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Story Time

Providing early literacy sessions in libraries to preschoolers on the autism spectrum and their parents





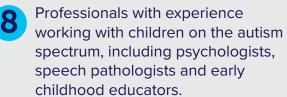
Background

More than 160 early literacy sessions, sometimes referred to as Story Time sessions, are conducted in Brisbane City Council (BCC) libraries each week, with more than 300,000 adults and children attending annually.



Who took part?







Aim

The overall aim of this project was to enable more inclusive participation of preschoolers on the autism spectrum in Story Time sessions delivered in BCC libraries.

We aimed to addressed this by:

- 1. Providing professional development training to build knowledge of
 - a. autism
 - b. emergent literacy development in preschoolers on the autism spectrum
 - c. strategies for working with children on the autism spectrum
- Developing autism-friendly Story Times for parents of preschoolers on the autism spectrum, to be delivered by library staff
- Embedding the autism-friendly
 Story Times into community practice
 through development of a multimedia
 professional development package for
 ongoing use.



How we did the research

There were four phases:

PHASE ONE

Face-to-face professional development



PHASE TWO Implementation of a six-week Story Time program



PHASE THREE Online professional development and implementation



PHASE FOUR Broader stakeholder consultation with education and allied health professionals



Storytime



What did we find?



Librarian participation in a face-to-face professional development presentation led to increased knowledge of autism, emergent literacy, and strategies to make Story Time sessions more autism friendly.



Most librarians contacted reported that they had changed their Story Time practice in response to the professional development.

"I feel more confident in assisting parents of children on the autism spectrum with information and book choices"



Implementation of the six-week Story Time program following online training was viable for librarians, without the need for external support from the researchers.



Allied health and educators viewed the online training components and training as useful and indicated suggestions for refinements to align more closely with their discipline needs.



Who did the research?









A/Prof. Marleen Westerveld, Dr. Jessica Paynter, Dr. Kate Simpson, Griffith University and Autism CRC; David McCartney, Autism Queensland; Andrea Hurley, First 5 Forever, Brisbane City Council; Kathryn O'Leary, Autism CRC.

Acknowledgments

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Find out more

Find the final report of this study and an executive summary at autismcrc.com.au/reports/storytime

You can contact the project leader at m.westerveld@griffith.edu.au