Conducting RCTs in Early Years Settings: What RCTs and pilot studies tell us about participant engagement

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Background

- Who we are and what we do
- Early Years evaluations
  - Concept Cat (Efficacy)
  - Communication Friendly Settings (Efficacy)
  - Communication Friendly Home-Based Settings (Pilot)
  - Plan, Do, Review (Pilot)
- Setting types (PVI's, Maintained, School-based, Childminders)
- The aim is to have/measure impact – is that what is being measured?

Barriers

- Time
- Staff turnover
- Practitioner/child ratio
- Motivation
- Staff sickness
- Child absence
- Knowledge of research

Measures and completion

- Assessments
- Routinely collected programme data
- Attendance data (child)
- Surveys
- Interviews
- Observations

Barriers and links to data collection

- Time (surveys, attendance data, interviews)
- **Staff turnover** (surveys)
- Practitioner/child ratio (surveys and observations and interviews)
- **Motivation** (surveys and interviews)
- Staff sickness (surveys)
- Child absence (assessments and attendance data)
- **Knowledge of research** (interviews)

Solutions?

- Build relationships from the start
- Take into account the intensity of the intervention and adapt your methods
- Surveys (especially baseline) should be short
    - Monthly blogs/emails
    - Have an alternative person to cover those on sick leave
- Visit settings to put them at ease
    - Interviews can be done during setting visits
- Send a simple spreadsheet to collect attendance data (or child level data) if it isn't part of routinely collected data.
- Budget and plan for extra setting visits to collect assessment data

What next?

This isn't the full picture

Mapping the Early Years landscape for barriers and facilitators

Questions?