

The background of the entire page is a light blue color with a white network pattern of interconnected lines and dots. A solid blue horizontal band spans the width of the page, containing the title and subtitle. In the bottom right corner, there is a dark blue rectangular box containing the word 'TONIC' in white.

Hertfordshire 'Teach Me Too' Evaluation

Final Report | May 2023

Dr Amanda Carr and Holly Harris

TONIC

Executive Summary

Overview

Learn and Thrive is a charity supporting learners with Down's syndrome to access specialist support to help them to learn and thrive. During COVID-19 the charity developed "Teach Me Too" - a free online library of videos and learning resources designed originally to support children's learning at home. In 2022 Learn and Thrive piloted "Teach Me Too" in mainstream and special early years settings across Hertfordshire and commissioned TONIC, an independent social research and consultation company, to evaluate the impact of these specialist resources on educators' practice. This executive summary is a report on the results of this evaluation of the Teach Me Too pilot.

Study Design

TONIC ran the evaluation from September 2022 to March 2023. To measure the impact of the Teach Me Too resources, data was collected from a baseline (pre-trial) survey, a follow-up (post-trial) survey, and depth interviews. 25 settings across Hertfordshire completed the pre-trial survey, 14 settings completed both surveys and 10 in-depth interviews were conducted with staff who had used "Teach Me Too" during the pilot period.

What is Teach Me Too?

Teach Me Too is a suite of materials that were produced by specialist teachers and speech and language therapists to deliver key early cognitive and communication skills across five key domains of the Early Years and Key Stage 1 Curriculum. Organised under five topic areas - Literacy, Mathematics, Language through Play, Exploring Language and the Wider Curriculum - the videos and accompanying downloadable resources provide fun, engaging activities using Makaton as well as speech to support learning in the classroom. Designed to be used with adult support, they can be used alongside the curriculum or as standalone activities.

How did educators use the materials?

The materials were used in 1-1 sessions delivered by a SENCO, Learning Support Assistant or Teaching Assistant. Settings also used the videos in small groups with children who had special educational needs other than Down's syndrome. All topic areas were accessed and activities used on a weekly and sometimes daily basis. Regular sessions at the same time were reported as being most effective in engaging children and in facilitating learning as the children came to anticipate the songs and activities in their favourite topics. 'Language through Play' and 'Mathematics' were cited as two particular favourites of the children.

Key Findings

The Teach Me Too suite of materials was highly rated and valued by the settings who participated in the trial. Staff were positive about the impact the programme had on their practice, their confidence in supporting children with Down's syndrome, and on the children they were supporting. Key areas of change reported by staff were in their ability to use signing/Makaton more effectively and in feeling more confident in adapting activities to meet the individual needs of the children they were supporting:

'I've learnt a lot – for me to follow it, it has given me new skills in Makaton. I'm getting more confident over time'. (SENCO, Nursery)

"Overall, a great tool to steer content which we could take further. It gave us ideas..."
(SENCO, Primary)

Key Insights:

- The content, structure and organisation of the materials was reported as engaging for pupils and helpful to staff
- Teach Me Too provides a specialist, and already made set of activities and resources which staff appreciated
- The materials gave staff greater knowledge of how to use Makaton in practice, increasing their confidence and communication skills.
- The benefits of this resource extended to include other non-verbal children on the SEND register and could have wider applicability.
- Staff were active learners as well as teaches, transforming their practices to better support the individual needs of the children they support.

"The materials demonstrated how to break down teaching into simpler steps so this was very beneficial for staff to see this..." (SENCO, Primary)

Conclusion

Given that most of the participants in this evaluation had received very little specialist training prior to supporting children with Down's syndrome, this suite of materials produced by specialists on Down's syndrome, is a valuable resource for any setting. Staff were very clear that they had changed their practices to better support the learning needs of the children they support as a result of having access to Teach Me Too. It had also given staff the confidence to know how to communicate more effectively, and to set the right pace, according to the needs of the child. For the more experienced staff, the programme provided them with an additional set of materials that could be used alongside pre-existing provisions and for new and inexperienced staff it gave them confidence to apply this knowledge in their practice.



www.tonic.org.uk
engage@tonic.org.uk
0800 188 40 34

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