

# Let's TALK Derby

**TALK  
Derby**

Welcome to the TALK Derby newsletter. In this issue we are talking TALK Derby DAY and highlighting some of the great work across the city supporting TALK Derby.

Please share this newsletter with your friends, family and colleagues to spread the the word about TALK Derby around the city.

February 2020, Issue 3

## TALK Derby DAY - inspiring a city

**TALK  
Derby  
DAY**

TALK Derby DAY takes place on Wednesday 1 July 2020. Its aim is to inspire schools, businesses, community groups and other organisations of all ages to stage activities which

encourage face-to-face conversations – between adults, and with children and young people.

This can involve everything from story-telling, games and picnics, to networking meetings and avoiding emails.

### How can you get involved?

1. Save the date!
2. Start planning what you can do to support the day.
3. Tell us about your ideas and plans so we can support and share them.

Over the next few months we will be making resources available to download and order through the website: <https://talkderby.org.uk/talk-derby-day/> and will keep you updated through our social media channels.

### Sponsorship opportunities

We are also offering Derby businesses the opportunity to show support not only by taking part, but by sponsoring the resources and materials needed to make TALK Derby DAY the success we all want it to be.



Chatting at Derwent Children's Centre

If you want to find out about sponsoring TALK Derby DAY, please email: [info@talkderby.org.uk](mailto:info@talkderby.org.uk).

Our children's futures are something to talk about – let's TALK Derby!

## About TALK Derby

TALK Derby is a Government-funded project aimed at raising awareness of the importance of speech, language and communication development in children and young people – and provides practical support for it.

The Department for Education has funded the project until August 2020 as part of the national Opportunity Area programme. We're supported by Derby City Council, the Derby Opportunity Area and a wide range of other partners.

## TALK Derby for parents

The early years support and training offer from TALK Derby is not just about practitioners. Parents can access 'Let's Talk at Home' and 'Let's Talk with Under Fives' at venues across the city. These sessions help parents and carers learn how to further develop their child's listening, attention and communication skills.

We visited one session at the Austin Sunny Hill Children's Centre to find out more.

It was week three of a six week course and the focus was on play. All the parents in the room had children aged two to three years old. The session started with an introduction to different sorts of play and the parents were asked to work together to sort toys into these categories. This set the scene for the rest of the session – a mixture of finding out how children learn to talk, discussing the content and lots of interactive activities.

The session was fun and practical, with a lot of talking and sharing stories about their children. The 'gloop' making went down very well, with the course leader noting down more than 16 different words the groups used to describe the process and how it felt – illustrating how play can increase vocabulary.



Let's Talk with Under 5s training for play time

### Three top tips for sharing books with your child...

Looking at books together combines the benefits of talking, listening and storytelling in one activity and helps to build the important foundations for language development. Here are some tips for sharing books with your child:

- Babies love the sound of their parents' voices and sharing books together can be calming. Looking at their favourite book can be a soothing experience and help build a bond between parent and child.
- Use stories to talk aloud to children and listen to their responses. They help you be silly, overcome adult inhibitions and are great topics for conversation.
- Songs and rhymes are especially good for children as the rhythms and repetitive language make it easier for babies to learn language structures and skills.



Asiya, Sharin and Baiba making gloop at Elkkan's Let's Talk with Under 5s training

At the end of the session the homework was set. This week it was planned play – not bad for homework!

More information about support and training for parents can be found on the [TALK Derby website](#).

## News in brief...

### White House Nursery focuses on speech and language

White House Nursery in Alvaston is one of the first settings to complete the Understand phase of the Balanced System. The system is available to nurseries, childminders and primary schools to help them recognise everything they are doing to support speech, language and communication. It then signposts them to resources, information and training to further support these skills.

[Find out more](#) about how this has made communication in the nursery even better.

### Nursery introduces bedtime stories

Diamond Day Nursery in Alvaston has recently introduced bedtime story sessions. The idea came to Lucy Brown, deputy manager and Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) when she attended a similar event at her daughter's school. Lucy said: "As well as promoting speech and language, encouraging parents and children to come to nursery in the evening in their pyjamas offers the chance for them to interact more."

Read the full article [here](#).



Lucy Brown and children at Diamond Day Nursery's Bedtime Story event

### More people make the pledge at University of Derby

In December the TALK Derby team spent the day at the University of Derby talking to students and staff about the project and how they can get involved. The day provided a big boost for the number of people making the TALK Derby pledge. If you haven't done this yet, please [sign up](#) now.

## TALK Derby in numbers

TALK Derby is making significant progress, take a look at these numbers!



244 pledges made



105 TALK Derby Champions signed up



366 professionals trained or in training



386,357 people reached on Twitter

### How you can support TALK Derby

#### 1. Make the TALK Derby pledge

Commit to spending more time talking and listening to the children in your lives by making the TALK Derby pledge.

#### 2. Find out more about TALK Derby

Visit the website: [talkderby.org.uk](http://talkderby.org.uk) or contact us direct: [info@talkderby.org.uk](mailto:info@talkderby.org.uk).

#### 3. Follow like and share our social media

Twitter: [@lets\\_TALKDerby](https://twitter.com/lets_TALKDerby)

Facebook: [TALK Derby](https://www.facebook.com/TALKDerby)

Instagram: [@talk\\_derby](https://www.instagram.com/talk_derby)

#### 4. Look at and share TALK Derby's resources for parents

Guidance for parents is available at: <https://talkderby.org.uk/resources/>.

## In focus: Derwent Stepping Stones

**Stepping Stones has four sites across the city – three supported by TALK Derby. With 300 children, including 128 at Derwent, they take children from 12 weeks to pre-school. Although the nursery is a mix of fee-paying and funded children, the majority come to the Derwent nursery on receipt of their two-year funding.**

Janet Holland, Chief Executive of Stepping Stones, says: “Three years ago more than half our children weren’t meeting development targets for communication and language and so we developed a strategy to improve this.

“We successfully applied for National Lottery funding to test out different interventions and bought an assessment tool to provide us with a clear picture of each child’s development.”

Using this tool they assessed 30 two-year-olds – 29 showed delays in communication and language development.

After nine months they re-assessed the children and saw a huge improvement. During this time the Opportunity Area funding for Derby was announced and Janet joined the working group which led to the TALK Derby project.

Janet adds: “We were already seeing the impact of focusing on communication at Stepping Stones and were beginning to understand the work needed to bring about that impact. We are passionate about communication and so we knew we would benefit from a project like TALK Derby.”

Stepping Stones has accessed all the support available through TALK Derby. They used the Balanced System to audit their current communication provision. One of the areas that needed work was engaging staff and so they created a staff newsletter and met with all staff individually. The System also identified their ‘universal’ work needed more focus - so they introduced bedtime story sessions, display boards and opened a library.

Three members of staff have taken part in the TALK Derby training from Elklan, with four more due to start soon. They have one TALK Derby Champion per setting who attends the networking meetings and have appointed their own room champions to share the responsibility of the role.

Stepping Stones is also aiming to achieve Communication Friendly Setting status and is working with the neighbouring Children’s Centre to deliver ‘Let’s Talk at Home’ at Stepping Stones.

By using its own work on speech, language and communications, combined with resources and support from TALK Derby, Stepping Stones is now focused on what is school readiness, how to engage boys more and how to measure impact.

Janet says: “The only way we could do all this is to show leadership. You can send staff to training but if they are not supported then things don’t improve.

“The current cohort of children about to move to Foundation level are the first to have been supported by TALK Derby. And while improvements in their communication skills may not be down to TALK Derby alone, it is a real chance to see what its impact has been.”



Natalie and Penelope in Derwent Stepping Stones’ Forest Garden.

Janet’s final words sum up the Stepping Stones approach: “We know we are making a difference to these children – we want to make a bigger difference.”

Read the full story [here](#).