

Children's vocabulary: Fresh opportunities for app boosting young learners' language skills

ChatterStars, designed to improve vocabulary among children, has recently received an investment from business accelerator, TwinklHive.

Good vocabulary is crucial to everyone's development. It helps us to express our opinions, understand complex subjects, and improve our reading skills. It is a fundamental part of communicating effectively, and it opens the door to a wide selection of opportunities. For children in particular, developing their vocabulary skills is extremely important for them to progress in education. However, with less book reading and more screen-use, are they missing out?

Recent school closures caused by the pandemic have also led many young learners to fall behind on their vocabulary. The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) report states that just under half of Year 1 pupils have such a limited understanding of words that it affects their learning*. This is something that has strong potential to cause problems in later life. The result of this is seen through the Oxford Language Report's discovery that five-year-old children with poor vocabulary are four times more likely to struggle with reading and communication in adulthood**.

The mobile app, ChatterStars, has the intention of solving this issue. Through engaging and fun activities, children are able to learn new words, consider nuance & synonyms, and put them into practise. The app is designed to be used both in school and home-based learning. Using the app is also a way for educators to track their learners' progress. As Twinkl specialises in creating digital learning materials, their resources will be great support for ChatterStars when developing and expanding the app.

Chatterstars.co.uk was created in 2018 by Helen Prince and Matt Salter. Helen has worked for over 20 years in education as an English teacher, Ofsted inspector and advisor to academy chains. Matt is a tech entrepreneur with 20 years' experience in the digital industry.

Helen said, "We are delighted the stars have aligned and brought Twinkl and ChatterStars together. Resources like our app are crucial to help children build their vocabulary in the digital age, at a time when nearly 70% of primary teachers believe the word-gap is increasing. Twinkl's insight and depth of knowledge in this sector will be invaluable for us in these early days and beyond."

Matt added, "As our app is at the start of its journey in the EdTech sector, it is wonderful to be working closely with a leader in the field. Twinkl's global reach will help more children become aware of our app, where they can build their vocabulary while on their screens."

TwinklHive was created by Sheffield educational publisher [Twinkl](#) at the end of 2019, with the aim of helping mission-led start-ups to scale and disrupt the technology sector. Since it began, TwinklHive has invested in over 20 businesses.

David Angrave, Chief Operating Officer at Twinkl and Investment Director of TwinklHive, said "We were delighted to offer an investment opportunity to ChatterStars, and to support such a fantastic learning experience for children. Twinkl has a long history of helping educate learners through technology, and it's wonderful to work with a business with such a similar mission to our own. I'm looking forward to supporting Helen and Matt as they continue their journey to improve children's vocabulary."

*<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED612885.pdf>

**<https://educationblog.oup.com/primary/why-closing-the-word-gap-matters-the-oxford-language-report>

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