

**'Investigating participant responses to
Preschool Storytimes'**

by

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Investigating participant responses to Preschool Storytimes

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Abstract

Research Problem: Preschool Storytime statistics for the past few years show consistently high numbers of attendance, and suggest that this is a Wellington City Libraries service greatly valued by its users. However, evidence into the benefits of storytime programs, particularly in a New Zealand context, is minimal. The purpose of this study was to investigate how parents, caregivers and children involved in the Preschool Storytime program respond to sessions in both home and library settings.

Methodology: Aiming for a sample size of 50 participants, the researcher collected both quantitative and qualitative data through the employment of anonymous questionnaires, as well as face-to-face interviews. Participation in the study was voluntary and interview participants were required to sign an informed consent form.

Results: Through thematic analysis, four main themes were identified in the data:

- How do children participate in and respond to Preschool Storytime sessions?
- What do children learn as a result of involvement in Preschool Storytimes?
- Library as place
- Parental perspectives of Preschool Storytimes

The findings showed that children's participation in sessions increased over time and contributed to the development of cognitive and social skills, however they did not behave differently when reading at home. The library was viewed as an important place for families, and parents expressed appreciation for the program, although some had concerns about the quality of storytelling. Due to poor response, quantitative results were displayed as counts rather than frequencies.

Implications: Poor response rates prevent the researcher from making any clear judgements as to how the overall population responded to the Preschool Storytime

program. Suggestions made by parents in relation to presenting could guide future improvements in this area.

Descriptors: Preschool Storytime, early literacy, public library, programs for children, storytelling, school readiness.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Rationale

The significance of literacy learning in the early years has long been recognized by professionals in both the library and education sectors (McKechnie, 2006; Watson & Wildy, 2014). It is well known that “the period from birth to age five is a time when important knowledge and abilities are developing that will serve as the foundation for children’s reading ability” (McCardle, Cooper, Houle, Karp & Paul-Brown, 2001, p. 250). This notion is also strongly supported in the field of neuroscience, in which the first five years of a child’s life are considered the “most critical” (Elliot, 1999, cited by Rushton, Juola-Rushton & Larkin, 2010, p. 353) in terms of brain development. Furthermore, research suggests that failure to engage children in literacy learning during the crucial early years could be detrimental to children’s future success in learning to read (Clay, 1977, cited by Irwin, Moore, Tornatore & Fowler, 2012; Prendergast, 2011).

As a result of widespread knowledge about literacy learning in early childhood, public libraries around the globe have been providing services for young children that support and foster early learning, especially skills relating to literacy and language acquisition, successfully for many years. Research of these programs indicate that libraries have the potential to provide meaningful educational experiences for young children, and may extend beyond literacy learning to a range of learning areas, such as social competence for example (Graham & Gagnon, 2013; Peterson, Jang, Jupiter & Dunlop, 2012). Research findings also showed that the positive influences of library programs for children may contribute to adult learning, with parent/caregiver attitudes towards and understandings of early literacy having increased after attending library led literacy experiences (Stewart, Bailey-White, Shaw, Compton & Ghoting, 2014). Storytime sessions for preschoolers are a particularly popular concept and have been traditionally offered in libraries to “introduce a love of reading and a foundation of early literacy skills” (McKend, 2010, p. 3) through sessions which emphasise learning through fun, interactive experiences (MacLean, 2008).

1.2 Problem Statement

The Wellington City Libraries Preschool Storytime program, which has been running for a number of decades on a weekly basis, has attracted a large group of dedicated attendees who frequent sessions across the Wellington region with their young children each week¹. While these numbers indicate that parents and caregivers consider Preschool Storytime sessions to provide positive educational experiences, the influence of the service on the literacy behaviours of participants remains largely unknown. This study endeavours to investigate how participants respond to Preschool Storytimes in both library and home settings in order to assess how the program fosters early literacy learning and teaching, as well as feelings towards the public library.

1.3 Significance

Research in this area has the potential to provide valuable insight into the overall benefits of taking part in the Preschool Storytime Program for both children and parents/caregivers, and findings may help to shape the development of future services for children in this age group.

2. Research Objectives and Questions

The purpose of this investigation was to evaluate how participants in the Wellington City Libraries Preschool Storytime program respond to sessions. The study focused predominantly on the literacy-related behaviours of participants following ongoing participation in the service, shedding light onto the value of Preschool Storytimes as an educational tool for promoting the development of literacy related skills. The study also touched on participant attitudes towards using the library, and whether these attitudes had changed as a consequence of attending Preschool Storytime. Data was collected from the perspective of parents and caregivers and reported on the responses of both children and adults involved in the service.

¹ As reflected in Wellington City Libraries Preschool Storytime statistics

2.1 Research Questions

- Do parents notice a difference in how children respond to story reading at home after attending Preschool Storytime sessions?
- What changes do parents/caregivers observe, if any, in the ways in which children participated in sessions over time?
- Do parents/caregivers think children's attitudes towards using the library change after attending sessions?
- In what ways do parent/caregiver practices change in regards to literacy engagement at home following participation in the program?
- How do parents/caregivers feel about their role in and ability to support early literacy learning after attending the program?

3. Literature Review

3.1 Early Literacy

In order to begin exploring trends in research of children's library services, it is first necessary to define early literacy and the role it plays in children's later reading success. The term 'early literacy' has been commonly used in literature to describe a combination of key skills required for a child to learn how to read. Otherwise referred to as pre-literacy, emergent literacy or reading readiness (McKend, 2010), early literacy skills are widely understood to have significant impact on whether or not a child will achieve at reading, and have consequently become an important factor in the planning and implementation of services in a variety of educational settings. Library programs for preschoolers have been particularly receptive to this information, with promotion of these skills incorporated into services for children.

The influence of early literacy skills on reading success have been particularly publicised in the United States, as well as Canada, through the Every Child Ready to Read (ECRR) movement. Developed in 2001 and 2002 by the Public Library Association (PLA) in partnership with the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC) in response to a report by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) outlining how young children learn and the importance of early experiences, a research based curriculum built on six key pre-reading skills was

born (Ash & Meyers, 2009). This project identified print motivation, print awareness, letter/alphabet knowledge, vocabulary, narrative skills and phonological awareness as the skills required for learning to read, and created training and tool kits aimed at supporting parents and caregivers to take an active role in children's early literacy learning. More recently, ECRR second edition was introduced following evaluation of the first edition, in which users indicated a need for simplified terminology (Celano & Neuman, n.d.). The revised practices - which include talking, singing, reading, writing and playing - continue to foster development of the original key skills. American and Canadian public libraries were established as allies in the ECRR campaign at an early stage and have since used these skills to shape the development of services for preschoolers. While New Zealand public libraries do not use the same prescribed approaches to program planning, the widespread success of ECRR has influenced practices internationally.

3.2 The Role of Libraries in Literacy Education

It is widely understood that exposure to books and reading material from a young age can positively influence the development of children's early literacy skills (Campbell, 2001; Ornstein, 1998; Celano & Neuman, 2001). Reading with young children to nurture a love of reading, such as before bedtime, has been a significant routine in many households for years, and older children who read a lot tend to be more competent at reading compared with peers (Krashen & Shin, 2004). Krashen and Shin (2004) identified access as a major contributing factor in children's reading success. They found that the biggest difference in children's reading abilities, despite the socio-economic background children were from, was what happened over the summer holiday period. High achievers read more because they had greater access to material, while low-income families relied more heavily on libraries as the only source of books during this time. These findings provide a very clear indication of the importance of libraries in literacy education, and suggest that the services libraries provide can have great influences on the learning of children and families who use them.

The notion that libraries play an active role in promoting the development of children's early literacy skills has been generally agreed upon and appearing in

literature since the beginning of last century. As far back as the 1920s, libraries were being recognised as partners in education through providing access to books outside of school (Powell, 1927). By the nineties, academics had a much deeper understanding of the potential impact of libraries onto the literacy skills of users, and Zapata (1994) advocated libraries as “institutional allies” (p. 126) in the campaign towards preventing and reducing illiteracy. Interest in this area continued to grow throughout the nineties and 2000s, and mounting research demonstrated the importance of library services in literacy education time and time again (Ash & Meyers, 2009; McKend, 2010; Krashen & Shin, 2004; Michaelson Schmidt, 2015). It was around this time that Dr. Neuman and Dr. Celano, both university professors, emerged in the field. Their evaluation report ‘The role of public libraries in children’s literacy development’, published in 2001, presented a comprehensive review of existing literature and thorough research using a range of techniques to further strengthen the perceived value of library programs. The report stated “as this evaluation suggests, public libraries have long fostered literacy skills in our nation’s children” (Celano & Neuman, 2001, p. 47) and solidified the pair as distinguished academics in the field. Today, Preschool Storytimes and other services for young children are a major part of most libraries missions (Lance & Marks, 2008).

3.3 Research Design of Previous Studies

Research approaches and methods in the literature often differ significantly between studies due to variances in scope, sample size and research design. Furthermore, the questions asked and the objectives behind each study vary considerably, making it a challenge to compare studies and reach solid conclusions about particular aspects of library services and the benefits they provide. Many studies have placed emphasis on changes in children’s early literacy skills, and how much library services contribute to this skill increase. The role of preschool programs aimed at building parent skills and knowledge to support children’s early literacy learning in home environments has also attracted the attention of academics in recent years, as has assessing delivery techniques in order to identify best practices, particularly in relation to ECRR. It is also worth noting that much of the current literature has been produced in North America and Canada, so findings may not directly correlate to similar services offered within the New Zealand library sector. While this diversity is

valuable in that it provides examples from a wide range of possible approaches, it also means that further research is required throughout the field in order for the literature to be more reliable. Qualitative research methods seemed to be most prevalent, possibly because they provided researchers with greater detail overall, and in-depth information about individual participants, but the specific implementation strategies ranged.

3.3.1 Population and Sample

Populations varied markedly between the studies in the literature. While some researchers concentrated data collection to just two locations (McKechnie, 2006; McKenzie & Stooke, 2007), others reached out to a much higher number of libraries to participate, in some instances collecting data representative of 400 different branches (McKend, 2010). Within these populations, samples also ranged dramatically, dependent on the number of participants who chose to take part. Existing studies have tended to focus on one of three main research groups participating in library services for children. These included librarians involved in delivering the programs, parents and caregivers of children attending storytime sessions, as well as the children taking part. Multiple perspectives were sought in numerous studies to provide more comprehensive information. Participation was voluntary in all of the studies reviewed, with researchers relying on data collected for the sole purpose of their study in most cases, as opposed to examining existing library statistics, which were only utilised by Celano and Neuman (2006).

3.3.2 Surveys

Surveying was a particularly popular research method which was commonly used throughout the literature to learn more about the benefits of attending library programs for children. Surveys were also used to obtain anonymous data, which is important in evaluative studies such as this. Several studies implemented pre- and post-surveys or questionnaires to distinguish changes in behaviour and thinking over time (Graham & Gagnon, 2013; Stewart, et al, 2014; Peterson, et al, 2012), while others sent out questionnaires in advance in order to allow participants to prepare for interviewing at a later date (McKend, 2010). Several studies using surveys presented very different completion rates between the pre- and post-questionnaires (Stewart, et

al., 2014; Graham & Gagnon, 2013) which clearly illustrates return rate as a key issue in survey research. On the other hand, Peterson, et al. (2012) experienced much higher numbers, achieving a return rate of 40 final surveys compared with the initial 42 that were completed. However, because of the anonymous nature of the study, they were “unable to ensure that the same parents/guardians completed both an initial and final survey” (p. 5). In most cases that used surveys before and following involvement in a service, anonymous data retained its value because the overall intent was to discover initial and final perceptions rather than changes over a period of time, but this could also be viewed as an advantage of once off questionnaires. Stewart, et al. (2014) also reported attendance as an obstacle in the reliability of pre- and post-survey statistics, which provides further support for one off questionnaires.

3.3.3 Interviews

Mixed-method approaches appeared frequently throughout the literature, and interviews appeared to provide a more comprehensive personal account of study participants' experiences in a number of instances. McKend (2010) interviewed participants following the distribution of questionnaires, so they were able to give “more detailed explanations of the responses” (p. 16) provided in the questionnaire. Graham and Gagnon (2013) took a slightly different approach, collecting data through randomly selected interviews four to six months after participation in the Mainly Mother Goose program. Interviews proved to be a valuable tool in both cases, and provided researchers with the rich data required to make more informed judgements about the respective services.

3.3.4 Observations

Observations were another commonly employed methodology, some of which were accompanied by audio recordings to achieve a “more complete record” (McKechnie, 2006, p. 192) of the experience. Researchers tended to use observations to document how participants, mainly children, behaved during a particular time period. This often occurred as library sessions were delivered (McKenzie & Stooke, 2007; Peterson, et al., 2012; McKechnie, 2006; Bamkin, Goulding & Maynard, 2013), but were also used to investigate how library patrons used the library in their free time

(Celano & Neuman, 2006). Due to the fact that the objectives of this study intend to illustrate participant responses to Preschool Storytimes in a variety of settings, including home environments, rather than primarily during the session, observations were not a suitable data collection method.

3.3.5 Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis was the chosen method of data analysis in all but one of the reviewed studies, and seemed to be particularly useful in research involving surveys. Researchers examined the data through a qualitative lens to identify patterns in the responses received and to highlight commonly occurring thinking and behaviour. Some researchers entered into data analysis with clear ideas of the patterns to look for (Peterson, et al., 2012), while others coded spontaneously. Bamkin, et al. (2013) explain that through spontaneous thematic analysis, labels for different reoccurring patterns are generated in the initial analysis stages. From here, “concepts are clustered together under headings, or categories” (p. 56). In many cases, researchers also implemented quantitative techniques by assigning numerical value to specific themes or categories and keeping frequency counts, as well as calculating percentages based on these figures (Graham & Gagnon, 2013; Stewart, et al., 2014).

3.4 What the Research Revealed

Findings from the studies reviewed were generally positive. Several of the studies supported the notion that library services for young children are beneficial to the individuals involved, although some of these did not present overwhelmingly significant results, such as Graham and Gagnon (2013) who found that the Mainly Mother Goose program promoted the maintenance of high frequencies of literacy related behaviours rather than an increase. Stewart, et al. (2014) did not produce statistically significant results either, which they attributed to data collection methods which were not sensitive enough to detect small changes. Others focused more on identifying effective practice, the purpose of child centered literacy programs and the goals of a service from the perspective of both parents and librarians, with results in these studies providing rich qualitative information (Bamkin, et al., 2013; McKechnie, 2006; Peterson, et al., 2012). While the variances in findings indicate the overall value of library services for young children on multiple levels, they also signify what

has been expressed by many; that further research is needed for understandings in this area to be enhanced.

4. Research Design

Due to the challenge of quantitatively measuring the outcomes of Preschool Storytimes, and in order to retrieve more detailed information from participants, this study implemented both quantitative and qualitative data collection. The study placed emphasis on phenomenological design with the intention of gaining a more comprehensive understanding of the experience of Preschool Storytimes from the point of view of participants in the program. While a qualitative approach has the potential to illustrate participant experiences and responses effectively, Leedy and Ormrod (2013) recommend collecting multiple forms of data so that the findings provide more meaningful insight. Questionnaires and interviews were both employed in an effort to achieve this.

5. Methodology

5.1 Population and Sample

Selecting an appropriate sample is paramount to good research design, and “nowhere is sampling more critical than in survey research” (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013, p. 215). Data collected from a chosen sample seeks to represent the larger group, so in order for the findings to be truthful and reliable, a sample must reflect a population. Wellington City and the surrounding areas in which Preschool Storytimes operate are very diverse in nature, with families from a range of socio-economic, ethnic and cultural backgrounds attending sessions each week. Therefore, data would be most meaningful if collected across different sites throughout the region. Due to employment of the researcher within the Wellington City Council, having access to past Preschool Storytime statistics through the Wellington City Libraries system was particularly helpful in planning visits to other library sites for data collection. Although some of these sites were selected simply because they were situated in the researcher’s area of work, attendance statistics were influential in selecting which other branches to visit. Arrangement of visits was very straightforward and achieved

through email communication with team leaders from different areas and the staff presenting Preschool Storytime sessions at each library. Most of the people that were contacted from within the Wellington City Libraries network were more than happy to assist in the study, but there were a small number of presenters who asked not to be involved. Relevant information and copies of the participant information sheet were shared with all library staff involved, to which the response was positive, and several presenters even promoted the study during Preschool Storytime sessions in the weeks that followed. The ability to conduct data collection during work hours, as well as added internal support, also allowed for greater flexibility during this phase, which was particularly helpful in managing unexpected setbacks in gaining ethical approval.

Five branch libraries were initially chosen to visit over a two week period. During this time, parents and caregivers in attendance were spoken to briefly partway through the session, informed about the research and their potential role in data collection, and then invited to collect an information sheet containing URL links to both the online questionnaire, as well as the interview preference form, after the session had concluded. Two more visits were added at the end of the first week in an attempt to increase response rates, which appeared to be low at this stage. One of the original five libraries was visited twice during data collection, as they offer two sessions per week and the researcher wished to engage with parents/caregivers that were only able to attend one of these sessions. Three to five visits were suggested in the proposal to be sufficient in reaching a wide enough audience, with an expectation that at least ten parents or caregivers per session completed a survey, and several expressed interest in doing an interview. However, it quickly became apparent that more visits would be required to meet the aim of fifty questionnaire respondents and five to ten interview participants. Despite the additional site visits and the fact that almost sixty information sheets were distributed, the overall response rate was significantly lower than anticipated, with a total of twelve anonymous questionnaires completed, and four interviews conducted. Due to low response numbers, results taken from this sample are unable to accurately reflect the wider population.

5.2 Data Collection

5.2.1 Questionnaires

Questionnaires or surveys are a commonly used methodology within qualitative, and quantitative, research design, and have proved to be an effective method of data collection for similar studies. Using relatively simple design, Questionnaires enable the researcher to reach a wide audience in a time efficient manner, and allow for the collection of large volumes of data. Questionnaires were deemed a suitable method of data collection in this study because they would enable the researcher to overcome time and resource constraints, and allow for anonymous results, which according to Leedy and Ormrod (2013), can help to generate more truthful responses from participants. Questionnaires were initially going to be sent to participants either via email or through the post, but due to issues of anonymity, changes to the data collection process were required by the human ethics committee. The committee recognized that the processes that had been proposed to recruit participants would not reflect the anonymous nature intended for the questionnaires, and an online survey was created to replace earlier approaches. While these changes inevitably omitted Preschool Storytime users without internet access from participating, online access made the process significantly quicker and simpler, and the researcher was not approached by any parents or caregivers during data collection to express concerns relating to this. An investigation into the trustworthiness of web-based studies in psychology research, conducted by Gosling, Vazire, Srivastava and John (2004) found that internet samples tended to be just as representative as traditional methods, and did not appear to be “tainted by false data or repeat responders” (p. 102). This suggests that this change in data collection would not have made a significant difference to questionnaire results. Questionnaires were made accessible to participants via Qualtrics online survey platform, using the same questions from the original questionnaire², with a link to the survey URL provided on the participant information sheet³ given out to parents and caregivers during Preschool Storytime session visits. A copy of this information sheet was attached to the beginning of the survey to remind participants of the purpose of the study and what their involvement entailed. Participants were encouraged to fill in the questionnaire by selecting the

² See *Appendix A* for survey questions

³ See *Appendix B* for participant information sheet

appropriate checkboxes and adding their own comments. The option to receive a summary of research findings was provided at the end of the survey, although none of the parents/caregivers who completed a questionnaire requested this.

5.2.2 Interviews

Interviews are another effective qualitative research method that formed part of the data collection strategy. Like questionnaires, interviews allow study participants to share their experiences of Preschool Storytimes, however, interviews have the potential to obtain richer information because the researcher is able to take a more active role in data collection through prompting the interviewee to explain aspects in greater detail and expand on specific ideas. Interviews also allow for greater spontaneity. While these are obvious advantages, interviews take significantly more time to organise and execute which could have posed a challenge to parents/caregivers with young children and may explain why interview numbers were so low. Interview questions⁴ were guided by the research questions and designed to encourage parents to provide more detailed information about the topics examined in the questionnaire. Participants were invited to take part in a face-to-face interview with the researcher by following the URL on the participant information sheet to an interview preference form, from which the interview could then be arranged. Gorman and Clayton (1997) acknowledge that random selection of respondents is the most representative technique to use, but it is not particularly common in qualitative research. Although interviews were initially going to be offered either in person or over the phone, this was changed to only face-to-face interviews during the ethical approval process in order to avoid difficulties with signing an informed consent form. Unfortunately only one parent opted to take part in an interview, which was transcribed at the time. Three further interviews were conducted with Wellington City Libraries staff in a last bid attempt to increase response numbers, which raises issues about the reliability of findings taken from this data. Unlike the questionnaire participants, all of the parents involved in interviews indicated an interest in receiving a summary of findings from the study.

⁴ See *Appendix C* for interview questions

5.3 Limitations

There are several limitations of survey research, relating to both the ways in which participants respond, as well as access. 'Self-report' data, through which research participants report what they believe to have happened or to be true, is not always completely honest (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). Participants may instead tell the research what they want to hear, or what they believe will best support study findings, resulting in data which is not representative or wholly reliable. Due to the anonymous nature of the questionnaire in this study, this problem was not encountered, and participants tended to be very honest in their answers. This could have presented an issue during interviews, which were not anonymous. However, because of the low number of interview participants, the researcher is unable to make reasonable judgement as to whether or not this occurred.

Low return rate is a common limitation of survey research because "potential respondents have little or nothing to gain by answering and returning the questionnaire" (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013, p. 201). Low return rate was a major issue in this study, and one that had significant effects on the overall results. A low return rate may be due to a lack of understanding from participants about the research objectives and purpose of the study, and may also be a consequence of misinterpretation of the questions asked in the survey. All material was written using language that would be appropriate to the reading abilities of all, and the term 'early literacy' was defined at the beginning of both the questionnaire and interviews. An email contact for was provided on all of the documents used, but none of the participants involved contacted the researcher for clarification. This indicates that the low response rate occurred for another reason, although there is no information to suggest what this may have been.

Access to internet is another barrier that could have prevented some potential participants from taking part in the study. Since the questionnaire was accessible online only through a survey platform, families without access to an internet connection, either on a computer or other device, would have been unable to complete it. Lefever, Dal and Matthíasdóttir (2007) recognized internet surveys as a potential hindrance in data collection, but maintained that online research had many advantages, including time and cost efficiency. The also suggested that a poor

response rate could be due to specific factors existent within the population, and urged researchers to “give attention to the methods of encouraging participation in online data collection” (p. 581). Public internet access, such as through the public library, would have been a possible solution to this problem, but it is unknown whether any parents and caregivers utilized this alternative for the study.

5.4 Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to the ethical requirements put in place by the Victoria University School of Information Management Human Ethics Committee. Participants were informed of their rights in participating in the study in the participant information sheet handed out at Preschool Storytime sessions. Participation was voluntary, and those involved were assured that they would not be identified in any way. While the questionnaire was anonymous and therefore implied consent, interview participants were required to read and sign an informed consent form⁵. Interviewees also had the option of withdrawing their information by August 31, however this did not happen. The Human ethics approval process took significantly longer than was initially expected, and resulted in a number of major changes to research design and implementation, as discussed in the above sections. Permission to collect data was also granted by the Wellington City Libraries head of Children and Young Adult services prior to gaining ethical approval.

5.5 Data Analysis

The qualitative data collected for this study was analysed thematically in order to identify commonly occurring patterns relating to the questions of the study and themes present within the current literature, as well as new ideas not yet discussed within this report. Because of the poor response rate to both questionnaires and interviews, data from both approaches were grouped together during this phase in order to generate richer data and more interesting findings. Leedy and Ormrod (2013) propose researchers use logical thinking and “scrutinize the body of data in search of patterns that the data reflect” (p. 97) in order to avoid making subjective observations, which is particularly important with regards to the researcher’s

⁵ See *Appendix D* for interview participants informed consent form

background in and prior knowledge of early childhood education and Preschool Storytimes. The data was examined closely and reoccurring words and ideas were highlighted manually in a process often referred to as coding. Coded data was then organized into categories which reflected similar overarching themes. While some of the themes identified direct links to the research questions, there were also several other new themes that emerged, such as parental perspectives on the storyteller, among others. Although the study intended to implement quantitative analysis through tabulation in order to show frequently occurring behaviours and “verify the existence and strength of any apparent relationships” (Rea & Parker, 2005, p. 179), low response numbers meant that quantitative data had to be described as counts rather than translating into percentages.

6. Results and Discussion

6.1 Quantitative Results

Table 1: How old is your child?

Under 3 years	5
3 years	7
4-5 years	4
Total	16

As may be expected from a program intended for preschool aged children, the majority of participants involved in this study took children between the ages of three and five years to Preschool Storytime sessions. There were, however, several children aged younger than three years that also attended the program. According to Smith (1998), associative play, where children learn through involvement in activities together, most commonly occurs after the age of three, which may explain why older preschool children often participate more actively in Preschool Storytime sessions. This said, more and more people now recognize that learning starts to happen from a very young age, or even from birth (Cheeseman & Sumsion, 2015), so it is likely that children younger than the intended age range still benefitted from the program. McKechnie (2006) found through observation that storytimes provided a context in which infants and toddlers engaged in literacy activity and social interaction, which confirms this.

Table 2: How long have you been attending Preschool Storytimes?

Less than a month	1
1-6 months	6
7-12 months	1
Over a year	8
Total	16

Table 3: On average, how often do you attend Preschool Storytime sessions?

4 or more times a month	6
2-3 times a month	7
Once a month	2
Less than once a month	1
Total	16

There was no obvious correlation between the length and frequency of attendance and the responses of children to the Preschool Storytime program, and the anonymous nature of the questionnaires prevented the researcher from identifying specific links between the data. It is, however, reasonable to assume that children who attended more often and for a longer period of time were more familiar with the library as a setting and knew what to expect from the sessions more so than children who rarely attended Preschool Storytime. One participant substantiated this thinking when they said that 'every week we get more books and learn more about the library'. Peterson, et al (2012) briefly mentioned inconsistencies in attendance of children participating in their study and how this lack of information might influence findings. While the research design of this study differs significantly, it is still an important limitation to consider.

Table 4: Do you currently attend, or have you attended, any other literacy programs with your child?

Yes, currently	7
Yes, in the past	5
No	4
Total	16

Twelve out of sixteen participants reported attending other literacy related programs with their child. Examples of these included Baby Rock and Rhyme, another popular Wellington City Libraries service directed towards children under two, singing groups, Playcentre and kindergarten. Stewart, et al (2014) declared the importance of ascertaining whether participants in their study had attended Every Child Ready to

Read family workshops in determining the effects of a storytime program. They found that 26.9 percent of participants that responded had attended the family workshop and therefore excluded this group from analysis. Although parents and caregivers in a similar situation in this study were not excluded from analysis, it is necessary to consider how this could have influenced overall results. One participant stated that it was 'difficult to isolate a separate influence via Preschool Storytime' because of the level of story-telling interaction offered elsewhere, which reflects this thinking.

6.1.1 Changes in behaviour and attitudes

The data revealed that all of the participants in the study noticed changes in the way in which children participated in Preschool Storytime sessions, often as a result of increased confidence after ongoing attendance. However, the rest of the findings were much more mixed. Only half of participants reported changes in response to reading at home after attending the program, with similar numbers for children's attitudes towards using the library. Many participants were already avid readers and library users prior to the study taking place, which may explain why these findings were not more dramatic. Eleven out of sixteen participants did not change their own literacy practices as a result of involvement in Preschool Storytime, and only two experienced increased confidence in their own abilities to support early literacy learning. One participant commented that Preschool Storytimes had been very good at reinforcing the practices they were currently using but did not inspire change, while another said that they were very nervous as a first time parent about how to support learning, and felt that the Preschool Storytime program helped them to build these skills effectively. These findings contrast with that of Graham and Gagnon (2013), who reported that parents and caregivers involved in their study experienced a significant increase in feelings of confidence and competence after participation in the Mainly Mother Goose early literacy program. Stewart, et al (2014) also concluded that survey respondents believed they were more knowledgeable as a result of attending enhanced storytimes. This suggests that, although the program promotes children's literacy learning during sessions, there is not enough evidence in this study to propose that Preschool Storytimes contribute to parent/caregiver education.

6.2 Qualitative Results

Through thematic analysis, four key themes were identified in the data. Although there were many interesting insights into how parents, caregivers and children respond to the Preschool Storytime program, a lot of the findings related in some way to the main research questions that guided the formation of the questionnaire and interview questions. Parents had a lot to say, in particular, about how children engaged in sessions. Therefore, two of the four themes that will be discussed here are:

- How do children participate in and respond to Preschool Storytime sessions?
- What do children learn as a result of involvement in Preschool Storytime sessions?

Two further themes will also be examined:

- Library as a place
- Parental perspectives of Preschool Storytimes.

6.2.1 How do children participate in and respond to Preschool Storytime sessions?

Children and participants in this study responded to sessions in a variety of ways, but in general did not change the ways in which they responded to story reading at home significantly. Nevertheless, some major changes took place within the library setting. One of the biggest changes that was observed by parents and caregivers was how children participated in Preschool Storytime sessions. While it was common for children to be quiet and somewhat apprehensive when they first started attending the program, with one parent stating that their child was hesitant to leave their side, all of the participants in the study reported increased involvement in sessions over time. Many attributed this change to increased feelings of comfort and confidence, which resulted in more active engagement in the session, as well as greater focus and enthusiasm. One parent/caregiver expressed that their child 'feels that her input is valued' which provides a good example of this.

Participants used a range of positive words, such as 'happy', 'enjoyable', 'curious', 'absorbed' and 'concentrated' to describe how children participated in Preschool Storytime sessions, indicating that a sense of fun was paramount to retaining

children's interest. The idea of learning through play, which links closely to sociocultural theory, is a well-known concept in early childhood education that has been supported by numerous academics in both education and information disciplines (Wohlwend, 2008; Roskos & Christie, 2001; Yelland, 2011; Herb, 1997; Saracho & Spodek, 2006). It also directly relates to Preschool Storytime and the techniques used to help build early literacy skills and inspire a love of reading in young children. The notion was made popular in part by Vygotsky (1978), who theorized that when children are engaged in social play, they are likely to perform to a higher standard than they usually would alone. He referred to the area between what children could achieve on their own, and what they could achieve while engaged in meaningful play experiences with other children or adults, as the zone of proximal development, and suggested that "learning awakens a variety of internal developmental processes that are able to operate only when a child is interacting with people in his environment and in cooperation with his peers" (p. 90). This notion is supported through Preschool Storytime sessions in which group learning and adult-child interaction is a key focus. Herb (1997) also states that in the age of internet technology, picture books remain the "best means of linking an adult and a child in those special bonds that produce a literate human being" (p. 23), which further reinforces the educational value of Preschool Storytimes and reflects the feelings of study participants.

6.2.2 What do children learn as a result of involvement in Preschool Storytimes?

Preschool Storytimes help to foster a range of skills in children that extend far beyond literacy. While sessions undoubtedly encourage a love of reading and provide an introduction to early literacy skills, research participants tended to focus more on other skills, particularly social, that their children had learnt, to some degree, through attending the program. School readiness, the term used for a combination of key skills that enable children to learn in a school setting, was mentioned by numerous participants in the study, and is clearly a skill area that parents and caregivers consider to be important. It is also a concept that has been reflected in literature about library programs for preschool children (Peterson, et al, 2012). In this instance, school readiness refers to skills such as 'independence', 'research skills',

'concentration' and 'social interaction skills' that were promoted through Preschool Storytimes. According to Diamant-Cohen (2007), positive early literacy experiences such as a storytime program can help build skills to "enable a child to enter into a classroom ready to learn" (p. 40). Study participants had similar feelings about the role of Preschool Storytime, likening sessions to a 'taste of classroom etiquette'. Another parent/caregiver stated that they were grateful for the 'structured listening and learning time' provided, as it would help children prepare for later school experiences. McKenzie and Stooke (2007) acknowledged the "role that storytime plays in preparing children for future success at school" (p. 18), recognising the important skills supported within an organised literary activity. Despite this, they were quick to point out that storytime had survived as a ritual event in the public library because they allow time for "spontaneity and fun" (p. 18), and urged parents not to underestimate the value of play, which links back to the previous section of this report about learning through play and social interaction. It is also important to remember here that some of the children involved in the study were attending other programs, such as kindergarten, which could be at least partially responsible for the development of these skills. As one participant articulated, 'it would be an exaggeration to claim' that Preschool Storytimes on their own are a 'major influence' on children's literacy and education. However, the program certainly has the potential to foster school readiness skills among others.

There was a clear desire from parents and caregivers for children to develop a passion for reading and a love of books. Many participants recognized that this is something that comes from ongoing engagement with literary materials, and Preschool Storytimes present an alternative to reading one-on-one at home. In fact, the group setting was an appealing aspect of the program, with some participants hoping their children would learn from peers. In her investigation into best practices for the planning, development and delivery of storytime programs, McKend (2010) discovered that librarians rated introducing children to books and a love of reading as the most important feature of storytimes. Bamkin, et al. (2013) shared similar findings, with the introduction of children to the "pleasure of reading" (p. 57) as a key technique for storytellers, to which children observed had a positive response. This clearly demonstrates similar opinions held by both librarians and parents/caregivers alike as to the importance of sharing a love of books with others, specifically children.

Not only did participants in this study value the potential for Preschool Storytime sessions to inspire and stimulate children to read more, but many also found it helpful to have the 'exposure to quality literature', which motivated parents and caregivers to choose a wider selection of books to take home. This was reflected in the Peterson, et al (2012) research, in which parents felt more excited about reading with their children as a result of attending an early literacy program. Unfortunately it is difficult to measure how children feel about books and reading, so the researcher is unable to make judgement about the level of increased love of books that occurred in this study.

Another skill area that was only mentioned by one participant, but that is still significant, particularly in a multicultural nation such as ours, is bilingual language learning. One mother conveyed how helpful attending Preschool Storytime had been in exposing her young child to English, which is not predominantly spoken at home. She described her child being 'very interested to listen to other voices' and considered the program to be a valuable tool for supporting bilingual language learning. This aspect has already been recognized in the past as a benefit of storytime programs (Howrey, 2003), and it has been suggested that "even if no library staff member speaks a language other than English, it is still possible to have a successful bilingual storytime" (Albright, Delecki & Hinkle, 2009, p. 17). Mynott, Denham and Elkin (2001) highlighted support for children from multicultural backgrounds as a key area requiring improvement in public libraries in the UK. Because "playful oral language experiences" such as those provided in storytime sessions "prepare children to understand and experiment with written language" (Herb, 1997, p. 23), Preschool Storytimes are a valuable tool in meeting this growing need.

6.2.3 Library as place

The data collected in this study provided wonderful insight into how children and families view the library, and what the library means to them. Opinions were overwhelmingly positive, and it was encouraging to find out what different children and parents/caregivers liked most about going to the library. Although many participants expressed that they had been regular library users for a long time, joy

about visiting the library seemed to increase as a result of involvement in the Preschool Storytime program. For example, one participant expressed how storytime sessions had 'made the library a community for me', while another talked about the sense of belonging they had developed, which illustrates how parents and caregivers view the library as a place for them rather than just a place to get books.

Library as place is a notion that has received more attention in recent years in response to increased funding issues and advancing information technologies (Leckie & Hopkins, 2002). With the uncertainty of the future of libraries looming over us (Van Slyck, 2001), the place that libraries provide to communities is more important than ever. It is worth pointing out here the differences between the library place and the library space. Space refers to the physical area, whereas the oxford dictionary (Soanes & Stevenson, 2006) defines place as "a portion of space available or designated for someone" (p.1094). In the case of libraries, they represent safe public places created for the use and enjoyment of everyone within the community a library serves. Söderholm and Nolin (2015) defend the notion of library as place through a social perspective, describing libraries as "contributors to social goals" (p. 248) and proposing that this characteristic of libraries makes them "indispensable and unique" (p. 249) within the digital era and works to strengthen the library purpose. Libraries did not always play such a significant role within the community, however, and before the 19th century were virtually irrelevant to the general public (Söderholm & Nolin, 2015). By the early 20th century, attention had moved to literacy and education, which is a concern that continues to shape the service libraries provide. Today, providing access to information and serving customers, particularly through services such as Preschool Storytime, is the prime focus. It is encouraging then that users like those involved in this study view the library as 'an information centre and educational resource' as well as a 'warm, welcoming, non-judgmental environment' for families.

6.2.4 Parental perspectives of Preschool Storytime

Parental perspectives on Preschool Storytime, and the storytelling techniques used by presenters, are an important theme to explore because it indicates what works especially well for participants, and suggests how session structures and methods

could be improved in order to increase the enjoyment and educational worth of the program. On the whole, participants were very appreciative of the service, and one interview participant even said 'all I ask is may it continue forever'. Parents and caregivers recognized the educational value of sessions and many were particularly pleased about the potential for social interaction and the development of social skills that were afforded through involvement in Preschool Storytimes. Furthermore, the program provided families with a regular, fun and entirely free activity. Brown (2011) stated that public libraries are great for parents and caregivers because they "offered a break from the monotony of park play" (p. 77). This is echoed in the data by one participant who felt that Preschool Storytime gave parents support as well as 'a bit of a break'.

Several of the participants in the study, however, raised concerns about the effectiveness of presenters. One suggested that Preschool Storytime sessions 'should be fronted by a storyteller, which not every librarian is', while another noticed 'huge differences in the quality of the storytelling'. Allor and McCathren (2003) recognised the important role that storytime presenters play in supporting early literacy skills, stating that "storybook reading has become much more than simply reading a book to a child" (p. 78). Presenters have a responsibility to provide meaningful literary experiences for children and their parents/caregivers in a fun and interactive environment. Participants in the study shared this belief, with one proposing that the 'key to having a great storytime is a reader who is prepared to have fun with the kids'. McNeil (2014) suggests structuring sessions to "fit your abilities, knowledge, and comfort" (p. 13). In doing so, presenters can play on their strengths to enhance the value of storytime, and the overall vibe is more relaxed and authentic. Another parent recommended having the same storyteller at each site each week, which would be good way to ensure continuity.

7. Limitations and Assumptions

7.1 Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity are key concerns in interview data, particularly when undertaking research in a researcher's field of work, as they are likely to hold some

strong views on some of the issues raised (Gorman & Clayton, 1997). This was further impacted in this study due to low interview numbers and the fact that three of the four interviewees are employed by Wellington City Libraries. Gorman and Clayton (1997) describe access to research participants as a “major issue” (p. 88) in qualitative research within information environments such as a library, explaining that a study such as this would be an overt rather than covert investigation, as the researcher had some preceding knowledge about potential participants. The researcher acknowledges this bias and has attempted to back up interview data with the information provided in anonymous questionnaires. Overall, participants had predominantly positive responses to Preschool Storytime, with many making similar judgements and suggestions for future practice, which indicates that results may not have differed significantly had all interview participants been randomly selected. Nevertheless, this is a key concern and something that has been considered in making final conclusions.

7.2 Response Rate

Low response rate was a major concern within this study and is something that inevitably impacted on the findings. While results provided good insight into the responses of parents, caregivers and children who took part in the study, lack of data prevented the researcher from making solid conclusions about the general population. Response rate is a key issue in survey research that has received extensive consideration in recent years (Sivo, Saunders, Chang & Jiang, 2006; Baruch & Holtom, 2008), especially as survey research has been made easier and more time and cost efficient with the growth of the internet (Cook, Heath & Thompson, 2000). According to Cook, Heath and Thompson (2000), response rate is important if it impacts on sample representativeness, which it does in this study. It also appears to pose more of a problem in anonymous data collection, such as questionnaires, which are a popular method in information research. Researchers in this position “depend on the willingness of people to respond to these questionnaires” (Baruch & Holtom, 2008, p. 1140), a trend that has shown continuing decline over the past few decades (Dey, 1997).

Demaio (1980, cited by Baruch & Holtom, 2008) stated that researchers should not expect full response when voluntary participation is involved, however they should aim for as high as possible in order to gain greater “statistical power” (p. 1140). However, it presents a huge challenge to predict future difficulties in response and to find ways of overcoming these problems. Coverage error, or the inability to make contact with potential research participants, is one of three major errors identified by Sivo, et al. (2006), and one that existed in this study. Although over 60 information sheets were distributed during the data collection phase, which equates to higher than the intended sample, “accurately delivering surveys into the hands of potential respondents is only half the challenge confronting” researchers (Frohlich, 2002, p. 61). Ideally, a researcher should follow up on questionnaires (Sivo, et al, 2006), but in an anonymous survey such is this, that was not an option. The use of incentives were also suggested as a method for overcoming poor response rates, however no significant differences were found in studies which used incentives and reminders (Baruch & Holtom, 2008).

Effort required of participants to complete a questionnaire, as well as perceived relevance of the study, were also influencing factors into response rate (Frohlich, 2002). This suggests that, if people feel passionately about the research topic and have little required of them, they are more likely to respond. This is evident in the data, as all participants were ongoing users of the program. The fact that information sheets were given out during sessions also excluded others who were not present or no longer attended. Contributions from Preschool Storytime presenters made a slight difference in the ways in which parents/caregivers responded. Some presenters were more encouraging of the study, which was reflected in the number of information sheets that were taken by parents/caregivers. In other circumstances when presenters showed less interest, this was reflected in a smaller number of information sheets taken. In hindsight, an aim of fifty questionnaire recipients was too high considering the number of regular attendees at each Preschool Storytime session, as well as the fact that data collection was conducted during winter, when the library is not as accessible in wet weather. Furthermore, Newtown library was closed for important maintenance during this period, which excluded potential participants from a range of ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds from taking part in the study.

8. Conclusions

The purpose of this research was to find out how children and their parents or caregivers responded to the Wellington City Libraries Preschool Storytime program. Using questionnaires and interviews to collect both qualitative and quantitative data, the researcher visited a range of different sites around the Wellington region to recruit potential research participants. The results showed that, in general, involvement in the Preschool Storytime program did not influence changes in practices or behavior relating to story reading and literacy learning at home. Participants did, however, notice significant changes in the ways in which children participated in sessions, with a number of important social and cognitive skills being fostered during this time. Parents and caregivers experienced increased feelings of belonging to the library, and children felt that the library was 'a place for them'. Although there were mixed feelings about the effectiveness of storytelling across sites, with several participants distinguishing some major inconsistencies in quality, the Preschool Storytime program was recognised as a much loved activity for local families.

8.1 Implications

Due to issues associated with poor response rate, and therefore reliability, the findings presented in this report are unable to accurately reflect the overall population or represent the overall feelings of Preschool Storytime users. For this reason, results are also not indicative of responses to similar programs in other cities, and the results of this study should not be relied upon to guide the development of future services. Given the voluntary nature of the study, it is expected that those who chose to take part enjoyed attending the program, which is reflected in the predominantly positive findings. Parents, caregivers and children who had negative experiences with Preschool Storytime are likely not represented in this study. Nevertheless, findings from this study still have the potential to lead to improved storytime practices, especially in relation to storytelling techniques, and solidify the program as a worthwhile service for families in the Wellington region.

8.2 Suggestions for Future Research

Although the data collected from this study was unable to reflect the general user population, and the researcher is therefore unable to make any accurate judgements on the value of Preschool Storytime to children, parents and caregivers, it would be very beneficial to carry out future study in this area. The need for future research in this area has also been expressed in other similar studies, with McKechnie (2006) suggesting that the reason for this is likely to be “at least partially due to the difficulties inherent in collecting empirical data about very young children in library settings” (p. 191). The methodological errors in this study certainly raise questions about more appropriate future approaches, and extensive research into successful data collection methods is proposed in order to overcome this. It is also suggested that storytime presenters could be the target of future research, which is likely to combat issues of poor response.

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10. Appendices

10.1 Appendix A

Participant Questionnaire

How do Preschool Storytime participants respond to the program in home and library settings?

Ingrid Crispin crispiingr@myvuw.ac.nz

Please fill out the questionnaire by ticking the appropriate checkboxes and adding your comments. Send the completed questionnaire to me, either in one of the pre-stamped addressed envelopes provided, or as an email attachment.

Please note: The term 'literacy' refers to the ability to read and write, and to understand language. Literacy skills develop through activities such as reading, writing and telling stories, rhymes, songs, and word, letter or number games.

1. How old is your child? (tick one)

- Under 3 years
- 3 years
- 4-5 years

2. How long have you been attending Preschool Storytimes? (tick one)

- Less than a month
- 1-6 months
- 7-12 months
- Over 1 year

3. On average, how often do you attend Preschool Storytime sessions? (tick one)

- 4 or more times a month
- 2-3 times a month
- Once a month
- Less than once a month

4. Do you currently attend, or have you attended, any other literacy programs with your child? Eg. Singing/music group (tick one)

- Yes, currently
- Yes, in the past
- No

5. Have you noticed any differences in how your child responds to story reading at home since attending Preschool Storytime sessions? (tick one)

- Yes
- No (skip to Q6)

Please describe these differences briefly:

6. Have you noticed any changes in how your child has participated in Preschool Storytime sessions over time? (tick one)

- Yes
- No (skip to Q7)

Please describe the changes you have seen:

7. Do you think your child's attitude towards using the library has changed since attending Preschool Storytime sessions? (tick one)

- Yes, a lot
- Yes, a little
- No, not at all (skip to Q8)

Please explain any changes you have noticed:

8. Have you changed the way you read and engage in literacy learning with your child at home since taking part in Preschool Storytime? (tick one)

- Yes
- No change (skip to Q9)

Please describe any changes you think you have made:

9. How do you feel about reading with your child and supporting their learning since attending the Preschool Storytime program? (tick one)

- I feel much more confident
- I feel a little more confident
- I feel about the same
- I feel less confident

Please explain your answer:

I would be very interested to read any further comments you have about reading with your child and/or the Preschool Storytime program:

Thank you for your time!

10.2 Appendix B

Participant Information Sheet

How do Preschool Storytime participants respond to the program in home and library settings?

Ingrid Crispin crispiingr@myvuw.ac.nz

Kia Ora Parents, Caregivers and Whānau,

My name is Ingrid and I work for Wellington City Libraries. I am also studying towards a Masters of Information Studies through Victoria University of Wellington, which will provide me with a library qualification. My background is in Early Child Education, and I am particularly passionate about early literacy and how children learn to read, write and use language.

Preschool Storytime is a highly successful program offered to young children through Wellington City Libraries. For my Masters project, I will be investigating how Preschool Storytime participants respond to the program in order to make more informed judgements about the value of this service. You are invited to take part in this study through sharing your experiences of Preschool Storytime.

What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of this study is to find out how children and parents/caregivers respond to the Preschool Storytime program, in both home and library settings. Findings from this study will show the learning that happens as a result of attending sessions, and provide insight into the overall benefits of Preschool Storytimes to Wellington families.

How will data be collected?

I intend to collect most of the data through questionnaires, accessible through Qualtrics, an online survey platform. I am also keen to collect some more detailed information through a small number of interviews, so please let me know if you would be interested in this.

What will my participation in the study involve?

Participation in this study will involve sharing your experiences of Preschool Storytimes through a short questionnaire which is expected to take a maximum of 15 minutes. If you choose to take part in an interview, this will take place at a time, date and place that suits us both, and is not expected to last more than 30 minutes at the most. Collected data will be accessible to myself and my research supervisor only, and will be destroyed within two years after completion of the project.

What are my rights in participating?

Participation in this study is totally voluntary, and you will not be identified personally in any written report produced as a result of this research, including possible publication in academic conferences and journals. The research report will be submitted for marking to the School of Information Management, and subsequently deposited in the University Library.

The questionnaire is anonymous and does not ask you to provide your name or the name of your child. Completion of the questionnaire implies participant consent. Interview participants will be asked to sign an informed consent form and codes will be used in the final report to protect their identity. If you take part in an interview but then decide you would like to withdraw your information, you have the option to do so until *31 August 2015*, and all interview data collected from you up until this date will be destroyed. Please contact me on the email address provided if you would like to withdraw from the interview or wish to discuss this issue further.

Victoria University requires, and has granted, approval from the School's Human Ethics Committee.

Would you like to take part?

If you are interested in being involved in this study, please visit

http://vuw.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_cwEt0b63obtIFOR to access the online questionnaire.

An interview preferences form can be found at

http://vuw.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_6ybTszKg1orWFT for people wishing to take part in an interview.

If you have any concerns, or there is something in this information sheet that you need clarified, please contact me via my email address, or you may contact my supervisor Anne Goulding at anne.goulding@vuw.ac.nz.

Thank you in advance, your involvement in this study is greatly appreciated!

Ingrid Crispin

10.3 Appendix C

Parent/Caregiver Interview

How do Preschool Storytime participants respond to the program in home and library settings?

Ingrid Crispin crispiingr@myvuw.ac.nz

Please note: The term ‘literacy’ refers to the ability to read and write, and to understand language. Literacy skills develop through activities such as reading, writing and telling stories, rhymes, songs, and word, letter or number games.

Date	
Location	
Interviewee	
Gender	
Relationship to child	

Introductory questions:

How old is your child?	
Why do you attend PSST?	
How long have you been attending PSST?	
How often do you attend PSST?	
Do you attend, or have you attended, any literacy programs other than PSST?	

Do parents/caregivers notice a difference in how children respond to story reading at home after attending Preschool Storytime sessions?

How did your child respond to story reading at home prior to attending PSST?	
Did you notice any differences in how your child responded to story reading at home after attending PSST?	
Do you think these changes are a result of PSST?	

What changes do parents/caregivers observe, if any, in the ways in which children participated in sessions over time?

How did your child behave at the first PSST session you attended?	
Did you observe any changes in how your child participated in PSST sessions over time?	

<p>Why do you think these changes occurred?</p>	
<p>Do you think participation in PSST sessions supports children’s literacy learning? If so, how?</p>	

Do parents/caregivers think children’s attitudes towards using the library change after attending sessions?

<p>What was your child’s attitude towards using the library before you attended PSST?</p>	
<p>Did you notice any changes in your child’s attitude towards using the library after attending PSST?</p>	
<p>Do you think these changes resulted from PSST?</p>	

<p>Do you think PSST prepares children for later library use? If so, how?</p>	
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In what ways do parent/caregiver practices change in regards to literacy engagement at home, and how do parents/caregivers feel about their role in supporting early literacy learning following participation in the program?

<p>How did you support literacy learning at home before attending PSST?</p>	
<p>How did you feel about your ability to do so effectively?</p>	
<p>Have your feelings and/or practices changed since attending PSST? If so, how?</p>	
<p>Do you think these changes are a result of attending PSST?</p>	

<p>Do you think PSST helps parents to develop their literacy teaching skills?</p>	
<p>Is there anything that you would have liked to learn through PSST that you didn't?</p>	

Final questions:

<p>What do you think is the most valuable thing about PSST?</p>	
<p>Is there anything you would change about PSST?</p>	
<p>Would you recommend PSST to other parents?</p>	
<p>Any further comments?</p>	

10.4 Appendix D

Interview Participant Consent Form

How do Preschool Storytime participants respond to the program in home and library settings?

Ingrid Crispin crispiingr@myvuw.ac.nz

I have been given and have understood an explanation of this research project. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction.

I understand that I may withdraw myself (or any information I have provided) from this project, without having to give reasons, by e-mailing crispiingr@myvuw.ac.nz by the 31 August 2015.

I understand that any information I provide will be kept confidential to the researcher and their supervisor, the published results will not use my name, and that no opinions will be attributed to me in any way that will identify me.

I understand that the data I provide will not be used for any other purpose or released to others.

Notes from the interviews will be erased within 2 years after the conclusion of the project. Furthermore, I will have an opportunity to receive a summary of notes from my interview.

Please indicate (by ticking the boxes below) which of the following apply:

- I would like to receive a summary of the results of this research when it is completed.
- I would like to receive a summary of the notes from my interview.

Email Address:

Signed:

Name of participant:

Date: