

Let's Talk Reading visits early years settings across Ipswich, each term, to share Storytime sessions with pre-school children, staff and parents/carers. The purpose of **Storytime** is to provide a focus on reading, communication and language for children, parents and staff; sessions are FREE.

By engaging the children in an animated reading session, we encourage their interest in physical books and the power of stories. Parents and staff gain from our guidance about the importance of reading with young children, the approaches we use to engage them and the chance to discover new books to share (or rediscover familiar books).

The sessions have evolved since our first visit to a nursery in June 2017. We have recruited 8 volunteers to help us expand the number of Storytime sessions offered. The volunteers have a wealth of experience as parents, grandparents, social workers, teachers, teaching assistants but the most important aspect they all share is a **love** of books and sharing that enjoyment with the next generation.

Let's Talk Reading **Storytimes have reached over 2,200 children**, parents and staff since starting in 2017 with 2 storytellers.

The Storytime sessions now follow a familiar format with variations depending on the storyteller:



First, we **tell a story** or two (or three) with lots of interaction, animation and props to bring the story to life and encourage children to get involved.

An opportunity to see different ways of reading and sharing books through use of repeated language and rhyme.



There may be a **song time** to sing some favourite rhymes.

Followed by a chance for children and parents to share stories from a **box of books** we bring, from the local library local, to the setting. The book selection includes old favourites, paperbacks, board books, new books, lift the flap books and unusual books. This way we can introduce children, staff and parents to new books, different ways of sharing books and borrowing books for free from their local library. We also raise awareness of the free activities that libraries provide such as the Wordplay sessions.



The **impact** of our Storytimes:

- Buttons and Bows started a lending library for children and parents to share books at home.
- Pear Tree Kindergarten bought a copy of Sneezy Bear, Aaaatishooo!
- Early Years @ Whitehouse looked to engage parents by shrinking our Storytime flyer to lunchbox size so that all parents could receive the invite.
- Introduced the book that gave staff an insight into working with an autistic child.
- Engaging children who don't usually join in with the stories and a special needs child signing along.
- Settings re-establishing links with their local library including visits.

Let's Talk Reading and EY staff are available to talk through any questions parents might have about reading with their children and language

What people say about us... The session was great. Fantastic interaction from you towards the children and encouragement for the children to join in. The children loved the different books. (Jan. 2020)

Why Read Aloud to Young Children?

- **Enjoyment** – children who loves books become readers for life.
- **Vocabulary** – extends vocabulary, develops letter and sound knowledge, and introduces new words and ideas.
- **Language** – children need good language skills to be able to learn to read, to do well in school and make friends. Children's language is the key to their social mobility outcomes.
- **Modelling Language** – models being a reader and talk about books.
- **Empowerment** – enjoying reading gives children independence to discover what interests them.
- **Empathy** – stories, songs and rhymes spark emotions and reading aloud gives children words to express their emotions.
- **Imagination** – wide reading experiences stimulate children's imagination.
- **Prediction** – talking about the book and asking what happens.
- **Concentration and listening skills**
- **Supports parental engagement** – inviting parents to Storytimes giving them the opportunity to explore new books, talk about books and see different ways of reading books.

Reading to young children has long been recognised as an important precursor to language and literacy development. Highberger and Brooks 1973, Review Bus et al. 2007

A national survey found that only 8% of parents read to their infants from birth. YouGov 2017

When you make a reader, you give them the world.
Amanda Spielman, Ofsted 2018

Reading and being read to from a young age sets some pupils up for a successful school career before they have ever entered the building. A Society of Readers, Demos/Reading Agency 2018

Storytime Sessions in Numbers

Summer 2017	Year 2017/18	Autumn 2018/19	Spring 2018/19	Summer 2018/19	Autumn 2019/20	Spring 2019/20
4 Storytimes	21 Storytimes	5 Storytimes	14 Storytimes	17 Storytimes	27 Storytimes	30 Storytimes
2 volunteers	2 volunteers	4 volunteers	5 volunteers	7 volunteers	7 volunteers	8 volunteers
SE Ipswich	Plus SW & NW Ipswich	Plus Central Ipswich	SE, SW, NW, C Ipswich	SE, SW, NW, C Ipswich	SE, SW, NW, C Ipswich	Plus NE Ipswich
40 + Children, staff and parents	500 + Children, staff and parents	70 + Children, staff and parents	200 + Children, staff and parents	250 + Children, staff and parents	550 + Children, staff and parents	670 + Children, staff and parents

What people say about us...

Storytime Session at Noah's Ark in February 2020 (parent feedback)

'Very engaging story telling. Good props. Good range of books to read with our children. A leaflet listing the local libraries and recommended 'reads' may work well. Stating the benefit of reading with children.'

'The story time session was great. The children enjoyed it and joined in and laughed. The books were great and the story tellers were very enthusiastic & engaging.'

'We use the Ipswich Library occasionally but will get down and borrow some more books. Very inspiring.'

FOCUS SETTING
Nature Den's Reading Journey

Paragraph to focus on Nature Den – CP writing

Quote from research about importance of reading stories to young children