

## **Your child is eligible to participate in the next stage of Sound Start**

Your child's free speech screening assessment will be conducted by  
a speech pathologist at their preschool  
**You are welcome to attend**

Your child is eligible to participate in the next stage of the Sound Start study. This study is funded by the Australian Research Council (ARC) and conducted through Charles Sturt University, The University of Sydney, and The University of the West of England. The findings of this project will provide useful information to educators, speech pathologists, and policy makers about working with young children and their families.

This project will be conducted by the following research team, who are all speech pathologists:

**Prof. Sharynne McLeod**

Research Institute of Professional Practice, Learning and Education, Charles Sturt University

**Dr Elise Baker**

Faculty of Health Sciences, The University of Sydney

**Dr Jane McCormack**

School of Community Health, Charles Sturt University

**Dr Yvonne Wren and Prof. Sue Roulstone**

Bristol Speech and Language Therapy Research Unit, The University of the West of England, UK

**Dr Kate Crowe**

Project Officer, Charles Sturt University

**Ms Sarah Masso**

Research Officer, Charles Sturt University

### **Information about the study**

This study will investigate the effectiveness of a computer-based intervention for the speech and pre-literacy skills of 4- to 5-year-old children with speech impairment. Findings from this study will inform families, educators, speech pathologists, policy makers, and the general public about ways to improve services for children with speech impairments and their families. Information gathered from this study will be published and may be used in future research.

## ***What will happen***

### Screening Assessment (during Term 2)

Your child will receive a free speech screening assessment from our qualified speech pathologist. This assessment will take approximately 20-30 minutes to complete. You will be asked to complete a detailed questionnaire about your child's speech, language, social, medical, and behavioural history and development which may take 20-30 minutes to complete. If your child's speech difficulties are not of the type we are investigating in the Sound Start study you will receive a summary of your child's assessment results and your child will not be required to participate in the remainder of the study.

### Comprehensive Assessment (during Term 2)

If your child's speech difficulties may be of the type we are investigating in the Sound Start study, your child will receive a free comprehensive speech assessment from our qualified speech pathologist. This assessment will take approximately 60-90 minutes to complete and you will need to complete a questionnaire which will take approximately 10-15 minutes. If your child's speech difficulties are not of the type we are investigating in the Sound Start study you will receive a summary of your child's assessment results and your child will not be required to participate in the remainder of the study.

### Computer Activities to Promote Speech and Pre-literacy Skills (during Term 3)

Half of the children in this stage of the study will **trial** a computer-based intervention that may assist them to develop improved speech and pre-literacy skills. If your child is selected to participate in this intervention they will need to complete a minimum of 4 sessions per week with the computer program (for 10-15 minutes per session) with a familiar teaching assistant from their preschool. This will occur over nine consecutive weeks. You may be asked to complete homework activities using this program if your child has been absent from preschool. Half of the children **will not** use this computer-based intervention or homework activity but will continue in their preschool program as normal.

### Follow-up Assessments (during Term 3 and 4)

All children who participated in the previous stage of this research will have their speech and language skills assessed at the end of Term 3, and again at the end of Term 4. This will help us to understand whether the computer-based intervention has impacted on children's speech and pre-literacy skills. Children's caregivers will also be asked to complete a 10-15 minute questionnaire at this time.

Children will be audio and video recorded during their assessment and intervention sessions and photographs may be taken. The purpose of this is to allow researchers to look closely at children's speech production during the analysis phase. These recordings and photographs will not be accessed by anyone other than the researchers without your written consent. If you give consent, they may be shown to others for educational purposes.

## ***Dissemination of Research Findings***

The findings of this research will inform the practice of educators, speech pathologists, and policy makers, and be of interest to the general public. Research findings will always be disseminated in ways that do not identify participants (child/family/teachers/preschools). The outcomes of this project will be accessible to families and centres who have participated in this research. Research findings will be published in journals and presented at conferences, and other events. Findings may also be broadcast through media outlets when possible.

## **Ethical Considerations**

Your child's name will not be used in this research, instead number codes will be used so information about them is anonymous. No information that could identify you or your child will be released (except the photographs, audio, and video recordings when you have provided consent for this to occur). Strict confidentiality is assured. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Electing not to participate in this study will not affect you or your child's existing or future relations with Charles Sturt University, The University of Sydney, or The University of the West of England. If you decide participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and discontinue your participation at any time. Information gathered from this study will be published and may be used in future research.

**NOTE:** Charles Sturt University's Human Research Ethics Committee has approved this project. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this project, you may contact the Committee through the Executive Officer:

The Executive Officer  
Human Research Ethics Committee  
Office of Academic Governance  
Charles Sturt University  
Panorama Avenue  
Bathurst NSW 2795

Tel: (02) 6338 4628  
Email: [ethics@csu.edu.au](mailto:ethics@csu.edu.au)

Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully and you will be informed of the outcome.

## **Further Information**

If you have any further questions about this research please contact Project Officer Kate Crowe form (phone: (02) 9752 9031, email: [kcrowe@csu.edu.au](mailto:kcrowe@csu.edu.au)) or Research Officer Sarah Masso (phone: (02) 9752 9031, email: [smasso@csu.edu.au](mailto:smasso@csu.edu.au)) before signing this form.



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