

Lisburn Primary Schools give speech & language a boost

13 primary schools in Lisburn have introduced a **Talk Boost** programme, which supports language delayed children aged 4 -7 years of age to make progress with their language and communication skills. The **Talk Boost** programme is delivered in primary schools and can accelerate children's progress in language and communication by an average of 18 months after a ten week intervention.



Staff from across 13 Primary Schools in the Lisburn Area completed training in the Talk Boost programme to support young people aged 4-7years in language development

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 delay impacts on children's communication skills, educational attainment, social and emotional development and life chances particularly in terms of employment.

Gail Malmo, Health and Social Wellbeing Improvement Manager with the Public Health Agency in the South Eastern area, said '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. Early Intervention is a priority for the PHA. We recognise a child's vocabulary skills at age five are a predictor of their employment status at age 34. Resolving speech and language difficulties by age six results in better outcomes for the child'.

Mr Geoffrey Cherry Principal of Pond Park Primary School said 'We as a school are delighted to host the training of the Talk Boost programme, and are delighted to introduce this programme in our school to support children with speech & language delay. To have an early intervention strategy that deals with developing speech and children's talking and listening skills will be very beneficial. The programme is structured and straightforward to administer'.

The Talk Boost programme was funded by the Public Health Agency and is available in:

Largymore, Forthill, Brownlee, Knockmore, St Aloysius, Pond Park, Killowen, Harmony Hill, Seymour Hill, Tonagh, Ballymacash, Old Warren and St Joseph's Primary Schools.

ENDS

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