



Story Choices Project: SETTING INFORMATION SHEET

What is this project about?

All Early Years settings know about the value of storybooks to their day-to-day practice, and most already use some of the principles of **interactive book reading**. This project will investigate how much **planning** these storybook activities makes a difference to outcomes.

We want to compare **two different approaches** to planning interactive storybook reading:

a) **Responsive or Child-led Approach:** Educators ask children to select the book for the daily group reading session or actively involve them in the book selection process. While reading, the questions and discussion points occur spontaneously.

b) **Planned Storybook and Discussion Points Approach:** Educators not only select the storybook ahead of time, but they also plan the specific discussion points they will use while engaging children in conversations about the story.

We will randomly allocate settings to deliver one of the approaches and ask you to stick to that approach for your main storybook sessions for fifteen weeks. Other aspects of your storybook reading routine can remain the same (for example, whether you read in key worker groups or with the whole class).

Why should I take part?

We are interested in looking at how powerful relatively small changes in everyday practice can be, with a focus on changes that individual educators can make themselves. This means that:

- You will be taking part in research with immediate, practical relevance for others in your position. This will help us understand how storybook reading practices in preschool influence children's progress.
- We won't be comparing a 'control' and 'intervention' – we will be comparing two approaches which we think will both have positive effects for the children. We believe all children will benefit in this project.
- You will not be required to attend training or have to take time away from your day-to-day teaching.
- This project can work flexibly with a variety of weekly routines in different contexts. As long as you have regular group storybook reading sessions, you can do this project.
- You will be asked to make relatively small changes to your everyday practice, keeping the other elements of your work the same.
- This project will give you a chance to reflect on the best ways to implement storybook reading. We will ask about other aspects of your storybook reading routine, but we don't want you to change them.
- At the end of the project, your setting will receive an Amazon voucher of £200 as a thank you for your support.



What will we have to do?

We will ask settings to commit to doing the following:

- Pass on information sheets to parents/carers
- Provide researchers with background demographic data on the children (date of birth, whether they have English as an additional language, eligibility for early years pupil premium, any special educational needs and disabilities, normal hours of attendance).
- Allow researchers to work with the children individually to assess their vocabulary level before the intervention and their language, vocabulary and interest in books after the intervention. This will take around 15 minutes per child in November 2024 and 30 minutes per child in May 2025.
- Ask the staff in their setting to complete the educator survey prior to the intervention – this takes around 20 minutes and asks about their background experience, and asks them to rate two videos showing examples of oral language teaching
- Follow the guidelines for storybook reading according to the condition you have been allocated to.
- Record which book was read and which children attended for each session on a monitoring form.
- Carry out storybook reading sessions according to the guidelines at least three times a week for fifteen weeks.
- Ask the staff in their setting to complete the feedback survey after the intervention to give their views of the guidance and the approach
- Consider taking part as a 'case study setting'. We will ask eight settings to provide more detailed information on how the approaches were implemented in their classes. This would involve researchers visiting the setting, observing some storybook reading sessions, and interviewing the staff members about their experiences.

Which schools and early years settings can take part?

We are interested in schools and early years settings that cater for children in the year before they start reception (ages 3 to 4). We are keen to recruit settings from the private, voluntary and independent (PVI) sector as well as state-maintained settings. We want to work in settings that have at least **8 children** attending at least 3 days per week.

We are recruiting in the following local authority areas:

West Midlands Local Authorities (14): Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Herefordshire, Sandwell, Shropshire, Solihull, Staffordshire, Stoke-on-Trent, Telford & Wrekin, Walsall, Warwickshire, Wolverhampton, Worcestershire

East Midlands Local Authorities (10): Derby, Derbyshire, Lincolnshire, Leicester, Leicestershire, North Northamptonshire, Nottingham City, Nottinghamshire, Rutland, West Northamptonshire,

Greater Manchester Local Authorities (10): Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford, Wigan

In general, we will not work with settings who are already taking part in research trials relating to literacy or language with this age group. If you are taking part in another research trial but would also like to take part in this project, please contact us to discuss it.



When will the trial take place?

Key Dates:

Date	Activity	Time required
October 2024	Settings will send an information sheet to parents	None
October	Individual educators complete an online survey about their background and knowledge of how to support language	20 minutes
November 2024	Settings provide background information about individual children in their setting	1 hour
November 2024	Assessment of vocabulary of individual children, administered by a researcher	We will visit the setting for one or two days, working individually with children for 15 minutes each
December 2024	We will inform settings which approach they should follow and provide guidance on the approach	None
January 2025-April 2025	Settings carry out the storybook reading approach 3 times a week for 15 weeks. Monitoring sheet to be completed after each session	Approx. 20 minutes storybook reading and 5 minutes completing the form per session
May 2025	Individual vocabulary, language and attitudes to books testing, administered by a researcher	We will visit the setting for two or three days, working individually with children for two sessions of 15 minutes each
June 2025	Individual educators complete an online survey about their views of the approach	15 minutes
June 2025	Some settings agree to take part in interviews about how the approach worked in their setting	2 hours

Our setting is interested! What is the next step?

Please complete our Expression of Interest form by going to

<https://app.onlinesurveys.jisc.ac.uk/s/coventry/story-choices-expression-of-interest-1>

Alternatively, please contact us using the following details:

Lead Investigator: Professor Julia Carroll

Trial Co-ordinator: Tanvir Ahmed

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