

An opportunity to make a difference

Save the Children are running a Randomised Control Trial (RCT), which will independently assess the effectiveness of our award-winning parental engagement programme Families and Schools Together.

About Families and Schools Together (FAST)

FAST brings parents, children, schools and the wider community together, helping parents create opportunities for learning and development at home and making sure children get the support they need to fulfil their potential at school – and in life.



Louis Leeson/Save the Children

FAST is an after-school programme and is open to children aged 3-8 years old. It begins with eight weekly sessions which are 2.5 hours long and give parents and their children the chance to spend quality time together.

Each session comprises eight fun and interactive activities which are repeated each week. These activities help to improve life skills and confidence in families, and supportive bonds within families and between parents, the school and the wider community.

After the eight weeks, parents that graduate from FAST are supported to establish a parent group that continues to meet, cementing their parenting skills and providing long-term peer support.

If you would like to see FAST in action please see our website: www.familiesandschoolstogether.com

To take part in the trial, your school will need to:

- Recruit at least 25 families to take part in the trial.
- Provide researchers with access to these families on at least two occasions.
- If your school runs the programme, provide staff and space to run the after-school sessions, plus 2 days training in advance of the sessions starting.

FAST sees really remarkable outcomes:

- 77% of parents feel more able to support their child in his or her education.
- Children's behavioural difficulties in school reduce by 27%.
- Family relationships improve by 16%.
- Parental involvement with school increases by 33%.
- 78% of families who join FAST complete the programme.

FAST makes a lasting impression on those who take part:

A **Head Teacher** who ran FAST in her primary school said:

"FAST has been the most far reaching project we have ever undertaken. In terms of forging effective relationships and building the school community it can't be beaten."

A **child** who participated in FAST said:

"Before I started FAST with my mum she didn't sign up for after school clubs, activities or come to my assemblies. But after FAST it was like we started again, it was a new fresh start."

A **parent** who participated in FAST said:

“My son loved having quality time with me and learned so much from the FAST activities. Being a parent can be lonely but because of FAST I have made lasting friendships. It’s easier to talk to my son’s teachers now about how he is doing.”

A gold-standard research project

We are working in partnership with the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) to run a Randomised Control Trial (RCT) on our FAST programme that will independently assess the effectiveness of FAST. The EEF is an independent grant-making charity dedicated to breaking the link between family income and educational achievement, and this will be the first trial of its kind outside of the USA.

As the gold standard in academic research, the RCT will really help us understand how the programme strengthens children’s learning, and supports their social and emotional development. The trial is part of our long-term goal of making sure every child gets the best start in life.

Schools will be randomly assigned to a treatment group (which will run FAST) or a control group (which will not). **While open to children 3-8 years old, the trial will compare Year 1 children’s educational attainment and monitor changes to their behaviour.**

Across England, 160 primary schools will take part in the trial which has begun in autumn 2015 and will continue in spring 2015 and summer 2016.

This is a chance for your school to be part of a prestigious research project, contribute to understanding what works in raising pupils’ academic attainment, and really change the lives of children in your school.

<p>For more information, please contact RCT@savethechildren.org.uk</p>
