

Inputs

Monthly story kits, designed for joyful, co-constructed story sharing.

Online support for practitioners and families.



Story Explorers is a co-designed, evidence-informed programme supporting adoptive, foster and kinship families to bond through story sharing.

Mechanisms of change

Novelty:

The variety of the books and resources invites curiosity and shared discovery – opening up a ‘third space’ for children and caregivers to come together and connect.

Practicality:

Easy to access and use materials encourage immediate use, gently shifting everyday routines to enhance relational moments.

Repeat engagement:

Monthly deliveries create both

anticipation and continuity, so families look forward to the time they spend together using them.

Ownership:

Kits are addressed to the child and theirs to keep, supporting their sense of agency and active participation.

Simple and everyday:

Resources are designed to enhance and reinforce what families already do, not introduce new complexity, helping make the most of existing strengths.

Short term outcomes

Families spend quality time together using the kits.



Enhanced engagement:

Warm, playful moments support interactional synchrony and attunement between children and parents/carers. Over time, caregivers gain deeper insight into children’s thoughts, feelings and inner worlds.

Increased care giver sensitivity:

Dynamic, varied, activities support ‘serve-and-return’ story sharing and play. Over time, these warm and consistent interactions

provide a structured context for positive caregiving behaviours that enhance caregiver self-efficacy and help children feel safe and supported.

Reduced stress:

Enriched routines create predictable, enjoyable day to day experiences and provide opportunities for co-regulation, calm and comfort. Over time, individual experiences build a sense of connection and stability.

Long term outcomes

Families build bonds through sharing books and stories together.

Mechanisms of change

Supporting attachment:

Shared reading promotes warmth, responsiveness and consistency which are core foundations of attachment.

Making reading rewarding:

Rich, responsive interactions and stronger connections create a positive feedback loop that encourages reading habits.



Impact

Regular shared reading and strong bonds support children’s emotional, social and cognitive development.

Key Features

Our co-design and evaluation learning highlight a number of features that are key to creating impact.

For children

- ◆ **Ownership and engagement:**
Each box arrives by post, addressed directly to the child.
- ◆ **Playful and fun:**
Every item is carefully chosen to spark joy, imagination and playful interaction.



For children and their care givers

- ◆ **Conversation starters:**
Books and resources are selected to encourage meaningful dialogue and warm, quality interactions.
- ◆ **Fresh experiences:**
Each kit is unique, offering new themes and materials to keep engagement high.
- ◆ **Developmentally aligned:**
Contents are matched to children's developmental stage, and designed to be enjoyable for adults too.



For caregivers

- ◆ **Guided onboarding and orientation:**
Support to help families understand everything they need to get started.
- ◆ **Ongoing engagement:**
Regular emails and online information to help families extend and make the most of their experiences.
- ◆ **Relational focus:**
Emphasis on strengthening connections and facilitating quality interactions through shared experiences.

