

Talk With Tales for Children (TWiTCH) Evaluation Study

Information for Parents and Carers

What is the TWiTCH study?

Your child's nursery is taking part in a research study to see whether a training programme for nursery staff called Talk with Tales for Children (TWiTCH) can help improve young children's communication and language skills. The study is being led by teams at Durham University and Sheffield Hallam University.

We would like to invite your child to take part.

This information sheet explains what the study is about and what it means for you and your child.

What is the TWiTCH Programme?

TWiTCH trains nursery staff to run special story time sessions in small groups to help support children's language development. Nursery staff receive nine storybooks based on traditional tales with activities to do with children over three weeks based on each of these story books. Each book is used for three weeks:

- Week 1: Shared reading activities
- Week 2: More in-depth discussions and language games
- Week 3: Story-themed activities used across the nursery.

The programme gives nursery staff ideas and strategies to help develop children's language and thinking skills during these sessions and throughout the day.

How will we know if TWiTCH works?

Nurseries will be randomly put into one of two groups:

- TWiTCH group (intervention group): Staff receive TWiTCH training and deliver the programme
- Control group: Staff continue with their usual story time practice.

We are then able to compare children's language skills and school readiness between nurseries that took part in TWiTCH and those that did not. This type of study is called a randomised controlled trial.

What does the TWiTCH programme mean for my child?

If your child's nursery is chosen to receive TWiTCH in the 2026/27 school year:

- Nursery staff will attend TWiTCH training and receive storybooks and other resources.
- They will run the TWiTCH story sessions with all children in the 3-4-year-old room for 27 weeks.

You can ask your child's key person any questions you have about the TWiTCH programme. You can also contact the Sheffield Hallam University who are delivering TWiTCH using the details at the end of this information sheet.

What does the research study involve for my child?

Language Assessments

We would like to carry out some short child-friendly language assessments at the start of the study (September-October 2026) and at the end of the study (June-July 2027).

- The LanguageScreen assessment would be done both at the start and end of the study. It is an interactive tablet-based assessment which looks at four areas of children's language skills.
- The Bus Story test would be done at the end of the study. Your child will be asked to look at pictures and tell the story of the pictures.

The assessments will be carried out by trained staff from Navigator Insight Limited (previously known as Qa Research), an independent research organization. They will:

- Visit your child's nursery
- Audio-record the assessments (for quality checking and scoring)
- Work alongside your child's key person or another familiar adult to ensure your child feels comfortable
- Be fully DBS-checked and trained in safeguarding.

If your child does not want to take part on the day, they do not have to.

Following your child's progress into school

We would also like to see how your child gets on when they start school. To do this, we will link their information to their Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Profile which your child's teacher completes at the end of reception year. This data is held in the National Pupil Database accessed securely through the Office for National Statistics (ONS). We will need you to tell us which school your child will attend to do this.

What information will you collect about my child?

When you sign up, we will ask you for:

- Your child's name, date of birth, address, sex
- Your name, phone number, email address, postcode.
- Whether English is the main language spoken at home
- How many children's books you have at home
- Your educational background.
- Your child's nursery attendance pattern and hours

We will also collect the results and audio recordings from your child's language assessments as described above.

With your permission, we will ask the nursery to share:

- Your child's name, date of birth, sex
- Your child's nursery attendance pattern
- Eligibility for Early Years Pupil premium
- Unique Pupil Number (UPN; if available)
- English as an additional Language status
- The school your child will attend in 2027/2028.

All data collected will be used only for the TWITCH study.

What do I need to do now?

If you are happy for your child to take part, please complete the consent form as soon as possible. You can complete the consent form online at: https://durhamuniversity.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9WQe0vgmLYRibhs or by scanning the QR code:



If you complete a paper copy of the consent form please return this to your child's nursery and they will share this with the research team.

If you later change your mind, you can withdraw your child at any time. You do not need to give a reason. You can tell the nursery, who will inform the research team, or can contact the Durham University team directly.

If you do **not** return a consent form your child will not take part in the assessments and no information about your child will be shared with the study team.

Who do I contact if I have further questions?

<u>Questions about the TWiCH Programme?</u>	<u>Questions about the Research Study?</u>
Please contact the TWiCH team at Sheffield Hallam University:	Please contact the Research Team at Durham University:
Fufy Demissie – Study Lead	Vic Menzies – Study Lead
E-mail contact twitch@shu.ac.uk through:	E-mail: twitch.evaluation@durham.ac.uk

Frequently Asked Questions

Who is involved in the study?

The research team: The study is led by Durham University. They are working with a researcher at Manchester University and with Navigator Insight Limited who will carry out the children's language assessments.

The TWiCH delivery team: The TWiCH Programme is delivered by a team at Sheffield Hallam University.

Assessment provider: The LanguageScreen assessment is provided by OxEd, an independent company who provide research-based assessment apps. They will process the LanguageScreen data.

Funding: The study is funded by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF). They will also store the study data for possible future research.

What will happen to my child's data?

We will treat all information about you and your child confidentially and follow General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). The information you and your child provide will be shared securely with researchers at Durham University. Durham University will share your child's details with Navigator Insight Limited, so that they can carry out the assessments, and with OxEd who process the LanguageScreen assessments. You can find full information about how your child's data will be used in the [Privacy Notice](#).

At the end of the study, the research team will write a report for the EEF which will be published on their website and may write other research publications. Neither the report or any other publication will name your child or the nursery.

When the project finishes, the data will be stored in the EEF's Data Archive. At this point, EEF and the Department for Education will be data controllers and contractors appointed to manage the Data Archive will be data processors.

The study data may also be linked with information about the children from the National Pupil Database (NPD), Department for Education, the EEF's archive manager and, in an anonymised form, with the Office for National Statistics, the UK Data Archive, and other approved researchers.

Can I have my child's assessment results?

Yes. If your child completes the assessments, you can contact the research team to request their results. Please note we can provide only the raw scores. We are not able to interpret or explain the scores.

Can my child take part without being audio recorded?

No. Audio recording of the assessments is needed for the scoring of the Bus Story Test and helps us to make sure the assessments are being delivered well by our researchers. Audio recordings of the assessments will be deleted once the scoring is completed and quality assured by the research team and the report has been published (expected to be Summer 2028).

Where can I find out the results of this study?

A final report will be written by the research team and published by the EEF in Summer 2028. It will be available on the EEF website: educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk.

If you are happy for your child to take part in the study, please complete the consent form: by scanning the QR code or accessing this link:

https://durhamuniversity.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9WQe0vgmlYRibhs

