

# **Interventions to improve children's early language skills**

Keynote lecture

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## **Outline**

Language is the foundation for education and the medium of instruction. Many children, especially those from socially disadvantage backgrounds, enter school with poor oral language skills which compromise their ability to benefit from education.

I will present the results from several studies showing that interventions delivered early in a child's life can have positive effects on language and reading comprehension skills. Studies of the Nuffield Early Language Intervention programme developed by our research group show that an oral language programme delivered by teaching assistants working in schools can produce improvements in children's oral language skills with moderate to large effect sizes. The programme also produces improvements in children's reading comprehension skills.

Recent work by our group has shown how early language interventions can effectively be rolled-out at scale. I will conclude with a plea for the importance of embedding oral language enrichment work in early educational settings.