

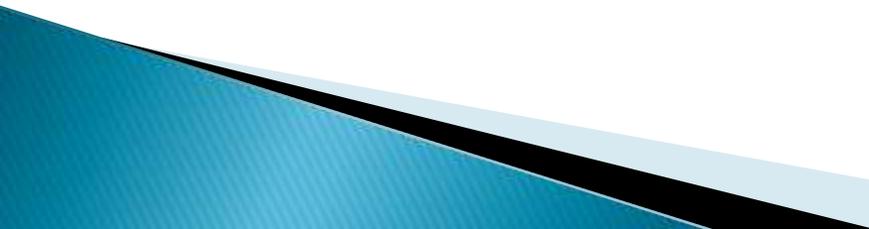
“No-one would sleep if we didn't have books”; Understanding the barriers and motivators to shared reading in families”



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# Shared Reading in families

We know that it is beneficial for young children to be read to:

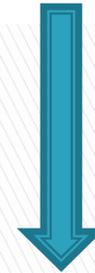
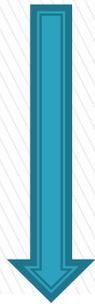
- ▶ Children who read regularly before they enter school are more likely to learn language faster, enter school with a larger vocabulary, and become more successful readers at school (Bus et al., 1995; Mol et al., 2008)
  - ▶ Shared reading facilitates more complex talk than during caretaking or play (Snow, 1994)
  - ▶ It provides an opportunity for physical proximity and social interaction (Hardman and Jones, 1999).
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# Reading interventions

- ▶ Some focus on quality of reading (Sim et al., 2014; Mol, Bus & de Jong, 2009)
  - ▶ Some just try to encourage regular reading: eg Booktrust in partnership with Jo Frost ('Supernanny') 'Bath, Book, Bed', which encourages parents to read with their young children as part of a bedtime routine
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# The family in the intervention

Reading Intervention



Reading Intervention

# This study: Barriers to shared reading in homes

- ▶ To explore shared reading practices and the barriers to these
- ▶ To investigate how shared reading fits, or not, within the context of every day family life
- ▶ To carry out this study within a socially and culturally mixed sample.



# Research design

## Whole project

- ▶ 8 studies
- ▶ Multi-disciplinary: psychology, linguistics, education, English and speech and language therapy
- ▶ How does shared reading promote child language development?

## This study

- ▶ Interviews with 29 families with pre-school children (age 3–4)
- ▶ Low-income areas in Sheffield
- ▶ 9 families from Liverpool
- ▶ Recruitment through nurseries and toddler groups
- ▶ Study will be used to inform The Reader Organisation's intervention programmes, such as 'Get Into Reading'

# Interview conduct

- ▶ At home
  - ▶ Picture of family life – general questions, e.g. ‘what do you like doing together when you’re home’, ‘talk me through a typical day’
  - ▶ Understanding home reading practices
  - ▶ How does reading feature (or not) in everyday life?
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# Motivators and Barriers – overview

1. Role of enjoyment and feedback
  2. Link with parents' own relationship with reading
  3. Reading as an everyday family practice
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# Parental enjoyment

- Important for parents to enjoy shared reading

It was like a comfort thing for me, I enjoyed it...it was nice to know...I've got a little baby of my own, and I'm reading to her

I enjoy reading for her...I'm not feeling forced to read

I'm not just reading...I talk more about the pictures...because it makes it more interesting for me than just repeatedly reading them again and again

If I'm not gonna enjoy it, if I'm not giving my 100%...she's not gonna enjoy it with me, so what's the point...she would probably notice...you have to be into it

# Parents benefit from feedback

- Feedback gives evidence of child's enjoyment (or not)
  - links to being child-led

Like now I'm happy to get her books because I can see that there's something going on (laughs), like on her face, she gets it, she enjoys it, but I'm not one of those to just do it and just think 'hopefully it's going in'

'But when...he does listen and then see his facial expression that he's realised, he's understanding it kind of thing'

# 'Negative' feedback

- Impact on shared reading activities

I remember for quite a while thinking 'she's just not interested'...until she were maybe like going on for two...she just didn't really have that interest in books...wouldn't sit still to listen, and didn't seem to be interested in it

Before she don't like reading...last year...she cut it! [the book]

He'll just start messing about with the book and you can tell he's not interested

I bring the book, she likes this [pushes away]...she didn't want it...After two years, she was a little bit better

She just gets bored...Because she's not involved...so I'm trying to get her involved to...let's find, like, the ball or the dog

# Reading with babies

- Babies give different forms of feedback

I just didn't bother [reading to him as a baby], I don't know, there's no point, they don't understand do they when they're babies

About one and a half...he didn't understand nothing then, but we used to still go ahead with him and show him, 'that's ball, that's this'

At the beginning you think 'she's way too young...she doesn't get this'

Even if she doesn't realise she's getting anything out of it she will be, just from hearing the language

I didn't think they probably would be, you know, really interested at that age

# Relationship between parental reading (as a child) and shared reading with own child

Did read and does read to child

18

Did read and does not read to child

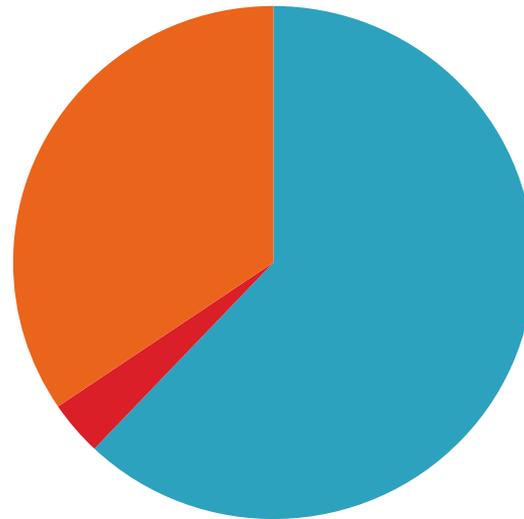
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Did NOT read and DOES read to child

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Did NOT read and does not read to child

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■ Did read and DOES read to child

■ Did read and DOES NOT read to child

■ Did NOT read and DOES read to child

# Did Not Read as a Child but Does Read with own Child



# Nathalie

Nathalie is a 28 year old single mother. She lives with her two sons aged 3 and 8. Nathalie is currently at home full time but plans to return to her job as a classroom assistant when her youngest starts school.



# Nathalie

## Own reading as a child

*“I never read when I was younger. Ever. I don't think it interested me”*

*“I've got certain memories in English where I couldn't read certain words and I used to have to ask the teacher and obviously you don't wanna have to ask the teacher in front of kids”*

## Own reading now

*“No. I'm not a reader really. I read autobiographies but I don't really sit and read. I wouldn't go out and purposely buy a book”*

# Nathalie

## Reading relationship with child/ren

*“It's our little bonding time really, that time together. It goes off books as well, just because we've got books in our hand, we talk about the rest of the day, we get a story in, but then that's our time, Rory will tell me everything that he's done”*

*“I enjoy reading more now with the kids because I'm excited to do different things with them, thinking of things I could do with the book...And I'm learning about new authors as well, like it wasn't something that I was that interested in so it's nice now I look at the stories and I'm looking for more books that that author's wrote that I think he might enjoy. I never used to do that, just got books that looked good on a cover”*

*‘I feel okay. I've picked it up more as I've gone along. I'm more confident now with the kids than I was when I was younger. I think I'm good at reading now, I hope so.’*



# Kylie

Kylie (aged 31–35) lived in a low-income area in Liverpool with her son Bradley, who was aged 3 years and 10 months, her husband, a self-employed builder, and 11 year old daughter. Kylie had recently begun part-time work at a hairdressers and had no formal educational qualifications.

# Kylie

## Own reading as a child

*“Mum never really sat and read with us”*

*“I can remember reading out in class and I wasn't confident around them and I'm still not, don't enjoy reading, not out loud, kids books are fine”*

## Own reading now

*“You know when people go on holiday and get into a book? I just can't get into one. I think it's from not reading when I was younger”*

# Kylie

## Reading relationship with child/ren

*“It's so easy to read with him”*

*“I love reading with him, I do. Love doing things like that. Reading”*

*“I think it's one of the easiest things you can do, because you can sit and read for half an hour or five minutes, it's just something that you can fit in. There's no cleaning up afterwards. just put the book back and get on. You can do it while the tea is getting cooked, things like that”.*

*“We do just because his books are out and he'll just go and get them. When they want to read, you can't say no”*

# Hadra

Hadra is in her early 30s and lives with her husband and two children – a son in high school and a daughter aged 3 years 6 months. They live in a two bedroom house in a low-income neighbourhood to the east of the city centre. Hadra and her children are Asian British. Neither Hadra nor her husband have formal educational qualifications. They married when Hadra was 16.



# Hadra

## Own reading as a child

*“I used to struggle a lot in school with reading”*

*“[Reading]Not with my parents, no, that's not something we did”*

Started reading as a teenager: *“I've been really into books since my first Forbidding Game”*

## Own reading now

*“out of control”*

*“I had a period where I had to stop reading... because sometimes, I don't know when to stop. So, if there's housework that needs doing...you know, I'm not sleeping and...I've got work in the morning, so I have to just say stop!”*

# Hadra

## Reading relationship with child/ren

*“She loves books, she absolutely loves books, and the books tend to be on what she's into most at the time”*

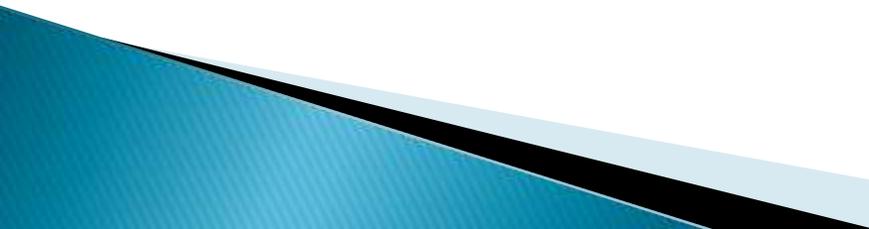
*“Her bedtime story happens regardless of anything”*

*“Yeah, so it's just trying to sort of build it into her that, sort of reading, and stuff, being part of her day, rather than her actually learning how to read”*

Child reads a lot with her father who is NOT a reader himself:

*“So he gets her changed and, erm, reads her her book, and then just tells her some stories and asks her about her day. So they talk, I wouldn't say rubbish (laughs), they talk randomly, and then he'll tell her a story, and I take her up to bed”*

# Summary – parents’ relationship with reading

- ▶ Adults who report that they are not readers/ do not like reading/ had poor experiences of reading at school, can, and do go on to have enjoyable reading relationship with their children.
  - ▶ The experience of reading to a child is different to own reading
  - ▶ Reading to a child is not necessarily about ‘reading’
  - ▶ For many families, reading is embedded in every day family life/ family practices
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# Reading as a family practice

Nathalie: *“It's our little bonding time really, that time together. It goes off books as well, just because we've got books in our hand, we talk about the rest of the day”*

Kylie: *“I think it's one of the easiest things you can do.... You can do it while the tea is getting cooked, things like that”.*

Hadra: *it's just trying to sort of build it into her that, sort of reading, and stuff, being part of her day, rather than her actually learning how to read”*

# Reading as family practice –cont

## Reading facilitated important family routines

*‘We only incorporated it into a routine so she would know bath, book and bed, for her to identify that it's bedtime’*

*‘I don't think anyone would sleep if we don't have books’*

## It sends a message of ‘being family’

*‘Most of the time, it's my boyfriend, he's much better and she laughs more when he does it, he's got better voices. She would like 10 books and is ‘right let's go’...She's excited, she loves it. I think as well, her Dad doesn't do anything like that...so she looks at Jamie as [pauses]... I don't wanna say ‘as Dad’ but he looks at her as his own daughter’*

# Conclusion – implications for intervention

- ▶ Rather than intervention encouraging families to ‘do’ shared reading, we need to firstly understand how shared reading is already a part of ‘doing’ family.
- ▶ Recognise that for many families shared reading is a very different experience to parents own reading
- ▶ There is a need to encourage parents to
  - find ways of enjoying shared reading
  - valuing shared reading as an enjoyable activity
  - carry on/ begin reading in ways that suit them and their child