

CASE STUDY

Impact of Childminder Support through Storytime Sessions

By Danielle Gilkes

Childminder and Hub Associate

Thames Valley
and South Central
Early Years
Stronger practice hub



What we did

For the past 18 months, I have delivered Storytime sessions for childminders in and around the Portsmouth area funded by the Thames Valley and South Central Early Years Stronger Practice Hub. The aim of the sessions was to provide a support and networking opportunity for childminders to attend with their minded children during their working day, removing barriers to accessing training or peer support.

Why?

Childminders often face barriers to training and support: daytime sessions clash with their working hours, while evenings are difficult after a full day and family commitments. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, many have reported increased feelings of isolation as local services were reduced. The Department for Education (2025) highlights that building a more expert and connected workforce, sharing evidence-based practice, enables childminders to deliver high-quality early education and improve outcomes for children.



Who was involved

Since the sessions began, we have supported **22 childminders** from across Portsmouth, West Sussex and Hampshire councils and we have given literacy support to **61 children**. Whilst we have regular attendees at the sessions, we also attract new childminders each time.

Role of the Stronger Practice Hub

The Thames Valley & South Central Early Years Stronger Practice Hub has been instrumental in the delivery of these sessions by offering funding and the flexibility to plan and deliver childminder support in a targeted area.

Strategies and Approaches

Storytime sessions were designed to combine:

- **Networking opportunities** for childminders to reduce isolation and share practice.
- **Themed literacy sessions** with books, activities, and resources to inspire engaging practice.
- **Alignment with EYFS principles**, giving children developmentally appropriate literacy and language opportunities.
- **Evidence-informed practice**, echoing the Department for Education's (2025) emphasis on creating a more expert, connected workforce that improves outcomes for children.



Thames Valley
and South Central
Early Years
Stronger practice hub



Quotes from Childminders



"I really appreciate the opportunity to meet with other childminders and share good practice and a story and craft together"

"These sessions are really good opportunities to meet with other professionals to share ideas and get support. The quality resources given out are very much appreciated and will be used in my setting to benefit the children. There's a good range of activities on offer for the children, all supporting their development with regards to the EYFS."

The Impact

The sessions provided by the Hub became a lifeline for childminders, providing professional growth, community, and renewed passion for reading with children. Practitioners reported increased confidence and wellbeing, while children benefitted from richer literacy experiences.

Outcomes

For children: 61 children experienced high-quality literacy activities, building engagement with reading, creativity, and emotional expression.

For childminders:

- Increased confidence and enthusiasm for embedding story-based activities.
- Reduced feelings of isolation through peer connections.
- Access to quality resources to extend practice in their own settings.

For the sector: Created a sustainable local model of targeted support at a time of declining LA services. Which the Hub will now expand into other regions.

Author: Danielle Gilkes
Editor: Tanya Snarey