



Briefing Note: *Reading Together® Te Pānui Ngātahi: Summary of evaluations and implementation exemplars and A3s*

To:	Hon Jan Tinetti, Associate Minister of Education		
Cc:	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education Hon Kelvin Davis, Associate Minister of Education – (Māori Education) Hon Aupito William Sio, Associate Minister of Education		
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Purpose of Briefing

This briefing outlines the key findings of the *Reading Together® Te Pānui Ngātahi: Summary of evaluations and implementation exemplars* report which will be released with a series of A3 summaries on Education Counts.

Summary

- Reading Together® Te Pānui Ngātahi is a high impact, research-based workshop programme that helps parents, whānau and aiga effectively support their children's reading. It accelerates reading achievement, supports children's wellbeing, and has enduring effects for positive and culturally responsive education.
- In Budget 2021, the Ministry received \$9.693 million to expand the delivery of Early Reading Together® and Reading Together® over four years, as part of a broader initiative to improve literacy and wellbeing outcomes for children.
- The *Reading Together® Te Pānui Ngātahi: Summary of evaluations and implementation exemplars* report supports the effective expansion of Reading Together® in schools. It outlines the multiple outcomes for parents, whānau and aiga, children, schools, and library communities; describes how schools can effectively implement the programme; and identifies how the Ministry can support schools with their implementation.
- The report and accompanying A3s that outline key findings, will be released on Education Counts on 7 November as part of an update to the *Reading Together® Te Pānui Ngātahi Exemplars: New evidence resources and links for support* feature.

- The updated feature makes available exemplars of community driven and iwi-partnership delivery:
 - *Reading Together® Te Pānui Ngātahi 2020 Case Study: Benefits of programme delivery in Samoan churches* report with accompanying A3s in English and Gagana Sāmoa.
 - [Reading Together® Fairhaven School-Iwi Partnership exemplar](#) that showcases reading in both English and Te Reo Māori.
- The Ministry has contracted Pragmatica Ltd to undertake further evaluation work to enable responsive feedback loops to continue to inform the implementation of Early Reading Together® and Reading Together®.

Recommendations

- a **note** that on 7 November we will release on Education Counts the *Reading Together® Te Pānui Ngātahi: Summary of evaluations and implementation exemplars* report, a new case study [*Benefits of programme delivery in Samoan churches*], and the series of five A3s designed to support effective implementation.

Noted

- b **agree** that this Briefing is proactively released as per your expectation that information be released as soon as possible. Any information which may need to be withheld will be done so in line with the provisions of the Official Information Act.

Agree Disagree



Sean Teddy
Hautū - Te Pae Aronui



Hon Jan Tinetti
Minister of Education

28/10/2022

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Background

Reading Together® Te Pānui Ngātahi

1. Reading Together® is a high impact, research-based, four session workshop programme that helps parents and whānau to effectively support their children's reading. When well implemented it raises children's reading achievement, supports children's wellbeing, and has enduring effects for positive and culturally responsive education.
2. Reading Together® contributes to the:
 - a. *Action Plan for the Literacy & Communication and Maths Strategy* focus area three: Educationally powerful connections support and enhance learning.
 - b. Objectives of the *Ka Hikitia strategy* to support Māori learners.
 - c. *Action Plan for Pacific Education 2020-2030* key shift 4 – Partner with families to design education opportunities together with teachers, leaders and educational professionals so that aspirations for learning and employment can be met.
3. In Budget 2021, the Ministry received \$9.693 million to expand the delivery of Early Reading Together® and Reading Together® over four years, as part of a broader initiative to improve literacy and wellbeing outcomes for children.
4. In addition to being offered in schools, Reading Together® has been offered in a number of community settings including the Ekalesia Fa'apotopotoga Kerisiano Samoa (EFKS) – Congregational Christian Church of Samoa (METIS 1292535 refers).
5. Early Reading Together® and Reading Together® have been adapted for delivery as Taonga mō ngā Tamariki by the Storytime Foundation in prisons and other Ara Poutama Aotearoa Department of Corrections' settings (METIS 1274290 refers).

The Reading Together® Te Pānui Ngātahi: Summary of evaluations and implementation exemplars report

6. The *Reading Together® Te Pānui Ngātahi: Summary of evaluations and implementation exemplars* report supports effective expansion of Reading Together® in schools. It discusses:
 - a. *the programme outcomes for parents, whānau and aiga, children, schools, and library communities.*
 - b. *what works and doesn't work for effective implementation in schools.*
 - c. *how the Ministry can support schools to effectively implement the programme.*
7. The report synthesises data from existing best evidence findings (6 reports) research and formal evaluations (14 reports), implementation exemplars (3 best evidence in action exemplars), as well as Ministry analyses of Reading Together® delivery in schools since 2004.
8. The key report findings, including participant voices, are summarised in three A3s (see Annexes 1, 2 and 3). The report and A3s will be particularly useful to senior school leadership teams looking to implement the programme, workshop facilitators, and Ministry teams and policy makers.

Key report findings

Reading Together® outcomes for parents, whānau and aiga, children, schools and library communities

9. The report notes that Reading Together®, when well implemented, has multiple valued outcomes for parents, whānau and aiga, children, schools, and library communities. It builds educationally powerful connections and culturally responsive relationships.
10. Parents, whānau and aiga said that after attending Reading Together® workshops they felt less stressed and found reading with their children more enjoyable. The programme:
 - provided parents, whānau and aiga with resources.
 - helped them to better understand how children learn to read.
 - taught them strategies to support their children's reading at home.
 - countered the negative effects of un-informed help with their children's reading homework.
 - helped them to access and select reading material for their children from school and local libraries, at the right level and in home-and-heart languages.
11. Notably, after participating in the programme, parents and whānau also reported experiencing greater social wellbeing and connection with their children, and improved parent-teacher and parent-school relationships that made a difference for their children.

"Reading is no longer a task, but something to enjoy. Ka pai tō mahi me haere tonu!"

"I took it home, put it into practice which has really helped, with their reading, [and] relationships with me and my children."

"I am a lot more interested and wanting to be more part of the school and learn more about what the school is doing."

12. Children whose parents had completed Reading Together® made significant and lasting reading gains. Their reading was accelerated by more than a year compared with children whose whānau did not have access to the programme, and notably their siblings also experienced similar gains. Children's attitudes towards reading become more positive. Their enjoyment of reading and their engagement in school increased as their confidence built. They also experienced consistent and considerable social and wellbeing benefits which included improved relationships with their parents and whānau.

"When you are reading together with your Mum it is safe happy, very good."

"Nan tries to read with me more. She doesn't always just tell me the word now. I get to choose really fun books and go the library every week."

13. Librarians reported Reading Together® helped them to build relationships with parents, whānau and children, and encourage the family's reading in the longer-term. Some librarians developed more culturally responsive collections.
14. Māori and Pacific communities experienced positive changes in partnerships between schools, community organisations, and hapū and iwi, where Reading Together® had been successfully delivered. The report highlighted implementations where

transformative changes occurred for Māori, for example: [Reading Together® Te Pānui Ngātahi at Ngāti Moko Marae: A School-Iwi Partnership implementation exemplar](#).

What works and doesn't work for effective implementation in schools

15. The report found that schools and school leadership teams need to implement Reading Together® well in order to make lasting gains in reading, and deep and sustainable change within the school. This includes:
 - using a strengths-based approach.
 - setting aside sufficient time, funding and support to run the programme.
 - taking a whole-school approach to introducing, planning and running the programme.
 - building strong relationships with parents and whānau to remove any barriers to participation, personalising warm culturally responsive invitations to attend the programme, addressing barriers to travel and childcare, and running the workshops in an enjoyable non-labelling and non-judgmental way.
 - delivering the core parts of the programme with fidelity by using the Reading Together® smart tools (including the workshop leader's handbook, and parent and whānau booklets).
 - using relational skills to support learning and change.
 - using robust data management systems to build Reading Together® into the business-as-usual operation of the school without deficit labelling.
16. If the programme is poorly implemented, there is a risk that parents and whānau will not engage sufficiently for their children to achieve the expected reading gains. To achieve equity outcomes, it is crucial to monitor implementation – whānau participation and drop-out rates – in order to make changes as needed to build trust and ensure a strengths-based approach for Māori and Pacific learners.

How the Ministry can support schools: System challenges and opportunities

17. The evaluation report explains the critical role the Ministry plays in championing and supporting the expansion of the programme in schools. Between January 2012 and June 2015, a total of 912 schools implemented Reading Together® with dedicated Ministry support. Evaluations were highly positive, and evidence showed significant achievement gains. Without such support, the number of schools offering Reading Together® fell markedly.
18. The report highlighted the opportunity for different Ministry teams to build on the evaluation findings and work together to support schools to successfully implement Reading Together®. This included:
 - Resourcing a skilled programme implementation team to build infrastructure and networks to help develop and maintain capability in schools and build strong connections with the Ministry.
 - Addressing equity by working in genuine partnerships with Māori and Pacific communities.
 - Identifying and supporting schools that are most in need of assistance.
 - Providing additional support to schools to collect useable achievement data.
 - Tracking implementation to ensure that scale out is on track and genuinely addresses equity issues for Māori and Pacific children.
 - Prioritising the programme and allowing schools three to five years to embed it.

How the Ministry is supporting implementation in 2022

19. Given the Budget 21 funding for the expansion of Early Reading Together® and Reading Together® available in 2021, the Ministry has taken action in response to the findings of the report. For example:
- Developed a new theory of improvement to inform implementation.
 - Provided training and wrap-around support for implementation in Early Learning services, Kōhanga Reo, Puna Reo, schools, and community groups (Pacific, refugee and migrant e.g. Chinese, Afghani. Arabic, Korean).
 - Each child receives packs of books to take home, including in Te Reo Māori, bilingual English and Te Reo Māori, English, and Pacific languages (research indicates there is a strong association between access to books at home and reading achievement. PIRLS data from 2001 to 2015 showed that access to books at home had declined for both Māori and Pacific learners).

Next Steps

20. The full *Reading Together® Te Pānui Ngātahi: Summary of evaluations and implementation exemplars* report and A3s will be released on Education Counts on 7 November as part of an update to the *Reading Together® Te Pānui Ngātahi Exemplars: New evidence resources and links for support* feature. A copy of the report can be provided prior to this if you wish to read it.
21. The full *Reading Together® Te Pānui Ngātahi 2020 Case Study: Benefits of programme delivery in Samoan churches* report and A3s in English and Gagana Sāmoa will be released on Education Counts on 7 November.
22. The Ministry contracted Pragmatica Ltd to undertake further evaluation work to enable responsive feedback loops to continue to inform the implementation of Early Reading Together® and Reading Together®. This includes:
- Undertaking a case study to gain a better understanding of the benefit to families and whānau of books in homes, with a focus on whānau responses to bilingual books.
 - Undertaking a case study looking into why some providers decide to offer both Reading Together® and Early Reading Together®.
 - Collating feedback from new providers on how the programme has worked for them, including early feedback comparing in-person and virtual delivery.
 - Developing a scoping proposal for the next phase of the improvement science evaluation using feedback loops to optimize outcomes in changing contexts.
23. Early findings from this evaluation work indicate that:
- Covid-19 influenced providers to offer fewer sessions, which was not optimal.
 - Despite Covid-19 challenges, feedback from providers and parents and whānau about implementation was highly positive. For example, BestStart, after a trial implementation across 17 Early Learning Centres, commented:
“The impact was huge...not just for the parents but also for the teachers. And the relationships really improved as well between teachers and their whānau. That was quite an exponential thing especially for the parents from different cultures and different language groups.”
24. The new Pragmatica evaluation reports are due to be delivered to the Ministry by the end of this year.

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