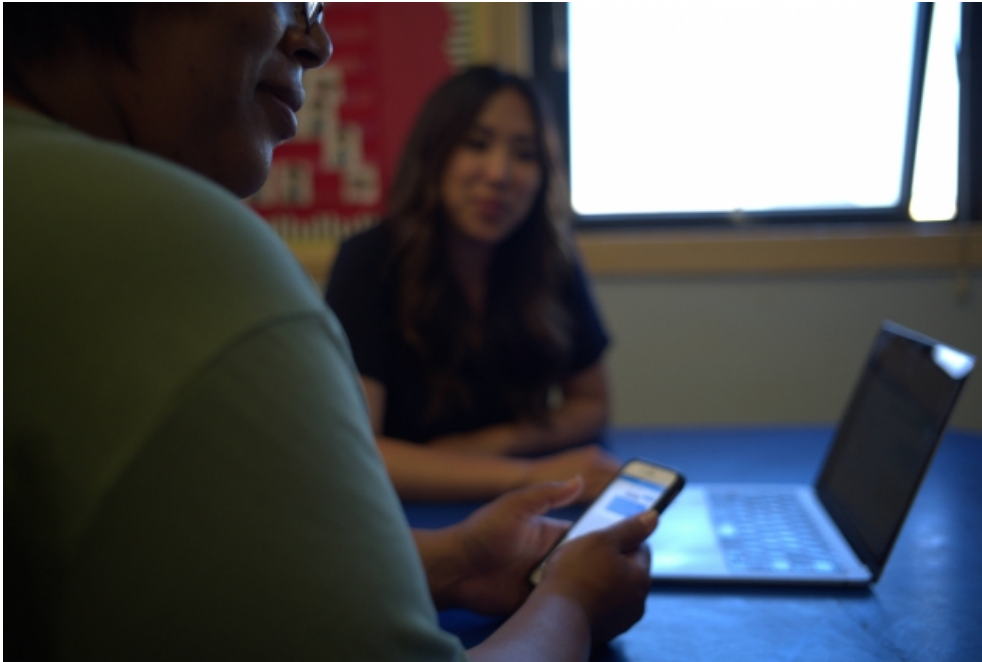


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ON CAMPUS AND AROUND THE WORLD



The TalkingPoints multilingual family engagement platform allows educators to communicate directly with English and non-English speaking parents through two-way messaging. J-PAL North America, TalkingPoints, and the BIP Lab are partnering to rigorously evaluate whether the innovative intervention increases parental engagement and children's executive function.

Photo: TalkingPoints

New research partnership evaluates innovation in family engagement

Randomized evaluation of the TalkingPoints multilingual family engagement platform will assess the intervention's impact on student achievement.

J-PAL North America
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This fall, J-PAL North America partnered with TalkingPoints, an education technology non-profit, and the Behavioral Insights and Parenting Lab (BIP Lab) at the University of Chicago, to evaluate the TalkingPoints multilingual family engagement platform. The platform will be assessed through a year-long randomized evaluation that will be conducted in more than 50 third-grade classrooms across the country. This evaluation will produce insights on whether the TalkingPoints platform increases parental engagement, and if so, whether there is a resulting increase in children's executive function — a precursor to improved academic outcomes across all education levels such as literacy, numeracy, and high school graduation rates.

Beginning in 2015, local and federal law began requiring schools to provide programming intended to promote parental engagement in their children's education. TalkingPoints was founded that year to drive student success — especially in underserved, diverse communities — by using accessible technology to unlock the potential of families to support their children's education. TalkingPoints developed a multilingual family engagement platform that allows educators to communicate directly with English and non-English speaking parents. Currently, it supports two-way messaging in more than 100 languages and provides tips for communicating with teachers and other information about their children's education.

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“We are excited for this opportunity to rigorously test our family engagement platform to understand its true impact on parental engagement and, ultimately, student achievement,” says Heejae Lim, founder and CEO of TalkingPoints.

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“We also hope that this evaluation can raise awareness of the value that rigorous evaluations like this can contribute to the field of using technology in education and leveraging parents and families as key partners to schools,” says Nancy Bromberger, vice president of partnerships at TalkingPoints.



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The evaluation will be led by the BIP Lab at the University of Chicago, which conducts rigorous research on the science of parental decision-making. The BIP Lab specializes in research to identify light-touch behavioral interventions for parents that work to change child outcomes, particularly for disadvantaged children.

“This research partnership highlights the BIP Lab and TalkingPoints’ mutual interest in identifying effective behavioral tools and our shared focus on low cost, accessible interventions,” says Professor Ariel Kalil, BIP Lab co-founder.

“Working to improve the quality and quantity of parent engagement to positively affect child outcomes is central to the mission of both of our organizations,” says Susan Mayer, BIP Lab co-founder. “We are excited to be launching this rigorous evaluation to contribute to the evidence base.”

The evaluation is funded through the J-PAL North America Education, Technology, and Opportunity Initiative, which supports education leaders in using randomized evaluations to generate evidence on how and to what extent uses of technology and innovation work to improve student learning.

“We are thrilled to be catalyzing this rigorous evaluation of a promising education technology platform,” says Kim Dadisman, J-PAL North America Education, Technology and Opportunity Initiative manager. “We are inspired by committed researchers and implementing partners like the BIP Lab and TalkingPoints that we connect to identify policy-relevant research questions and translate research into action.”

The Education, Technology and Opportunity Initiative, supported by Arnold Ventures and the Overdeck Family Foundation, has funded seven evaluations to date on educational technology programs, ranging from computer-assisted learning to technology-enabled behavioral interventions. The TalkingPoints evaluation will be piloted in spring 2020, followed by full implementation beginning in fall 2020. J-PAL North America, TalkingPoints, and the BIP Lab are committed to sharing study results and identifying relevant policy lessons to inform the broader field of family engagement.

Topics: Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL)

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