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Story Choices

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Story Choices Information for Parents/Carers

Your child's nursery or childcare setting has agreed to take part in the Story Choices Trial. We would like to include your child in the project. First, we would like to give you some information about the trial and what it will involve.

The Story Choices Project

All Early Years settings know about the value of storybooks to their day-to-day practice, and most already use some of the principles of **interactive book reading**. This project will investigate how much **planning** these storybook activities makes a difference to outcomes.

We will compare two approaches, as follows:

a) **Spontaneous or Child-led Approach:** Educators ask children to select the book for the daily group reading session or actively involve them in the book selection process. While reading, the questions and discussion points occur spontaneously.

b) **Planned Storybook and Discussion Points Approach:** Educators not only select the storybook ahead of time, but they also plan the specific discussion points they will use while engaging children in conversations about the story.

We are recruiting approximately 100 preschool and nursery settings to take part in this project. This project is important because it will help us understand the best way to plan storybook reading in preschool settings. It will help to improve preschool support in the future.

The Story Choices project is a partnership between researchers at Coventry University and the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF), which is funding the project.

How will the trial work?

We will randomly allocate your child's setting to deliver one of the approaches and ask them to stick to that approach for their main storybook sessions for fifteen weeks. Other aspects of the storybook reading routine can remain the same (for example, whether they read in key worker groups or with the whole class).

We will collect some details about the children taking part before the trial starts. This information will be provided by the setting. This includes:

- the child's name,
- date of birth,
- gender,
- home postcode,



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- nursery/preschool attendance patterns,
- whether they are eligible for the Early Years Pupil Premium,
- whether they have English as an Additional Language,
- whether they have any special educational needs or speech, language and communication needs.

We will then visit the childcare setting before the trial starts and work individually with each child for around 15 minutes to assess their vocabulary and attitude to books.

The assessments will be administered one-to-one with your child by a research assistant from the evaluation team at your child's nursery or childcare setting.

- If your child does not want to do the assessments on the day, they do not have to.
- All research assistants have Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) clearance, have completed safeguarding training, and are used to working with young children.
- Your child's key person or a familiar staff member will be available during the assessment to ensure your child feels comfortable.

We will come back in May 2025 to carry out these assessments again, alongside a measure of general language development. This allows us to see whether the two different approaches have led to differences in language skills and attitudes to books.

We will also carry out some observations of the staff in the setting conducting the storybook reading sessions. We will not identify individual children during these observations.

What will happen to the findings from the trial?

We will publish a report on the results of the trial on the Education Endowment Foundation website. This will be used to inform guidance for early years educators. We may also publish the results in an academic journal and discuss them at conferences for people interested in early years education. Your child's data will be treated with the strictest confidence and we will not use any identifiable staff, pupil, or school information in any report or output that we publish about the Story Choices project.

What are the risks and benefits of my child taking part?

There are no significant risks associated with your child taking part in this work.

The benefit to taking part are that you will be enabling your children's childcare setting to take part in research with immediate, practical relevance for other childcare settings. This will help us understand how storybook reading practices in preschool influence children's progress.

- At the end of the project, your child's childcare setting will receive an Amazon voucher of £200 as a thank you, which they can spend on equipment for the



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childcare setting. They will also receive access to LanguageScreen, a digital tool to allow them to assess the language skills of all the children in your setting (worth £245).

What will we do with the data?

Most personal data will be collected directly from participating schools. Data will be shared and stored securely, in accordance with the Data Protection Act (2018) and UK GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation). Full details of the data we will collect and how we will keep it secure is available in our privacy notice [\[link\]](#).

Why will we do we collect this data?

We collect this information for the following reasons:

- To take account of the children's age and background characteristics in our statistical analysis
- To allow us to link the children's data collected before and after the trial
- To allow the information to be linked to other data sources and enable potential future research

As part of their work, the EEF hold a data archive. At the end of the project we will securely transfer children's information from this project to the EEF data archive. Before the data goes into the archive, EEF's archive manager, FFT Education (FFT) will take out names and personal details like addresses. For the purposes of research and archiving, children's data will be linked with information held by the Department for Education's National Pupil Database (NPD) and shared with the Department for Education, the EEF, the EEF's archive manager, the Office for National Statistics and potentially other research teams.

How will the data be stored and deleted?

All electronic data will be stored on a password protected OneDrive folder. All paper records will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the research centre at Coventry University.

All research team members working with your data will have received appropriate training in data handling and GDPR requirements.

For further information about how Coventry University will handle your personal data, please read our [Privacy Notice for Research Participants](#).

We will only retain pupil personal data for as long as necessary to fulfil the purposes we collected it for, including for the purposes of satisfying any legal, accounting, or reporting



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requirements. When it is no longer necessary to retain your child's personal data, it will be securely deleted. The approximate date of deletion for pupil personal data is 31st March 2026 (within three months of the final report for the Story Choices project being published).

What do parents/carers need to do?

If you are happy for your child to take part in this trial, you do not need to do anything. If you would prefer that we do not collect data about your child, please complete the attached form and return it via email or on paper to your child's childcare setting.

If you withdraw your child from the trial before any of their personal data is shared with Coventry University, then settings will not share your child's personal data and they will not take the baseline and endline tests. They will continue to take part in group storybook reading sessions as normal. Should we be informed that you would like to withdraw your child from the trial after some personal data has been collected, we will not collect any additional data for your child. Wherever possible, we will delete all of your child's personal data collected up to that point.

How can I get more information?

If you would like more information about the Story Choices project, please contact:

Name: Professor Julia Carroll

Address: Centre for Global Learning, Coventry University, Priory Street, Coventry, CV1 5FB

Phone Number: 07974 984 042

E-mail: StoryChoices@coventry.ac.uk

Who should I contact if I have a complaint?

If you are unhappy for any reason, in the first instance you can contact us directly using the contact details above. You can also contact the Coventry University Ethics Committee at Coventry University, Priory Street, Coventry CV1 5FB or email ethics.uni@coventry.ac.uk.



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Parent/Carer Opt Out

I have read the parent information sheet and I choose **not** to allow Coventry University to collect data about my child for the purposes of the Story Choices trial

Name of Child: _____

Name of Childcare Setting: _____

Name of Parent/Carer: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please return this form to your childcare provider.