Using paired reading for parental engagement

Case studies to inspire parental engagement

Age 6-12

CFE First and Second Level

Resource created by Scottish Book Trust
Paired reading is an incredibly versatile model and project. Here are two examples from schools based in Glasgow that used paired reading as a way to work with parents and carers, and to involve them more in school life and their child’s learning. Each school received £1000 to spend on their paired reading project.

**Oakgrove Primary School: READ and DO project**

Principal Teacher Maria Docherty at Oakgrove Primary School designed a six-week programme of interactive reading activities and home reading tasks. The project focused on Primary 4 and Primary 5 pupils and their families.

**Session 1**

The first session involved a visit to Kelvingrove Museum to take part in a dinosaur trail. The fact-finding trail provided many opportunities for families to paired read. This was an ideal activity to kick-start the project. Families were encouraged to read more about dinosaurs at home using the text provided. This led to children working on their own fact files with their families. Feedback from this session was very positive. All families reported that their children were keen to read more about dinosaurs at home.

**Session 2**

Inspired by the story of *Tyrannosaurus Drip* by Julia Donaldson, our next session saw families baking dinosaur footprints together. Families then had an extract of a dragon story, a recipe card and ingredients bag to take home.

**Session 3**

Our third session, a gardening themed activity, saw the families reading seed packets, instruction cards and gardening books together before planting in the school garden. Materials were then sent home with the families to read and grow together.

**Session 4**

In session four, all families were able to take home a copy of *Kensuke’s Kingdom* by Michael Morpurgo to read. In the session, we read extracts together and explored the challenges to survival, which the main character (Michael) would face. Using UV
beads, families investigated which materials would best protect Michael from the sun on the island.

**Session 5**

In session five we were using the text from the song *It’s a Wonderful World*, families were tasked with creating their own stop motion animation which would bring the text to life.

**Session 6**

In our sixth and final session families received a day tripper card. They were then tasked with researching the amazing places they could visit in and around Glasgow. Using this information, families created their own route map and event list. Families were asked to document their reading around Glasgow day, creating a ‘guide book’ for the school.

**Final thoughts**

Our pupils and their families said:

‘It is fantastic that the school puts this amount of value on reading. It has made a difference…if this was to run next year I would definitely want to be part of it.’

‘I loved all the sessions. I think reading is really important. I think it has been good to learn what other stuff you can do with books. I liked my mum reading bits with me-she liked all the sessions. We really loved the recipes. I read them to my mum. Reading is fun. We should have a reading all the time like this.’

‘We have really enjoyed being part of these family sessions. It is a great idea. This should happen more. We have done so many different things.’

‘We took the recipes home and baked together. I asked my child to read the steps and now we are going to read more recipes. We will probably go get some baking books from the library.’

‘I love the dinosaur story…I liked making the biscuits and I helped read the instructions. I was shouting out all the instructions to help my mum. I liked this lot. I love baking now. What other stories could we use?’

Oakgrove Primary School is passionate and active in promoting reading for enjoyment. We have worked hard to develop a reading culture across our entire school community, and are involved in a range of activities and projects which encourage and support all pupils to develop a love reading for pleasure. We recognise the huge importance and value in working with families to support all aspects of children’s education and this is especially true in relation to reading together.
Barmulloch Primary School: Family Camping Adventure project

Shona Campbell, Deputy Head Teacher at Barmulloch Primary School tells us about their project that married paired reading with an overnight adventure.

We have enjoyed working with our families this year and are always looking for new ways to engage them in learning with their children. We chose to spend our £1000 on running a family camping adventure for our Primary 3 pupils, as this was a new experience for them. The focus of their camping trip was storytelling - children shared tents with their parents/carers and read stories together while engaging in fun games and reading tasks.

For the camping adventure, we went to the Red Deer Holiday Village Park Camping Site, in Stepps. This is close to our school, but far enough that our children felt like they were travelling a long distance. We provided transport, tents, sleeping mats, air mattresses and sleeping bags, which were all purchased, with our fund. All the families had to bring was a change of clothes and their washbags. We gave everyone dinner, supper and breakfast.

We began by practising our map reading to make sure we found our pitches at the campsite. Next, we had to put up our tents – tent instructions can be tricky to read, but our Primary 3s managed it without any problems. We had an afternoon of activities, including nature bingo, followed by toasted marshmallows.

We gathered after supper for group ‘campfire stories’.

Once the children were ready for bed, they were allowed to choose a lovely storybook and enjoy family story time by torchlight in their tents before falling asleep. Everyone was tired from their very busy day.
Final thoughts

Our pupils said:

‘The bedtime story was fun! – I LIKE BOOKS A LOT!’
‘Can we stay here forever??!’
‘Thank you for inviting me, my brother and my mum and dad – WE LOVE CAMPING NOW!’

This was a very successful project. Some of our inner city communities had never been camping, so to offer this opportunity when it would otherwise be inaccessible, was wonderful. The families all enjoyed new experiences together and learned different ways to enjoy reading at home. It was a great start to the summer holiday, and gave them positive memories and experiences that they will treasure forever.

In terms of legacy, this has had a significant impact on the opportunities we can offer our school community in the future. Now that we have the equipment, we will be running the camping adventure as a yearly project for Primary 3s.