius Primary School said "We as a school are delighted to host the training of the Early Talk Boost programme, given the rich empirical evidence; we look forward to and are delighted to introduce this programme in our nursery unit to support children with speech & language delay. We are committed to supporting our children's speech and language development, which is why I was really keen that our school takes part in the pilot of Early Talk Boost.

Early Talk Boost will now form part of our practice and we expect that it will prepare children for school and help them become more confident communicators."

The Early Talk Boost programme has been funded by the Public Health Agency and is being piloted in:

Barbour, St Aloysius, Holy Trinity, Pond Park and Old Warren Nursery schools

ENDS

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