

Evaluation of Early Talk Boost (2025-26): Setting and Staff privacy notice

1 Why are we collecting this data?

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) has commissioned the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) to carry out an evaluation of Early Talk Boost, using a randomised controlled trial (RCT). Early Talk Boost is a language intervention designed for 3 to 4-year-old children with speech and language challenges to boost their language skills. This trial aims to ascertain the impact of the programme on the participating children's language skills and development and will take place over the course of the 2025-26 academic year.

This document outlines how personal data from setting staff will be collected from settings and processed for the purposes of the evaluation. There is a separate privacy notice for parents and carers (available here:

https://www.nfer.ac.uk/media/quybv5r/eetb_parent_carer_privacy_notice_2025_2.pdf), which covers the children's personal data being collected as part of the evaluation.

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) has funded this research. NFER is the data controller for the trial and Speech and Language UK is the data processor. This means that NFER will determine the purposes of data processing and Speech and Language UK will process this data on behalf of NFER.

Speech and Language UK will also process data to deliver Early Talk Boost. For this process, they are the data controllers and are responsible for making decisions about how data is processed. Their privacy notice can be found here: <https://speechandlanguage.org.uk/privacy-policy/>. As part of the Early Talk Boost programme delivery, settings will be asked to use Early Talk Boost Tracker. The privacy notice for the Talk Boost tracker can be found here: <https://speechandlanguage.org.uk/privacy-policy/privacy-notices/tracker-privacy-notice/>.

We will use other data processors to provide specific services; details are provided in section 5.

None of the data collected will be used for any purpose other than those stated in this privacy notice.

2 What is the legal basis for processing activities?

The legal basis for processing personal data is covered by GDPR Article 6 (1) (f):

Legitimate interests: the processing is necessary for your (or a third party's) legitimate interests unless there is a good reason to protect the individual's personal data which overrides those legitimate interests.

A legitimate interest assessment has been undertaken. Our legitimate interest in processing personal data for this trial is to evaluate the Early Talk Boost intervention. The evaluation fulfils one of NFER's core business purposes (undertaking research, evaluation and information activities) and is therefore in our legitimate interest. It has broader societal benefits and will contribute to improving children's lives by providing evidence about how early years settings can boost children's language skills and can best support their development. Research cannot be done without processing personal data, but NFER will ensure your rights are respected at all times.

3 How will personal data be obtained?

All personal data will be collected directly from participating settings.

Speech and Language UK will collect names and contact details for setting staff who are interested to hear more about the project via an online Expression of Interest (EoI).

Speech and Language UK will collect names and contact details for the setting staff via the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) when the settings sign up to participate in the project.

Speech and Language UK will collect attendance data for all staff attending training sessions and support sessions by completing an attendance register for each of the training and support sessions. This attendance register will be designed by NFER with inputs from Speech and Language UK.

Personal data collected by Speech and Language UK will be shared with NFER via NFER's secure portal.

NFER will ask key contacts and lead practitioners in all settings to respond to two online surveys using the Tivian survey platform (one at baseline and one at the end of the trial).

A small number of intervention settings will be invited to participate in case study visits involving observations and interviews. Participation in these additional activities is optional.

4 What personal data is being collected for this project?

Speech and Language UK will collect the full name, job title and contact details for setting staff who are interested in participating in the trial via the EoI form. In addition, the following data about the setting will be collected at this point: setting name, full address including postcode, local authority of setting and setting type.

Speech and Language UK will use the MoU to collect the full name and contact details for the following staff members at each setting as they sign up to participate in the trial:

- the headteacher or Nursery Manager
- the key contact for the project, who will facilitate communications between the setting and Speech and Language UK, and NFER

- the lead practitioner who would be primarily responsible for delivering the programme if the setting was allocated to the intervention group
- any additional practitioners who would support the lead practitioner with programme delivery.

Speech and Language UK will collect attendance data for practitioners at the training and support sessions.

NFER will ask the key contact in all settings to complete an online survey about their existing practices (September 2025) in relation to early language development and social skills, language programmes and/or tracker tools, and parental engagement. The key contact in settings allocated to the control group will be asked to complete a similar survey in June 2026. At the same time (June 2026), the key contact in settings allocated to the intervention group will be asked to complete an online survey about their experiences of implementing the programme in their setting and any impact they perceive it to have had. Nominated lead practitioners in all settings will be asked to complete an online survey about their confidence and behaviour in relation to supporting speech and language development within the setting in September 2025 and again in June 2026. In addition, lead practitioners in intervention settings will be asked about their experience of the training and session delivery.

A small number of settings allocated to the intervention group will be invited to participate in additional case study data collection activities, including a session observation, interviews with the staff and overview of the time and costs incurred in delivering the programme. Participation in these activities is entirely optional.

5 Who will personal data be shared with?

Speech & Language UK will share staff names and contact details with NFER for the purpose of contacting settings. They will also share training attendance data with NFER to inform analysis for the evaluation. All personal data will be shared using NFER's secure online portal.

The online survey data is collected via Tivian which stores names, contact details and survey responses in Azure and AWS data centre infrastructure in the European Union (EU). Tivian's privacy notice is available here: <https://www.tivian.com/uk/privacy-policy-2/>

We will not share personal data collected through staff surveys or staff interviews with other organisations.

Archiving at the end of evaluation

To provide maximum value to taxpayers, school leaders, policy makers and the wider education and research communities, EEF archives impact evaluation data. Data is archived with a view to tracking the long-term effect of the interventions they fund. This means that at the end of the evaluation, NFER will link all of the child-level personal data with details of the setting and practitioners. This will include the setting's name, address, postcode, setting identifier, setting Local Authority, summary data for practitioners' Early Talk Boost training attendance, specific variables from the practitioner surveys covering self-reported confidence and practitioner motivation in supporting early language development. Three months after the evaluation report is

published, NFER will submit this linked dataset to the EEF archive. At this point, the EEF will become the data controller. The EEF archive is managed by the FFT Education (FFT) on behalf of the EEF. FFT will hold children’s personal data until participating children would be expected to appear in Department for Education’s (DfE) National Pupil Database (NPD), then match with NPD and replace these identifiers with the Pupil Matching Reference (PMR).

The dataset containing the PMR (but no direct identifiers) will then be archived in the EEF Archive. The EEF data archive is hosted in the Secure Research Service (SRS) (transitioning to the Integrated Data System, IDS) at the Office of National Statistics (ONS). Further matching to NPD and other administrative data may take place during later research. This will enable the EEF and other research teams to use the pseudonymised data as part of subsequent research through the ONS Approved Researcher Scheme.

FFT and the designated EEF archive evaluator will act as data processors for the archive.

Further information about the EEF archive is available here:

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/projects-and-evaluation/evaluation/evaluation-guidance-and-resources/evaluation-data-archive> and the privacy notice can be found here: <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/privacy-notice/privacy-notice-for-the-eeef-data-archive>

6 Is personal data being transferred outside of the UK?

When NFER use Tivian to administer online surveys, data is stored in the EU. This transfer is protected by UK adequacy arrangements. Only personal data required for, and collected as part of, the online surveys (names, contact details and survey responses) will be stored outside of the UK.

7 How long will personal data be retained?

NFER will delete any personal data after one year from the publication of the final report. The deletion process is currently planned for May 2028. Recordings and digitalised transcriptions of interviews and assessments will be deleted as soon as notes and responses are finalised.

Speech and Language UK will delete any personal data collected as part of their role as data processors on this project after one year from the publication of the final report. The deletion process is currently planned for May 2028. As noted above, Speech and Language UK will also process data to deliver Early Talk Boost. For this processing, they are the data controllers. Any personal data for which Speech and Language UK are controllers will be deleted within their normal data retention policy (no more than 5 years after the end of the project).

Once NFER deletes the data, EEF will retain sole data controller responsibility for the archived data. Their retention schedule is detailed in their privacy notice.

8 What are my rights with respect to personal data?

NFER handles personal data in accordance with the rights given to individual under data protection legislation. Under certain circumstances data subjects have the right:

- to request access to information that is held about them (a data subject access request).
- to have personal data rectified if it is inaccurate or incomplete.
- to request the deletion or removal of personal data where there is no compelling reason for its continued processing.
- to restrict processing of personal data (for example, permitting its storage but no further processing).
- to object to processing
- to data portability
- not to be subject to decisions based purely on automated processing where it produces a legal or similarly significant effect.

We may need to request specific information from you to help us confirm your identity and ensure your right to access the information (or to exercise any of your other rights). This helps us ensure that personal information is not disclosed to any person who has no right to receive it.

Although we value your participation in this evaluation and its contribution to important findings, you can withdraw from the evaluation activities at any time. If you withdraw, unless otherwise instructed, we will use any data we have collected up to that point in our analysis. Please note that withdrawing your data will not be possible once data analysis has commenced (from September 2026) . Withdrawing your data will not impact on your school's participation in the Early Talk Boost programme. If at any time you wish to withdraw from the evaluation activities, or withdraw your data or correct errors in it, please contact the project team at ETBTrial@nfer.ac.uk.

9 Who can I contact about this project?

Any queries about the day-to-day management of the data processing outlined in this privacy notice, please contact the project team at ETBTrial@nfer.ac.uk.

If you have concerns about the way NFER processes personal data, please raise your concern by contacting the Compliance Officer: compliance@nfer.ac.uk.

If you remain dissatisfied, you have the right to lodge a complaint about data protection issues with the Information Commissioner's Office, the body responsible for enforcing data protection legislation in the UK, at <https://ico.org.uk/concerns/>

10 Updates

We keep our privacy notice under regular review to make sure it is up to date and accurate; any changes will be recorded. We recommend that you revisit this information from time to time. The date when this privacy notice was last updated is shown in the footer at the bottom of this document.

This version was last updated on 27th August 2025 to reflect a change in the EEF logo.