

## Introduction

~28% of all children in the UK start school without the requisite skills to thrive. Giving parents easy, actionable information for activities that can be embedded into daily routines may help to reduce this statistic and benefit children from low socioeconomic backgrounds in particular.

## Methods

-Reception pupils (aged 4-5) in the first year of formal schooling, and their parents at 109 primary schools in the North East of England (n=2,392) were randomly allocated to receive or not receive text messages over a 12 month period (Nov 2019-Nov 2020).

## Intervention

-3 text messages per week sent to parents  
-Content: tips and ideas for activities to improve language, literacy, numeracy and socio-emotional skills at home.

## Primary outcome measure:

-York Assessment of Reading Comprehension

## Secondary outcome measure:

-Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire (teacher reported).

## Results

-Expected in spring/summer 2021

## 'Tips by Text': text message reminders to enhance the home learning environment

### Planned analyses

- For each measure, outcomes will be estimated using a linear regression model including a dummy variable indicating trial arm allocation and clustered standard errors at the school level. The 'intention-to-treat' effect will be estimated.
- Control variables will include prior attainment (based on pre-test assessments), age and gender.
- Sub-analysis will be conducted on the subgroup of pupils eligible for Free School Meals - a measure of deprivation in the UK.
- An indicator of compliance will be constructed using the text message delivery rates over the course of the intervention period, and whether or not the parent opted out of receiving the messages.

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## Exemplar text messages

### Fact:



Counting is one of the first maths skills that children learn. You can help by counting items during everyday activities.

### Tip:



As you put the dishes away, count the plates one-by-one with Alice. Try again with the bowls. Can Alice count the cups herself?

### Growth:



Keep counting! You can count many things with Alice - your fingers and toes, or how many steps to the car.