

What is 'Home -Talk'?



To a child's brain, the most important time in life is before the 3rd birthday. Research shows that talking more with babies is one of the most critical elements in their early brain development. It works right from birth even before the baby understands a single word! Most parents don't know how much they're talking with their babies. **And almost all parents can do it more!**

LENA technology counts words at home for a full day. This project addresses the cycle of word poverty by encouraging parents with children ages birth-3 to increase the quantity and quality of language interaction with their babies and children.

The system is designed for parents who are not confident to talk, simply aren't aware of the need to, or need help engaging more with their babies and children.

What is LENA Technology?

LENA® System – like a pedometer for talk!



Babies and children wear a vest with a pocket for the audio device. This registers the sounds and patterns of words, including babbling and gurgling, but not actual words. It also distinguishes between adults' and children's sounds, logs conversational 'turns', and recognises other audio such as the radio or television. The child wears the recording device over 24 hours a week (not in the bath or in bed!). The device is then taken to the scheme and the audio uploaded to The Cloud.

The audio is assessed through the LENA online software and the numbers of words, conversational items and non-human sounds are logged. Feedback is given to the families about how, and how much, they talk to their children.

How Does 'Home -Talk' Work?

Specially trained volunteers visit the family in their own homes once a week for 12 weeks.

The volunteers help the family by talking through targets to increase the number of words a baby or child hears, and gives tips on how parents can reach the targets: from singing nursery rhymes to reading books and from talking about the shopping or the laundry to extending language and vocabulary. Data from the device produces a report which gives an hour by hour account of words heard, conversational turns, and TV/electronic sound. The skill of the volunteer is to help the parent interpret the report and identify what was happening when, for example, there were a lot of conversational turns. Parents are then encouraged to repeat this, thus increasing interactive talk with their baby/child.

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