

Reading Together® Te Pānui Ngātahi in Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano Samoa churches

This document describes changes that Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano Samoa (EFKS), a leading Samoan group of churches, made possible by running Reading Together® in 2020.



BENEFITS OF READING TOGETHER® FOR PACIFIC FAMILIES

Previous research shows there are clear links between parents and families attending all four Reading Together® workshops and children's reading improvement (Alton-Lee, 2016, p.70). With the right support from Te Pae Aronui, Te Mahau, high levels of parent attendance are possible in both church and school settings.

In 2020, EFKS ran 40 Reading Together® programmes in 33 Pacific churches. Many (77%) of the parents and families ('aiga) came to all four sessions, maximising the potential reading gains for their children.



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Pacific PARENTS and 'aiga developed a strategy to help their children read

PARENTS' LEARNING JOURNEY

FROM	TO
Low confidence	→ High confidence and enjoyment
Struggling to fit in reading time	→ Regular short reading times
Feeling stressed, sometimes angry or tired	→ Engaged and relaxed
Distracted and interrupted	→ Set up a quiet time and place free of distractions
Focus on mistakes and make corrections	→ Focus on success and being curious - explore the text together
Use negative strategies - cover pictures, remove clues and punish mistakes	→ Use positive strategies - encouragement, find text at the right difficulty level and talk about the text
Teaching reading is the teacher's job	→ Shared role to support children learning to read

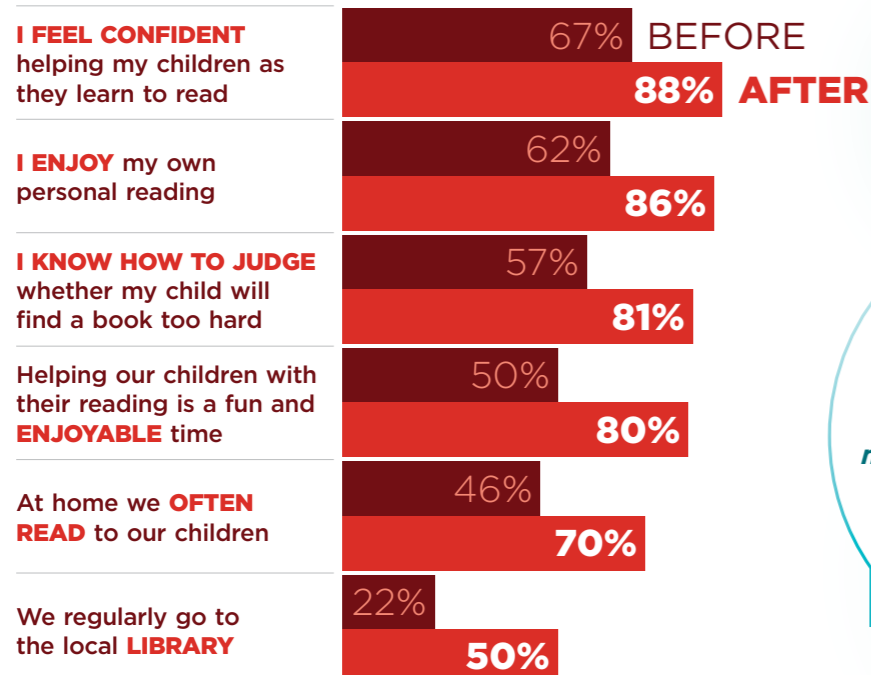
"If there are 50 words, and then there are ten words that we got wrong, that helped me to figure out that we were pushing her too hard. So by deliberately reading something slightly easier it helped [child] to build her confidence. By doing this she has actually gone up a reading level at school." (Parent)

"When my child comes home with a reading book and I find there's words I don't understand we write it down and I will ask the teacher [the] next day to explain it. I did not use[d] to do this, but the Reading Together® programme has changed my way of thinking in reading and supporting my child." (Parent)

"Coming to this programme has made us read together, just so I understand how his reading is. In the beginning, he didn't read. ... This programme has started us on a journey to read together." (Parent)

Pacific families' READING HABITS changed after attending Reading Together® in Pacific churches

Parents and 'aiga said...



Before n = 292 After n = 303

"She isn't afraid to ask questions anymore." (Parent)

"Reading is fun! Read, read, read as often as they can. Before it seemed like a chore, hard and boring, but now knowing to keep it short and simple and read when everyone is ready has been a good tip!" (Parent)

And CHILDREN'S attitudes and reading behaviour also changed

CHILDREN'S LEARNING JOURNEY

FROM	TO
Struggle for their parent's attention when reading	→ Have their parent's full attention when reading
'Often, I can't do this'	→ 'Usually, I can do this'
Read mostly with Mum	→ Read with Mum and with other 'aiga
Don't enjoy or feel capable of reading	→ Feel confident, happy to read and enjoy being a successful reader

"My children are even able to text message in Samoan instead of always texting in English." (Parent)

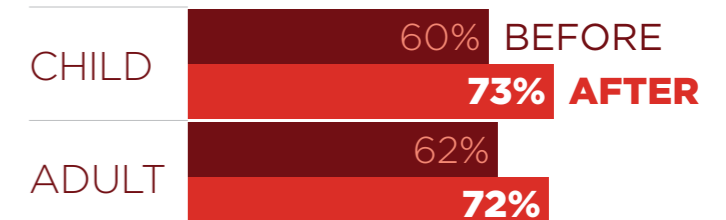
"I have been cooking with my son and he has had to read the recipe. It is so good to know that we can read so many different types of writing. We laughed so much!" (Parent)

"The girls now ask to take them to the library instead of taking them to the playgrounds. This is a huge change to our girls, and we will maintain it." (Parent)

Parents, 'aiga and children used ELECTRONIC READING DEVICES more

Parents, 'aiga and children learned to use online e-readers, tablets or computers at Reading Together®. They found out how to get reading resources online, including bilingual resources.

Parent's, 'aiga and children's ACCESS TO ELECTRONIC DEVICES INCREASED after attending Reading Together® at Pacific churches



Before n = 292 After n = 303

Reading Together® Te Pānui Ngātahi in Ekalesia Faapototoga Kerisiano Samoa churches Continued...



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KEY LEARNINGS ABOUT IMPLEMENTATION

Pacific leadership from the Parent Information and Community Intelligence (PICI) team in Te Pae Aronui, in partnership with EFKS church leadership, delivered Reading Together® in Pacific settings on a larger scale

“Reading Together® is a game-changer. It improves parents’ relationships with their children. The children’s reading will strengthen. The learning that parents want to see happening can occur.” (Leatufale Tu’uauato Mark Tulia, Principal Advisor, Te Pae Aronui)

“Thanks for the program and specially to Rev and the Faletua for the job well done.” (Parent)

Why is Reading Together® VALUABLE in Pacific churches?

- The programme supports parents and ‘aiga on their child’s reading and learning journey.
- It is a proven programme. The development work is done. Research and testing show Reading Together® works – when well implemented.
- Reading Together® strengthens reading in English and aids reading in first languages.
- Churches can successfully run Reading Together® if they follow the training and the Reading Together® Workshop Leader’s Handbook. (Programme champion, Te Pae Aronui)

Pacific churches can RALLY FAMILIES

Many church leaders see the programme’s potential and are grateful for access to it. EFKS churches can deliver Reading Together® in a culturally suitable and inclusive way. With few barriers, parent attendance is high.

Pacific churches draw on existing RELATIONSHIPS

The existing relationships are important in offering the programme. EFKS Ministers:

- can lead the programme, as they are already highly trusted in their community
- understand how the programme can better support, strengthen and enhance parents and ‘aiga ambitions for their children
- have the cultural knowledge of the community to mobilise Pacific parents
- know who to invite – they know which families have school-aged children and the extended family members involved in their care
- can reach families through Sunday school and church services, which are also suitable places to run Reading Together®
- can encourage parents to take part in Reading Together® as a form of pastoral care.

Pacific churches meet the COMMUNITY’S NEEDS

By offering Reading Together®:

- parents and ‘aiga can see their role in learning and supporting their children
- families can learn together – which they like
- the programme meets Samoan language needs (and other communities’ first language needs).

Those without strong English can enjoy participating:

“My English reading is not really good ... But after listening to today’s programme I am so happy, and I will be looking forward to bringing my kids... [Now I know] I can read together with my kids in Samoan.” (Parent)

“[Now I know] I can read together with my kids in Samoan.” (Parent)

Reading Together® encourages bilingual reading:

“My children are happy ... [The programme] has encouraged them to find Samoan books that are different to the Samoan Bible and the English books from school.” (Parent)

Dads enjoy reading with their children:

“Before ... I did not help my son at all. ... After this programme, my relationship with my son is way different now. I ... listen and read with my boy and I can see that my son feels happy.” (Father)

“After this programme, my relationship with my son is way different now.” (Father)

What EFKS churches did to prepare for and RUN WORKSHOPS

Have leaders and community champions who:

- understand how Reading Together® will benefit their community and can support and champion the programme
- are highly respected with enough mana and influence to encourage parents and ‘aiga to join in (such as church Ministers and/or their wives, sports club leaders or community organisation leaders)
- know the support parents and ‘aiga will need to attend sessions
- can make invitations to join the programme personal, warm, friendly, and positively framed.

Have facilitators who:

- are teachers from, or trusted by, the community
- are culturally responsive and inclusive and can create sessions that are warm, welcoming and friendly
- can work well in both their first language and English (sometimes, a translator works alongside an English-speaking teacher)
- can encourage parents and ‘aiga to have learning conversations about their child’s reading with classroom teachers.

Have enough support, which includes:

- trusted community members assisting parents and ‘aiga to attend in practical ways
- people who can reach out to encourage those parents and ‘aiga who miss sessions to catch up and come to the next session.

Have suitable places to meet and the resources available to:

- run Reading Together® in venues that parents and ‘aiga can easily access and that are familiar and comfortable (such as a church, a marae, or a sports club)
- run the sessions at convenient times for parents and ‘aiga
- ensure parents and ‘aiga can access a wide range of reading material:
 - › involve a local librarian and visit a local library
 - › include bilingual books as part of children’s mini libraries
 - › encourage access to e-books
- provide transport, food, and childcare so all parents and ‘aiga can come.

Effective implementation of Reading Together®: Learning from PACIFIC EXPERTISE

Pacific leadership from the PICI team in Te Pae Aronui, in partnership with EFKS leadership, expanded the delivery of Reading Together® in Samoan settings to a large scale.

- Having sufficient support from Te Pae Aronui, and senior leaders in EFKS was critical to the effective delivery of Reading Together® in churches.
- Churches offered a culturally responsive programme for parents and ‘aiga in a Samoan setting, that reflected Te Tiriti principles of being self-determining.
- Senior leaders supported and championed the programme in the community. Highly respected Ministers with mana, influence and community knowledge encouraged parents and ‘aiga to join in.
- During Reading Together® many parents and ‘aiga visited the community library for the first time and were surprised and delighted to learn of all the library resources available and how to access them.
- E-readers helped parents and ‘aiga access a wider range of reading material including bilingual material.
- After attending Reading Together®, typically, Pacific parents and ‘aiga told the facilitators they could talk to, and work better with, teachers and school leaders.
- By churches developing culturally responsive and closer relationships with parents and ‘aiga over reading, children had more positive reading experiences.

“The [parents] experienced so many good things [from attending Reading Together®]; it built their confidence, they learnt so much about their children and created a good bond between them. All parents also shared the same passion – they want their children to succeed in school. The children have improved so much in their reading.” (Facilitator)

“My sons are more confident at telling stories, communicating with us. This program [has helped] us a lot, not only his reading is improving but our bond is much stronger. This program is very helpful [in] so many ways.” (Parent)