Reading Together® *Te Pānui Ngātahi:*
Suggestions for Implementation of Virtual Workshops

Introduction

These suggestions have been compiled by Biddulph Education Trust for educators, librarians and others who are seeking information about the adjustments required for virtual implementation of the *Reading Together®* workshop programme i.e. when in-person workshops are not possible or safe.

This document is a supplement to the 2019 edition of the *Reading Together® Te Pānui Ngātahi: Workshop Leader's Handbook* and needs to be carefully considered, step-by-step, alongside the detailed information in the *Handbook*. Workshop Leaders who have not read the *Handbook*, or who have not recently implemented the programme effectively, are advised to read all sections of the *Handbook* before beginning to read this document.

Please note that, as well as being prohibited by law, the unauthorised copying, publication, adaptation, translation or reproduction (e.g. on websites) of any of the *Reading Together®* programme materials and resources may also undermine the future of the programme.

Some important considerations for a virtual approach

Implementation since 1982[1] has been in-person (in school, library and community/marae/church settings). In-person workshops ensure the full benefits of *Reading Together®* and are the optimal form of implementation.[2] However, when bringing groups together face-to-face is not safe or feasible, a compromise can be adopted i.e. a virtual approach.

Effective virtual implementation of *Reading Together®* is especially relevant during a pandemic when support for children in the home is paramount. It will help mitigate the negative impacts of school disruption on children and families/whānau, and will help to increase children's engagement, confidence and competencies in language and literacy learning.

Special considerations during these circumstances include:

- Workshop Leaders, as for in-person implementation, will need to understand and identify with the theoretical perspectives and principles on which *Reading Together®* is based, and implement the workshops as scripted to maintain the integrity of the programme.[3]
- Virtual implementation of *Reading Together®* is likely to be more effective, manageable and enjoyable when there are no more than eight parents/whānau participating.
- Particular care will need to be given to personal, strength-based invitations to parents/whānau to participate in the *Reading Together®* virtual workshops, taking care to find a time to run the workshops that works well for the participants.
- Careful and detailed preparation and planning in advance of the workshops will be essential, particularly as participants will need resources covering all four workshops provided to them in advance.
- Workshop Leaders are best placed to make decisions about the technology which is most appropriate for virtual implementation for their school/community context and participating parents and whānau.

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[1] Please see the History of *Reading Together®* in New Zealand
[2] Please see *Reading Together®* Valued Outcomes
[3] Please see *Reading Together®* Implementation Exemplars

Feedback about your virtual implementation of *Reading Together® Te Pānui Ngātahi* would be welcome.

Organising and Preparing for Virtual Workshops

Section 4 (pp 37-53) of the *Reading Together® Te Pānui Ngātahi: Workshop Leader's Handbook*[4] provides detailed suggestions for organising and preparing for the workshops. The adaptations for virtual implementation below are additional to the *Handbook*.

Engaging and supporting parents' participation in *Reading Together®* (pp 38-43)

To support the distribution of appropriate reading materials to families/whānau, it will be important, when inviting participants, to talk about which child will be their particular focus.

Find out from each parent what times would be suitable to hold workshops, taking into account that a child takes part during Workshop Two.

Discuss *Reading Together®* with your colleagues and seek their support (p 43, pp 50-51)

Colleagues can assist with your virtual implementation of *Reading Together®*, particularly in accessing and compiling the resources required and with personal approaches to parents.

Provide relevant, meaningful and good quality resources for families (pp 47-49)

Virtual implementation of the workshops will require the following resources to be compiled and made available to families in plenty of time before the workshops begin:

1. *Reading Together®* Packs (programme resources for all four workshops).
2. *Reading Together®* Mini-library for the participating child.
3. *Reading Together®* Family Library.

Here is the detail for each of these resources:

1. *Reading Together®* Pack

- Compile the programme resources listed below into separate A4 envelopes (i.e. one for each of the four workshops).
- Include a message on each envelope as follows:
  Please do not open until Workshop [specify which workshop i.e. *1, 2, 3 or 4*] ☺

Note: Parents/whānau will need to have their *Reading Together®* Pack beside them during each workshop.

Workshop One envelope:

- A timetable and summary of the Workshop Programme (p 59).
- The *Reading Together® Suggestions* booklet or *Te Pānui Ngātahi Reading Together® Suggestions* booklet.
- Where appropriate, insert a *Reading Together®* Message in a Pacific Island language[5] inside the front cover of the *Reading Together® Suggestions* booklet.
- A copy of the text you have selected which you will help a child to read when you are demonstrating the suggestions during the workshop (p 46, pp 63-65).
  - o The parents need to be able to see the hard copy that you and the child are reading together.
  - o This text can be returned to the school with the *Reading Together®* Mini-libraries.

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[4] For information, please see *Reading Together® resources*
[5] Please see *Reading Together® Messages in Pacific Island Languages*

- The first two pages of the *Set of Jokes and Riddles* (2021 Edition[6]).
- A printed copy of information about the local library and mobile library service, if relevant.

Workshop Two envelope:
- A transcript of the brief audio recording you have made for Workshop Two (pp 44-45).
- The next two pages of the *Set of Jokes and Riddles* (2021 Edition).

Workshop Three envelope:
- *Di Tri Ladle Pegs* and other activities in Appendices C and D (pp 89-91).
- A colour copy of the 2-3 page text you will use for the role play in Workshop Three (pp 49-50, pp 76-77). If you use a short story or article from a *School Journal,* you can legally print a copy of that story/article for parents, provided that it does not exceed 5% of the entire *Journal*, and that you use it for educational purposes only.
- The next two pages of the *Set of Jokes and Riddles* (2021 Edition).

Workshop Four envelope:
- *Brock: A 'reading book' for adults.*
- A copy of the *Feedback sheet* (Appendix E, p 92).
- A *Set of 'Traffic Light' Bookmarks.*
- The last two pages of the *Set of Jokes and Riddles* (2021 Edition).

2. *Reading Together®* Mini-libraries for the Participating Child (pp 47-49)

Reading Together® Mini-libraries for the child who will participate in Workshop Two are essential to support that child and ensure that the parent(s) can provide effective help. The participating child will begin to use their *Reading Together®* Mini-library during that workshop.

Research indicates that readers are able to make better sense of hard copy materials than digital text.[7] Hard copy resources for children, parents/whānau and educators play a critical role in the success of the *Reading Together®* programme, whether the workshops are implemented in-person or virtually.

It is helpful if the child's teacher is involved in setting up and refreshing the *Reading Together®* Mini-library, helping to provide a range of resources (fiction and factual) at the participating child's **guided/instructional** reading level. Ideally, the Mini-library will consist of at least 20 books.

- A list of Ministry of Education funded resources which reflect the cultures, languages, experiences and interests of children who are Māori and children of Pacific Islands heritage (compiled in 2019) is available by emailing info@thebiddulphgroup.net.nz.
- Add a label to each *Reading Together®* Mini-library that names the particular participating child e.g. *Reading Together® Mini-library for [name of child]*
- Also add a note to the Mini-library to say: *Please wait until Workshop Two to use this.* ☺
- The child's Mini-library needs to be beside the parent and child, ready for use during Workshop Two.
- If manageable, refresh each child's Mini-library between Workshop Three and Workshop Four, and at some point after Workshop Four.
- Ask for the Mini-libraries to be returned when you think it is appropriate to do so.

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[6] Please see Revised Jokes and Riddles for *Reading Together® Te Pānui Ngātahi*
[7] See, for example:
- Clinton, V. (2019) *Reading from paper compared to screens: A systematic review and meta-analysis.* Journal of Research in Reading, May, Vol 42, Issue 2.
- O'Callaghan, T. (2014) *Digital technology is transforming the way we read and write: Does it matter?* New Scientist, 1 November, pp 41-43.
- Blundell, S. (2018) *Dear Reader.* NZ Listener, 13 October, pp 12-19.

3. *Reading Together®* Family Library

Reading Together® Family Libraries, preferably consisting of at least 20 books (fiction and factual), are very beneficial for families. The *Reading Together®* Family Library consists of books for reading **to** and **with** children in the family/whānau, plus four or five texts at the **guided/instructional** reading level of the child who will participate in Workshop Two with a parent.

The *Early Reading Together®[8] Suggestions* booklet (pp 8-9) lists books which have particular appeal for families, and especially those with younger children, including children who are emergent readers.

The teacher responsible for the school library (if any) and/or the Children's Librarian at your local library may be able to assist in providing resources for participating families (pp 43-44, pp 47-49). The National Library might also be able to assist.[9]

Add a note to the *Reading Together®* Family Library to say:
Please wait until Workshop One to use this. 😊

Workshop Content and Processes

Workshop processes and activities are described in detail in Section 6 (pp 59-81) of the *Reading Together® Te Pānui Ngātahi: Workshop Leader's Handbook*. The Appendices (pp 83-93) contain additional information for Workshop Leaders, including examples of *Reading Together®* Workshop Reminders.

Suggestions about some adaptations for virtual implementation of *Reading Together®* are outlined below.

Please note that some of the processes which are very effective during in-person workshops will not be possible when implementing *Reading Together®* virtually.

- For example, parents will not be able to 'help each other to read' *Di Tri Ladle Pegs* and other texts in Workshop Three (pp 73-75) and *Brock: A 'reading book' for adults* in Workshop Four (pp 78-79).
- Therefore, additional care will be needed to:
  - o introduce each of these activities to the group (as explained in the *Handbook*), and
  - o allow time for the parents to look through the page/booklet by themselves.
- Then, please read each of the texts **to** the group, chatting briefly about what you are doing/thinking, and encourage discussion when you have finished reading.
- This will help to engage parents in ways which are as supportive, manageable and meaningful as possible.

Workshop One (pp 59-67)

- As part of your introduction to the programme, check that parents have received their *Reading Together®* Pack, the *Reading Together®* Mini-library and the *Reading Together®* Family Library.
  - o Discuss *Reading Together®* Family Libraries briefly, and encourage parents to use and enjoy them with their children.
  - o Tell them they will begin to use the *Reading Together®* Mini-library with the participating child during Workshop Two next week.
- An essential component of *Reading Together®* is the demonstration during which the Workshop Leader supports a real child in real time. Please see page 46 and pages 63-65.

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[8] Please see *Early Reading Together®* programme
[9] Please see National Library support for *Reading Together®*

Adaptations required for virtual implementation include the need for the text to be selected by the Workshop Leader, rather than the child, so that a copy can be distributed to each participating parent in the Workshop One envelope prior to the workshops.

- This demonstration needs to be unrehearsed and as realistic as possible.
    - Whether this demonstration is 'pre-recorded' or done live, carefully read Section 4.7 of the *Handbook* and focus on the demonstration coming across as unrehearsed and realistic.
    - Participating parents need to feel that they **can** support their child as the Workshop Leader does i.e. by using the 'ways of helping' in the *Reading Together® Suggestions* booklet or *Te Pānui Ngātahi Reading Together® Suggestions* booklet, which have just been discussed with the group.
- Towards the end of the workshop, talk briefly about the local library information (if available), which is in the Workshop One envelope. Mention that the librarians are looking forward to meeting the parents and children, and helping them to borrow resources.
- Information on using the school library can also be covered, if borrowing books from the school library is possible at the time.
- At the end of the workshop, briefly outline Workshop Two, and ask the parents to have the second envelope and the following ready:
    1. *Reading Together® Suggestions* booklet or *Te Pānui Ngātahi Reading Together® Suggestions* booklet.
    2. Participating child sitting near them.
    3. *Reading Together®* Mini-library ready to open (for the first time) and select books to read together in a place that is as peaceful as possible.

Workshop Two (pp 68-72)

- Please note the suggestions on pages 70-72 about your role during this activity i.e. when the child is choosing a book (or books) from their *Reading Together®* Mini-library and reading with the parent(s). It is very important that the parents and children do not feel that they are being watched or judged. Tell them that you will not be listening in while they are reading together. Explain that, while they are reading with their children, you will be reading a book that you enjoy. You will not be 'spying' on them.
- Before the parents and children begin reading together, explain that everyone needs to be muted while they read (or consider using breakout rooms, so that if someone asks a question, it doesn't interrupt the others), and that you will come back together as a group in 20 minutes for the group to:
    1. Chat briefly about reading with their participating child.
    2. Show the books they have enjoyed.
    3. Ask the Workshop Leader any questions they might have.
- During this activity, other family members could be enjoying the *Reading Together®* Family Library.
- At the end of this workshop, mention that at Workshop Three next week:
    1. It will be just the parents participating.
    2. They will need their *Reading Together® Suggestions* booklet or *Te Pānui Ngātahi Reading Together® Suggestions* booklet, and the resources in their *Reading Together®* Workshop Three envelope.

Workshop Three (pp 73-77)

- Before the workshop, it is particularly important to consider the detailed suggestions (including the notes) under the heading '*Ideas about how we read and what helps us to read*' on pages 73-75.

- At the end of this workshop, mention that at Workshop Four:
    1. Just the parents will be participating.
    2. Parents will need their *Reading Together® Suggestions* booklet or *Te Pānui Ngātahi Reading Together® Suggestions* booklet, and the resources in their *Reading Together®* Workshop Four envelope.
- Explain that you would like the parents to return the *Reading Together®* Mini-library so that you can refresh the resources, if it is possible to do so.

Workshop Four (pp 78-81)

Ideally, this workshop is held four weeks after Workshop Three to allow parents and children time to establish and enjoy reading together at home, on a regular basis, before the final workshop. However, Workshop Leaders implementing Virtual *Reading Together®* may have a valid reason to compromise and shorten the interval between Workshops Three and Four.

- Carefully follow the suggestions about gathering feedback (pp 79-80).
- It would be helpful if a colleague could participate in this workshop, and make notes of parents' oral feedback about their experiences supporting their children's literacy learning. See *Feedback sheet* on page 92.
- Parents might like to provide some written feedback via email or online. Explain that their comments will help you to support other parents/whānau in future implementations of *Reading Together®.*
- Section 5 (pp 55-58) of the *Handbook* outlines suggestions for gathering information and preparing a brief report.
- Workshop Four, when implemented in-person, is held in the local library whenever possible. However, for virtual implementation, you could invite the local children's librarian (if available) to join you briefly towards the end of the workshop to:
    1. 'Meet' the parents.
    2. Offer their support.
    3. Answer any questions parents might have, including about how they can access resources from the local library or mobile library service.
- Explain to the parents how and when they can return the *Reading Together®* Mini-library and *Reading Together®* Family Library.
    - If possible, refresh the *Reading Together®* Mini-library to support families for an extended period of time.
    - Ideally, the *Reading Together®* Family Library would also be refreshed and extended. Some New Zealand publishers of children's books, booksellers and charitable trusts donate books or funding for *Reading Together®* Mini-libraries and *Reading Together®* Family Libraries, which are given to participating families to keep at the conclusion of the *Reading Together®* programme. Please see the information here for an excellent example.
- If awarding Certificates of Participation in the *Reading Together®* programme[10], perhaps show one of these to the parents and tell them that you will send them hard copies.

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[10] Please see 'Graduation' certificates