'Auckland Urban Libraries and Preschool Storytime Outreach'

by

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Submitted to the School of Information Management,
Victoria University of Wellington
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Information Studies

June 2019

Abstract

Research Problem: The purpose of this study was to identify the aims of storytime outreach sessions delivered by public library staff at early childhood education and care centres and the challenges staff face when delivering these sessions. It also examined how library staff prepare for and deliver these sessions, and how libraries measure their impacts.

Methodology: This research utilised a qualitative approach, using purposive sampling to select 9 participants from the 4 Auckland Libraries branches in the Waitematā local board area, including one senior manager from the Auckland Libraries organisation. Data was collected via semi-structured interviews, which were conducted face-to-face, over the phone, and via email.

Results: The aims of storytime outreach were identified as building relationships and awareness of the library, encouraging a love of reading, and developing meaningful sessions. These aims contribute to the desired outcomes for Auckland Libraries. It also found potential for development in the way staff evaluate their practice and measure the impacts of sessions, ensuring ongoing support is provided, with opportunities for staff to meet and share ideas on a regular basis, and creating the opportunity for staff to record their personal experiences in order to demonstrate the meaningful value of these sessions. It also examined the challenges staff face in delivering storytime outreach, creating the opportunity to improve the experiences of both staff and storytime outreach attendees in future.

Implications: The results of this study are valuable to public libraries and similar organisations who currently deliver storytime outreach sessions, as well as organisations who are new to this type of programme. It enables organisations to evaluate how staff are prepared and supported in their planning and delivery of storytime outreach sessions. The information gathered on how libraries evaluate these sessions is also useful in helping organisations understand methods to measure the success of such programmes in order to demonstrate their value.

Keywords: Public libraries, urban libraries, preschool storytime, library outreach, early literacy, strategic alignment, professional development.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor, Anne Goulding, for her kindness and insight throughout this research project.

I'm so grateful to all of the staff from Auckland Libraries who facilitated and participated in this study, demonstrating such generosity and enthusiasm throughout the process.

This research would not have been possible without the unfailing support of my parents, John and Maree. Thank you.

I am also deeply grateful for the patience and eternal good humour of my partner, Alex.

I was very fortunate to have the support of my colleagues at Television New Zealand, particularly Kathleen Eagle, who enabled me to dedicate my full attention to my research during its final stages.

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1. Problem statement

This study examines the aims of storytime outreach sessions delivered by public library staff at early childhood education and care centres (ECEs). It focuses on urban libraries, investigating the experiences of four Auckland libraries in the Waitematā local board area.

Storytimes have long been a common service in public libraries, both in New Zealand and internationally (Goulding, Dickie & Shuker, 2017). Therefore, it is important that these programmes are continually researched, providing information that can be harnessed to understand and improve them for present and future staff and attendees.

Outreach provides libraries with a valuable opportunity to engage with their local communities outside of the physical library space. This connects libraries with new users, promoting the library and its services, as well as expanding the potential of what a library can be and how it is perceived.

Klarwill states that a library "must be accountable for the services it provides, rather than the space it offers" (1999, p. 39). Staff can now work with users in a wide range of contexts, bringing their knowledge and skills to people in a variety of settings, both inside and outside of the physical library space, as well as promoting the library itself.

There have been a number of studies on the work of children's services in libraries. In recent years, there has been research on early literacy practices in storytimes (Goulding, et al., 2014; Harbison-Price 2017), as well as studies on specific elements of storytimes, such as book selection (Carroll, 2015) and peer mentoring (Stoltz, Czarnecki, Wilson, & Martinez, 2010). However, there is room in the research for a study which focuses on the outreach side of these programs, as there are significant differences in the challenges faced when preparing and presenting storytimes within the library space as opposed to those outside of it.

With the rise of library outreach services, it is important that programmes such as storytime outreach sessions are considered. These sessions can provide a range of benefits, including, but not limited to: bringing the library to new or irregular users, promoting the library and its services, highlighting the importance of early literacy, exposure to books and reading material, growing vocabulary and narrative skills, and solidifying libraries as an ally to local institutions and people.

In order for libraries to ensure such benefits are delivered, it is important that organisations have defined aims for storytime outreach sessions that are communicated to staff. It is essential to understand what public library staff see as the aims of storytime outreach sessions, how they prepare, the challenges they face, and the way they evaluate the impacts of these sessions.

Children's storytimes, as well as including stories, often feature action rhymes, songs and other activities, and generally run for around 30 minutes (Goulding, Dickie, Shuker, & Bennett, 2014).

This research looks at storytimes in early childhood education and care centres, defined in the New Zealand Education Act (1989) as "premises used regularly for the education or care of 3 or more children (not being children of the persons providing the education or care, or children enrolled at a school being provided with education and care before or after school) under the age of 6".

However, the concept of library outreach is more difficult to define. Pointon (2009) advises, "Draw a circle around the central or main library building – every library service, program, or library-related endeavour taking place outside that circle is outreach" (2009, p. 5-6). Yet Ford (2009) points out that this raises the issue of the library space, as many library collections are now available online, transcending physical libraries and therefore falling under Pointon's definition. In 1984, "outreach" first appeared in Harrod's Librarians' Glossary and was defined as, "The process whereby a library service investigates the activities of the community it serves and becomes fully involved in supporting community activities, whether or not centred on library premises." This consideration of community is an important aspect of library outreach. Taken alongside Pointon's definition, library outreach can then be defined as a service or program designed to support the community a library serves outside of the physical library space.

1.1 Implications

This research fills a gap in the knowledge about storytime outreach sessions. It identifies the aims of storytime outreach sessions, as well as the challenges staff face in delivering these sessions, creating the opportunity for improvements to the experience of staff and storytime attendees.

The results of this study are valuable to public libraries and similar organisations who currently deliver storytime outreach sessions, as well as organisations that are new to this type of programme. It enables organisations to evaluate how staff are prepared and supported in their planning and delivery of storytime outreach sessions. The information gathered on how libraries evaluate these sessions is also useful in helping organisations understand methods to measure the success of such programmes in order to demonstrate their value.

2. Literature review

The following literature review outlines research examining the changing nature of library services, the aims of storytime sessions, the training and preparation of staff who deliver storytime sessions, and the way that these sessions are evaluated. It is clear from this research that storytimes and outreach are important and valuable library services that warrant further investigation.

2.1 Serving communities outside the library space

Over the past few decades, the understanding of the purpose and role of public libraries has undergone a change, with public libraries now being associated with the information they provide, rather than the physical library space (Klarwill, 1999). This evolution enables libraries to reach users in new ways, serving their patrons in a manner that is more convenient to their needs, and promoting the library to potential new users. This shift creates the opportunity for new methods of serving preschool aged children, particularly with the rising number of children in formal early childhood education. Storytime outreach gives library staff the opportunity to "reach audiences who are unfamiliar with library storytimes or don't have access to a local library" (Romero & Armstrong, 2017, p.9).

In 2009, 54 percent of all New Zealand preschool children were attending formal early childhood education, with this number rising to 64 percent in 2017 (New Zealand Government, 2017). This increase is something that libraries must address in order to meet the changing needs of their communities, for "just as the community belongs in the library, the library belongs in the community" (Johnson, 2004, p.48). Campana, Mills, & Martin state that library outreach is "crucial for reaching families" and supporting their ongoing learning, and that through partnering with community organisations, libraries demonstrate that "they are an important part of the childhood learning community" (2018, p.36).

2.2 Storytime aims

Storytimes have been delivered in public libraries for many years. Originally called story hours, these sessions began in the 1940s in order to expose children to books and reading and

develop their passion for them, as well as encouraging children to socialise with peers. The mid-1950s saw librarians move towards incorporating literacy into storytimes, as well as utilising techniques such as clapping to songs and rhymes, dramatising stories, and repetition (Albright, Delecki, & Hinkle 2009).

Building relationships and a passion for reading continue to be key goals of storytime sessions today. In exploring preschool storytimes in urban New Zealand public libraries, Goulding et al. (2017) found that public libraries support children in becoming readers, by providing support and access to reading materials and resources, as well as providing a space for children to read and explore. This is mirrored by the findings of Harbison-Price who identified the goals of storytime as making children and caregivers comfortable within the library space, and "building a positive relationship between the library and attendees, leading into use of library services" (2017, p.22).

Print motivation was another significant aim for storytime sessions, with many library staff hoping to share and foster a love of reading (Harbison-Price, 2017). Other aims included circulating items, creating new library members, and bringing people into the library space (Harbison-Price, 2017).

While many librarians share the desire to create an enjoyable experience for children, there is not an unanimous view on whether storytimes are recreational or educational activities (Harbison-Price, 2017). However, incorporating early literacy skills into a storytime session can have impacts beyond the skills themselves, as "librarians and library services consider them an important mechanism for building relationships with families and whānau" (Goulding et al., 2017, p.209).

Auckland Libraries' strategic plan for for 2013 - 2023 states its key outcome for children and young people as "every child a reader, every child a library member" (2012, p. 22). In order to achieve this goal, this strategic plan details the necessary directions and actions, many of which align with storytime aims. They include building relationships with educational organisations, creating play spaces and learning avenues online, developing service models that enable library staff to be active in the community, advocating for library membership, supporting learning outside the classroom, and utilising community expertise to support engagement with young people.

2.3 Storytime outreach aims

It is valuable to consider the unique aims of storytime outreach. While there is overlap in the goals of these sessions and those delivered in the library, there are also some additional objectives.

One such outreach model is the Library has Legs preschool programme in Melbourne, Australia, which was developed by the Casey-Cardinia Library Corporation, in partnership with Windermere Child and Family Services (Smith, 2008). While this community development initiative does aim to promote literacy, it also promotes "the attractions of the library" (Smith, 2008, p.154). These concepts are recurring themes in the literature on preschool storytimes and outreach.

Another key point to note is the impact that preschool outreach can have on early childhood staff. Cahill argues that "while most preschool teachers are aware of the importance of reading to children, many have had limited experience with maximising the reading experience and limited opportunity to observe good practice" (2004, p.61). Therefore a desired outcome for outreach sessions is professional development, modelling the teaching skills, techniques, behaviours and strategies that preschool teachers need in order to best support new readers.

Looking at early childhood library services in Vancouver, Canada, Campbell-Hicks (2016) found that outreach was fostered through a range of methods, including creating full timetables of early childhood library activities, supporting nation-wide confidence in libraries, and giving attention to the atmosphere of the library itself, ensuring that staff are open and welcoming to visitors. This final point is crucial to the success of library outreach, ensuring that when it results in new users, their experience in the library space is positive.

These studies highlight a range of potential storytime outreach aims: promoting literacy and the library, giving a human face to the library, and providing professional development for preschool teachers.

2.4 Storytime training and preparation

There are a range of approaches to training staff for delivering storytime sessions, as well as different methods of preparation.

In a study of twenty-six public librarians in Maryland, United States, Martinez (2007) found that participants were not trained in early literacy, with the focus instead being on "the areas of cataloging, classification, references, collection development, programming, records management, storytelling materials, literature for children and young adults, and computer databases" (Martinez, 2007, p.33). However, these librarians did attend a one-day training session, where storytime planning sheets were provided, outlining the types of activities that are appropriate for the different ages of preschool children. This training session was a valuable experience for attendees, providing them with an understanding of the connection between library programming and preparing children for school, as well as giving them useful suggestions for storytime content.

In Canada, McKend (2010) also found a lack of storytime training for library staff. Of the 30 participants interviewed, 12 described formal storytime training experiences, while 13 stated that no training was offered. Eight respondents described informal or casual training opportunities. This study also discussed the Every Child Ready to Read® (ECRR) Program from the American Library Association, a programme which began in 2004 as a way for libraries to educate parents and caregivers about supporting the early literacy development of their children (American Library Association, 2018). McKend (2010) found that out of 400 public library branches, 202 formally use the ECRR programme, while 144 make informal use of the programme, utilising it for the planning of preschool sessions, incorporating the ECRR's pre-literacy skills, as well as harnessing it to educate parents and caregivers.

In the New Zealand context, Carroll (2015) studied the book selection practices of Auckland library staff. The majority of these participants had no formal preschool storytime training. Instead they learned through observation of sessions and advice from colleagues. Participants were found to base their selection of books for storytimes on the following factors: length, illustrations, subjects, concepts and themes, use of language; the potential for audience participation, the potential for emotional engagement, and personal preference. This selection

process required utilising a range of methods: browsing physically and online, searching the library catalogue, and seeking recommendations (Carroll, 2015).

These studies identify a range of approaches to storytime preparation, each noting varying levels of staff experience.

2.5 Evaluation

Evaluating storytime outreach is an important part of the process. It can be highly beneficial for library staff and storytime attendees, generating new knowledge to inform and improve these programmes and providing information that can be used to exemplify and support their value.

In order to measure the impacts of storytime outreach, Fitzgerald (2016) identified a variety of formal and informal indicators, including personal satisfaction, observations of audience, attendance statistics, circulation statistics, public feedback surveys, peer feedback, and supervisor feedback. Informal reflection is undoubtedly useful, enabling staff to consistently reflect on and improve their practice. In some cases, outreach programmes utilise a formal evaluation process in order to gain a deeper understanding of programme benefits and areas for improvement.

Barratt-Pugh & Allen looked at the Better Beginnings initiative from the State Library of Western Australia, a programme "designed to provide positive early literacy experiences for all Western Australian families with young children aged from birth to three" (2015, p.82). Each year, public libraries submit data about the programme (both statistical and anecdotal), which is analysed by the State Library. Statistics cover attendance figures, the number of outreach sessions delivered, library memberships for the target groups, and circulation of parenting and picture books. Staff also observe and describe the impact of the programme in terms of families' use of the library and its services.

Better Beginnings was also independently evaluated by the Centre for Research in Early Childhood at Edith Cowan University in Western Australia. Three hundred parents took part in ongoing evaluation through answering surveys and interviews, with researchers' focusing on the effectiveness of the programme, and the factors that helped and hindered its

implementation. This process led to the identification of the key elements of integral importance to its success: listening to feedback from attendees and staff; professional development; coordination between libraries and agencies to create programmes that are well-planned, supported, and sustainable and; allowing for flexibility in the programme design, adapting to meet the needs of different communities (Barratt-Pugh & Allen, 2015).

Auckland Libraries' strategic plan (2012) provides a potentially useful framework for libraries to measure the success of storytime outreach, as it has a number of goals for children and youth to which these sessions can contribute.

2.6 Summary

Through considering the literature on storytime sessions and storytime outreach, it is clear that there are a range of approaches to these sessions, particularly in terms of training, preparation, and evaluation. While storytimes within the library and storytime outreach share some common goals, there are also some distinct differences, which are considered further in this research.

3. Research questions

This study identified the aims of storytime outreach sessions delivered by public library staff at early childhood education and care centres and the challenges staff face when delivering these sessions. It also examined how library staff prepare in order to best deliver these outcomes, and how libraries measure the impacts of these sessions. The research addressed the following questions:

- What are the aims of storytime outreach sessions?

- How do library staff prepare for storytime outreach sessions?

- What are the challenges staff face when delivering storytime outreach sessions?

- How do libraries measure the impacts of storytime outreach sessions?

A full list of interview questions can be found under Appendix C.

4. Methodology

4.1 Research design

This research took a qualitative approach. Jackson, Drummond, & Camara refer to this approach as "understanding human beings' richly textured experiences and reflections" (2007, p.22). As this research was concerned with gaining insight into the experiences of library staff, a qualitative approach was therefore most appropriate. This research is exploratory, and aimed to gain a new understanding of library staff experiences with preschool outreach. The explorative nature of the research allowed participants to respond to questions in their own words, evoking rich, meaningful responses.

4.2 Population and sample size

As this research was based on urban libraries in Auckland, interview participants were staff from libraries in the Waitematā local board area. This area includes four libraries, located in the central suburbs of Auckland: Auckland Central City Library, Grey Lynn Library, Parnell Library, and Leys Institute Library (Ponsonby).

It was important that a variety of staff perspectives were collected. Experiences with preschool outreach sessions can vary depending on the role a staff member serves within the library, and the responsibilities and expectations of that role. For example, a children's librarian may have greater responsibility (and potentially more experience) in delivering children's sessions than a part-time library assistant. The insights of different types of staff are valuable to the research, as they reflect the experiences of a variety of staff who are delivering these sessions. Interview participants were a range of senior librarians, and library assistants.

This research also involved an additional interview with a senior manager from Auckland Libraries in order to understand the aims of storytime outreach sessions from a strategic point of view.

In total, 9 participants were interviewed for this study.

4.3 Data collection

This research utilised semi-structured personal interviews.

These interviews allow the researcher to "follow the standard questions with one or more individually tailored questions to get clarification or probe a person's reasoning" (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015, p.160). This created the potential for new information to be discovered and allowed more room for the experiences of interviewees to be reflected in the research.

Interviews were conducted face-to-face, over the phone, and via email. Two interviews were conducted face-to-face. Three took place over the phone, due to the availability of participants. Four took place over email, which allowed participants to complete the interviews on their own time. This was particularly useful for part-time staff, who had limited availability.

Emails can be a highly useful format for interviews. They provide access to participants who would otherwise be inaccessible, and can be used "quickly, conveniently, and inexpensively" (Meho, 2006, p.1293). This format of interviewing also gives participants time to consider and formulate their responses (Ratislavová & Ratislav, 2014). In this context, interview questions were organised into four sections, and emailed to participants, with follow up questions emailed after completion.

As noted in the Literature Review, this research referred to Auckland Libraries' strategic plan, which allowed for comparison between staff aims and practices and the strategic goals of the organisation

4.4 Limitations

The sample size of participants for this research means that the collected data is not representative of the experiences and beliefs of all urban Auckland Libraries staff. However

purposive sampling provided data on a range of experiences and beliefs from a variety of library staff from different library settings.

The different interview formats created variation in participants' responses, with each format presenting its own limitations. With data being collected through a range of interview methods, the quality of the data varied depending on the limitations of each process.

Ratislavová & Ratislav (2014) describe the limitations of email interviews in terms of feedback and interaction, with less opportunity for people to communicate using various cues and senses. Therefore it was important that email interviews were conducted in a manner that "empathetic, attentive and sensitive" (Ratislavová & Ratislav, 2014, p.456), ensuring that attention was paid to the manner of communication in order to account for this limitation and build relationships with research participants that facilitated the collection of meaningful, useful data.

Telephone interviews also limit the researcher's ability to establish a rapport with participants (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015), as well as eliminating the opportunity to read non-verbal cues. While face-to-face interviews are not limited in this way, they can be time-consuming for both parties (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015). This was particularly relevant to library staff in customer-facing roles who had less available time for this form of interview. These interviews were scheduled based on the availability and convenience of participants.

As both telephone and face-to-face interviews were conducted in real time, participants had less time to review their responses or refer to resources (for example storytime planning templates) during the interview process. Email interviews were often more dense, structured, and explicit than face-to-face interviews. This method allows participants more time to consider and evaluate how they respond (Ratislavová & Ratislav, 2014).

Interviews rely on self-report data, and participants may describe their experiences, thoughts, and beliefs inaccurately (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015). In the case of telephone and face-to-face interviews, responses were conducted on the spot, and potentially influenced by recent events or circumstances, therefore not giving the most authentic representation of information. Some interview questions also required participants to rely on memory to provide their answers, which can also present inaccuracies.

4.5 Ethical considerations

Ethics approval was granted from the Victoria University School of Information Management's Human Ethics Committee.

As this research involved human participants, it was essential to address any issues surrounding their voluntary and informed participation and right to privacy. The researcher was granted permission from Auckland Libraries to approach their staff for interviews. Once this was approved, emails were sent to relevant potential participants, outlining the study. Confidentiality of potential participants was guaranteed. Those who participated in the study were given information about the research project and their involvement in it, as well as the option to withdraw from the study any time before a specified date. They were also given a consent form to sign before being interviewed (see Appendices A and B). Transcripts of recorded interviews were sent to participants to be verified.

4.6 Data analysis

Data was analysed following Creswell's data analysis spiral (2013). The data was organised into electronic folders, and information was read several times in order to gain a broad sense of the information collected, while preliminary notes were recorded. The data was then organised based on themes, which were broken down into smaller categories, giving shape and clarity to the collected information. This step involved a visual component, with data organised by colour coding. Finally, the data was summarised into sections. The information collected was a combination of deductive and inductive data, with themes based on the literature and research questions, and others emerging from the data.

The processes of data collection, analysis, and reporting, can often be non-linear and interrelated. Employing the use of the data analysis spiral was a useful and effective method for organising the collected information, providing the opportunity to consider the data numerous times, leading to considered research.

4.7 Summary

Applying a thoughtful and informed methodology to this study was a critical component in ensuring the information gathered was relevant, organised, and useful. An awareness of the potential limitations of the research was essential in approaching the process with understanding and care, leading to the collection of valuable and impactful information.

5. Results

This research revealed a number of themes on storytime outreach aims, delivering and evaluating sessions, measuring the impacts of these sessions, training and support, and the challenges associated with storytime outreach. The following sections will detail these findings.

5.1 Background

Staff interviewed from the four libraries from the Waitematā local board area delivered storytime outreach sessions at over 30 early childhood education and care centres, reaching over 1,000 children. The level of experience that interview participants had with storytime outreach was widely varied, from six months to eight years. While most participants visited each centre once per term, this was not unanimous, with others visiting once every two terms.

The majority of interview participants delivered sessions alone. Some participants preferred this, while one discussed a lack of staffing impacting their ability to deliver sessions in pairs:

"… to find a day where there's someone to cover the regular programme here and be able to take someone else out with me is a unicorn of a day."

Those who were able to present their sessions alongside a colleague highlighted the benefits of this arrangement, noting how it enabled them to keep children engaged and the sessions "on track".

When asked to describe a typical storytime outreach session, participants described each session including an introduction of themselves, and a welcome song and goodbye song, interspersed with picture books, action songs, and rhymes. Many of the participants finished each session by blowing bubbles for the children.

5.2 Storytime versus storytime outreach

The key difference identified between storytime sessions at the library versus storytime outreach sessions was the adult to child ratio. This created limitations on the kinds of activities library staff could include in their sessions, and sometimes made it more difficult for staff to keep children engaged throughout the session.

One participant described storytime outreach as having more "variables", such as the number and age of the children at each centre. There was also discussion of the different role library staff felt they served in the early childhood centre space. Some participants felt that early childhood staff were already able to provide songs and activities, making it important that they primarily focus on books:

"I read more stories when I do outreach because I feel like that's the aspect of the library that I'm really promoting."

"In the library I see it more as pushing that boundary of what a storytime is, whereas in a centre...we're really there for the stories."

As the following section will discuss, building relationships is a significant goal of storytime outreach. In this context, relationships are built between library staff and children attending their sessions, as well as library staff and the centres themselves. However storytime sessions delivered at the library instead develop relationships with families:

"In some ways the hard work of building that relationship is almost done because they're coming into the library. What you're doing is nurturing that relationship. You don't have to establish it because they've already walked in your door."

5.3 Library staff aims for storytime outreach

The key aims for staff when delivering storytime outreach were building relationships with children and centres, promoting awareness of the library, nurturing a love of reading, and developing meaningful storytime outreach sessions.

5.3.1 Building relationships and awareness

When questioned about the desired outcomes of storytime outreach, many interview participants discussed building relationships by creating a positive experience for children, and encouraging them to view the library as a place of familiarity and enjoyment.

One participant discussed how many young children are now in early childhood education and care centres for much longer times, some from infancy until they enter school, which can prevent them from being able to regularly visit their local library. They saw storytime outreach as a way to connect with these children and ensure that they are aware of the library and have access to its services, despite not being able to physically visit the library itself. Through building positive relationships, library staff aim to ensure that children who are able to visit the library feel comfortable and welcome. One staff member stated:

"It enhances their visit if they come in. They might know your name, or remember you, and it makes the library a more friendly environment than the stereotypes of libraries where you just get your book and sit quietly."

The concept of "connection" arose numerous times, with library staff discussing the importance of not only building connections but maintaining them over time. They achieved this by regular visits, building consistent, ongoing relationships. Staff also discussed the powerful impact of how they conduct themselves within the centre, identifying the importance of being "open", "personable", and "friendly" when conducting a session.

It was also important for interview participants to create a relationship with not only children within the centres, but with the centres themselves. Some participants highlighted the value of sharing knowledge with early childhood staff. The books and songs shared during the outreach sessions may be new to staff at the centre, and in this way, library staff are sharing knowledge with staff as well as children.

One librarian also mentioned the learning stories that early childhood staff record and send home for parents, providing the potential for parents to be reminded of the library and affirming the positive impact of its services.

5.3.2 The joy of reading

Encouraging and developing a love of reading was another common goal. Library staff discussed sharing their "passion" for books, hoping that their outreach sessions would introduce children to reading and teach them that "books are something that they should love".

One participant discussed choosing picture books with "bright, eye-catching illustrations to engage the children". This notion of engagement was critical for many, who established the importance of involving children in the sessions rather than having them "sit there and not partake". Staff worked to achieve this by asking questions throughout the reading experience, beginning each story with questions related to its content. Many continued with questions throughout the story in order to encourage continued engagement.

Some participants described their desire that developing the enjoyment of reading would encourage and promote the use of the library and its collections:

> *"Our hope is...that children will want to seek out more books from Auckland Libraries - in each session, we let them know that they can come [to the library] to borrow books if they want to"*.

The majority of interview participants pinpointed enjoyment as a key aim of storytime outreach sessions. Many found that creating a "fun" session was a crucial way to foster a love of reading, and that by associating the session with entertainment, children would hopefully come to enjoy reading. One participant also highlighted the hope that this association would stretch to the physical library also, and that children would "see the library as a fun place."

As one librarian stated, "I try to make the time that I'm there with them...one of the most exciting times of the day."

5.3.3 Developing meaningful storytime sessions

Another aim some participants discussed was the continued development of meaningful storytime outreach sessions. Rather than simply entering the space and delivering a session, these staff hoped to gain "knowledge and understanding of how we can support the early childhood centres as a library community".

One participant discussed how they viewed the storytime outreach experience as an opportunity to see what children were working on within their centres, which provided them with direction and themes for future sessions. This approach also enabled them to understand children's reading capabilities and interests in order to better serve them.

Another outlined their library's shift towards "intentional" storytelling:

> *"We are trying to focus now on spending longer with each story, so we might read less stories but be more focused on the story and talking about what's happening, allowing more time for children to contribute, question, and talk about their experience with it."*

This change grew from a desire be conscious of the impact and value that storytime outreach brings to an early childhood education and care centre, in order to make it more meaningful and effective.

5.4 Training and support

When questioned on storytime outreach training, participants had varied responses. Most participants had previously delivered storytime sessions within the library, which they felt gave them the foundation for presenting these sessions outside the library space. However some participants had never delivered a storytime session at their library, and instead had their first experience in an outreach capacity.

While some participants mentioned training documents, this was not a common thread across the interviews, and those that were aware of these resources did not use them. Only one participant described attending a training workshop for children's programming.

There is no formal training for storytime, whether delivered within the library, or as outreach. Instead, participants described learning by visiting centres with a colleague and observing their practice before presenting sessions themselves, a method described by one library assistant as "a very organic and relaxed experience".

One participant discussed seeking professional development outside of the library organisation, utilising the American Library Association's *Supercharging your Storytimes* webinar in order to up-skill, and share new knowledge with colleagues.

Another participant described the broad range of life experience that can aid storytime delivery, detailing their experience reading books aloud from a young age: "reading stories to younger siblings, and nephews and nieces, has always been part of our family culture". Another described their experience at drama school, which gave them the skills and confidence to deliver storytime sessions.

When discussing how they felt about the level of training and support they received, numerous participants expressed satisfaction with the help they received from colleagues but the majority did not mention broader support from the organisation. One participant expressed the necessity for more professional development opportunities, noting the importance of not just training but also meeting with staff from different libraries in order to share ideas and refresh their practice.

5.5 Storytime outreach delivery

When delivering storytime outreach sessions, participants had differing approaches to preparation, while common themes arose when discussing useful skills and qualities.

5.5.1 Preparing for storytime outreach sessions

Interview participants had a wide range of approaches to preparing for storytime outreach sessions. While most participants utilised some form of plan to refer to when delivering their sessions, the method of preparation was varied.

On one end of the spectrum, some participants described creating plans for all upcoming storytime outreach sessions at the beginning of the term, selecting books and songs and using

these same resources for a range of centres. These plans served as a base, which could be adapted depending on the age group or engagement levels of those at each session.

Another participant described communicating with early childhood education and care centres, and basing their storytime plans on the current learning focuses for each centre.

On the other end of the spectrum, one participant did not plan their sessions, as they were comfortable depending on their many years of experience, and instead brought a wide range of picture books to each centre, deciding which ones to read during the session itself.

5.5.2 Necessary skills and qualities

When discussing the necessary skills for storytime outreach, the majority of participants highlighted the importance of confidence, a crucial quality which helped to ensure children remained engaged throughout the storytime session. This skill was also useful when unexpected hurdles occurred during a session, such as a malfunctioning iPod, as it enabled staff to maintain composure and continue to lead the session with command and assurance.

Another valuable quality was flexibility, enabling staff to respond to sudden changes and obstacles:

> *"...if you go in with a plan and one of them [the children] derails it slightly, if you can't work with that, then it's going to be a disaster."*

If staff feel comfortable and confident in delivering storytime then they are more able to face challenges with ease. However, multiple participants noted that these were not skills they possessed prior to delivering storytime sessions, instead developing these abilities through experience and practice.

A love of books and reading was another commonly identified quality, and numerous participants felt it important to demonstrate this passion through enthusiasm:

> *"they're [the children] not going to enjoy it unless you can bring the enthusiasm, and a showmanship to what you do."*

Warmth and good humour were also recurring themes, described by one participant as "paramount" to a session's success.

5.6 Evaluation and impacts

Interview participants had varied approaches to evaluating their practice, as well as different methods for measuring the impacts of their sessions.

5.6.1 Evaluating storytime outreach

Similar to preparation and planning, questions about methods of storytime evaluation inspired mixed responses. Some evaluated their practice regularly, while others had not done so for some time.

Some library staff employed formal evaluation techniques, surveying early childhood education and care centres one or two times per year, and meeting with colleagues each term to identify areas for improvement. Others relied on in-person feedback, either from colleagues or early childhood staff, directly after each session. Many also felt that gauging audience response during the session was an effective method of evaluation:

> *"I like to feed off and engage with everybody to see where I'm going and if I'm going in the right direction. You'll know from them what you need to improve on because it'll either work or it won't."*

These staff refined their sessions with each delivery, identifying songs or stories which engaged, or did not engage, children, and continuing, or discontinuing their use accordingly.

Despite many interview participants emphasising the value of consultation with colleagues, only one participant discussed meeting with staff from other libraries to network and share experiences.

5.6.2 Measuring impacts

Many of the library staff interviewed discussed the difficulty of tangibly demonstrating the impacts of storytime outreach sessions.

While statistics are recorded, noting centres visited and children present, some participants found that this form of measurement does not describe how children engaged with the session, or what the effects of the session were:

"From a statistical point of view we can count how many kids we are reaching [at a storytime outreach session] but that doesn't mean they're physically coming to this library...it's a bit of a hard measure."

Some participants detailed communicating with early childhood education and care centre staff in order to obtain feedback but there was no common method of acquiring this information. One participant noted that early childhood staff are often "pressed for time", leaving them unable to give written feedback on the sessions. Instead, some participants found informal, verbal feedback to be a more effective method.

A recurring theme that arose was recognition, with many library staff members feeling that children remembering them and associating them with the library was a positive result of their consistent sessions at centres. Multiple participants told anecdotes of being recognised in public by children, and associated with the library space. One participant reported her experience of visiting a primary school where many of the students recognised her from storytime outreach sessions at their former early childhood centres:

"It was an entire room of children who already knew me....I'm not quite sure how to capture this but that is also a measure of success that tells me that going and reading stories...has worked. Because not only did you sit here quite quietly and entranced for the entirety of storytime, which suggests that you've learned that skill of sitting and listening to a story... but that you remember me, suggests that you've already got a relationship built with the library."

Another discussed noticing an increase in centres visiting their library, a change that has taken several years to come into effect. Again, the difficulty of demonstrating these visits in physical evidence was a struggle for participants, with another discussing how children may also be visiting different libraries depending on where they live, which added to the struggle of capturing this information.

5.7 Challenges

Storytime outreach presents a number of challenges for staff, some of which present obstacles to reaching centres and delivering sessions, while others can be resolved through planning and experience.

Having adequate time to prepare and deliver sessions was a significant challenge for many, with participants describing the difficulty of scheduling storytime outreach alongside regular children's programming at the library. One librarian described mitigating this by having one morning a week dedicated to outreach, allowing the rest of the week for sessions in the library. This shift included communication with the centres, encouraging them to visit the library during the weeks that did not contain an outreach session, potentially fostering a more reciprocal relationship between the library and the centres.

Some staff found transport to limit their potential reach, selecting centres for sessions based either on their ability to travel there on public transport, or find nearby parking. While some participants had many centres within walking distance, this also presented its own challenge, with bad weather or uphill walking routes creating a potentially unpleasant travel experience.

When delivering storytime sessions, some participants described a lack of support from staff at early childhood centres, who would take these sessions as an opportunity to focus on other tasks, rather than sharing responsibility for the children. This made it hard for library staff to maintain engagement, who felt that centre staff could help through modelling appropriate behaviour.

As new children are enrolled at centres at varying times throughout the year, library staff do not always know who their audience may be, and are constantly meeting new children who they must build relationships with. In some cases children are younger than anticipated, making it necessary for staff to ensure they bring a selection of material to each session, and be willing to include or remove songs and books depending on what will best suit the attendees present.

Technology also presented challenges for some, who sometimes struggled with using iPods and bluetooth speakers in order to play songs during the sessions. They felt it important to

deliver a polished, smooth session in order to be positive examples of the library and its services:

"I'm used to it now but it's still in the back of my mind that there are people that work there that are watching you....and how you deal with things. We're supposed to be showing the professional side of the library as well as the creative side."

Multiple participants discussed their own nerves and shyness to be an initial challenge when delivering storytime outreach sessions, one that they worked to overcome through preparation, experience, and support from colleagues.

Finally, keeping sessions fresh and new was also a struggle, particularly for staff who had long-term experience delivering storytime outreach.

5.8 Strategic alignment

As well as interviewing library staff, this research involved speaking with a senior manager from Auckland Libraries in order to get a strategic perspective on storytime outreach.

They felt that the main goal for these sessions was to support literacy, helping children to learn and explore language in a fun way. Promoting library membership was also cited as a key aim. Another intent was to support school readiness by adding elements of "imagination, creativity, and learning to play" to storytime sessions. They also discussed the importance of reaching out to early childhood education centres in order to ensure that children have access to books, as well as promoting books to parents through early childhood education centres, stating "our intention is always to create and nurture readers".

Many children are not supported in reading at home, be it because their parents do not read with them, do not have books at home, are not active library members, or are unable to visit the library. Storytime outreach provides access to these children through their centres, giving library staff the opportunity to build connections with them, and increase awareness of the library itself. In some cases, this builds a reciprocal relationship between the library and the centre, resulting in centres visiting the library, giving children exposure to the library from an early age.

When questioned about their understanding of the library organisation's aims for storytime outreach, library staff discussed engaging with the community, promoting the library, sharing professional knowledge, and supporting literacy, goals which align with the strategic perspective.

5.8.1 Understanding of challenges

In discussing challenges, the senior manager felt that storytime outreach obstacles were largely operational. Lack of resources was a key struggle, and it was highlighted that some libraries are unable to reach all of the centres in their area due to staffing. It was also noted that some early childhood centres did not visit their local library, be this because it did not align with the centre's priorities, or the logistical difficulties of transporting groups of children.

5.8.2 The future of storytime outreach

This research occurred at a moment of change for Auckland Libraries' storytime outreach. During the interview process, consultation was occurring between senior management and library staff in order to improve and enhance the storytime outreach experience. While the documentation for this programme development is yet to be released, this research did cover some of the hopes for future storytime outreach.

One element of this shift is a focus on delivering more meaningful storytime outreach sessions, both in terms of literacy and entertainment. Professional development was also a key goal, aiming to ensure that staff understand the desired outcome for storytime outreach and "why we do what we do".

When discussing Auckland Libraries' strategic plan for for 2013 - 2023, the participant felt that storytime outreach was contributing to the key outcome of promoting library membership. What was most important however was connecting and engaging with children:

> *"We can use as much jargon as we want, "every child a reader" and absolutely we want to work towards it but how do we do it? The most beautiful part is that we go and we actually touch their lives."*

As many library staff members noted, measuring the impacts of storytime impacts can be a difficult task. This area is also tackled in the programme development document, which will look at short-term and long-term outcomes. These will focus on not only children and caregivers, but also the community, with the hope that they will ensure "that our children's librarians, and our entire staff who would deliver storytime, really understand and make it more meaningful and valuable to the community". Indicators for these impacts are yet to be confirmed.

5.9 Summary

This research revealed the key aims of storytime outreach, as well as the various approaches to delivering and evaluating sessions, the training and support staff receive, and the challenges associated with storytime outreach. The aims of these sessions were also examined from a strategic perspective, providing greater clarity on the purpose of outreach and the understanding of what is needed to improve and enhance storytime outreach in the future.

6. Discussion

The results of this research identified a number of themes that mirror those of previous studies, as well as revealing some new information that will be of value as outreach programmes continue to develop. This discussion will examine the results of this research, focusing on storytime outreach aims, training and preparation, measuring impacts, and the challenges staff face when delivering these sessions.

6.1 Storytime outreach aims

As stated by Romero & Armstrong (2017), outreach provides libraries with the opportunity to reach new users. It enables library staff to promote and share library services with those who are unable to visit the library itself (Smith, 2008). This establishes the library as an important part of the childhood learning community, reaching families in a new way (Campana, Mills, & Martin, 2018). These aims were supported by interview participants, who felt that building relationships with children and early childhood centres was a key way of providing access to library services, while also promoting the library as a fun and welcoming space, an aim noted by Campbell-Hicks (2016). This served to enhance the visits of new users, increasing familiarity with the library. It also rooted the library as an important part of the early childhood community.

Storytime outreach does not only serve children, as participants described the potential for professional development of teachers, who are exposed to new resources during these sessions, and are able to observe good practice of the reading experience, an area which Cahill (2004) argues is often in need of support.

In keeping with the findings of Haribson-Price (2017), participants also hoped to encourage print motivation, defined by Goulding et. al as "being interested in and enjoying books and reading" (2014, p. 3). This was achieved by choosing eye-catching books, and asking children questions throughout the session, cultivating and encouraging engagement. Many participants felt that delivering a fun, entertaining session also contributed to this goal. While Harbison-Price (2017) noted a tension over whether storytime sessions were recreational or

educational activities, the majority of participants in this study agreed that enjoyment was an important part of storytime outreach, which could lead to the use of the library and its collections.

This research also revealed a number of new insights on the desired outcomes of storytime outreach. It was interesting to note the intention of changing the perception of the library, aiming to promote it as a friendly space, rather than one of austerity and silence. Demeanour was identified as an important contributor to this, with participants highlighting the importance of maintaining a personable presence throughout each outreach session.

Auckland Libraries' strategic plan for for 2013 - 2023 (2012) states a number of goals for children and youth. Storytime outreach sessions delivered by library staff in the Waitematā local board area actively contribute to a number of these aims, supporting the desired outcomes for Auckland Libraries, which are to "create and nurture readers; work holistically with parents, whanau, carers and schools to strengthen family literacy; stimulate imagination, creativity and learning through play and; support learning, life skills and transitions for children and young people" (2012, p. 22). It is clear that this outreach is a highly valuable and effective component of the organisation as a whole.

6.2 Measuring impacts

Another significant finding of this research was participants' desire to be conscious of the impact of storytime outreach, developing meaningful, intentional sessions, informed by the learning focuses and needs of each centre. This is a valuable goal, providing the opportunity for storytime outreach to continually improve and enhance based on the changing demands of early childhood education. However, the lack of a cohesive evaluation process may impact staff ability to measure the impacts and necessary developments for these sessions.

While statistics of storytime outreach sessions are recorded, noting the centres visited and children reached, participants did not discuss any other formal methods of measuring and evaluating their impacts. However, participants did use various methods of informal evaluation, such as observing engagement, verbal feedback, being recognised outside of the library space, and increased library visits from early childhood centres, many of which were

also stated by Fitzgerald (2016). While the majority of these impacts are not statistical, they do contribute to the strategic goals of storytime outreach.

The value of these personal experiences was advocated by participants, including the senior manager interviewed, who described the holistic benefits of storytime outreach.
It is clear from this research that anecdotal evidence and observations make up a large part of participants' evaluation of storytime outreach, yet these are not currently recorded, and therefore cannot be utilised to demonstrate the value of these sessions. The desired outcomes of storytime outreach go beyond reaching a certain number of children, or growing library membership. Staff aiming to build relationships with children and centres, or encourage print motivation, are likely to observe many examples of these goals being achieved. However without a method of capturing these impacts, the result is that they appear to be less important than statistics.

As discussed by Barratt-Pugh & Allen (2015), the State Library of Western Australia's Better Beginnings initiative utilises an evaluation method in which public libraries submit data on both statistics of sessions, and staff observations. In recording these observations, staff experiences and perspectives are captured and validated. This approach may be useful for Auckland Libraries.

Better Beginnings also benefited from an independent evaluation, which led to the identification of the key elements for the programme's success (Barratt-Pugh & Allen, 2015). While many of the participants in this research had a firm understanding of the necessary skills one needed to deliver storytime outreach, as well as the elements that made it a success, these factors are not currently used as areas to monitor and improve on. Ensuring an understanding of the critical factors for positive outreach experiences enables staff to not only evaluate their sessions but also improve and develop them, ensuring they deliver the meaningful sessions for which they strive.

6.3 Training

In order to ensure the continued delivery of storytime outreach aims, it is critical that staff are supported in their preparation and delivery of storytime outreach, and are given the opportunity to develop and refresh their sessions.

As with the findings of McKend (2010), there was inconsistency in the storytime training of participants in this study, who had a range of experience, both in the library, and working with children. Carroll (2015) found that Auckland Library staff delivering storytime sessions learned by observing and working alongside colleagues. This was considered sufficient by many participants in this study, who felt that practical learning was well-suited to these sessions.

While training workshops can be vastly beneficial experiences for library staff delivering outreach programmes, this form of training was not experienced by the majority of interview participants. Such training can provide attendees with resources for planning sessions, as well as broader information about the connection between the library and outreach services, and the intended outcomes for these sessions (Martinez, 2007).

It has been established that there is potential for enhancing the way that storytime outreach is evaluated. An important part of this process is staff training. It is in this context that staff can learn about the various ways of observing the impacts of storytime outreach, using these observations to continue to develop their sessions.

It was interesting to note the range of life experiences that contributed to participants' ability to deliver these sessions, demonstrating the potential range of training methods that could be used to inform storytime outreach and the benefits of knowledge outside the formal library skill set.

While initial training was largely felt to be satisfactory, it is important to highlight the lack of support from the wider organisation, particularly in terms of refreshing ideas for sessions.

Learning alongside colleagues may be a successful method yet many research participants delivered sessions alone, limiting their potential for feedback and new learning.

Keeping storytime outreach new and exciting was identified by multiple participants as a challenge. This obstacle could be addressed by support from the organisation, ensuring opportunities for regular meetings between relevant library staff, or a platform through which staff can share experiences and ideas. Much of the knowledge that could be used to enhance the experiences of both those delivering storytime outreach, and those attending the sessions, is already in existence. What is necessary is a method for this knowledge to be shared.

6.4 Preparation

Similar to training, staff preparation for storytime outreach sessions was varied. However, a number of effective approaches were noted, which enabled staff to deliver considered sessions that allowed for flexibility, and worked in conjunction with early childhood centres to contribute to learning in a way that is both sustainable and relevant.

This was achieved through two methods. Planning storytime sessions at the start of the term gives staff a foundation which can be adapted based on the needs of each centre. Having this base can enable staff to be mindful of the desired impacts of these sessions, ensuring their intentions are achieved. The second method is consulting with early childhood centres to deliver sessions based on their learning focus areas. This creates greater synergy between libraries and centres. It also contributes to the aim of building a relationship with centres, a goal described by participants in this study, reflecting the argument of Campana, Mills, & Martin (2018) and instilling libraries as a key part of their community.

Applying this method at the planning stage may be useful for staff who are looking to develop sessions that support their early learning community, considering their needs and priorities, while also ensuring that the library and its services are promoted.

6.5 Challenges

This research generated new information about many aspects of storytime outreach, particularly the challenges library staff face when delivering these sessions. A range of obstacles were identified, including a scarcity of time and staff, transport, a lack of support from early childhood staff, the unpredictable age range of children, using technology, and the shyness of some staff.

As this research occurred during a time of strategic development of storytime outreach, understanding these challenges will be of immense value for senior management staff. While the senior manager interviewed believed challenges to be a largely operational concern, considering and addressing these issues is integral to the ongoing success of storytime outreach.

6.6 Summary

This research supports the findings of previous studies while also identifying new information that can be used to improve and develop storytime outreach. There are numerous strong aims for storytime outreach, which would benefit from greater organisational support, and a more considered, holistic approach to the evaluation of staff performance and the impacts of sessions.

7. Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to generate new information about storytime outreach sessions. It identified the aims of these sessions as building relationships and awareness of the library, encouraging a love of reading, and developing meaningful sessions. These aims align with - and contribute to - the desired outcomes for Auckland Libraries. It also found potential for development in the way staff evaluate their practice, ensuring ongoing support is provided, with opportunities for staff to meet and share ideas on a regular basis. The methods staff use to measure the impacts of storytime outreach would also benefit from further consideration, creating the opportunity for staff to record their personal experiences in order to demonstrate the value of these sessions.

This research also created the possibility to improve the experiences of both staff and storytime outreach attendees by understanding the challenges staff face when delivering these sessions. These results are valuable for public libraries and similar organisations who currently deliver storytime outreach sessions, as well as organisations who are new to this type of programme. A deeper understanding of how staff are prepared and supported in their planning and delivery of these sessions will enable organisations to address obstacles moving forward.

As this research took place at a time when this programme was being redeveloped, it will be useful to revisit this topic in light of the changes applied. It will be beneficial to understand how this has impacted the aims of, training for, and delivery of storytime outreach, as well as ascertaining if it has minimised the identified challenges. It would also be useful to look at storytime outreach with a focus on early literacy skills, analysing how library staff feel they fit into the early childhood education space, and the role they feel they play in this context.

The senior manager interviewed noted the importance of mobile librarians, who are key outreach contributors. While this was not applicable to the focus of this research, it would be highly beneficial to gain insight on their perspectives on delivering storytime sessions.

As noted in the Limitations section, this research focused on library staff in the Waitematā local board area, whose perspectives may differ to those of staff from different areas. Researching the unique experiences of staff from other local board areas would contribute to gaining a well-rounded understanding of Auckland Libraries' storytime outreach. Such research is vital to supporting and achieving the worthy goals of these sessions, ensuring that libraries continue to play a vital role in their communities.

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9. Appendix A - Invitation to participate in research

Kia ora [Title and Name]

My name is Isabella McDermott and I am a Master of Information Studies student at Victoria University of Wellington. I'm inviting libraries to take part in my research into storytime outreach sessions.

The purpose of this research project is to investigate the aims of storytime outreach sessions at early childhood and education and care centres, as well as looking at how library staff prepare for these sessions, the challenges they face in delivering them, and how the impacts of these sessions are measured. I'm hoping to focus on urban libraries, particularly those in the Waitematā local board area.

I would love to interview some of the library staff delivering these sessions. I'm looking to interview 8 - 12 people. It would also be useful to speak to a member of Auckland Libraries' senior management staff about the aims of these sessions. During this research project, I'm hoping to talk to a range of library staff to generate new information that will hopefully be of value to a wide range of libraries.

The interviews should only take around 30 minutes and can be done in person, over the phone or via email. If you're interested and think your staff would like to take part, I can send more information including some areas of discussion, as well as the information and consent forms as required by the Human Ethics Committee.

I hope to hear from you soon.

Kind regards,

Isabella McDermott

10. Appendix B - Information sheet

Auckland Urban Libraries and Preschool Storytime Outreach

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS

You are invited to take part in this research. Please read this information before deciding whether or not to take part. If you decide to participate, thank you. If you decide not to participate, thank you for considering this request.

Who am I?

My name is Isabella McDermott and I am a Masters student in Information Studies at Victoria University of Wellington. I'm inviting you to take part in my research into storytime outreach.

What is the aim of the project?

The purpose of this research is to investigate the aims of public library storytime outreach sessions at early childhood and education and care centres, as well as looking at how library staff prepare for these sessions, the challenges they face in delivering them, and the way the impacts of these sessions are measured.

This research will create new knowledge, benefitting public libraries and other organisations that deliver these sessions.

This research has been approved by the Victoria University of Wellington Human Ethics Committee (reference number 0000027098).

How can you help?

I am inviting library staff who deliver storytime outreach sessions to children at early childhood education and care centres to participate in this research.

If you agree to take part I will interview you either in person at your place of work, or via telephone or email if that is more convenient to you. I will ask you questions about your experiences and reflections on delivering storytime outreach sessions. The interview will take half an hour.

You will be asked for permission to record the interview and a transcript of the interview will be sent to you for checking. You can choose to not answer any question or stop the interview at any time, without giving a reason. Should you wish to withdraw from the project, you may do so within the two weeks following the completion of the interview and the data collected up to that point will be destroyed.

What will happen to the information you give?

You will not be named in the final report but your organisation will be named.
Only my supervisors and I will read the notes or transcript of the interview. The interview transcripts, summaries and any recordings will be kept securely and destroyed within two years after the completion of this project.

What will the project produce?

The information gathered will culminate in a research project for my Master of Information Studies and possible journal articles and conference presentations.

If you accept this invitation, what are your rights as a research participant?

You do not have to accept this invitation if you don't want to. If you do decide to participate, you have the right to:

- choose not to answer any question;
- ask for the recorder to be turned off at any time during the interview;
- withdraw from the study within the two weeks following the completion of the interview;
- ask any questions about the study at any time;
- receive a copy of your interview transcript

    If you have any questions or problems, who can you contact?

    If you have any questions, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact me at mcdermisab1@myvuw.ac.nz or my supervisor Anne Goulding, Professor of Library and Information Management, at anne.goulding@vuw.ac.nz or telephone 04 463-5887.

Human Ethics Committee information

If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research you may contact the Victoria University HEC Convenor: Dr Judith Loveridge. Email hec@vuw.ac.nz or telephone +64-4-463 6028.

11. Appendix C - Interview questions

BACKGROUND

1. What is your role?

2. How long have you been working for this library?

3. How long have you been running storytimes at the library?

4. How long have you been running storytime outreach sessions?

5. How would you describe your community?

6. What kinds of storytime outreach sessions do you run?

7. Can you describe a typical storytime outreach session for you?

STORYTIME AIMS AND IMPACTS

8. What is your goal/desired outcome for storytime outreach sessions?

a. How do you work to achieve this?

9. What is your understanding of the library's vision for children's outreach sessions?

10. How do you measure the impacts of these sessions?

STORYTIME PREPARATION

11. How do you prepare for storytime outreach sessions?

12. In your opinion, what skills or experiences does one need to deliver these sessions?

13. Have you received any training or support for delivering these sessions?

14. How do you feel about the support/training you receive from your library?

15. How do you evaluate and improve your practice?

STORYTIME CHALLENGES

16. What challenges do you face when delivering storytime outreach sessions?

17. In your opinion, how does storytime outreach differ from storytime sessions in the library?

18. Is there anything further you would like to add about your or your library's approach to storytime outreach?

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Word Count (excluding abstract, acknowledgements, and appendices): 9,979