

Reading Together® Te Pānui Ngātahi: **SUCCESS FACTORS** for high-impact implementation through school-whānau/parent partnerships

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WHAT WORKED

Lessons for getting started

The Ministry supported principals and workshop facilitators by offering:

- an initial 'can do' briefing that was informative and inspiring
- clear evidence of what does and does not work to run the programme
- ongoing expert support that is relevant and responsive to school context
- further support from experienced Reading Together® school leaders/facilitators for trouble shooting
- access to suitable books, including in te Reo Māori, home languages and bilingually e.g. through the National Library.

The Ministry and schools shared responsibility for running the programme by:

- committing to Te Tiriti o Waitangi partnership principles to deliver a culturally responsive implementation
- providing funding, making time and offering support for facilitators and school leaders to:
 - › build relationships
 - › engage with the Reading Together® resources
 - › consult and collaborate with staff and school whānau
 - › provide 'well-loved books' for children and whānau.

Effective workshop implementation

The Ministry provided:

- ongoing access to expert support to principals and workshop facilitators
- evidence and guidance around "the how" of effective implementation.

The Ministry and schools jointly committed to building partnerships and practices that:

- embodied manaakitanga/whakawhanaungatanga
- were responsive to context, strength-based and engendered high trust
- prioritised appropriate cultural practice (e.g. Marae tikanga)
- collaborated productively, where appropriate, with other schools, early learning centres or community groups (e.g. local hapū, churches).

"Facilitators need to ensure workshops are informal, enjoyable, non-threatening and meaningful for all participants."

School leaders set their schools and whānau up for success by:

- involving the BOT and ensuring their buy-in and support
- identifying and supporting capable Reading Together® facilitator(s) and ensuring role clarity
- allowing sufficient time for facilitators to read deeply and consider the Reading Together® Workshop Leader's Handbook
- ensuring all teachers are allies and follow up with students and families
- implementing the programme collaboratively, considering staff workloads
- involving and partnering with the school library and local library
- building Reading Together® into the school's literacy, enrolment and community engagement strategies
- identifying opportunities to support or launch Reading Together® e.g. to an existing whānau group.

School leaders/teachers planned for sustainability from the start by:

- promoting Reading Together® when children enrolled at school
- actively engaging in or supporting Reading Together® workshops
- having ongoing collaboration with parents/whānau
- planning for ongoing reviews, including developing strategies to engage reluctant parents and whānau using existing networks.

Schools implemented Reading Together® with fidelity by:

- making the programme available to parents/whānau early to provide effective strategies to support their child's reading
- building shared connections and relational trust by:
 - › personalising invitations to be warm and strength-based
 - › creating a welcome, comfortable, respectful and safe space to share
 - › making workshops fun and laughter filled
- affirming whānau want the best for their children, know them best and can make the biggest difference
- using marae, staffrooms, community settings, libraries to create responsive and inclusive places for the workshops
- offering child-care, transport, and food; and timing sessions to make attendance possible
- providing access to a wide range of appropriate books for children
- using first languages and support buddies to address cultural needs of whānau.
- offering a graduation 'celebration' for parents and whānau.

"..The fact that the programme was research based held a great deal of importance for us. We weren't about to initiate something that we just thought 'might' make a difference."

Evaluation was critical for ongoing learning

The Ministry collected change data and evaluated Reading Together® to support:

- ongoing improvement
- schools to run consistent manageable processes
- including qualitative and quantitative data to address multiple valued outcomes
- regular reporting on reach/impact to maintain and inform support for the programme.

The Ministry and schools shared responsibility for developing evaluation findings that:

- address local context
- were shared between Ministry and schools to further inform implementation.

The schools supported ongoing learning by:

- collecting whānau feedback as a part of the programme
- providing feedback to parents, whānau, students and teachers by monitoring student progress and adapting to their needs.

"Initially ...we had low attendance of Māori whānau at the Reading Together® workshops. We realised that we needed to build relationships of trust with whānau and we felt that taking the workshops to the Marae would eliminate barriers and show whānau our commitment to supporting tamariki."

"Mai anō i te timatanga, ... heoi anō, he tokoiti noa iho ngā whānau Māori haere ai ki ngā wānanga o Te Pānui Ngātahi ki te kura. I tokotia ake te whakaaro kia tuitui ai ngā tūhonotanga ki ngā whānau Māori katoa mehemea ka whakatū ki runga Marae, ka mutu ka whakamāmā te huarahi mō ngā mātua katoa, kia pono ai te tautoko i ā rātou tamariki."

Māori Immersion Pod leader Tatai Takuira-Mita explains the support provided to all school staff to build responsive relationships with the iwi and whānau partners.

WHAT DID NOT WORK

Implementation was less effective when:

- insufficient funding or time was allowed for deep engagement with the Reading Together® resources
- planning did not prioritise inclusive whānau/parent engagement or partnerships
- a siloed or add-on approach was used rather than building Reading Together® into ongoing priorities
- invitations or facilitation alienated whānau and/or deficit labelling of students occurred
- practical barriers to attendance were not addressed
- buy-in from school staff, BOT, mana whenua was rushed or inadequate
- there was insufficient support for engagement with the theory and research elements of the programme
- leader or facilitator change and funding short-falls did not enable succession planning, resourcing or ongoing support.

"Policymakers need to prioritise the programme and allow schools three to five years to embed it into their systems so successful implementation is possible."

"The research findings suggest Reading Together® should be part of core service delivery in schools and not at risk of being dropped or compromised due to new policy initiatives or demands."

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