



## Leading Beyond the Classroom: Empowering Leaders and Practitioners to Implement Evidence-Informed Approaches

### Our Journey.....

Our mission is to provide high-quality training to all EYFS practitioners. However, we recognise that childminders often face barriers to professional development due to their unique working hours. To solve this, a working party of Staffordshire County Council EYFS experts, The Team at Cannock Library and Thrive Together SPH, collaborated to design a solution: delivering expert training directly through interactive stay-and-play sessions.

#### Key strategies included:

- Teaching and modelling new vocabulary
- Interactive reading
- Collaborative talk
- Modelling high-quality language



The childminders and their children actively joined in with stories, songs and play, whilst picking up new ideas and activities to use in their own setting



#### It was also a chance to:

- Build confidence in supporting communication, language and literacy
- Take away simple activities to use at home
- Connect with other local childminders
- Enhance practice leading to better outcomes for children
- Celebrate the wonderful difference Childminders make to children in Staffordshire.





## Insights of Impact to celebrate....

*"I don't just 'read' a story anymore, I change my tone of voice, ask questions and prompt the children to respond more often, leading to greater conversations between with me and the children."*



*"I now make story time more physically active using different props songs and actions, so that everyone is engaged"*

*"I'm more aware about how to further improve my story telling techniques using intonation, actions, prompts. I can then develop their language and phonological awareness too."*



*I've used 'what's in the box'. The children were really engaged with it and I've gained confidence doing it with them.*

*"I now use more expression while reading stories to the children and ask them more questions during the story to keep them actively engaged."*



*"Each week, after the Library session, we follow the same theme in our setting and expand the children's language and thinking by using the prompts and methods with other stories. "*

*"Children continue talking about the story at home and use the phrases, words and actions in their play."*



## Signs of Impact

### Impact One

Childminders reported being able to use a wider range of strategies to enhance children's vocabulary, communication and understanding during shared book reading.

### Impact Two

Children's engagement and curiosity around shared book reading increased significantly. Their developing vocabulary and conceptual understanding became evident in their daily interactions.

### Impact Three

Childminders observed that children's enhanced communication skills improved their interactions with peers. There were more "serve and return" conversations, greater use of social communication strategies Children also began to label their emotions more effectively when resolving conflict.

## Looking Ahead

Our experience has shown us the power of evidence-informed professional development. By investing in high-quality training in an accessible way and embedding strategies into everyday practice, we have seen tangible improvements in both educator confidence and children's communication and literacy outcomes.

As we continue this journey, our next step is to build on this momentum—sharing what we've learned with other Childminders and continuing to refine our approaches so that every child has the opportunity to thrive through the power of language.

## Find Out More

Find out more about evidence-informed approaches to early years practice in the [EEF Early Years Evidence Store](#)