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Evaluation of the Doodle Families

Interim Report

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Contents

List of Tables	4
List of Figures	5
1. Methodology.....	6
Introduction	6
Evaluation Design & Analytic Strategy.....	6
Instruments and Measurements	7
Sample.....	8
Patterns of Non-Response Between T1 and T2	13
Parental Perceptions of Doodle Families.....	14
Introduction	14
2. How effective is school and community interagency working with families on the development of children’s literacy?	15
Introduction	15
Reading at Home: Incidence and Frequency	15
Parental Perceptions of Children’s Reading Activities.....	16
Parental Perception of Children’s Digital Literacy	18
Parental perceptions of changes in children’s Emergent Literacy.....	19
Oral language and storytelling.....	19
Reading	20
Writing	20
School Experience & Attendance.....	21
Summary	22
3. What is the impact of Doodle Families on parental attitudes, awareness and skills to practice effective family literacy activities with their children?.....	23
Introduction	23
Parents own Literacy Behaviours and Attitudes.....	23
Shared Reading Activities.....	24
Shared Reading Practices.....	26
Shared Literacy Practices in the Home	27
Shared Writing Practices.....	29
Summary	30
4. What is the impact of Doodle Families on parental knowledge and confidence of how to best support their children’s learning at home?	32
Introduction	32
Parental Confidence with school literacies.....	32

Parent knowledge of learning processes and learning needs	33
The Balance of Responsibility Between Schools and Parents.....	34
Summary	35
5. Overall Impressions and What is the impact of Doodle Families on the relationship between parents and teachers?	36
Introduction	36
Overall Impressions of Doodle Families.....	36
Changes in Self	38
Building Literacy Relationships	38
Feeling Supported	39
Seeking Support	40
Summary	41
Appendix 1	43
References	45

List of Tables

Table 1: Characteristics of Participating Schools	10
Table 2: Summary of data collection to date.....	13
Table 3: Frequency Distribution of Children’s Reading, T1 and T2.....	15
Table 4: Frequency Distribution of Child-Led Reading, T1 and T2.....	16
Table 5: Descriptive Statistics Regarding Frequency That Child is Read To.....	25

List of Figures

Figure 1: Parental Perception of the Frequency of Children’s Reading.....	17
Figure 2: Frequency of Digital Literacy Use	18
Figure 3: Change in Child, as Perceived by Parents	19
Figure 4: Perceived Changes in Oral Language and Storytelling.....	20
Figure 5: Perceived Changes in Reading Behaviour.....	20
Figure 6: Perceived Changes in Writing Behaviour.....	21
Figure 7: Changes in Experience of School	21
Figure 8: Parents’ reading habits at Time 1	23
Figure 9: Parents' attitudes towards reading, T1.....	24
Figure 10: Duration of Reading Sessions	25
Figure 11: Involvement in Shared Reading Activities (% Every time or Sometimes).....	26
Figure 12: Prevalence of Parental Involvement in Supportive Reading Activities.....	27
Figure 13: Frequency of Shared Literacy Practices	28
Figure 14: Frequency of Shared Literacy Practices (more).....	28
Figure 15: Frequency of Shared Writing Practices.....	29
Figure 16: Share of Parents that are Confident or Very Confident with School Literacies.....	33
Figure 17: Parent Knowledge of Learning Processes and Learning Needs	33
Figure 18: Parent Perceptions of the Balance of Responsibilities	34
Figure 19: Overall Impressions of Doodle Families.....	36
Figure 20: Frequency of the Use of New Literacy Approaches.....	37
Figure 21: Change in Self.....	38
Figure 22: Changes in Perceptions of Learning.....	39
Figure 23: Changes in Perceptions of Learning.....	39
Figure 24: Perceptions of Doodle Families	40
Figure 25: Confidence Levels in Seeking Support	40

1. Methodology

Introduction

In this chapter, the methodological approach to the evaluation (for Time 1 and Time 2 data) is set out. Here, we discuss the research design, the sample, the research methods and instruments, as well as the analytic strategy employed in the evaluation. Doodle Families is a standardised, 8 week family literacy initiative conducted in schools, and involves a one-hour session for parents/guardians and a separate one-hour session for children in First Class each week for 8 weeks. The purpose of Doodle Families is to strengthen the links between the home and the school and to increase parental involvement, as well as to embed change in family literacy activities.

Evaluation Design & Analytic Strategy

The study adopted a quantitative approach to the evaluation of Doodle Families, whereby data was obtained from parental questionnaires administered at two points in time. The evaluation adopted a quasi-experimental approach, whereby the research instruments sought to capture both 'before participation in Doodle Families' and 'after participation in Doodle Families' measures. Capturing 'before' measures – measures of the family literacy environment before participation in Doodle Families - makes it possible to determine the possibility for change in the key dependent variables. Thus, we used this design strategy to capture the family literacy environment before participation in Doodle Families (DF) and analyse the data to see whether participation in DF has had an effect on the family literacy environment.

The evaluation design did not strictly follow a traditional experimental design, in that only one group was the focus of the evaluation – parents who participated in Doodle Families and who agreed to participate in the evaluation. That is, on the request of the Childhood Development Initiative (CDI), a control group was not been included in the design of the evaluation. Thus, the evaluation represents a 'before-after' study without a control group.

This type of 'before and after' quasi-experimental design seeks to provides evidence of concomitant variation between the independent variable (participation in Doodle Families) and the dependent variables (measures of the home literacy environment). The difference in the home literacy environment before and after participation in Doodle Families is taken as evidence of the effectiveness of the programme on a range of outcomes relating to the home literacy environment. In such research designs, the 'before' measures serve as a control in the sense that it is assumed to represent the family literacy environment in the absence of the experimental treatment – participation in Doodle Families. Thus, each participant each subject serves as his/her own control.

However, we should also keep in mind that other influences may have operated between the 'before and after' measures. External events unrelated to the 'experimental treatment' (participation in Doodle Families) may lead to a change in position on the dependent variable (measures of the home literacy environment), as well as processes of growth and development. This design does not make it possible to separate such effects from those of the experimental treatment. While the day-to-day work of schools may have some influence on the outcomes in question (changes to the home literacy environment), it is reasonable to expect that schools will have been a relatively uniform influence across each of the research sites over time, and that such influence will not excessively 'contaminate' the quasi-experimental design presented here.

The Childhood Development Initiative (CDI) works closely with a number of schools in areas of socio-economic deprivation nationally, and they were responsible (along with facilitators) for selecting the parents and children that participate in Doodle Families. Since participation in Doodle Families was based in 9 DEIS schools selected by the Childhood Development Initiative, where facilitators/ teachers selected families for the programme, and parents self-selected themselves and their children onto the programme, the evaluation could not use a random allocation procedure to create a true experimental design. That is, for these reasons, random assignment to the experimental treatment (participation in Doodle Families) was not completely possible. In such a design, the 'before' measures still provide evidence of whether there were differences in 'Y' (the dependent variable – measures of the home literacy environment) that precede differences in 'X' (participation in Doodle Families).

Instruments and Measurements

To date, the evaluation team has administered questionnaires with the same parents over two points in time:

- Time one (T1) represents the period immediately **before** parents/guardians/carers participate in Doodle Families (October 2018).
- Time two (T2) represents the period immediately **after** parents/guardians/carers complete Doodle Families (December 2018).

Questionnaires for parents attending Doodle Families

Questionnaires for parents consisted mainly of multiple-choice questions, but Likert-type scales were also used. There were 31 questions at Time 1 and 26 questions at Time 2. At Time 1, in seven programmes the questionnaires were distributed by the Doodle Families Facilitator with the support of a member of the research team, and in the two remaining programmes, the DF Facilitator distributed the questionnaires. At Time 2, the majority of the questionnaire were distributed by the DF Facilitator. Respondents were allocated approximately 30 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

Questions at Time 1 were devised to allow the research team to measure the home literacy environment before participation in Doodle Families, and also included some demographic questions. Measures of the parent/guardians own literacy activities were included in the questionnaire at Time 1 as well as motivations to join Doodle Families, and other attitudes towards family literacy. Specifically, the following areas were captured at Time 1:

- **Family Demographics and Resources** (age, relationship to child, family structure, parental educational qualifications, language spoken in the home, income difficulty of the household, number of books in the home, previous school and interagency engagement, parental access to learning infrastructure, parental motivation for participation).
- **Parental Literacy Behaviours and Attitudes** (parental reading habits, parental attitudes towards reading).
- **Parental Literacy Beliefs and Understandings** (understanding of how school literacies are taught, confidence in children's literacy development, information networks, beliefs about the roles of parents and the school).
- **Child and Family Literacy Activities** (child reading behaviour, child-led literacy in the home, shared reading activities, shared reading practices, shared literacy practices).

These questions used in the questionnaire were guided and adapted from previous work conducted by Swain et al., (2015), Sénéchal et al. (1998), Saracho (2000) as well as questions asked in the Growing up in Ireland survey and guidelines from the NCCA for 1st class. In their evaluation of the Doodle Den Literacy Programme, Biggart, Kerr, O’Hare and Connolly (2012) tapped into the following concepts using the Family Literacy Questionnaire devised by Saracho (2000).

The questions at Time 2 were designed to analyse changes in these attitudes, beliefs and literacy practices. Questions around the family literacy environment were asked at both Time 1 and Time 2 in order to estimate ‘the effect’ of participation in Doodle Families. However, some new questions captured at Time 2 allowed the research team to explore the use of family literacy activities from Doodle Families, including the frequency and timing of their use, and the family members who were usually involved. Specifically, at Time 2, the key research questions that need to be addressed include:

- How effective is school and community interagency working with families on the development of children’s literacy, from the perspective of parents/guardians?
- What is the impact of Doodle Families on parental attitudes, awareness and skills to practice effective family literacy activities with their children?
- What is the impact of Doodle Families on parental knowledge and confidence of how to best support their children’s learning at home?
- What is the impact of Doodle Families on the relationship between parents and teachers?

Sample

In this section, we outline the population and the sample achieved during the evaluation at Time 1 and at Time 2. The selection of schools is outlined, followed by the selection of participants – both parents and children.

Selection of Schools

The selection of schools from which the Doodle Families programme would run was undertaken by the Childhood Development Initiative. Each of the schools that were involved in this evaluation of Doodle Families has had some form of contact with CDI since 2007 – whether through programmes organised in the community or linked to education. The participant schools were selected by CDI because they are located in areas of disadvantage. Furthermore, schools could either opt in or out of delivering Doodle Families (or any other CDI initiative). The following criteria were set by CDI regarding school involvement in Doodle Families:

- The family literacy programme should be the **Doodle Families** programme developed by the Childhood Development Initiative.
- The Doodle Families programme should run for 8 weeks from October 2018 to December 2018.
- The Doodle Families programme should include both parents and children: a one hour session per week for parents and a 15 minute session for children in First Class.

- The school must participate in the internal CDI evaluation of Doodle Families, which includes a contract, the requirement of Facilitators to administer before and after questionnaires to be completed by attending Parents, Children and Facilitators themselves. The participating school must also provide Financial returns (given that schools receive funding from CDI to support the running costs of Doodle Families), and an End of Programme Report (CDI 2018).

In order for parents/guardians to be included in this external evaluation they had to be participants on a Doodle Families programme in one of the selected schools.

Given the speed at which schools were recruited, it was initially challenging for CDI to secure schools to participate in the evaluation. These challenges included (i) difficulty in recruiting schools to run Doodle Families, and (ii) difficulty securing enough children, and in particular parents, to participate at each school site. CDI initially sought to secure 8 schools to run Doodle Families with up to 15 children participating in each. Following a briefing run by CDI for Doodle Families facilitators on September 15th 2018, 11 schools indicated an interest in participating in the programme. CDI, with the support of the evaluation team, secured 9 schools for the current evaluation.

In total, 9 Doodle Families programmes, running in 9 schools in disadvantaged areas of Dublin participated in the evaluation from October 2018 – December 2018. 5 schools began the programme during the first week of October 2018, while the remaining 4 schools began the programme during the second week of October 2018. Doodle Families took place largely in parent rooms or other locations within each of the 9 schools. The programmes were facilitated by specialised Facilitators in 3 schools, while in the remaining schools either the Home-School-Liaison Officer or a teacher acted as Facilitator.

Table 1 provides a summary of the key characteristics of the schools that were involved in the evaluation. There is considerable homogeneity across the schools that participated, given that each of the schools were mixed or co-educational, and classified as being in urban areas, and all were under the patron of a Catholic religious body. As shown in Table 1, each of the schools have high concentrations of socio-economic disadvantaged pupils. 2 schools held DEIS Urban Band 2 status, while the remainder are Urban Band 1 schools. The most common school size was in the '300-499' category which represented 5 schools, while just 3 were classified as smaller schools in the '100-199' school size category. 4 schools were located in the Dublin 24 region, 2 in the Dublin 12 region, 2 in the Dublin 7 region and 1 in the Dublin 8 region. In just 1 school, instruction is through the medium of Irish.

Table 1: Characteristics of Participating Schools

Id	Number of Children Participated in DF	Number of Parents	Literacy Achievement Groups of Children	Number Previously Attended Doodle Den	School Postal Code	DEIS Status ¹	Programme Began	Facilitated by	School Size		
									Girls	Boys	Total
School A	10	T1=4 T2=3 T3=	High =4 [40%] Moderate =4 [40%] Low =2 [20%]	8	Dublin 7	Urban Band 1	2 nd week Oct	Facilitator	99	38	137
School B	10	T1=6 T2=5 T3=	High =2 [20%] Moderate =4 [40%] Low =4 [40%]	4	Dublin 24	Urban Band 1	1 st week Oct	HSLC	175	188	363
School C	10	T1=5 T2=5 T3=	Low=2 [20%] <i>Reminder unspecified</i>	0	Dublin 12	Urban Band 1	1 st week Oct	Facilitator	194	201	395
School D	10	T1=8 T2=5 T3=	<i>Mixed – but unspecified</i>	0	Dublin 8	Urban Band 2	2 nd week Oct	Teacher/ HSLC	178	170	348
School E	9	T1=8 T2=6 T3=	<i>Unspecified</i>	4	Dublin 7	Urban Band 1	2 nd week Oct	Facilitator	43	75	118
School G	12	T1=11 T2=9 T3=	High=3 [25%] Moderate=4 [33%] Low=5 [42%]	4	Dublin 24	Urban Band 1	1 st week Oct	HSLC	73	96	169
School F	8	T1=3 T2=3 T3=	<i>Unspecified</i>	2	Dublin 24	Urban Band 2	1 st week Oct	Teacher	195	141	336
School H	11	T1=10 T2=8 T3=	<i>Mixed – but unspecified</i>	0	Dublin 12	Urban Band 1	2 nd week Oct	HSLC	52	63	115
School I	15	T1=9 T2=8 T3=	High=7 [47%] Moderate=3 [20%] Low=5 [33%]	4	Dublin 24	Urban Band 1	1 st week Oct	HSLC	199	182	381

¹ A classification of Urban Band 1 represents schools that have the greatest level of disadvantage.

Numbers and Selection of Participants

Selection of Children

While the remit of this evaluation did not extend to an evaluation of the effectiveness of Doodle Families for the literacy outcomes of children, it is important to say something about the children who participated. Doodle Families is a programme which targets children in First Class, given the focus of the programme on 'emergent literacy' (CDI 2018). The children's sessions were delivered after school, and the parents were also invited to participate in the last 5-10 minutes of the children's sessions with their child (CDI 2018).

In all, 95 First Class children participated in Doodle Families across the 9 schools. The number of children that participated in each of the Doodle Families programmes is outlined in Table 1.

The Doodle Families manual (CDI 2018) outlines the following selection method used to select children for Doodle Families:

- Facilitators first obtain parent/guardian consent to participate in the programme and inform them of what Doodle Families is about.
- The Facilitator then completes a short questionnaire designed by CDI to evaluate the child's current literacy level. Children are referred to the programme by a class teacher or Doodle Families Facilitator in consultation with parents, based on an identified literacy need, using the following method:
 - (i) Letter identification – the child's ability to identify letters,
 - (ii) Writing vocabulary – the child's ability to build a writing vocabulary,
 - (iii) Phonemic awareness – the child's ability to discriminate the individual phonemes within words, and
 - (iv) Text comprehension – the child's ability to construct meaning from text.

These criteria are measured using a Likert-type scale (i.e. from 0 = extremely poor to 10 = extremely good). CDI recommend a cross-section of need in order to maximise a positive learning environment where it is recommended that (i) 60% of children will have scored between 0-20 (high literacy need); 25% of children will have scored between 21-30 (medium literacy need); and 15% of children will have scored between 31-40 (low literacy need).

- The child should also be comfortable or have the capacity to participate in group activities.

The Doodle Families manual indicates that Doodle Families may not be appropriate for children with a developmental delay or children who are currently receiving additional support for literacy or speech and language (CDI 2018, p. 53).

As shown in Table 1, this recommended range of literacy need in the children that participate in Doodle Families was not met by any of the participating DF programmes. In 4 programmes, the composition of students by literacy need was not specified. In just 2 programmes, the share of participating children with high literacy need was greater than the share of participating children with medium/low literacy need, contrary to the guidelines. In terms of the characteristics of the children that participated, just one child in School E had previously participated in a Doodle Families programme, and 26 children out of the 95 (27.3%) had previously attended Doodle Den.

Selection of Parents

The focus of this evaluation relates to parental outcomes. As indicated above, Doodle Families is a Family Literacy Programme, designed to be delivered in two components – including a one-hour session for parents/guardians each week of the programmes 8 weeks. The Doodle Families Manual recommends that parents' sessions can be delivered during the school day (CDI 2018).

Parents of children who participated in Doodle Families were the target respondents in the evaluation, and the unit of analysis. The formal selection of parents into Doodle Families was undertaken by CDI, who obtained consent from the parents to participate in Doodle Families. The Facilitators of each of the Doodle Families programme in each school offered support as gatekeepers for the research team. That is, while the research team were not responsible for the recruitment of parents onto the Doodle Families programme, participating parents/guardians were recruited to the evaluation with the help of the gatekeepers.

Recruitment of parents at Time 1 typically took the form of a member of the research team attending Session 1 of the Doodle Families parent component to brief participating parents about the evaluation and to seek consent to participation in the evaluation. This was the case for 7 out of the 9 Doodle Families programme. The programmes run 2 schools (School C, School D) the Facilitator recommended gaining parental consent for participation in the evaluation.

At this point, the challenges in gaining consent from parents to participate in the evaluation became evident. This was because (i) not all parents of the children attending Doodle Families attended the programme; and (ii) not all parents gave consent to participate in the evaluation. The research team notified CDI of the lower than expected uptake of parents to the programme and to the evaluation. CDI responded by informing Facilitators that schools may use supporting funds from CDI to incentivise parents to participate in Doodle Families. Facilitators also responded as some programmes ran Session 1 of the Parent Component a second time in order to increase parental participation. The research team also responded by visiting schools a number of times to secure more parents in the evaluation. Non-participation in the evaluation at Time 1 is explained largely by parents not attending Doodle Families, rather than because they refused to participate in the evaluation. The greatest number of parents who refused to participate in the evaluation were in School B. In this school 3 parents opted out of the evaluation.

Out of the 95 children that participated in Doodle Families, 64 (67.3%) parents consented to participate in the evaluation and completed parental questionnaires at Time 1 in early October 2018. 8 weeks later (late November, early December 2018) when Doodle Families concluded, data collection for Time 2 began. Data collection at Time 2 typically involved the Doodle Families Facilitator administering the parent questionnaire during Session 8 – the final parent component. In some cases, a member of the research team also attended this final session to support the Doodle Families Facilitator. At this point 52 parents completed parental questionnaires at Time 2. This represented 54.7% of the parents of the 95 children that participated in Doodle Families.

Overall, for the longitudinal analysis of Time 1 and Time 2, we had 51 parents who filled in the survey at both time points. That is, 51 out of the 64 parents that participated in the data collection at Time 1 completed data collection at Time 2, representing 79.6% of the original sample.

The attrition between the two time points is explained largely by parents withdrawing from Doodle Families, rather than because they refused to participate in the evaluation. A comparison of the characteristics of parents who responded at Time 1 and Time 2, with the characteristics of parents who responded at Time 1 only shows little variation in socio-demographic patterns (see Appendix 1).

Attrition was evident across all programmes, with the exception of School C.

A summary of the number of completed questionnaires is provided in Table 3. Here, we report that out of all the parents that participated in Doodle Families, 64 completed questionnaires at Time 1 (October 2018). 52 parents completed questionnaires at Time 2, 51 of whom had completed questionnaires at Time 1.

Table 2: Summary of data collection to date

Number of Family Literacy Programmes Delivered	9
Number of schools involved	9
Number of completed questionnaires at T1	64
Number of completed questionnaires at T2	52
Number of completed questionnaires at T3	
Number of parents who completed T1 and T2 questionnaires	51
Number of parents who completed T1, T2 and T3 questionnaires	
Number of parents who completed T1 and T3 questionnaires	
Total number of completed questionnaires	116

Patterns of Non-Response Between T1 and T2

Analyses were undertaken to decipher patterns of non-response between Time 1 and Time 2. As shown in Appendix 1.

The longitudinal sample differs in some (non-statistically significant) ways from the original sample at Time 1. While the majority of study children at Time 1 were female, there is a more equal distribution of males and females in the longitudinal sample.

The longitudinal sample is marginally younger, marginally better educated than the original sample at Time 1. There are more two-parent family units in the longitudinal sample and they perceive themselves to be under less economic difficulty than the sample at Time 1. There are also less native English speakers in the longitudinal sample.

Parental Perceptions of Doodle Families

Introduction

As shown in Appendix 1 26% of parents had previously attended some form of family literacy programme, and just 8% had previously participated in a Childhood Development Initiative (CDI) programme in the community. Thus, for the majority of parents, this was their first encounter with family literacy, but also with CDI.

2. How effective is school and community interagency working with families on the development of children’s literacy?

Introduction

In this section, we draw on the findings from the parent surveys to determine the effectiveness of school and community interagency working with families on the development of children’s literacy, from the parental perspective. In doing so, we seek to examine change/progress in children’s reading at home and reading activities; children’s digital literacy, and emergent literacy, from the perspective of parents/guardians/carers.

Reading at Home: Incidence and Frequency

Analyses of the longitudinal data reveals that there was no change over the two time points in the incidence of reading at home². That is, the vast majority (96%) of parents at both time points reported that their child reads at home. While the majority of parents indicated that the child reads with family members (mother, father, grandparent, siblings), just 4 out of the 51 parents indicated that the child reads alone. However, it was very clear from the comments left by parents that children have very different experiences of reading at home. Some comments which lead us to this conclusion include:

‘[My child] Gets very upset [when reading], no confidence’.

‘He reads alone but I help him if there are some difficult words’.

‘Sometimes she reads, but not difficult books’.

Parents were asked at both time points about the frequency of reading that their child engages with at home ‘How often does your child read at home?’ As shown by Table 3, before Doodle Families 44% of children were reported to read ‘every day’ by their parents, and this had increased to 56.3% after Doodle Families.

Table 3: Frequency Distribution of Children’s Reading, T1 and T2

	% at T1	% at T2
Never	2.0	0.0
Sometimes	18.0	14.6
Frequently	36.0	29.2
Every Day	44.0	56.3
	100	100

A chi-square test was conducted to compare the frequency of reading before and after attendance at Doodle Families. A statistically significantly higher percentage of children were reading every day after

² At both time points, parents were asked ‘Does your child read at home?’ If they answered yes, they were then asked to indicate with whom the child reads.

attendance at Doodle Families than before ($\chi^2=6.032$, $df=1$, $p=.020^3$). The effect size (the magnitude of the association between the two variables) based on Phi =.354, indicating a very strong association between the two variables.

Parents were also asked at both time points, ‘How often does your child ask for somebody to read to him/her’? While the share of children asking to be read to ‘very often’ increased from 17.6% at Time 1 to 27.5% by Time 2 (see Table 4), the results of a chi-square test indicated that there is no statistically significant association between the two variables, suggesting an insignificant change between Time 1 and Time 2⁴.

Table 4: Frequency Distribution of Child-Led Reading, T1 and T2

	% at T1	% at T2
Never	9.8	5.9
Seldom	9.8	15.7
Sometimes	35.3	29.4
Often	27.5	21.6
Very Often	17.6	27.5
	100	100

Parental Perceptions of Children’s Reading Activities

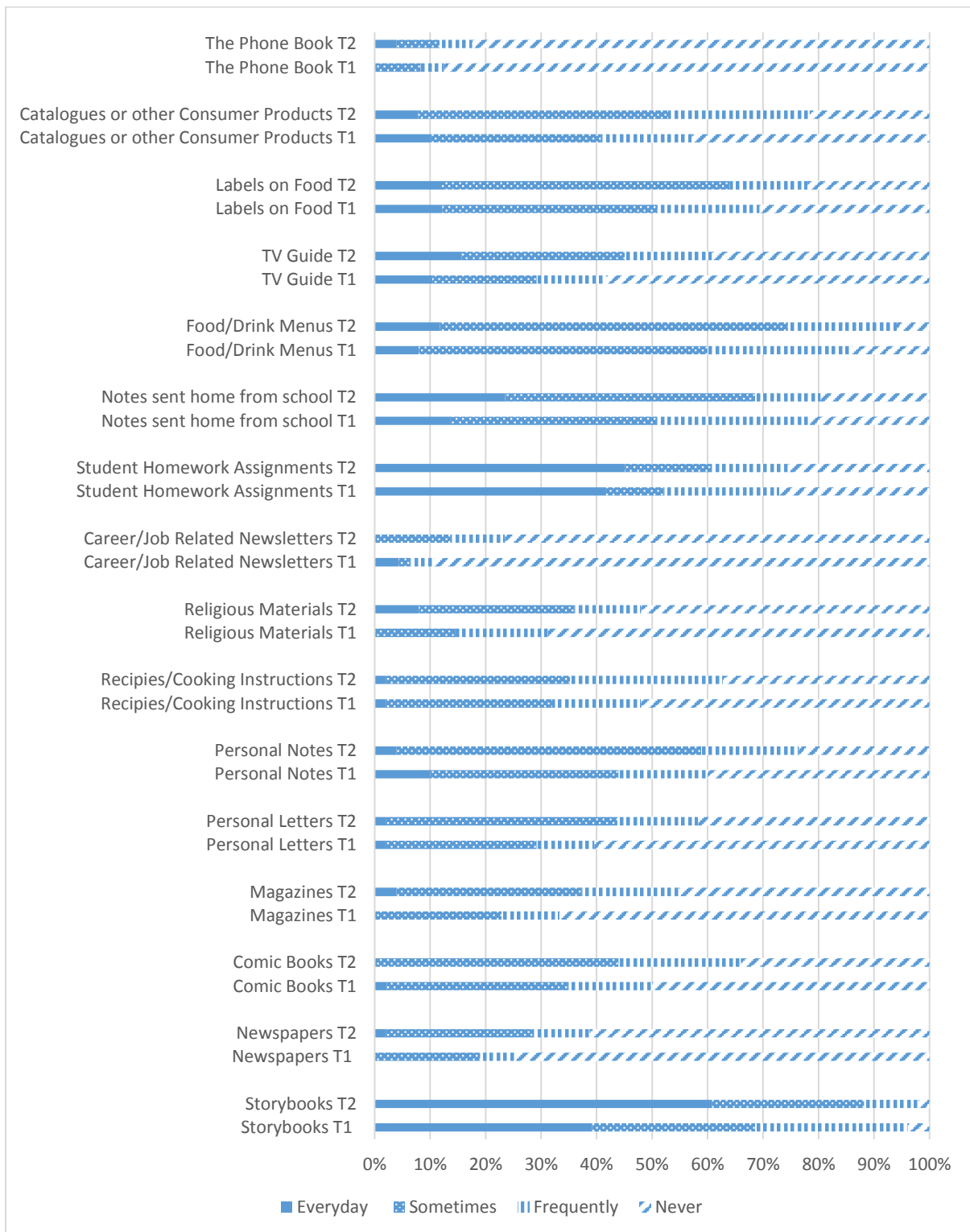
Parents were asked at both time points about the types and frequency of reading that their children engaged in. These questions were adopted from the work of Olivia Saracho (2000) who designed a research instrument to assess the perceptions of families of their young children’s literacy acquisition. As illustrated by the clustered bar chart of Figure 1, habitual daily reading activities before Doodle Families were largely dependent on school-related reading (student homework assignments) and traditional storybooks. That is, over 40% of parents indicated that their child read these types of reading materials – storybooks and/or student homework assignments - everyday.

By Time 2, after participation in Doodle Families, the share of parents reporting that their child reads from a storybook every day increased to 60.8%. An increase in everyday reading between before and after participation in Doodle Families was also evident with regard to student homework assignments (from 41.7% to 45.1%), notes sent home from school (13.7% to 23.5%), reading from food or drink menus (from 8% to 11.8%), and reading a TV guide (10.4% to 15.7%).

³ Based on the results of a two-sided Fischer’s Exact Test. The results for the one-sided test are ($\chi^2=6.032$, $df=1$, $p=0.14$).

⁴ Response categories of the two variables were merged into two binary variables where 1=never/seldom/sometimes and 2=often/very often. A crosstabulation and chi-square test was used in place of the Spearman rank-ordinal correlation coefficient which is typically used for bivariate analyses of ordinal variables because of the violation of the assumption that there is a monotonic relationship between the two variables. Further analyses (not shown here) using a paired samples t-test shows a relatively strong and positive association between the two variables. While on average, scores were higher at Time 2 than at Time 1, suggesting greater frequency in children asking to be read to, there was no significant difference between Time 1 and Time 2 scores.

Figure 1: Parental Perception of the Frequency of Children’s Reading



In order to estimate the presence of change between Time 1 and Time 2, we summed up these literacy activities at Time 1 and at Time 2. At Time 1, the mean of the scale was 46.2 with a standard deviation of 11.9, while at Time 2, the mean of the scale was 43.7 with a standard deviation of 7.7. On these scales, the higher the value, the less often these activities took place (as reported by parents. A paired-sample t-test was conducted to compare the literacy activities of children, before and after the course.

There was no statistically significant difference in the scores before and after participation in Doodle Families.

Parental Perception of Children’s Digital Literacy

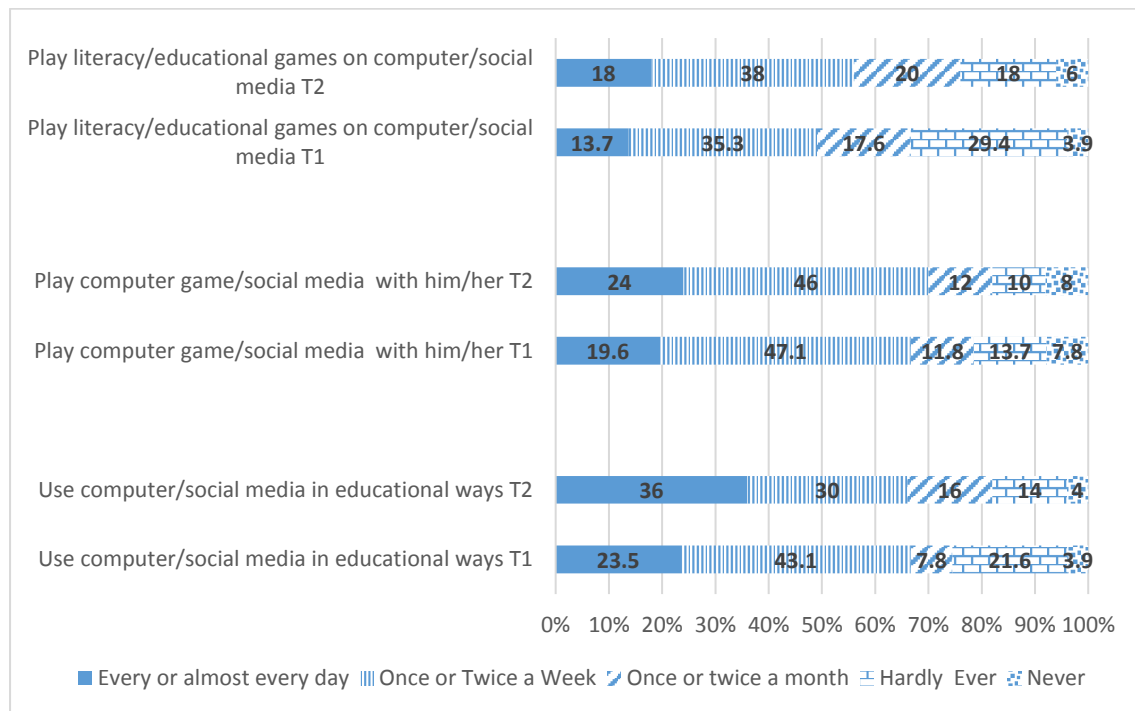
This study was also concerned with the nature and use of literacy in the home, including digital literacy. As reported by Marsh et al., (2017, p. 58) ‘initiation into literacy as a social practice is initiation into the practices of *digital* literacy’. Parents/guardians at both times were asked about the frequency of the use of digital technology.

We find that the use of technology is clearly a feature of children’s daily lives (see Figure 2). For example, parents were asked if their child uses computers or social media in educational ways. Before and after participation in Doodle Families, approximately two-thirds of parents indicated that this occurred almost every day or a couple of times a week.

Parents were also asked about the frequency that children play literacy/educational games on computers or social media. Before participation in Doodle Families, almost half (49%) of parents indicated that this occurred almost every day or a couple of times a week. After participation in Doodle Families, this increased to over half of parents (56%), suggesting perhaps some re-direction of the use of technology for digital literacy.

Finally, parents were also asked about the frequency that they play computer games or social media games with the child. Before participation in Doodle Families, just over two-thirds of parents indicated that this occurred almost every day or a couple of times a week, and this rose to 70% after participation in DF.

Figure 2: Frequency of Digital Literacy Use



As in previous analyses, we summed up these digital literacy practices to create a scale. The mean score at Time 1 was 7.6 while the mean score at Time 2 was 7.0, the higher the value the less often these digital literacy practices took place (as reported by parents). Thus it would appear that children’s

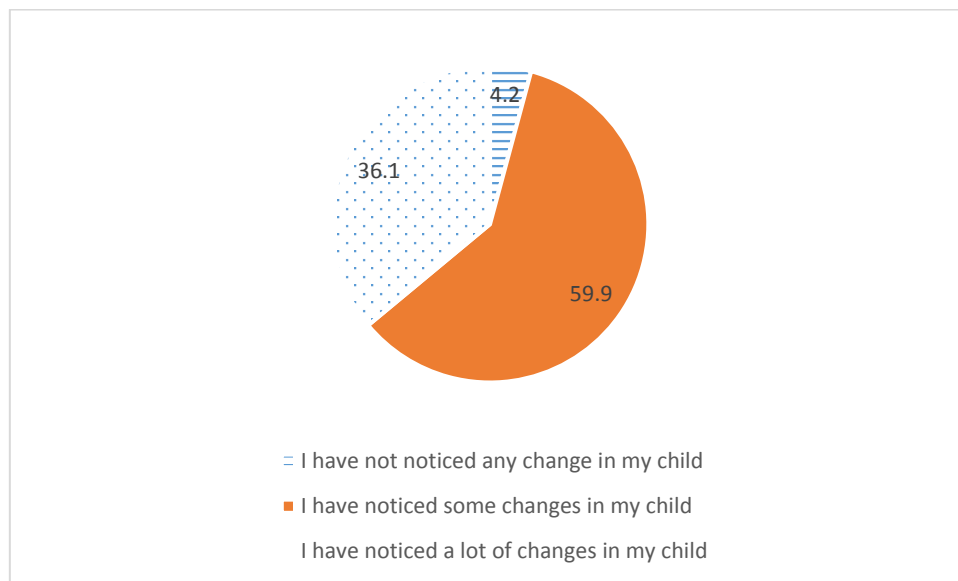
mean digital score increased after participation in Doodle Families. The results of the paired samples t-test showed that children’s digital literacy scores at Time 1 and at Time 2 were strongly and positively correlated ($r=.433$, $p=.002$), but that the difference in mean scores before and after was not statistically significant ($t(49)$, 1.207 , $p=.233$).

Parental perceptions of changes in children’s Emergent Literacy

Parental responses after Doodle Families suggest that the majority of parents felt that Doodle Families had a positive influence on their child’s emergent literacy. In this section, we explore if parents perceive any change in their child with regard to oral language and storytelling, Reading, Writing, and their school experience more generally.

Parents were asked at Time 2 ‘Have you noticed any changes in your child’? As illustrated by Figure 3, the majority of parents indicated some change in their child since participation in Doodle Families. 55% reported ‘some change’, and 33.3% reported ‘a lot of changes’. Just 6% indicated that they had not noticed any change in their child.

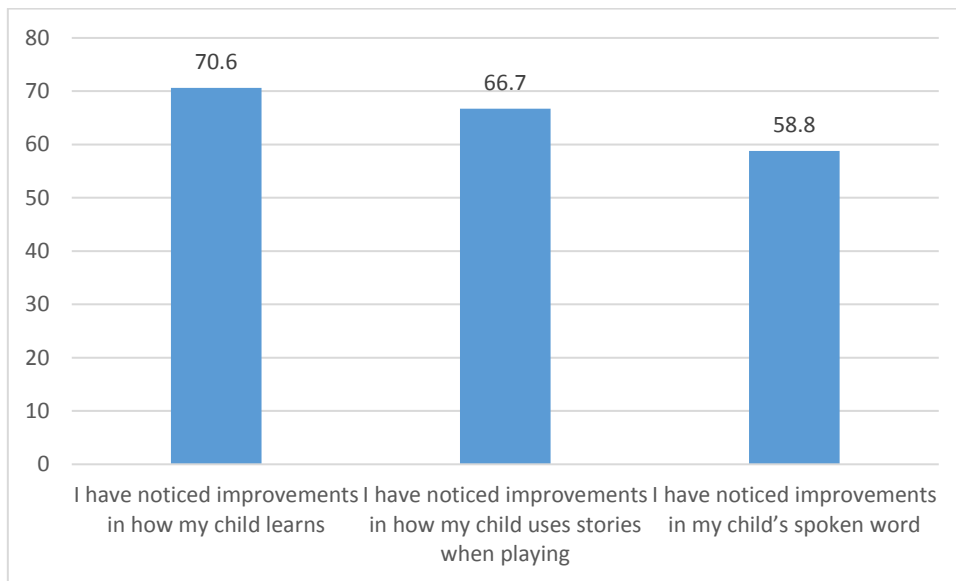
Figure 3: Change in Child, as Perceived by Parents



Oral language and storytelling

Specifically, parents were asked about developments in oral language and storytelling. As shown by Figure 4, the vast majority (70.6%) noticed an improvement in how their child learns, two-thirds (66.7%) noticed improvement in how their child uses stories when playing, while 58.8% of parents noticed an improvement in their child’s spoken word.

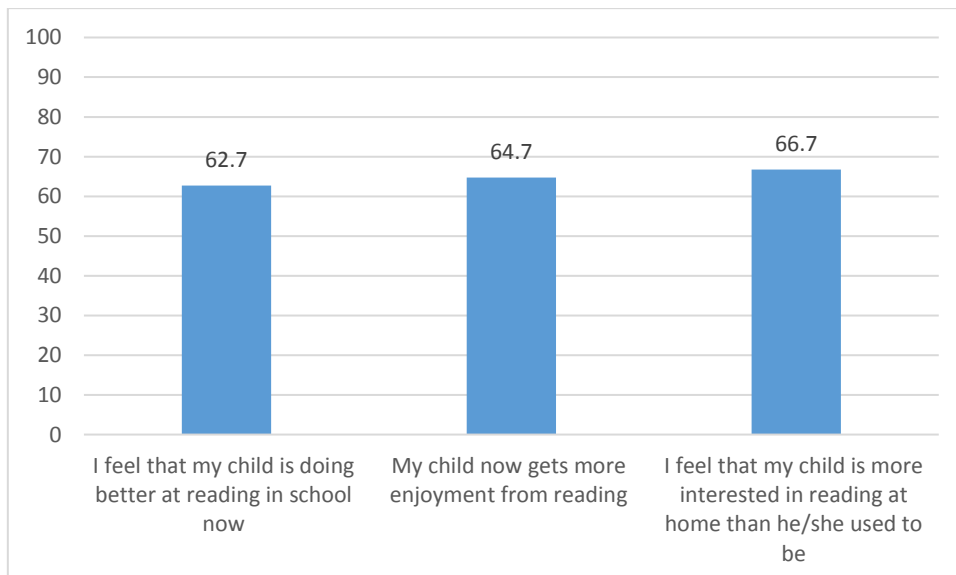
Figure 4: Perceived Changes in Oral Language and Storytelling



Reading

Parents were also asked after Doodle Families about changes in the reading behaviour of children. As illustrated by Figure 5, 66.7% of parents agreed with the statement 'I feel that my child is more interested in reading at home than he/she used to be', 64.7% agreed that 'My child now gets more enjoyment from reading', and 62.7% agreed that 'I feel that my child is doing better at reading in school now'.

Figure 5: Perceived Changes in Reading Behaviour

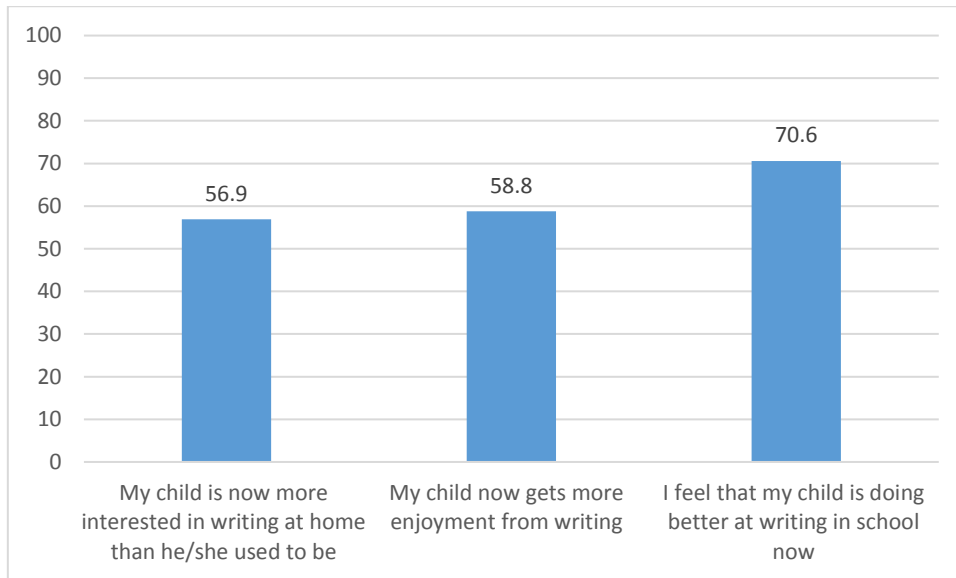


Writing

At Time 2, parents were also asked about changes in their child with regard to writing. Again, Figure 6 shows that just over half of parents (56.9%) agreed that 'My child is now more interested in writing at

home than he/she used to be', and 'My child now gets more enjoyment from writing' (58.8%), while 70.6% agreed that 'I feel that my child is doing better at writing in school now'.

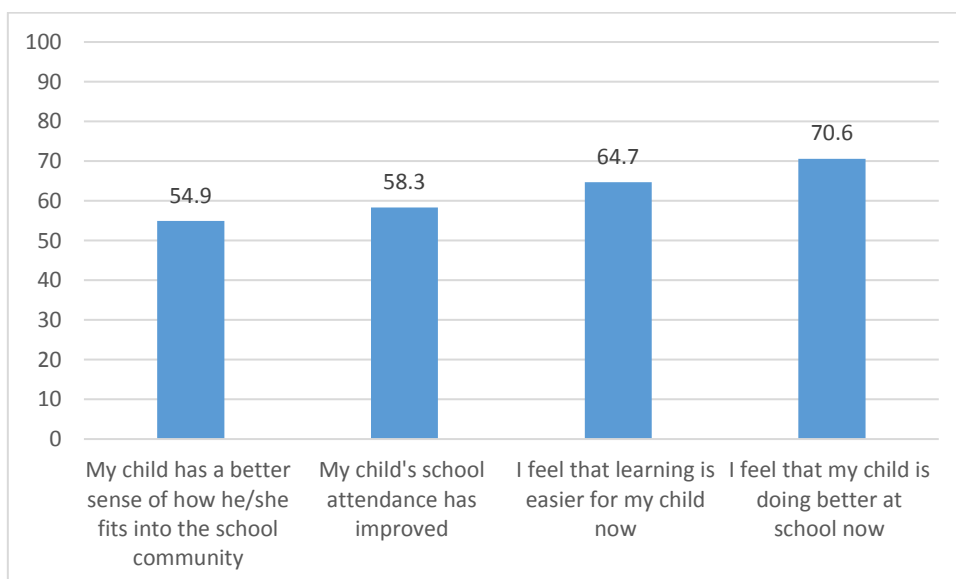
Figure 6: Perceived Changes in Writing Behaviour



School Experience & Attendance

Parents were also asked at Time 2 about changes in their child's school experience more generally (Figure 7). Just over half (54.9%) agreed that 'My child has a better sense of how he/she fits into the school community', and school attendance was perceived to have improved by 58.3%. Almost two-thirds agreed that 'I feel that learning is easier for my child now' and 70.6% agreed that 'I feel that my child is doing better at school now'.

Figure 7: Changes in Experience of School



Summary

While the measurement of the development of children's literacy as a result of participation in Doodle Families was beyond the remit of this evaluation, here we sought to examine changes before and after attending Doodle Families on parental perceptions of the development of children's literacy.

There was little evidence to suggest that Doodle Families had changed in the incidence of the act of reading at home. This was because 96% of parents before attending Doodle Families indicated that their child was already involved in reading at home. However, there was some evidence to suggest that because of Doodle Families, a greater share of children became increasingly involved in habitual reading, as 44% of children were reading on a daily basis before participation in Doodle Families, and this had increased to 56.3% after Doodle Families. Yet, there was little evidence to suggest that children demanded more shared reading with parents as a result of participation in DF.

We sought to capture parental perceptions of the types and incidence of children's reading activities before and after Doodle Families. Interestingly, the raw data suggested an over-reliance on school-related reading materials before attending Doodle Families, and there was some evidence to suggest an increase in the scope of reading materials used by children after Doodle Families, as storybook reading in particular became more prevalent after attendance at Doodle Families. However, there was no statistically significant difference in reading scores before and after the programmes.

Parental perceptions of the use of digital literacy was also captured in the surveys before and after. While the use of technology is clearly a feature of children's every day lives, there was little change before and after Doodle Families.

Finally, the 'after' survey sought to capture some subjective perceptions of children's emergent literacy – in particular with regard to oral language and storytelling, reading, writing, and the school experience more generally. The vast majority of parents perceived some changes or a lot of changes in their child as a result of Doodle Families. Just 4.2% of parents perceived no change at all. While parents generally indicated that there were positive outcomes for their child in each of these domains, this was particularly the case with regard to learning more generally, writing, and attendance.

3. What is the impact of Doodle Families on parental attitudes, awareness and skills to practice effective family literacy activities with their children?

Introduction

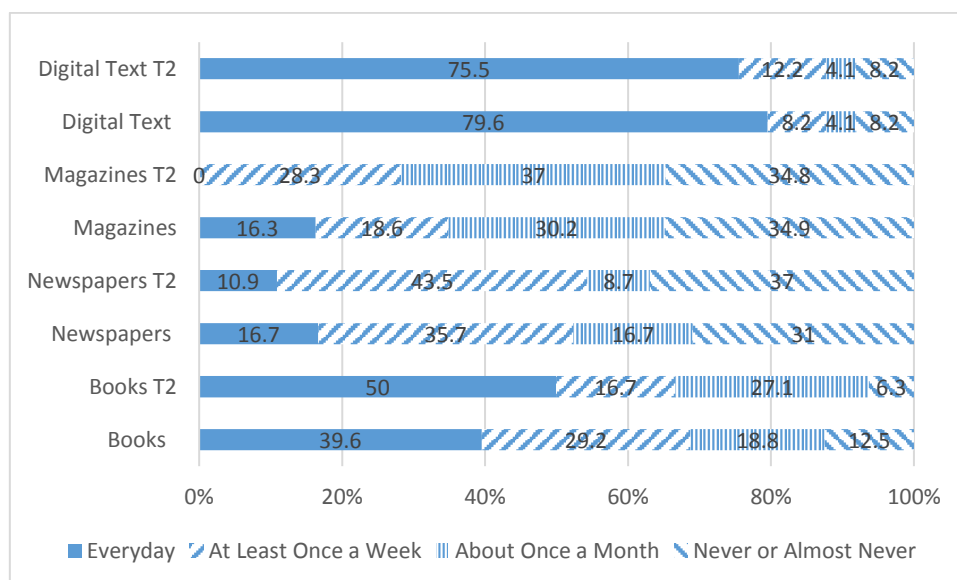
In this section, we draw on the findings from the parent surveys to determine the effectiveness of Doodle Families on parental attitudes, awareness and skills to practice effective family literacy activities with their children. Specifically we examine changes in (i) parents own literacy behaviour and attitudes; (ii) shared reading activities; (iii) shared reading practices, and (iv) shared literacy practices in the home before and after Doodle Families.

Parents own Literacy Behaviours and Attitudes

As part of the evaluation, we asked parents about their own literacy habits. While these habits are reflective of the choices that parents make, they are also linked to the availability of sources. Figure 8 summarises parents' reading habits before participation in Doodle Families. The vast majority of parents read digital text on their computers, e-readers or tablets everyday (79.6%) or at least once a week (8.2%). Books were also popular among the parents who attended Doodle Families, as 39.6% read books every day and 29.2% at least once a week. The least frequently read materials were newspapers and magazines. Over a third of parents never read these in hard copy.

As illustrated by Figure 8, there was little change in parents' own reading habits before and after attendance at Doodle Families, with the exception of an increase in the share of parents who indicated that they read books ($\chi^2=8.385$, $df=1$, $p=.008$). That is, while the share of parents who did not read books decreased from 12.5% to 6.3% between Time 1 and Time 2, the share of parents reading a book increased from 39.6% at Time 1 to 50% at Time 2.

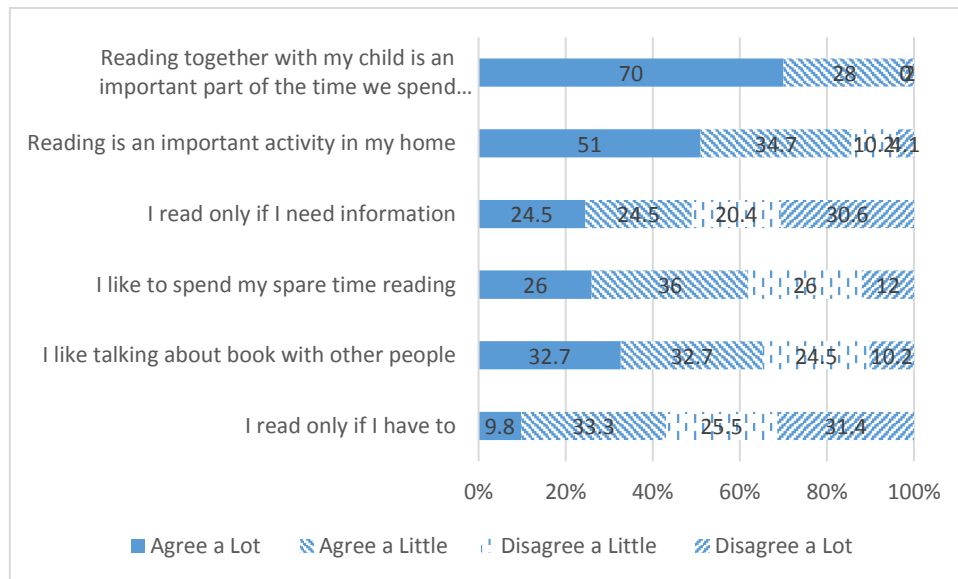
Figure 8: Parents' reading habits at Time 1



Parental attitudes towards reading were also explored. As illustrated by Figure 9. Before participation in Doodle Families, the majority of parents (98%) ‘agreed a lot/little’ with the statement ‘Reading together with my child is an important part of the time we spend together’. Just over half indicated that reading is an important activity in the home.

In terms of their own reading habits before attending Doodle Families, 65.4% of parents agreed that they like to talk about books with other people, and 62% like to spend their spare time reading. Fewer parents (43.1%) indicated that they read only if they have to, and 49% indicated that they read only when they need information.

Figure 9: Parents' attitudes towards reading, T1



As with previous analyses, scales were derived in relation to parents reading habits (behaviours) and attitudes towards reading. Paired samples t-tests were conducted to compare parents reading habits and attitudes towards reading before and after attending Doodle Families, but there was no significant difference in scores before and after attending Doodle Families, suggesting that the programme had little influence on parent’s own reading attitudes and behaviours.

Shared Reading Activities

The prevalence and duration of shared reading activities at bedtime and at other times were explored before and after attending Doodle Families.

At both time-points, parents/guardians were asked ‘At bed time, how often do you, or other members of the family, read to your child in a typical week’, and ‘Other times, how often do you, or other members of the family read to your child in a typical week’. The results are presented in Table 5.

Before Doodle Families, on average, parents or other family members read to their child at bedtime 3.58 days per week. Just 12% of parents who attended Doodle Families never read to their child at bedtime, while 18% read to their child at bedtime every night of the week. A paired samples t-test was conducted to determine if there was a statistically significant difference in the number of times parents read to their children at night time before and after Doodle Families. The test showed that the average number of times parents read to their children at night was greater after attending Doodle

Families than before (M=3.58, SD=2.3 at Time 1, M=4.90, SD=1.6 at Time 2), and that the difference was statistically significant $t(50)=-4.319, p=.000$ ⁵.

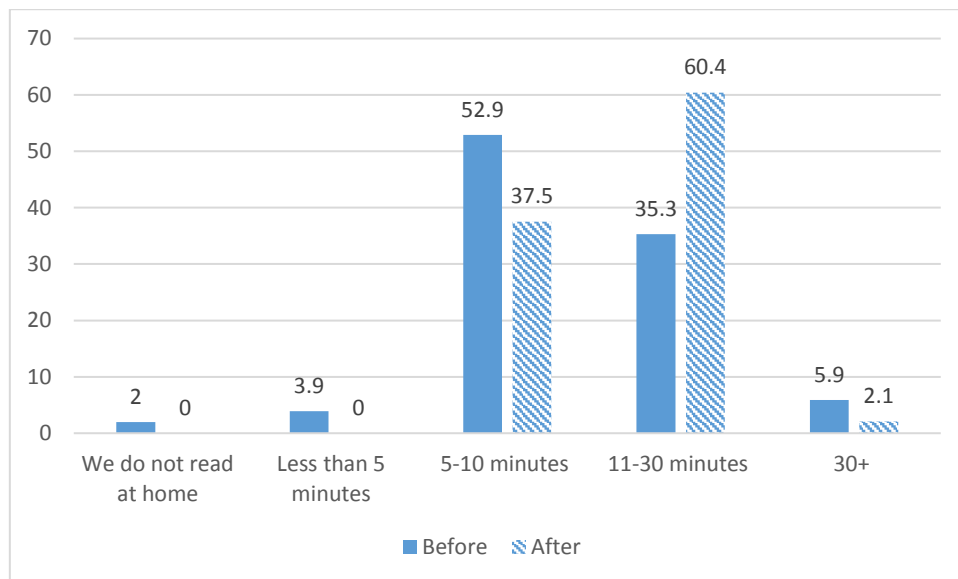
Reading to a child can of course take place at other times other than bedtime. Before Doodle Families, on average parents/guardians read to their child 4.12 times per week. Few (2%) never read to their child, while 26% read to their child every day. A paired t-test showed that the average number of times parents read to their children was greater after attending Doodle Families (M=4.12, SD=2.2 at Time 1, M=4.78, SD=2.0 at Time 2), and that the difference was statistically significant $t(49)=-2.130, p=.038$ ⁶.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics Regarding Frequency That Child is Read To

	Average	Minimum	Maximum	% Never	% Every Night
Bedtime reading					
Before	3.58	0	7	12.0	18.0
After	4.94	0	7	2.0	25.5
Reading at other times					
Before	4.12	0	7	8.0	26.0
After	4.82	0	7	2.0	26.0

Parents were also asked about the duration of shared reading sessions, and according to parent/guardian self-reports, the most frequent duration before attending Doodle Families was ‘between 5-10 minutes’ (52.9%) followed by ‘between 10-30 minutes’ (35.3%). After Doodle Families, more parents were reading for a longer duration – that is, a greater share (60.4%) of parents did so for 10-30 minutes, and fewer (37.5%) spent ‘between 5-10 minutes’ (see Figure 10).

Figure 10: Duration of Reading Sessions



⁵ Effect size Cohen’s $d=0.666$

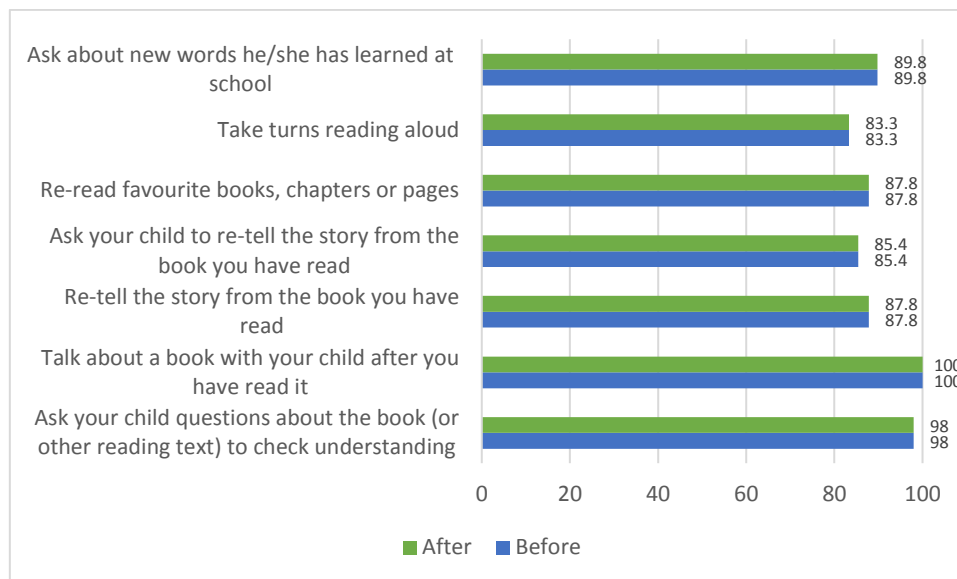
⁶ Effect size Cohen’s $d=0.313$

Shared Reading Practices

Parents were also asked about the shared reading practices that they engage in with their child. As illustrated by Figure 11, both before and after Doodle Families, the vast majority of parents indicated that they are involved in reading practices beyond the act of reading.

While there are some less frequently used shared reading practices employed by parents/guardians, the majority of parents/guardians used these practices, at least on some occasions, with little change before and after Doodle Families.

Figure 11: Involvement in Shared Reading Activities (% Every time or Sometimes)



Parents were also asked before and after Doodle Families about a range of supporting reading activities including the frequency that their child (i) is brought to a public library by a family member, (ii) is supported in oral language development, and (iii) discussions about school are undertaken in the home between the child and a family member. The findings before and after Doodle Families are presented in Figure 12.

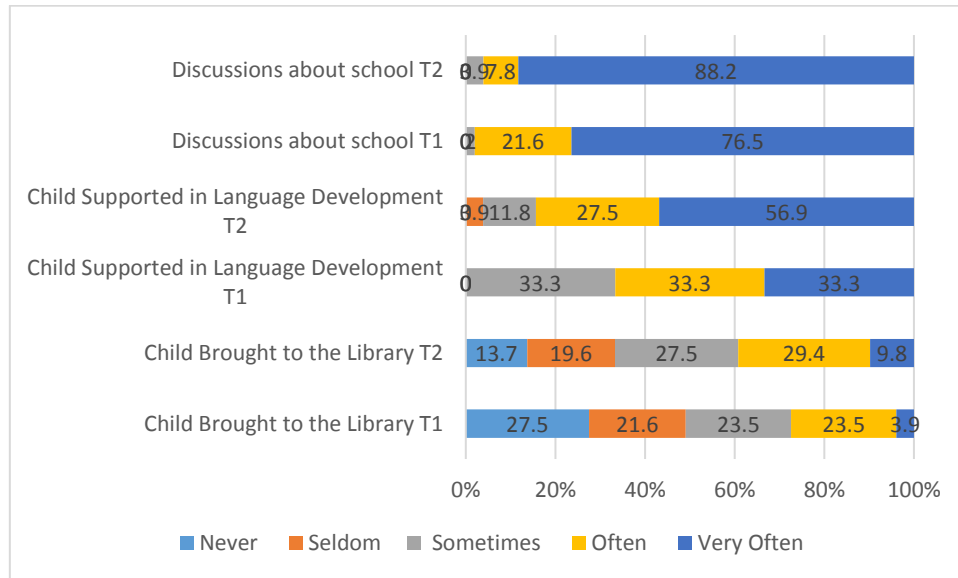
Clearly both before and after Doodle Families, parents are providing support for their child given that over three quarters of parents (76.5%) very often have discussions with their child about school, and this increased to 88.2% after Doodle Families. The programme also appears to have assisted parents in supporting the language development of their children more frequently.

Visiting the library was a less frequent activities in the homes of parents who participated in Doodle Families at Time 1 and at Time 2. Before attending Doodle Families, over a quarter of parents (27.5%) never brought their child to the library, and for a further one-fifth (21.6%) seldom. After attending Doodle Families, the frequency with which parents or another family member brought the study child to the library increased.

A scale was derived using these measures in order to capture discussions in the home regarding reading literacy before and after attending Doodle Families. The average score was greater after attending Doodle Families than before ($M=11.2$, $SD=1.8$ at Time 1, $M=12.2$, $SD=1.7$ at Time 2), indicating that these activities took place more often after attending Doodle Families than before.

While the reliability test for each scale was weak (less than .8), a paired samples t-test revealed a statistically significant difference in scores before and after Doodle families $t(51)=-4.933, p=.000$ ⁷.

Figure 12: Prevalence of Parental Involvement in Supportive Reading Activities



Shared Literacy Practices in the Home

Shared literacy practices also extend beyond reading as an activity. Parents were asked about the types of literacy practices that they engage in beyond reading. The findings are presented in Figure 13 and Figure 14.

The most popular habitual activities at both time points include singing songs together and playing rhyming or other word games. Each of these activities were undertaken on a regular weekly basis by the majority of families before they attended Doodle Families. The frequency of these activities increased after attending Doodle Families, as well as making up stories, writing with the child, playing boardgames and working on crossword puzzles or sudoku (Figure 13).

Other popular shared literacy practices include parents and children talking about what the child likes and dislikes about school, about their experiences in school as well as listening to the child read, helping the child with phonics, spellings and making up stories together. All of these activities were popular shared activities among children and their parents before attending Doodle Families (Figure 14). The popularity of these activities generally increased after attending Doodle Families. Less popular activities at both time points were listening to audio books, while after attending Doodle Families, visiting and borrowing books from a library became a more popular and regular activity.

⁷ Effect size Cohen's $d=0.571$.

Figure 13: Frequency of Shared Literacy Practices

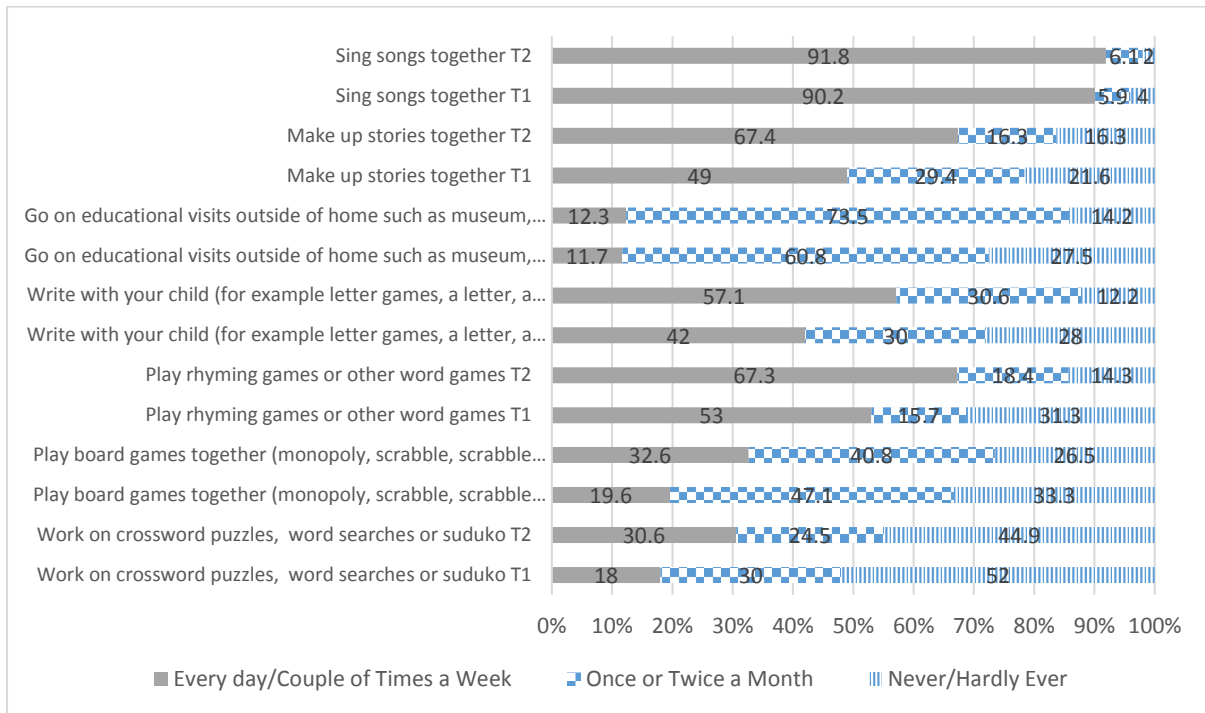
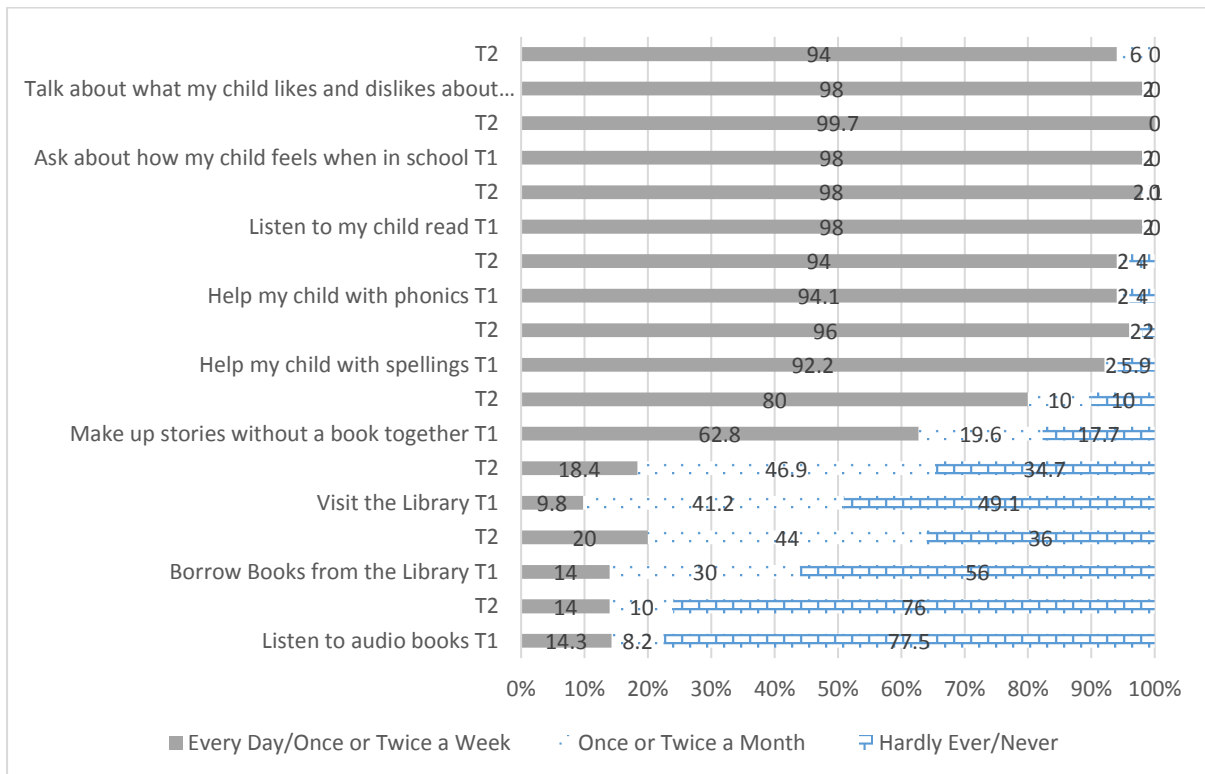


Figure 14: Frequency of Shared Literacy Practices (more)



A scale was derived using each of these measures shown in Figure 13 and in Figure 14 in order to capture discussions in the home regarding shared literacy practices before and after attending Doodle

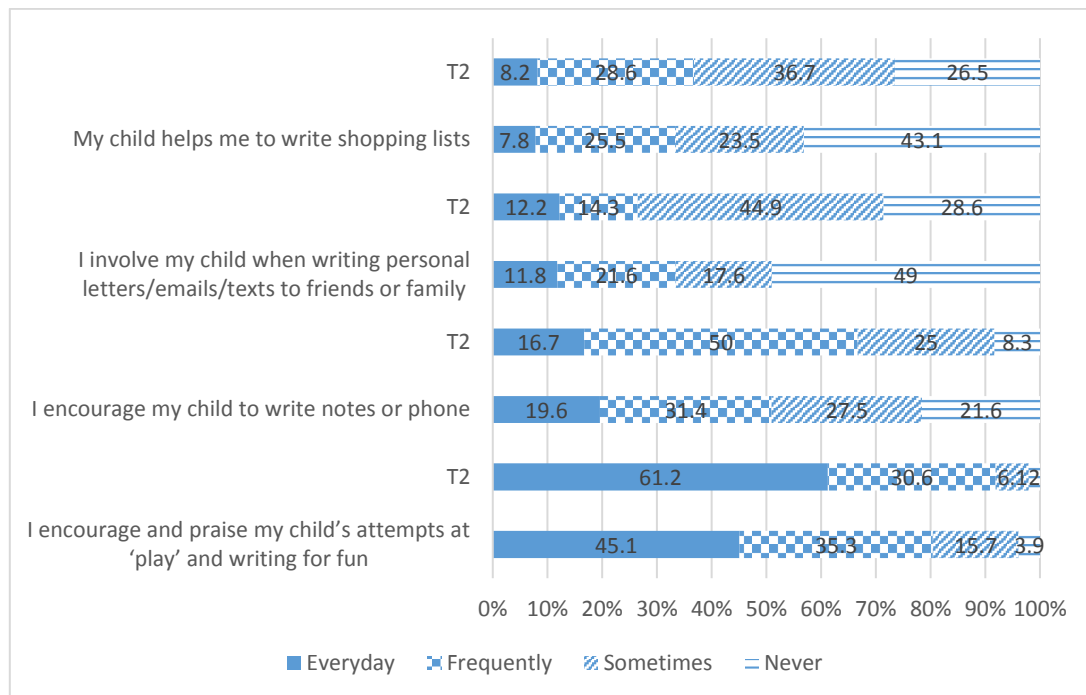
Families. In this scale, a higher score indicates a lower frequency of shared literacy practices while a lower score indicates a higher frequency of shared literacy practices.

A paired samples t-test showed that the average score was greater before attending Doodle Families than before (M=38.5, SD=8.1 at Time 1, M=34.4, SD=7.4 at Time 2), indicating that these activities took place more often after attending Doodle Families than before. That is, parents improved their frequency of shared literacy activities after participating in Doodle Families. Furthermore, the difference between the two points was statistically significant $t(51)=3.069, p=.003$ ⁸.

Shared Writing Practices

Writing as a literacy practice was also explored. Parents were asked at both time points about the frequency that they encourage their child to write, or engage in writing activities. The results are shown in Figure 15.

Figure 15: Frequency of Shared Writing Practices



As Figure 15 illustrates, the majority of parents (80.4%) before attending Doodle Families regularly encouraged and frequently praised their child's attempt at play and writing for fun, while shared writing activities were somewhat less prevalent.

A paired t-test showed that the average shared writing score was lower after attending Doodle Families than before (M=10.3, SD=3.3 at Time 1, M=9.4, SD=2.5 at Time 2), indicating that parents improved their frequency of shared writing literacy activities after attending Doodle Families.

⁸ Effect size Cohen's $d=0.528$

Furthermore, the difference in scores between the two points was statistically significant $t(49)=2.129$, $p=.038$ ⁹.

Summary

In this section, we sought to analyse the responses from the parent surveys to determine the effectiveness of Doodle Families on parental attitudes, awareness and skills to practice effective family literacy activities with their children. Specifically we examine changes in (i) parents own literacy behaviour and attitudes; (ii) shared reading activities; (iii) shared reading practices, and (iv) shared literacy practices in the home before and after Doodle Families.

With regard to parents own literacy behaviour and attitudes, parents rely largely on digital text for their own reading. The least frequently read materials were newspapers and magazines. Prior to participating in Doodle Families, over a third of parents never read these in hard copy. However, there was little change in parents' own reading habits before and after attendance at Doodle Families, with the exception of an increase in the share of parents who indicated that they more frequently read books.

Parental attitudes towards reading were also explored. Before participation in Doodle Families, the vast majority of parents (98%) indicated that they frequently read together with their child, while just over half indicated that reading is an important activity in the home. A minority of parents (43.1%) indicated that they read only if they have to, and just under half (49%) indicated that they read only when they need information. Our analyses revealed that there was no significant impact of attendance at Doodle Families on parental attitudes towards reading.

The prevalence and duration of shared reading activities at bedtime and at other times were explored before and after attending Doodle Families. A statistically significant increase was found when we compared the number of times a week parents (or any other family member) reads to their child at bedtime and more generally after attending Doodle Families. After Doodle Families, more parents were reading to/with their child for a longer duration – that is, a greater share (60.4%) of parents did so for 10-30 minutes, and fewer (37.5%) spent 'between 5-10 minutes'.

In terms of shared reading practices, both before and after Doodle Families, the vast majority of parents indicated that they are involved in reading practices beyond the act of reading. While there are some less frequently used shared reading practices employed by parents/guardians, the majority of parents/guardians used these practices, at least on some occasions, but with little change before and after Doodle Families.

Parents were also asked before and after Doodle Families about a range of supporting reading activities including the frequency that their child (i) is brought to a public library by a family member, (ii) is supported in oral language development, and (iii) discussions about school are undertaken in the home between the child and a family member. Our analyses of before and after revealed that these activities took place more often after attending Doodle Families than before.

Shared literacy practices also extend beyond reading as an activity. Parents were asked about the types of literacy practices that they engage in beyond reading. The most popular habitual activities at both time points include singing songs together and playing rhyming or other word games. Each of these activities were undertaken on a regular weekly basis by the majority of families before they

⁹ Effect size Cohen's $d=0.307$

attended Doodle Families. The frequency of these activities increased after attending Doodle Families, as well as making up stories, writing with the child, playing boardgames and working on crossword puzzles or sudoku. Other popular shared literacy practices include parents and children talking about what the child likes and dislikes about school, about their experiences in school as well as listening to the child read, helping the child with phonics, spellings and making up stories together. All of these activities were popular shared activities among children and their parents before attending Doodle Families. The popularity of these activities generally increased after attending Doodle Families. Less popular activities at both time points were listening to audio books, while after attending Doodle Families, visiting and borrowing books from a library became a more popular and regular activity. Parents typically improved their frequency of shared literacy activities after participating in Doodle Families, and the difference between the two points was statistically significant, suggesting a positive effect of Doodle Families on fostering such activities.

Finally, writing as a literacy practice was also explored. Parents were asked at both time points about the frequency that they encourage their child to write, or engage in writing activities. While the majority of parents (80.4%) before attending Doodle Families regularly encouraged and frequently praised their child's attempt at play and writing for fun, while shared writing activities were somewhat less prevalent. However, statistical analyses of before and after revealed that parents improved their frequency of shared writing literacy activities after attending Doodle Families.

4. What is the impact of Doodle Families on parental knowledge and confidence of how to best support their children's learning at home?

Introduction

In this section, we explore the effectiveness of Doodle Families in supporting parents in their children's learning at home. This section begins by exploring (i) parental confidence in approaching the school and confidence in school literacies more generally. We then move on to examine (ii) parents' beliefs about school and understanding how school literacies are taught, and (iii) the balance of responsibility for parents and school.

Parental Confidence with school literacies

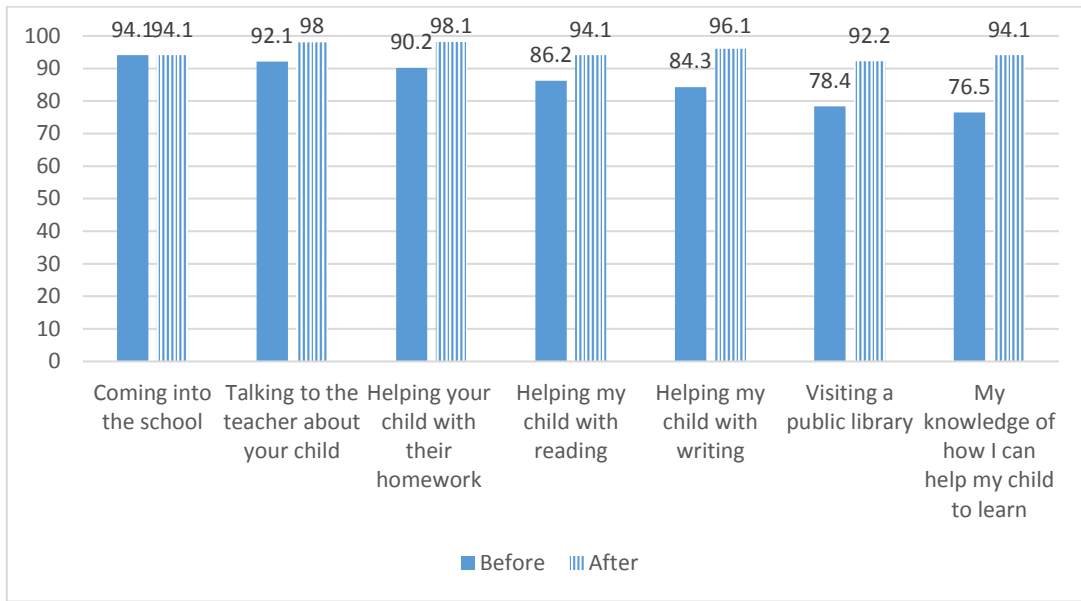
The most frequently mentioned reasons for why participants opted to join Doodle Families were largely related to gaining support with regard to school matters and school literacies (see Appendix 1). Before attending Doodle Families, the majority of parents (92.2%) reported that their child receives homework 'everyday or almost everyday'. Before attending the programme, not any of the parents believed that reading and writing homework is not important in their child's learning, and 82.4% indicated that is 'very important'.

As shown in Figure 16, the vast majority (90% or over) of parents felt confident or very confident at before attending Doodle Families about coming into the school, talking to teachers about their child, and helping their child with homework. While parents were generally confident or very confident with specific aspects of homework such as reading and writing, confidence levels were marginally lower around these aspects of school literacies. Furthermore, parents were less confident when it came to visiting a library (78.4%) and were less confident in their knowledge of how to best support their child to learn (76.5%).

As illustrated by Figure 16, by the end of Doodle Families, parental confidence levels had increased across each of the items. This was particularly the case with regard to 'visiting a library' and 'my knowledge of how I can help my child to learn'.

A paired-samples t-test was conducted to compare parents' confidence levels with regard to school literacies before and after attendance at Doodle Families. The combined scores were significantly higher after the course ($M=33.4$, $SD=2.7$) than before ($M=31.1$, $SD=3.6$); $t(51) = -4.567$, $p=.000$, indicating that Doodle Families has had a significant and positive effect on parental confidence levels around school literacies.

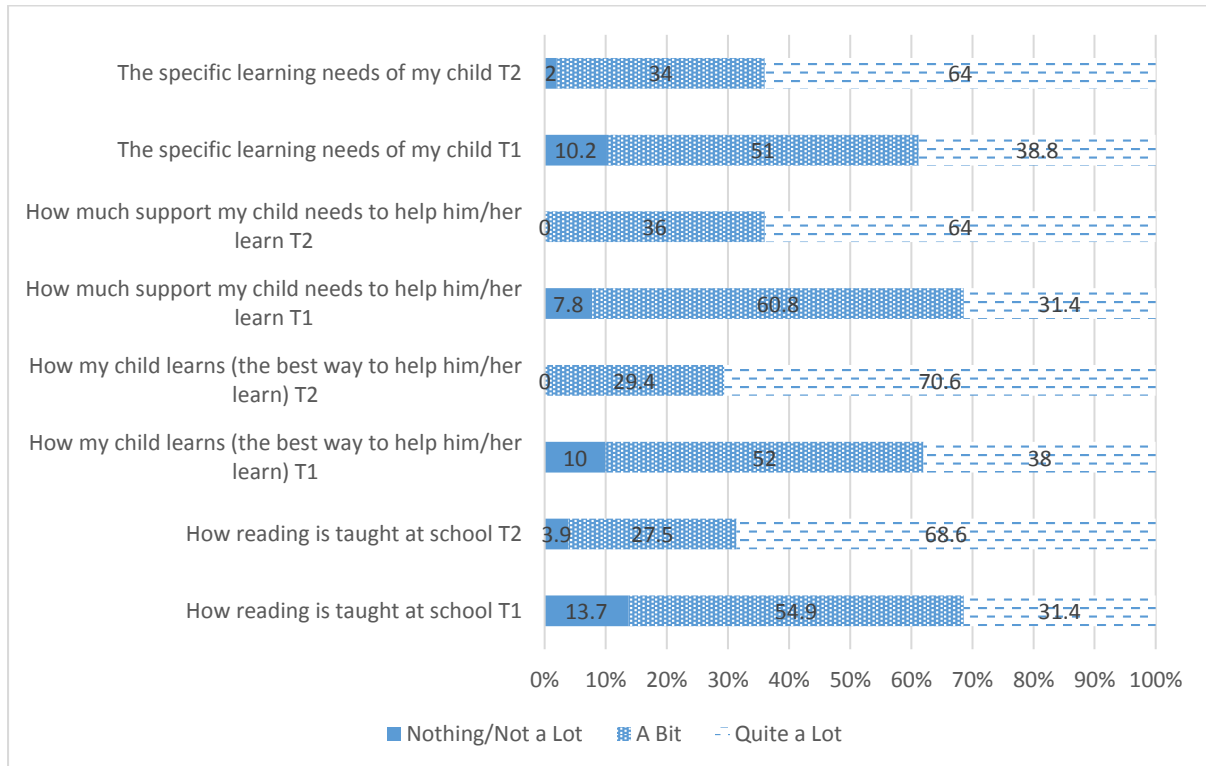
Figure 16: Share of Parents that are Confident or Very Confident with School Literacies



Parent knowledge of learning processes and learning needs

Parents were asked about their understanding of learning processes used by the school specifically with regard to how reading is taught, as well as their knowledge of the learning needs of their children. The results for Time 1 and Time 2 are illustrated in Figure 17.

Figure 17: Parent Knowledge of Learning Processes and Learning Needs



Typically, before attending Doodle Families, with regard to knowledge of how reading is taught, the most frequently reported response was ‘a bit’ (54.9%), while almost a third of parents indicated that they knew ‘quite a lot’. These patterns were also generally reflected in knowledge of the learning needs of their children, and how best to support their child.

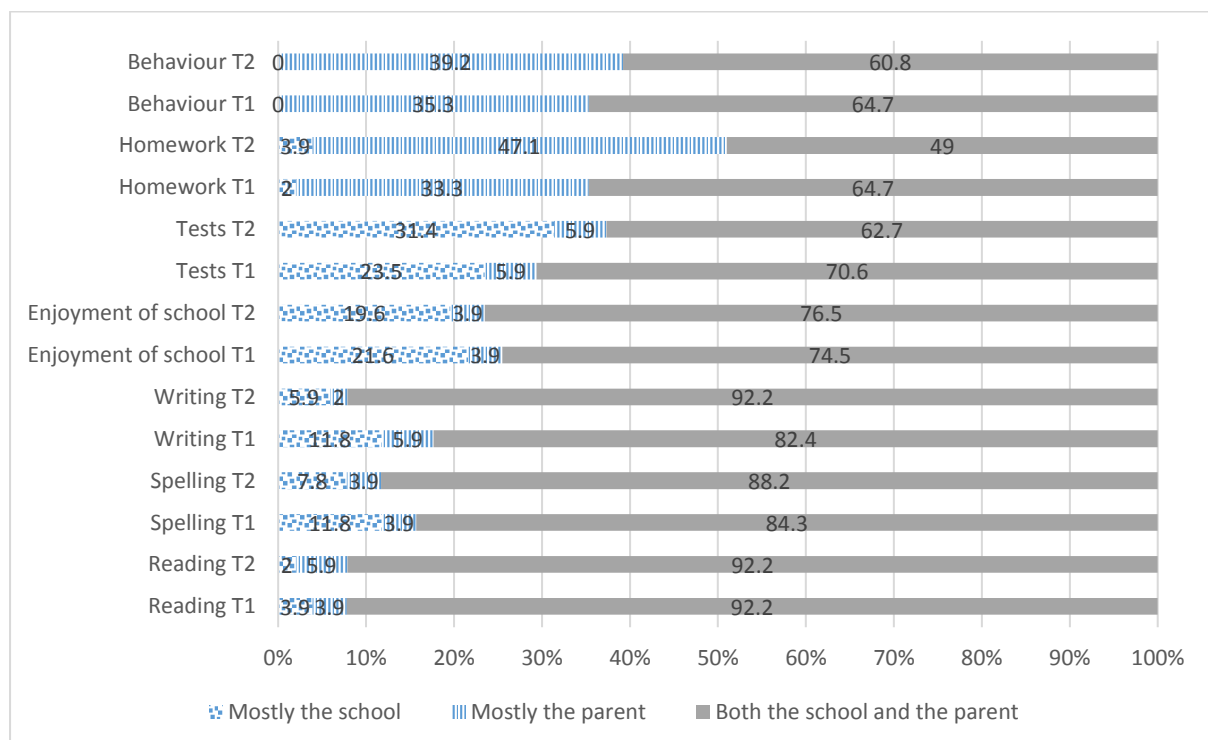
As illustrated by Figure 17, by the end of the course, parents perceived that their knowledge levels had increased across each of the items. By the end of Doodle Families, much fewer parents felt that they knew ‘nothing or not a lot’ about how reading is taught at school (down from 13.7% to 3.9%), but also about the learning needs of their children, and how best to support their child.

A paired-samples t-test was conducted to compare parental knowledge with regard to learning processes used by the school and the learning needs of their children before and after attendance at Doodle Families. The combined scores were significantly higher after the course (M=10.5, SD=1.8) than before (M=8.8, SD=2.1); $t(51), =-4.785, p=.000$, suggesting a positive and significant influence of Doodle Families on improving parental knowledge.

The Balance of Responsibility Between Schools and Parents

The questionnaires also contained questions on the role of parents and the school in the development of reading, writing, spelling, homework, tests, behaviour and enjoyment of school (see Figure 18).

Figure 18: Parent Perceptions of the Balance of Responsibilities



Most parents reported that each of these aspects of literacy development and broader experience of school is shared between school and the parents. However, there was some variation in responses. While the vast majority of parents felt that the traditional areas of literacy development – reading,

writing, and spelling - is a shared responsibility between the school and parents, over one-third of parents felt that behaviour and homework are largely the responsibility of parents, while over one-fifth of parents reported that responsibility for tests and enjoyment of school are largely the responsibility for schools – or at least more the responsibility of the school than of parents.

While there was no statistical significant difference in scores before and after attending Doodle Families, Figure 18 illustrates that attendance at Doodle Families did have the influence of embedding an outlook of shared responsibility, particularly with regard to spelling, writing, and enjoyment of school. After Doodle Families, a greater share of parents seemed to be under the impression that behaviour and homework are more the responsibility of the parent than of the school or a shared responsibility; while tests were seen an increasingly the responsibility of the school.

Summary

In this section, we sought to explore the effectiveness of Doodle Families in supporting parents in their children's learning at home.

While the vast majority (90% or over) of parents felt confident or very confident at before attending Doodle Families about coming into the school, talking to teachers about their child, and helping their child with homework, parents were less confident when it came to visiting a library (78.4%) and were less confident in their knowledge of how to best support their child to learn (76.5%). After attending Doodle Families parental confidence levels had increase, and this was particularly the case with regard to 'visiting a library' and 'my knowledge of how I can help my child to learn'. Our statistical analyses revealed that Doodle Families has had a significant and positive effect on parental confidence levels around school literacies.

Before attending Doodle Families, parent's understanding of learning processes used by the school specifically with regard to how reading is taught, as well as their knowledge of the learning needs of their children were relatively low. By the end of Doodle Families, much fewer parents felt that they knew 'nothing or not a lot' about how reading is taught at school (down from 13.7% to 3.9%), but also about the learning needs of their children, and how best to support their child. Before and after tests showed a positive and significant influence of Doodle Families on improving parental knowledge.

The questionnaire also sought to capture before and after measures of parent's perceptions of the balance of responsibilities between parents and the school in the development of reading, writing, spelling, homework, tests, behaviour and children's enjoyment of school. While there was no statistical significant difference in scores before and after attending Doodle Families, it would seem that attendance at Doodle Families did have the influence of embedding an outlook of shared responsibility, particularly with regard to spelling, writing, and enjoyment of school. After Doodle Families, a greater share of parents seemed to be under the impression that behaviour and homework are more the responsibility of the parent than of the school or a shared responsibility; while tests were seen an increasingly the responsibility of the school.

5. Overall Impressions and What is the impact of Doodle Families on the relationship between parents and teachers?

Introduction

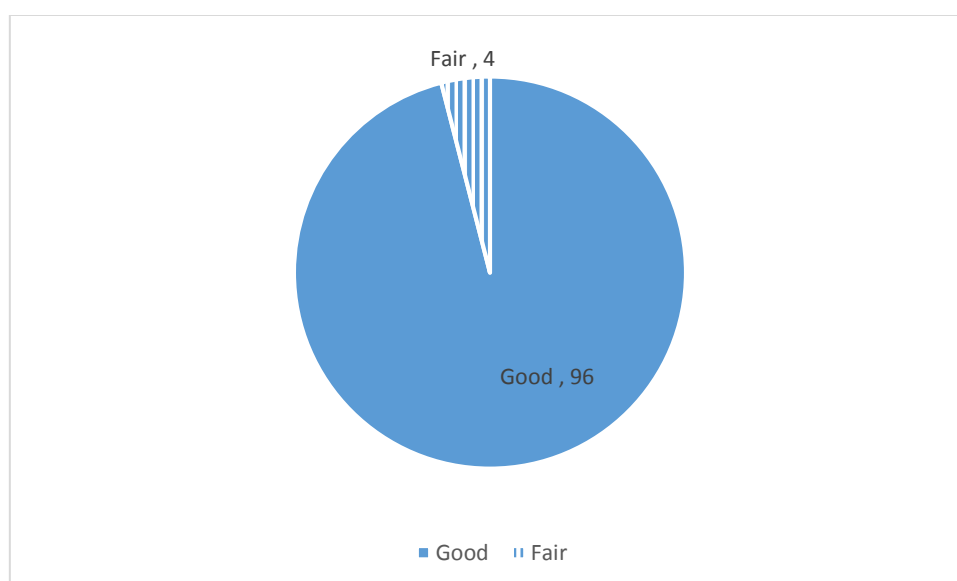
In this final section, we seek to explore (i) overall impressions of Doodle Families from parents, as well as (ii) the influence of Doodle Families on the parents themselves and (iii) the influence of Doodle Families on the relationship between parents and teachers.

Overall Impressions of Doodle Families

26% of parents had previously attended some form of family literacy programme, and just 8% had previously participated in a Childhood Development Initiative (CDI) programme in the community. Thus, for the majority of parents, this was their first encounter with family literacy, but also with CDI.

Parents were asked about their overall impressions of Doodle Families - 'What has been your experience of participating in Doodle Families', whereby parents could respond 'Good', 'Fair' or 'Poor'. The results are shown in Figure 19, and the vast majority (96%) reported that their experience of Doodle Families was good.

Figure 19: Overall Impressions of Doodle Families



Furthermore, the vast majority (98%) felt that they had learned new ways (tips, games, activities) to support their child in the development of their literacy (not shown here), and of these, 58% agreed that other family members also adopted these new ways while 41.7% did not. When asked about the types of activities that families took on during Doodle Families, typical comments included examples of changing literacy practices in terms of reading, writing and engaging in broader literacy activities. Typical comments included:

Read more, play games, sing more

Reading and writing more
Reading at night, Solo reading
Reading books
The whole family, we are incorporating more family game time and more audio reading
Take turns reading
Reading more dramatically, reading more with voices
Help with breaking down the words, sounding out he letters & combining to make a complete word

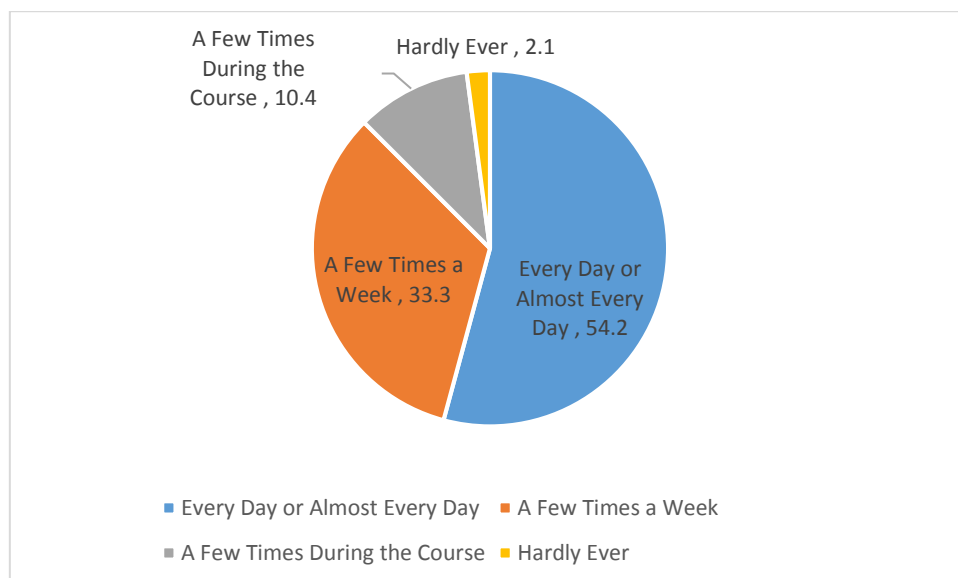
Write stories, draw pictures
Holding his pencil correctly, make silly stories for fun
Make learning it more fun

If he doesn't understand give him the time before saying 'you should know that' let him do things the way he feels most comfortable.
Making reading time more fun. Encouraging my child to use descriptive language, praising child and not putting pressure on him to read.
Asked them questions in a more detailed way by encouraging them to explain things more vividly. Encourage more educational programmes for fun.
Get him to sound out words more & ask him more questions about stories & songs.

Storytelling and library days out
Bring her to the public library more with her little brother we are going to do our own version of the book
Games like Hedbanz and activities like I tell a word and he starts word with the last letter of my word, sudoku, puzzels

When asked about the frequency that parents adopted these approaches, over half indicated that these new ways to support their child at home were used every day or almost every day, and a third indicated a few times a week (Figure 20).

Figure 20: Frequency of the Use of New Literacy Approaches

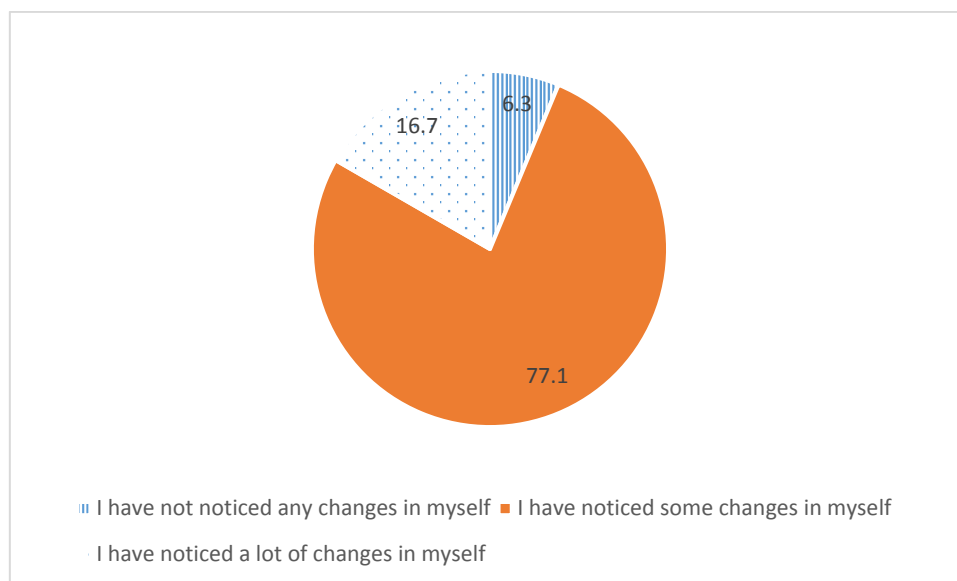


Changes in Self

Parental responses at Time 2 suggest that the majority of parents felt that Doodle Families had a positive influence on their outlook.

Parents were asked at Time 2 'Have you noticed any changes in yourself'? As illustrated by Figure 21, the majority of parents indicated some change in self since participation in Doodle Families. 77.1% reported 'some change', 16.7% reported 'a lot of changes' and just 6.3% indicated that they had not noticed any change in self.

Figure 21: Change in Self



Building Literacy Relationships

There was evidence to suggest that the programme had some influence on building literacy relationships. After the programme, the majority of parents (91.1%) indicated that they had a better understanding of how their child learns, but also of how they learn as individual themselves (73.3%). 60% indicated that they have changed the way that they support their child's learning (Figure 22).

Building literacy relationships and perceived change in self was also reported by parents with regard to the importance of using literacy in the home – specifically, given that the majority of parents indicated that they had a better understanding of the importance of using spoken words (88.9%), and storytelling (82.2%) as a result of attending Doodle Families (Figure 23).

Figure 22: Changes in Perceptions of Learning

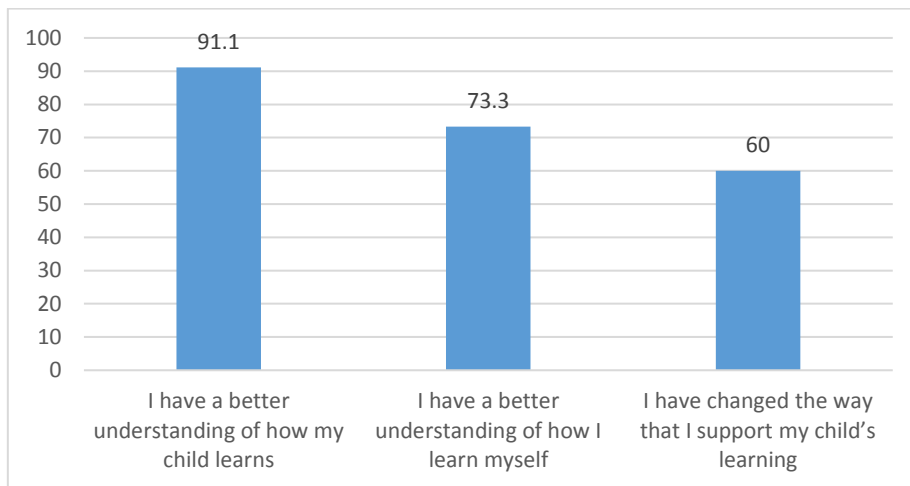
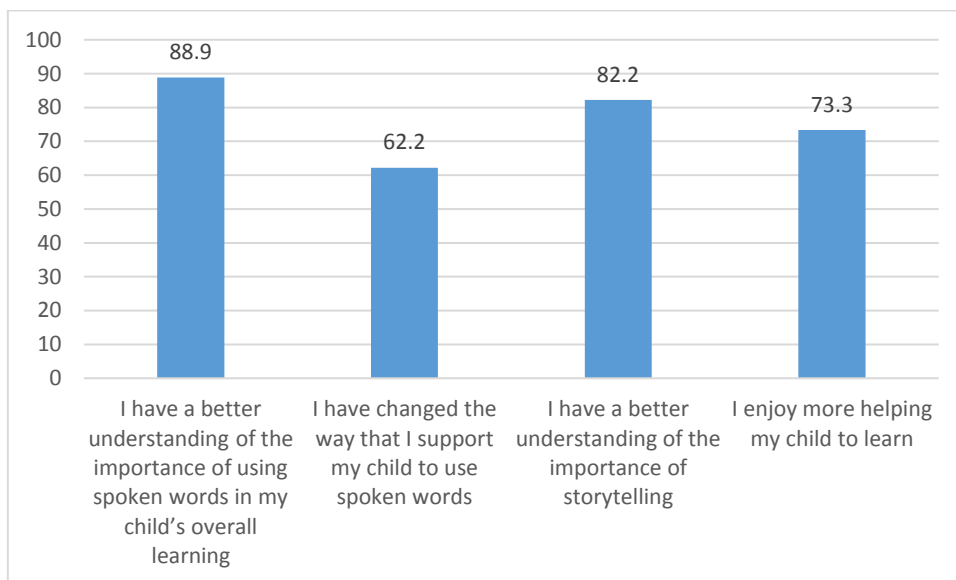


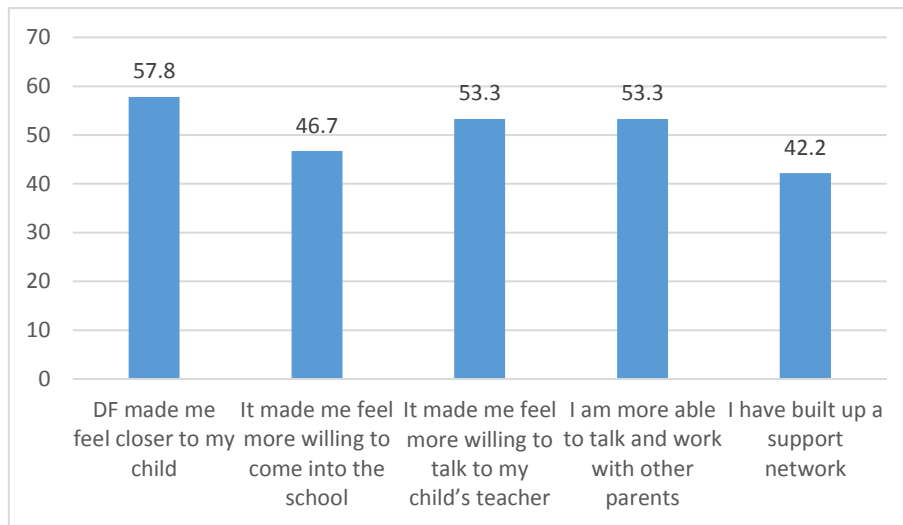
Figure 23: Changes in Perceptions of Learning



Feeling Supported

After Doodle Families, just over half of parents that participated at Time 1 and at Time 2 agreed that the programme 'made me feel closer to my child' (57.8%), 'made me feel more willing to talk to my child's teacher' and 'more able to talk and work with other parents (53.3%)'. The programme was less successful in helping parents build up a support network to support the family literacy environment, or to make parents more willing to come into the school (see Figure 24).

Figure 24: Perceptions of Doodle Families

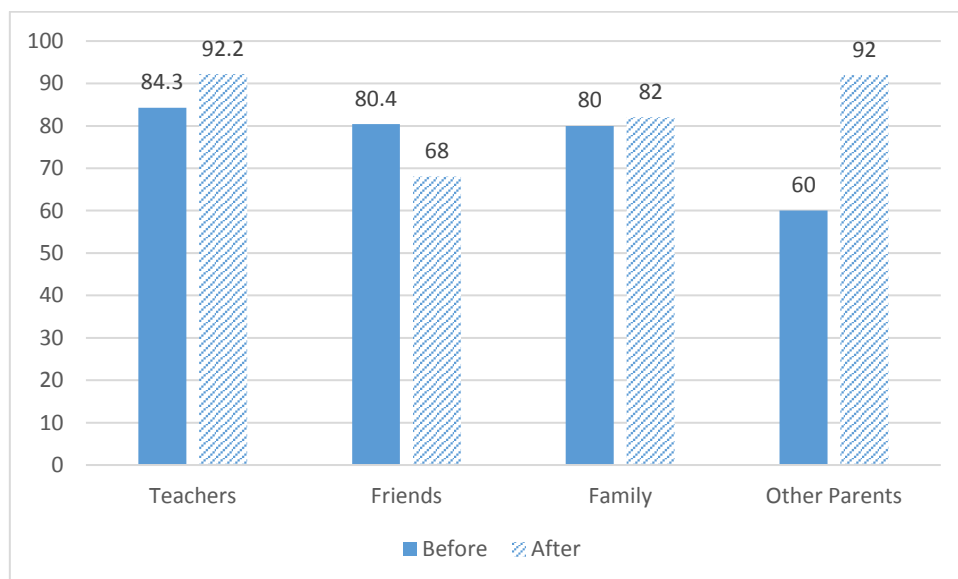


Seeking Support

The findings above can be further explored using questionnaire data that sought to capture how confident parents were in asking other people – teachers, other parents, friends, and family – about things they might not understand in their child’s homework or schooling more generally, before and after attending Doodle Families.

Figure 25 illustrates the percentage of parents before and after who indicated that they are either confident or very confident in seeking support from each of these sources. Before Doodle Families, the vast majority of parents (at least 80%) indicated that they are confident or very confident in asking teachers, friends or family for support. However, just 60% reported that they would ask other parents about things they might not understand in their child’s homework or schooling more generally.

Figure 25: Confidence Levels in Seeking Support



After Doodle Families, parents generally reported an increase in confident levels in asking teachers and other parents for support. In particular, 92% of parents after attending Doodle Families felt that

they were confident or very confident in asking other parents for help, up from 60% before the programme.

A paired-samples t-test was conducted to compare parental confidence in asking for support before and after attendance at Doodle Families. The combined scores were significantly higher after the course ($M=17.7$, $SD=3.0$) than before ($M=16.7$, $SD=3.6$); $t(51) = -1.958$, $p=.056$ ¹⁰, suggesting a positive influence of Doodle Families on improving parental confidence in seeking support.

The findings from Figure 24 suggest some areas for improvement in this regard, including the possibility to enhance social capital among parents.

Summary

The findings presented here showed that the vast majority of parents (96%) reported that their experience of Doodle Families was 'good' as opposed to 'fair' or 'poor'. The vast majority (98%) felt that they had learned new ways (tips, games, activities) to support their child in the development of their literacy as a result of participation in Doodle Families, and that the effect of Doodle Families extended beyond the parent who attended, given that in over half of families (58%) other family members also adopted these new ways. Over 80% of parents reported that they implemented these new ways of supporting their child's literacy development either 'every day' at home or 'a few times a week'.

Parental responses at Time 2 suggest that the majority of parents felt that Doodle Families had a positive influence on their outlook. The majority of parents indicated change in self since participation in Doodle Families. 77.1% reported 'some change', 16.7% reported 'a lot of changes' and just 6.3% indicated that they had not noticed any change in self.

Change was particularly evident with regard to building literacy relationships in the family. Parents were very positive about Doodle Families for providing information and advice on how to support their child's learning at home.

Change was also evident with regard to building literacy relationships between the family and the school. The programme was less successful in helping parents build up a support network to support the family literacy environment, or to make parents more willing to come into the school.

However, after Doodle Families, just over half of parents agreed that the programme 'made me feel more willing to talk to my child's teacher' and 'more able to talk and work with other parents (53.3%)'. Questionnaire findings from Time 1 and Time 2 showed an increase in the confidence level of parents in seeking support from teachers but also other parents.

¹⁰ Cohen's $d=.301$

Appendix 1

Table A1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents contd.

	Respondents T1 and T2	All Respondents at T1
<i>Gender of the Child</i>		
Male	51.0	47.6
Female	49.0	52.4
<i>Age of Respondent</i>		
24-40	77.6	69.8
41-50	16.3	20.6
51+	6.1	6.3
<i>Relationship to Child</i>		
Mother/Stepmother/Female carer	90.2	85.7
Father/Stepfather/Male carer	3.9	7.9
Grandmother	5.9	6.3
<i>Highest Level of Education</i>		
Primary Education or Less	2.0	4.8
Lower Secondary	11.8	9.5
Upper Secondary	21.6	27.0
Technical or Vocational Certificate or Diploma	31.4	30.2
Higher Education Degree	23.5	19.0
9.8	9.5	
<i>Family Structure</i>		
Living with Spouse/Partner	78.4	73.0
Not Living with Spouse/Partner	21.6	27.0
<i>Income Difficulty of Household</i>		
With great difficulty	0.0	1.6
With difficulty	8.0	8.1
With some difficulty	40.0	41.9
Fairly easily	32.0	32.3
Easily	12.0	8.1
Very easily	8.0	8.1
<i>Language Used in the Home</i>		
English Native Language of Respondent		
Yes	73.5	76.2
No	26.5	23.8
English main language used with child		
Yes	77.6	79.3
No	22.4	20.7

Table A1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents contd.

	Respondents T1 and T2	All Respondents at T1
<i>Books for Adults at T1</i>		
None	11.8	9.8
Less than 10	39.2	41.0
10-20	23.5	23.0
21-30	11.8	11.5
More than 30	13.7	14.8
<i>Books for Children at T1</i>		
None	0.0	0.0
Less than 10	23.5	24.2
10-20	19.6	22.6
21-30	17.6	14.5
More than 30	39.2	38.7
<i>Previous School and Interagency</i>		
% helped out in a primary school classroom	26.0	27.9
% attended another family literacy prog	26.0	26.2
% attended other CDI programme	8.0	8.2
<i>Parental Resources and Contact with school</i>		
% child has suitable place to do homework	100.0	96.8
% has a library nearby that is easy to get to	91.8	90.3
% school provides information	89.1	89.7
<i>Motivation for Participation</i>		
To be more involved in my child's school life and education	92.2	88.9
To learn how to help my child with his/her homework	78.4	76.2
To learn how the school teaches my child to read and write	76.5	73.0
To increase my confidence in helping my child with his/her homework	58.8	55.6
To improve my own writing	23.5	25.4
To increase my confidence in my own literacy skills	27.5	30.2
To improve my own reading	19.6	23.8
Mean Age of Respondent	35.5	36.7
Mean number of Dependent Children	2.44	2.5
N	51	64

Missing cases excluded

Because of the small number of cases involved, cannot compute statistical tests for questions relating to language used in the home

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