

Story Links

Working with Parents of Pupils at Risk of Exclusion



University
of Chichester




ef
Esmée
Fairbairn
FOUNDATION

Supported
by the TDA


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Centre for Therapeutic Storywriting

What is Story Links?

- ▶ Story Links developed from Therapeutic Storywriting Group model – positively evaluated and used in over 500 schools
www.therapeuticstorywriting.com
 - ▶ Story Links intervention involves parents in co-creating stories that address their child's emotional and behavioural issues
 - ▶ Supports pupils who are at risk of exclusion and also have poor reading skills
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The Story Links Project

- ▶ 20 month project funded by the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) and Esmee Fairbairn Foundation
 - ▶ 3-day training programme delivered to 55 educational professionals
 - ▶ Evaluation of impact of programme on parental engagement and pupils' learning
 - ▶ Online training manual
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Video Clip


- ▶ **Teachers TV:** www.teachers.tv/video/34482

Research and Development in SEN: Working with Families

Story Links (8.10–13.40 min)

- ▶ **Excerpt (2.30 min) on home page of:**
www.storylinkstraining.co.uk

Attachment anxiety

- ▶ Majority of excluded pupils have behaviours associated with attachment anxiety
 - ▶ Transgenerational patterns of parenting and literacy difficulties and behaviour
 - ▶ 72% of permanently excluded pupils identified as having SEN (SEN Green Paper, Support and Aspiration, DfE March 2011)
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Impact of Parent on Pupil Achievement

	Effect of parent on pupil achievement	Effect of school on pupil achievement
Age 7	0.29	0.05
Age 11	0.27	0.21
Age 16	0.14	0.51

Until end of primary school, what the parent does with their child outweighs anything the school in terms of academic achievement in school.


(Sacker et al., 2002, cited in Desforges and Abouchaar, DfES 2003)

How do we engage parents of pupils at risk of exclusion

- ▶ Solution-focused
 - ▶ Focus on reading rather than behaviour
 - ▶ Empower the parent to feel they can be a 'good parent'
 - ▶ Make it enjoyable for parent and child
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Evaluation

The research aimed to evaluate the impact of the Story Links programme on:

- a) parental engagement
 - b) pupils' behaviour
 - c) pupils' emotional and social well-being
 - d) pupils' attitude to reading
 - e) pupils' reading skills
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Case study methodology


Quantitative methods

- **Record of frequency of parental attendance**
- **Goodman's Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)**(Youth in Mind website, 2009) completed pre and post intervention by classteachers .
- **Neale Analysis of Reading Ability(NARA)** (1997) pre and post intervention assessment of accuracy and comprehension.

Qualitative methods

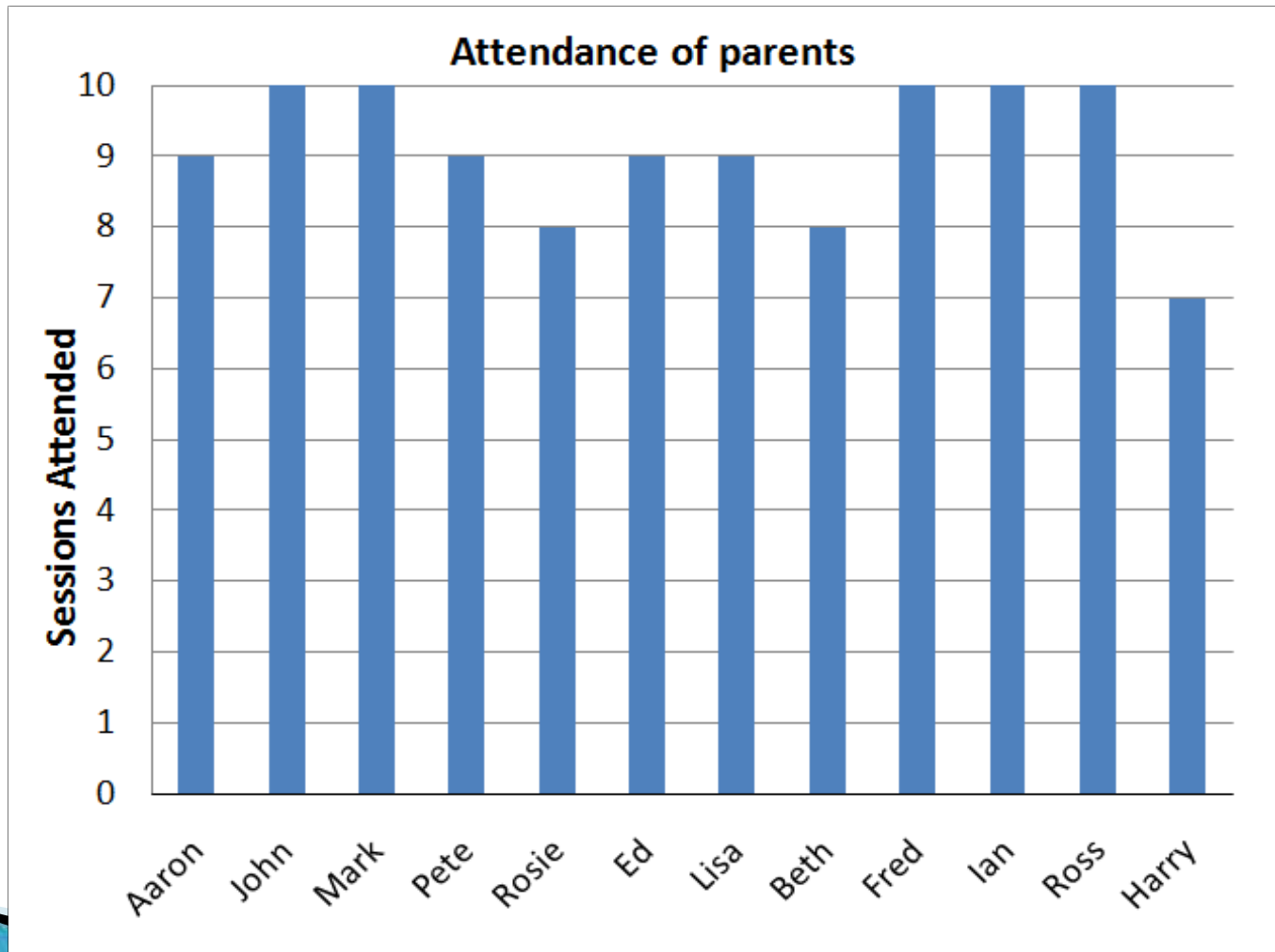
- **Over 80 semi-structured interviews** pre and post intervention with pupils , parents, TAs, SENCOs, classteachers and SL teachers .
- **Analysis** of over 100 stories.

Evaluation findings

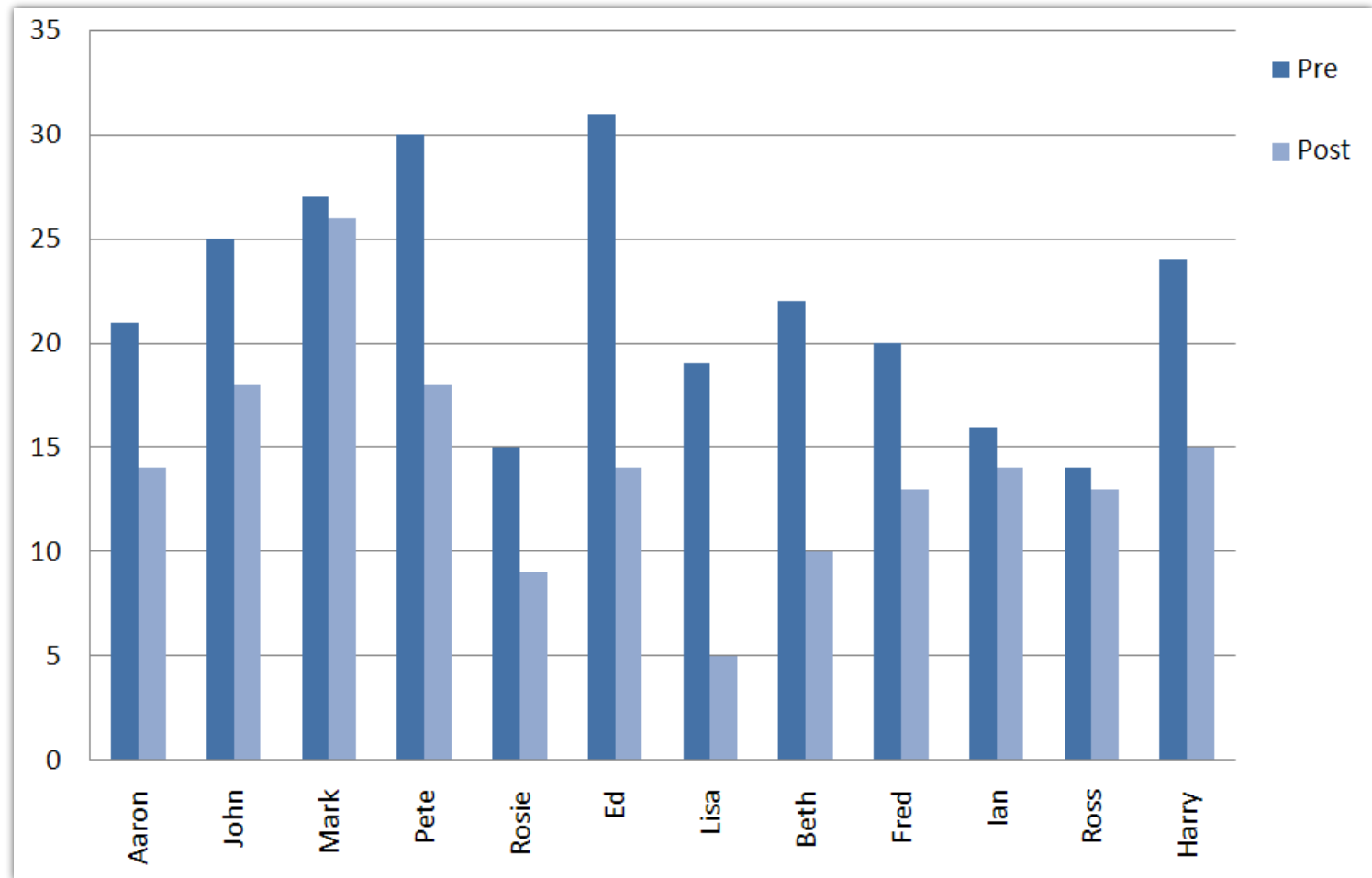
- ▶ Parents attended remarkably well
 - ▶ Dramatic improvement in frequency of parents hearing their child read at home
 - ▶ Significant reduction in pupils' emotional stress
 - ▶ Significant improvement in classroom behaviour
 - ▶ Significant reduction in rates of exclusion from classroom
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Parental attendance

(names changed in all data)



Reduction in pupils' emotional stress (Goodman's SDQ)

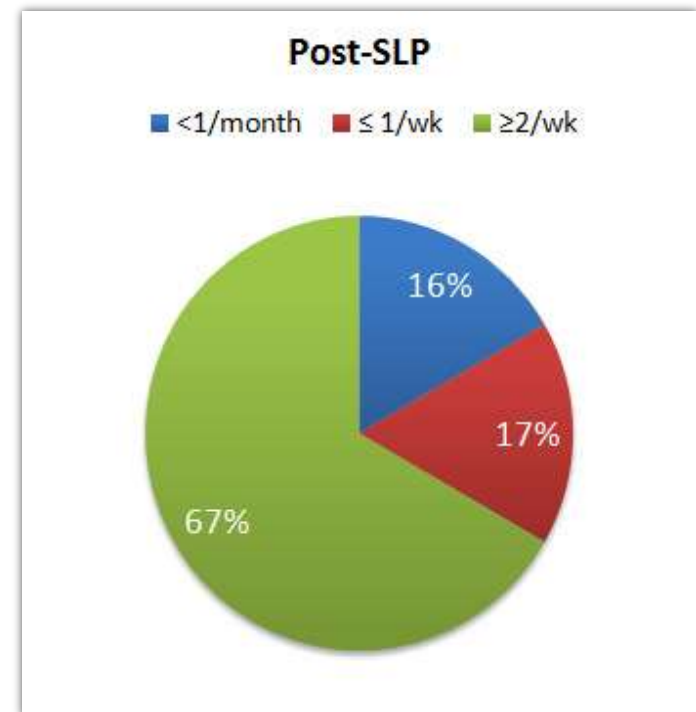
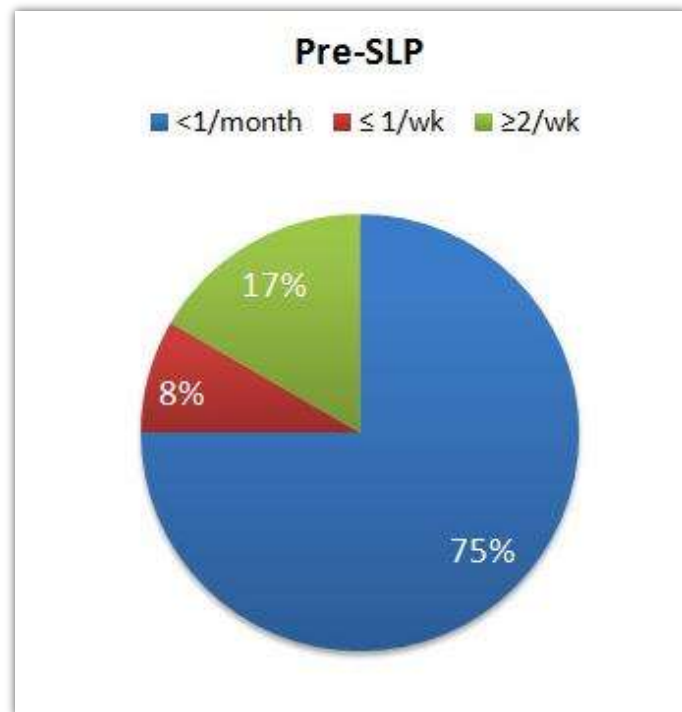


Key: ≤ 11 = Close to average; 12–15 = Slightly raised; 16–18 = High; ≥ 19 = Very High

Reduction in exclusion

	Exclusion over 12 months pre- Story Links programme			Exclusion during Story Links programme		
	School	Classroom	Playground	School	Classroom	Playground
Twice or more a week	0	5	5	0	0	3
About once a week	0	3	0	0	3	1
Less than once a week	2 + 1 self- excluder	2	2	0	1	2

Increase in frequency of child reading to parent



Change in home-school relationships



▶ *The school thought she would be very hard to engage.... Mum is very eager, surprisingly eager, the school is quite shocked that she's actually turning up religiously and is very committed (SL teacher)*

“*John's got behaviour problems so my interaction with the school was horrible all the time – the only interaction was 'John's been bad, this has happened, that's happened'... now, it's nice to look forward to coming in ...John glows and picks up his reading and is eager to tell us his story. (Mother)*

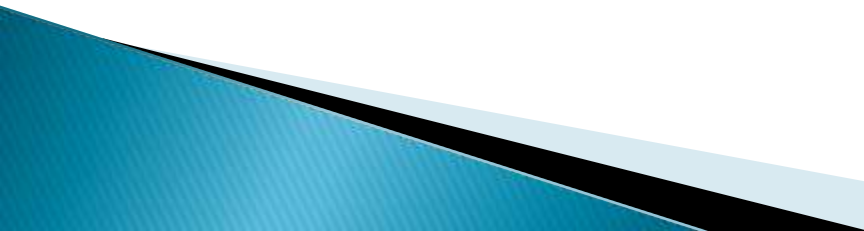
Relation of stories and pictures to pupils' anxieties

▶ Bo the Elephant was stropky and used to cry because he had to find food on his own He walked for miles and miles, digging at the ground and sniffing at the tree... (then) his keeper came in his lorry with a big box. The box was full of sticky buns which they ate together.

So, Bo knew now that... he didn't have to get stropky and cry, trying to find food on his own. His keeper would look after him well.



Analysis of stories

- ▶ **SLT:** Alex the guinea pig was very angry and fed up.
 - ▶ **Pupil:** He couldn't go for a swim in the bath but his brother and sister could.
 - ▶ (Girl competing with 6 siblings for attention at home)
 - ▶
 - ▶ **SLT:** Dino the dinosaur was very angry. He sat outside his cave and growled.
 - ▶ **Pupil:** He wanted to be the King but he wasn't so he killed the King.
 - ▶ (Boy often fighting to be in control)
 - ▶
 - ▶ **SLT:** Ranio the Rhino was very angry.
 - ▶ **Pupil:** Because Ben had run off without him after pushing Ranio into the water hole .
 - ▶ (Boy who had frequent fights and few friends)
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Impact on reading skills

- ▶ Minimal increase measured on NARA (two-thirds initially below baseline 6.01)
- ▶ Increased confidence and improved attitude to reading:

“ *What’s changed is that he now happily picks up a book and starts reading. Mark’s Mum*

“ *It was more of a chore before.... you had to make her read... But ever since she’s done this... she loves it, she wants to do it. Rosie’s Dad*

“ *He gets stuck on words but then he asks for help. But it’s the fact that he now wants to and it’s like he’s clicked with being able to retain a story... and putting it together in his head. Ed’s Mum*

Further information

- ▶ The full evaluation report of the Story Links project can be viewed at:

www.storylinkstraining.co.uk

- ▶ Contact: Dr Trisha Waters

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