



Press release – 29.03.2012

INTERVENTION FOR LANGUAGE DELAYED CHILDREN LAUNCHED AT *CRACKING COMMUNICATION* CONFERENCE

On Wednesday (28th March 2012), The Communication Trust, a leading voluntary sector coalition, hosted *Cracking Communication* - a conference attended by over 100 school leaders and curriculum coordinators on how to meet the communication elements on the new Ofsted and National Curriculum frameworks.

The conference, sponsored by Pearson Assessment, unveiled *Talk Boost*, a new targeted and evidence-based intervention supporting language delayed children in Reception and Key Stage 1 to make significant progress with their communication skills.

Developed by I CAN, the children's communication charity, and The Communication Trust, with support from the *Every Child a Chance Trust*, *Talk Boost* can boost a child's communication by an average of 18 months after just ten weeks of intervention

Anita Kerwin-Nye, Director of The Communication Trust, says; "For the first time, Ofsted frameworks have placed communication alongside literacy and numeracy as key areas for inspection. Schools will be challenged to show how children with SEN are progressing and to demonstrate how the gap is being reduced between pupils with the lowest and highest attainment.

"Whilst the national year of communication has finished, our leadership role at The Communication Trust is continuing. Over the next six months, we will be showcasing best practice from the voluntary sector on what works to support all children's communication, particularly those with SLCN. *Talk Boost*, developed with I CAN is an excellent example of this and schools are telling us it could help over half of their learners."

Virginia Beardshaw, Chief Executive of I CAN, said: "I CAN is delighted to have launched *Talk Boost* with The Communication Trust. This ground-breaking 10-week intervention programme for use by teachers, teaching assistants and parents/carers has been shown to narrow the gap between 4-7 year olds with language delay and their peers.

.In some parts of the UK, particularly socially deprived areas, upwards of 50% of children are starting school with language skills that are under-developed for their age. Language delay can significantly impact on children's attainment, their literacy and numeracy development and ability to learn and make friends. Many of these children have the potential to catch up but only if they receive timely intervention –Talk Boost provides just that.

“Primary schools can find out more about Talk Boost by visiting www.talkboost.org.uk.”

Kerwin-Nye concludes: “The *Cracking Communication* conference, sponsored by Pearson Assessment, forms part of a wider Trust campaign to place communication at the heart of schools' policy and practice. We have also unveiled for the first time *Talk of the School* – a website for primary and secondary schools to guide their teaching strategies and to provide information on supporting children and young people's communication.

“All of this work builds directly on the *Hello* campaign, national year of communication. The Communication Trust is delighted to be working with long time supporters such as Pearson Assessment and BT as well as entering into exciting new partnerships. A great example of this is the charity Achievement for All, where our partnership work will highlight the importance of whole school approaches.”

At the conference, a new report *Building a joined-up offering for vulnerable learners*, was made available. Written by Achievement for All and The Communication Trust, it highlights the need for a 'whole school' approach to helping children who struggle with speaking and listening to catch up with their peers. It is available to download at <http://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/about-the-trust/what-do-we-do/latest-news.aspx>

You can visit the *Talk of the School* website at www.talkoftheschool.org.uk

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Notes to editors

About The Communication Trust

- The Communication Trust is a campaigning voice for children with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN). It raises awareness, influences policy, promotes best practice among the children's workforce and commissions work from its members.

- The Communication Trust is a coalition of nearly 50 leading voluntary sector and community based organisations.
- It has an extensive advisory and partner network that includes the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT), Achievement for All, Council for Disabled Children, Early Support Programme and specialists across early years, schools and youth justice.
- Recently, the Trust ran the *Hello* campaign (national year of communication) in partnership with Jean Gross in her role as the Government's Communication Champion for children.
- The Communication Trust in 2012 is building on the legacy of *Hello* by showcasing best practice from the voluntary sector around what works to support all children's communication, particularly those with SLCN, and disseminating it to the widest possible audience.
- This work will include launching later in the year a campaign to place communication at the heart of schools' policy and practice.
- For more information, visit www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk

About *Talk Boost*

- *Talk Boost* is a targeted and evidence-based intervention, supporting language-delayed children in Reception and Key Stage 1 to make significant progress with their communication skills.
- It has been developed by children's communication charity, I CAN and The Communication Trust, leaders in the field of children's speech, language and communication.
- Trials of *Talk Boost* have shown it can boost a child's communication by on average 18 months after just 10 weeks of intervention.
- It includes small group activities undertaken three times a week and a weekly classroom activity delivered by trained teachers, teaching assistants and volunteers, which focus on listening and attention, vocabulary, sentence building, storytelling and conversations.
- To find out more visit www.talkboost.org.uk or email talkboost@ican.org.uk

About I CAN

- I CAN is the children's communication charity. www.ican.org.uk or www.talkingpoint.org.uk

- We are here to ensure that no child is left out or left behind because of a difficulty speaking or understanding.
- I CAN's mission is to make sure that everyone in contact with children knows how important communication is, what a communication difficulty looks like and what they can do to help.
- We do this through our special schools for children with severe and complex communication needs; increasing public awareness of the problems children face; giving expert advice to parents and families; providing assessments for children ; giving teachers and people working with children the skills to help children who struggle; campaigning to ensure children and families get a better deal.