

**Can participation in a shared reading activity produce relational benefits between  
foster carers and the children in their care?**

**A thesis submitted as part of the requirements of the University of East London for the  
Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology**

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### **Abstract**

As a population, children in care (CiC) are found to be at an increased risk of a range of negative outcomes associated with poor educational attainment and difficult early attachment relationships. Having access to educational interventions in key areas such as literacy and the opportunity to develop positive, stable and caring relationships is seen as crucial to overcoming many of these disadvantages. Professionals supporting CiC, including those within the area of special educational needs and disability (SENDs), are duty bound to work together towards this aim. Paired reading is an educational intervention that has been used within the researcher's local authority (LA) for several years and is credited with helping children, including foster children, achieve significant improvements in their reading. In addition, feedback from participants and some research (Forsman, 2017; Osborne, Alfano & Winn, 2010) into the efficacy of this intervention has suggested that participation might also benefit the foster carer/child relationship. In this qualitative study, semi-structured interviews were used to obtain and explore foster carers and children's views of a shared reading (SR) intervention with respect to its impact on their relationship. Additional techniques were also adapted and used to support the children to express their views. Thematic analysis identified five key themes supportive of previous findings which suggest SR interventions can enhance the relationship between foster carers and foster children. Results also suggest, however, that more needs to be done to emphasise the relational benefits to potential participants. This research makes an important contribution to the understanding of SR practices and informs the promotion, recommendation and delivery of future interventions and the work of Educational Psychologists (EPs) and other professionals supporting this particularly vulnerable group of children.

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## List of Abbreviations

CiC	children in care
SEND	special educational needs and disability
LA	local authority
SR	shared reading
EPs	Educational Psychologists
DR	dialogic reading
DfE	Department for Education
VS	Virtual School
EPS	Educational Psychology Service
TEP	Trainee Educational Psychologist
DoH	Department of Health
RCT	Randomised Control Trial
PCBR	parent child book reading
PCRI	Parent-Child Relationship Inventory
PCP	Personal Construct Psychology
KFD	Kinetic Family Drawing
IPA	Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis
BPS	British Psychological Society
APA	American Psychological Association

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### **Dedication**

For Mum and Dad

### Chapter 1. Introduction

“It is the nightly custom of every good mother after her children are asleep to rummage in their minds and put things straight for next morning, repacking into their proper places the many articles that have wandered during the day. If you could keep awake (but of course you can't) you would see your own mother doing this and you would find it very interesting to watch. It's quite like tidying up drawers. You would see her on her knees, I expect, lingering humorously over some of your contents, wondering where on Earth you picked this thing up, making discoveries sweet and not so sweet, pressing this to her cheek, as if it were a nice kitten, and hurriedly stowing that out of sight. When you wake in the morning, the naughtiness and evil passions with which you went to bed have been folded up small and placed at the bottom of your mind and on the top, beautifully aired, are spread out the prettier thoughts, ready for you to put on.”

J.M. Barrie, *Peter Pan*

#### 1.1. Introduction

For many people memories of childhood include the image of cuddling up with a loved one for bedtime stories. Positive experiences of being parented in childhood are generally associated with warmth and security and responsive and reliable care. Ideally, children experience this care from adults who can help them to manage and contain their fears and frustrations and provide them with unconditional love. Such experience provides the best possible foundation for healthy development and a successful adult life by creating curious, sociable and confident children, who feel secure enough to learn through exploring their environment. For some, however, experiences in early childhood are far from containing

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and reassuring. For those who experience abuse and/or trauma the result can be time in care, resulting in disruptions to their relationships, education and sense of belonging and identity. Such children require concerted therapeutic and educational support from substitute carers, social workers and educational professionals to help address and compensate for their pre and in-care experiences.

One major area for intervention is literacy, with reading in particular seen as a vital gateway skill to educational success (Rose, 2009). It is also understood that a key adult taking an interest and having an active role in the educational lives of CiC is an important factor in their overall educational success (Martin & Jackson, 2002, cited by Osborne et al., 2010; Stein, 1997). Reading interventions that involve both carers and children and encourage reading together at home are thus becoming increasingly popular, for example the ‘Reading Together’ programme, currently being delivered and evaluated by Queens University Belfast and Oxford University (Queens University Belfast, 2020). Moreover, while parent-child reading may play an important part in learning to read, it also embodies many of the dynamics inherent in important early relationships and is a common practice within healthy parent/child relationships. This research was interested in finding out whether regularly sharing books, a commonplace event for many children and parents, could be used more consciously and more widely to support and enhance relationships between substitute carers and the children in their care.

### **1.2. Definitions and Descriptions of Key Terminology**

#### **1.2.1. Children in care.**

Within the field of children’s social care, a number of terms are used to describe children who are in the care of the state including ‘Looked After Children’ and ‘Children

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Looked After'. At the LA where the researcher is based, the term 'Children in Care' is used.

All of these terms refer to children who are:

- in care through a care order under section 31 of the Children Act 1989
- accommodated on a voluntary basis through an agreement with their parents under section 20 of that Act, or with agreement of the child if they are over 16
- placed away from home under an emergency protection order and on police protection/remand/detention (Section 21 of the Children Act).

For the purposes of this research, the term 'Children in Care' and its abbreviation CiC was adopted.

A child in need is defined under the Children Act 1989 as a child who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable level of health or development, or whose health and development is likely to be significantly or further impaired, without the provision of services; or a child who is disabled. When referring to children in need, the acronym CHIN was used.

### **1.2.2. Shared reading and reading together.**

SR, also often termed interactive shared book reading and joint book reading, can sometimes refer to a whole class reading strategy based on the work of Don Holdaway (1982). It is also, however, commonly used to mean the less formal and unstructured reading practices that take place between parents/carers and their children at home. For the purposes of this research, SR refers to a range of structured reading practices that take place between parents/carers and children at home, encompassing interventions including dialogic reading



(DR) and paired reading. Alternative terms, such as ‘reading together’ or ‘parent-child reading’, were used when describing informal parent/carer-child reading which does not relate to specific, structured reading programmes or interventions.

### **1.3. National Context**

#### **1.3.1. Common experiences and outcomes for children in care.**

It is a well-established fact that being in care is linked disproportionately to a range of negative long-term outcomes in areas such as education, personal relationships, employment and mental health (Bazalgette, Rahilly & Trevelyan, 2015; Berlin, Vinnerljung & Hjern, 2011; Luke, Sinclair, Woolgar & Sebba, 2014; Nissim, (2006); Rahilly and Hendry, 2014). CiC are a growing population in the United Kingdom, latest figures show that between 2018 and 2019 the number of CiC rose 4% to 78,150. Of these children, 72% are in foster placements, with most placed with foster carers not already known to them (Department for Education (DfE), 2019a). Although CiC are not a homogenous group, having varied backgrounds and experiences of care, research by Cairns and Stanway (2004) suggests that they generally share three key experiences:

- academic underachievement
- disrupted relationships with initial caregivers
- separation involving trauma

While there had been some improvements in the educational attainment of CiC in recent years, CiC continue to remain disproportionately represented in statistics relating to low levels of school attainment and high levels of exclusion and SEND. Government

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statistics for the year 2018 to 2019 show that, compared to other children of the same age not in LA care, CiC perform less well academically and make slower progress. Statistics also show that CiC are five times more likely to have a fixed period of exclusion compared to other children with the exception of pupils with CHIN status, and have much higher rates of SEND (DfE, 2019b).

### **1.3.2. The virtual school.**

In response to such statistics a range of public policy developments have been introduced in the last few years to try to address and redress these trends, including the creation of specific teams within local authorities, called Virtual Schools (VSs), aimed at raising the educational attainment and attendance of children in LA care (The Children and Families Act 2014). These tend to be small multi-disciplinary teams working in collaboration with colleagues across the authority and in partnership with the third sector. Their role includes tracking educational progress, attendance and exclusions, supporting and monitoring work with children and young people in care, helping young people achieve their full potential and offering support, training and advice to those who care for and work with them. All children in the care of the LA who are of statutory school age and in education post 16, including university, are part of the area's VS. Each team is directed by a VS Head working at a strategic and operational level to provide the effective planning and coordination of educational interventions for this group of children and young people.

### **1.4. The Importance of Relationships for Children in Care**

While education is seen as one of the major forces for improving the life chances of CiC another is the development of key relationships (Berridge, 2012; Gypen, Vanderfaeillie,

Maeyer, Belenger & Holen, 2017; Perry & Szalavitz, 2008). One major contributor to current understanding of how relationships form between adults and children is Attachment Theory. Hence, Attachment Theory is potentially seen as a key concept for this research.

### **1.4.1. Attachment Theory.**

The most influential psychological theory regarding relationships is Attachment Theory, introduced by John Bowlby in his seminal work in the 1940's and later developed by Mary Ainsworth (Ainsworth, 1979; Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991; Bowlby, 1969, 1988). While there is some contention around the theory of attachment (Tizard, 2009) it nevertheless remains the principal theory to consider when thinking about the development and value of adult-child relationships. At the heart of this theory is the essential sense of security that comes from positive attachments to caregivers and the impact that this has on a child's development.

Attachment is a psychological term used to describe the process of bonding that takes place in the first two years of life between infants and their primary caregivers (Bowlby 1969). Attachment involves a reciprocal process and an emotional connection between child and adult which provides the child with a sense of security (Bowlby, 1969) and influences the child's physical, cognitive and psychological development. Children who are securely attached benefit in a number of ways:

- they have higher self-esteem and empathy
- they can deal with stress more effectively
- they have faster memory recall
- they have higher impulse control
- they are reliable and likely to be popular with others

(Shemmings & Shemmings, 2011)

A healthy attachment cycle sees a bond develop as the infant learns that they can rely on their caregiver to get their needs met consistently and is a process that forms the basis for future relational development. Attachment theory tells us that from these patterns of early interaction, the developing child forms internal working models (cognitions and emotions) that they take forward as a guiding framework for future social interactions (Bowlby, 1973). “Attachment experiences are thus imprinted in an internal working model that encodes strategies of affect regulation that act at implicit unconscious levels” (Schorre & Schorre, 2008, p.4).

Primary school-aged children that have experienced secure attachment in their first few years would be expected to develop skills and abilities in social competency, self-regulation, empathy, socialization and development of self-concept (Brion-Meisels & Jones in Roffey, 2011). Children who have experienced disruptions to these attachments through trauma, abuse, separation or significant difficulties in bonding are likely to have difficulties in these areas (Bernier, Carlson, Deschenes & Matte-Gagne, 2012; Mackay, Reynolds & Kearney, 2010) and require specific and long-term effort on the part of key adults in order to create positive attachments and redraw their internal working models (Atwool, 2006). Fortunately, research suggests that children can form new attachments at any age (Waters, Hamilton, & Wienfield, 2000). The foster family is a place where children can learn to trust new primary caregivers and so is a key domain for developing new attachments (Schofield & Beek, 2009). However, this is often not an easy task with many foster carers experiencing behaviour associated with insecure attachment which, on the surface appears intended to push or keep the carer away (Oosterman, de Schipper, Fisher, Dozier, & Schuengel, 2010).

### *1.4.1.1. Critiques on Attachment Theory*

Since catching public attention in the 1950's, attachment theory has had a significant and far-reaching impact on child-care policy, practice and legislation in the United Kingdom (Rutter & O'Connor, 1999) and continues to inform the practice of a wide range of professionals working with children and young people. Yet, during this time Bowlby's theory has also attracted criticism, with concerns expressed about certain key ideas within the original theory (Slater, 2007; Tizard, 2009). One of these was the concept of monotropy, the attachment to a single figure, usually the mother, within a critical period of the first two years, upon which attachment theory rested. Monotropy was central to another of Bowlby's main claims, that anything other than very minor and temporary breaks or disruptions to this early attachment would lead to signs of partial or complete deprivation within the child. This would result in emotional disturbances such as guilt, depression or excessive clinginess, and an irreversible impact on development resulting in a range of negative outcomes such as cognitive delay, unresponsiveness and criminality (Belskey & Rovine, 1988). This central feature of early attachment theory aroused much feminist critique. It was seen to imply that women's choices, for example, to work outside of the home, could be blamed for the poor social and emotional outcomes of their children with significant socio-political implications for the role of women in society (Cole, 2004). Such claims have since been undermined by research into the neutral or often positive impact of day-care on young children (Zigler & Gordon, 1982, cited by Rutter, 1995) and evidence showing that young children tend to form several selective and significant attachments (Rutter & O'Connor, 2008).

Others, such as Mead (1954) and Audry (1962), have queried the universality of Bowlby's attachment theory and for not incorporating cultural variability in parenting strategies and children's development. This questioning of some of the central concepts in

Bowlby's theory was part of a wider critique directed at the overall deterministic and fatalistic nature of the model which assumed little scope for positive intervention.

### ***1.4.1.2. The Work of Michael Rutter***

For many, the work of Child Psychiatrist, Michael Rutter (1981), which aimed at developing and refining Bowlby's theory, addressed their concerns in terms of the exclusive mother-child relationship and provided a more optimistic outlook by presenting evidence that children were capable of more than one selective attachment and could therefore 'survive' the loss of a main attachment figure. Importantly, he proposed that a clear distinction should be made between privation and deprivation (Rutter, 1981). He argued that the type of damage that Bowlby was describing was more likely to stem from 'privation', the failure to form an attachment at all, and the absence of other important experiences which come with close relationships, such as play and social interaction, rather than 'deprivation', the loss of, or interference in an attachment relationship through separation, which, while distressing, may not lead to the outcomes that Bowlby suggested. This body of work led Rutter (1995) to dispute that early experiences would inevitably have a detrimental effect on later behaviour and to argue that factors could be overcome with proper care experiences and intervention later on in the child's life and that children, especially those that had experienced loss, could go on to form positive relationships in the future. This then raised the question as to whether "the interactional processes highlighted as important to the development of secure relationships with mothers also operates with other adults" (Rutter & O'Connor, 2008, p.958). Studies looking at relationships with non-parental, home-based caregivers such as foster carers, implied that this could be the case (Anher, Pinquart & Lamb, 2006). For Rutter (1995) this inferred that the relational process that occurs between mother and child is similar

to the development of secure relationships with others. “It came to be appreciated that social development was affected by later, as well as earlier relationships” (Rutter 1995, p.551).

Largely as a response to Rutter’s research, Bowlby developed and modified his theories rejecting the deterministic model he had originally proposed and replacing it with one which recognised the ameliorating effect of compensatory and subsequent attachment experiences later in childhood, and emphasised the importance of risk and resilience factors on outcomes (Bowlby, 1988; Rutter & O’Conner, 1999).

### ***1.4.1.3. Summary and Conclusion***

Since its conception, Bowlby’s attachment theory has been both hugely influential and highly controversial. Work such as that completed by Michael Rutter has provided a more realistic prospect with respect to a child’s ability to overcome early adversity, with the separation and loss of an attachment figure seen as a vulnerability rather than the causation of negative outcomes. For most, concerns with Bowlby’s original attachment theory have been adequately addressed by the many revisions that Bowlby made to his initial theory over the subsequent decades in response to findings from his own later research and the critique and research of others (Bowlby 1979; 1988; Rutter & O’Connor, 1999). As a consequence, while some contention remains, attachment theory is generally accepted to be extremely relevant to EP practice. As Slater argues in the conclusion to her evaluation of attachment theory “Like most psychological theories it does not provide us with a model of understanding all human behaviour, but it gives us another tool for understanding some of the more confusing and challenging behaviours with which we are presented” (Slater, 2007, p.214).

### **1.4.2. Potential barriers to forming attachments with foster children.**

Children enter care for all sorts of reasons, but once in care, placement instability and disrupted relationships with caregivers is commonplace. Placement breakdowns can exacerbate things and have a further detrimental impact on a child's sense of stability and emotional wellbeing. These multiple changes in home life also often mean multiple changes in schools. Together these experiences can result in major disruptions to key relationships and a child's sense of belonging, as well as to learning, (Wade & Dixon, 2006, cited in Gypen, Vanderfaellie, Maeyer, Belenger & Holen, 2017).

Due to their pre-care experiences, many CiC can find it more difficult to form adaptive social relationships with caregivers, as challenging behaviours and attachment difficulties can compromise their ability to regulate emotions in response to environmental stress. Such behaviours have been shown to predict elevated stress amongst carers (Oosterman, de Schipper, Fisher, Dozier & Schuengel, 2010) and so put additional pressure on the relationship between child and foster carer which could jeopardize the stability of foster placements.

Research by Bazalgette, Rahilly and Trevelyan (2015) suggests that the care system can struggle to provide effective management and interventions to address these problems. Briskman et al. (2012) argue that a lack of intensive, expert support can mean that, despite best intentions, foster carers may struggle or fail to respond to the children in their care in a way that promotes the relationship building needed to compensate for early experiences of parenting and to avoid the risk of placement breakdown. A review of interventions aimed at increasing the resilience of CiC, however, concluded that outcomes for children improved when their foster families had received support through direct intervention (Leve, et al., 2012). While SR interventions did not feature in this review, their conclusions suggest that there may be a role for such practice, "effective programs are attachment focused or have



evolved from parenting interventions based on social learning frameworks”, (Leve et al., 2012, p.206). This body of research suggests, therefore, that while having both a stable foster care placement and a good educational grounding may be key factors in improving long-term outcomes for CiC (Gypen, Vanderfaellie, Maeyer, Belenger & Holen, 2017), interventions may be necessary in supporting these objectives. Evidence-based interventions that can support both simultaneously, may be of particular interest.

### **1.5. The role of the EP**

Approximately 70% of CiC have some form of SEND (DfE, 2014a). Professionals working on behalf of the LA and in the area of SEND are expected to work closely with their VS to enable joined up and effective working. As experts in both education and psychology, EPs can offer valuable support to CiC either directly, or by working alongside professionals and organisations such as VSs to help identify and meet their needs by planning and supporting the delivery of effective interventions.

The EPs role in working with CiC comprises a range of activities. These activities include involvement in individual casework and Education Health and Care assessments and attending Personal Educational Plan review meetings in order to give their perspective on what needs to happen for that individual child, to enable them to make progress and fulfil their potential. They also often offer training and the development of resources for schools. Having an overview of the four key areas of children’s development: communication and interaction, cognition and learning, social, emotional and mental health and physical and sensory (DfE, 2014a), means that EPs are well placed to consider the full range of needs of this vulnerable group of children.

### **1.6. Rationale**

#### **1.6.1. Local context.**

Within the Educational Psychology Service (EPS) where the researcher is based as a Trainee Educational Psychologist (TEP), paired reading programmes for primary school-aged foster children and their carers are organised each year in conjunction with the local VS. Results from the administration of pre and post assessments indicate that this intervention has led to substantial improvements in reading for the children involved. In addition, feedback from participants has suggested that the paired reading was also beneficial for the carer-child relationship. This research aimed to investigate the potential relational benefits further.

#### **1.6.2. Paired reading.**

Paired reading is a highly regarded, widely used, evidence-based literacy intervention in which a more capable reader (a peer, parent or other adult) supports a child with reading. Studies into the effectiveness of paired reading have shown it to be successful in improving reading both in the short and long term for the majority of participants (Topping & Lyndsey, 1992; Topping, Thurston, McGavock & Conlin, 2012). Topping and Lindsay (1991) identified that the children who participated in a paired reading intervention gained skills at over three times the expected rate in reading accuracy and more than four times in reading comprehension. Studies have suggested that paired reading has a similar impact on children in foster care (Forsman, 2017; Menmuir, 1994; Osborne, et al., 2010; Vinnerljung, Tideman, Sallnas & Forsman, 2014).

For the current paired reading intervention VS officers identified children suitable for the programme based on the following key criteria:

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- reading age identified as approximately two years below expected levels
- primary school-aged children
- children are in a stable foster care placement
- children are in a stable school placement

They then discussed their suitability and participation with the child's social worker. Foster carers were contacted to discuss their views and schools were contacted to inform them of the child's participation and to make arrangements for the pre-intervention assessments to take place. Clear guidance was given via a foster carer training session, led by an EP, on how to select appropriate reading material, where and when to read, and how to conduct the paired reading sessions. The stages as outlined by Topping (2014) in brief are:

Stage 1: This stage focuses on the adult and child reading the words out loud together at a pace that is steady and set by the child. Adults provide additional support by giving praise or simple corrections where appropriate.

Stage 2: While this stage starts with the adult and child reading together simultaneously, the aim is for the child to read aloud independently once they feel confident enough to do so, with the overall outcome being a sustained improvement in the child's reading ability. Before beginning to read, the child and adult agree a non-verbal signal that the child then uses to signal to the adult that they wish to read alone. At which point the adult gradually lowers their voice until the child is reading independently. The adult continues to give additional support through the use of praise/correction as and when necessary, joining the child in reading aloud until the flow is re-established and the child signals that they are ready to read

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independently once again. The reading pair then continue in this way, switching from reading together to reading alone, giving the child the level of help they require to experience success.

Carers were asked to read for up to 15 minutes, for a minimum of three times a week. Trained VS officers provided supervision through weekly telephone calls with carers.

Each year the EPS has found impressive improvements in the reading age and comprehension skills of the participants after the 16 weeks and slight increases in reading self-concept. In addition, the administration of the Child-Parent Relationship Scale (Pianta, 1992) measuring 'positive aspects of relationships, conflict and dependence' alongside feedback from participants has provided either quantitative or anecdotal evidence of an improvement in the relationship between foster carers and their children. While the value of paired reading as a means of improving literacy for both foster children and others is well documented, for example Topping & Lyndsey (1992), Topping, et al. (2012), Menmuir (1994), Osborne et al. (2010) and Forsman (2017), its potential as a vehicle for improving foster carer/child relationships is not. What is well recognised, however, is the importance of these relationships for the child in care (Berridge, 2012).

### **1.6.3. Researcher's position.**

This topic was chosen as an area of research for several reasons. First, because the intervention explored is concerned with the experiences of an especially vulnerable group of children, for whom a small change in outcome could be potentially life changing. Second, it is possible that SR might have the scope to reach a much larger group of children and young people. Third, the researcher was drawn to SR due to her humanistic based beliefs that everyday interactions shape and give meaning to individuals lives, informing self-concepts

and world views and through her experience of non-mainstream educational practice and philosophy. Finally, the paired reading programme being implemented within the researcher's LA provided the opportunity to investigate relational development through a SR intervention already in existence.

### **1.7. Summary**

Being in care is associated with a range of negative outcomes. Initiatives such as the introduction of VSs emphasise the priority currently being given to ensure that this group of vulnerable children have access to evidence-based interventions aimed at improving long-term outcomes. Having a good educational grounding and a strong, positive, stable relationship with a key adult is shown to be vital for improving the long-term outcomes for CiC in education, employment and mental health (Briskman et al., 2012; Gypen et al., 2017). Previous research suggests that there are few evidence-based programmes for foster families (Bazalgette, et al., 2015; Briskman et al., 2012). With a growing population of CiC and a significant proportion of these children living with foster carers, interventions that promote both improvements in academic attainment and attachments between foster carers and foster children, it might be argued, could be particularly valuable.

### **1.8. The Current Research and Next Steps**

Using data from the paired reading participant cohort of 2018 – 2019, the aim of this research was to explore the experiences of participants of a SR intervention in order to see whether taking part in SR activities can bring about relational benefits between foster carers and primary school-aged foster children and what aspects of SR participants particularly value. Interest in this area as a focus for enquiry stemmed from the researcher's experience as

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a TEP on placement. It was hoped that the findings would directly inform the work of the EPS with this vulnerable group of children, as well as contribute to the small but growing body of research into how participants experience SR and whether SR has the potential to benefit the relationship of readers. Findings will be discussed in terms of their implications for EP practice with respect to the recommendation and promotion of SR interventions.

Firstly, a review of current literature was carried out in order to further inform the design and focus of the current research.

## **Chapter 2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Introduction**

The purpose of the current research was to systematically investigate whether taking part in a SR activity benefits the relationship between foster carers and their foster children from the perspective of the readers. To investigate what is already known about this subject a critical analysis of the existing research was conducted. This aimed to initially explore what is known about the effect that reading together has on the readers' relationship generally, and then more specifically on relations between foster carers and their children.

### **2.2. Details of the Systematic Literature Review**

The database search engine EBSCOHOST (accessing four main specialist psychological and educational databases) was used to systematically search for articles relating to the following two searches:

- the effect of reading together on relationships
- reading together interventions between foster carers and foster children

It was hoped that the following review questions would be addressed through these separate searches:

1. Can adult-child reading together have an effect on the readers' relationship?
2. Can reading together have an effect on the relationship between foster carers and the children they care for?

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A summary of the literature search strategy in relation to Review Question 1. is outlined in Table 1. A rationale for preliminary inclusion and exclusion parameters is outlined in Appendix A, p.163.

Table 1.

### *Systematic Literature Search 1*

Search date	15.6.19
Databases	Academic Search Complete, Child Development and Adolescent Studies, ERIC, PsycINFO
Search terms used	(‘shared reading’ OR ‘paired reading’ OR ‘reading together’ OR ‘parent-child reading’ OR ‘adult-child reading’ OR dialogic reading) AND relations*
Parameters	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Peer reviewed published articles</li><li>2. Published within the last 20 years</li><li>3. Terms appearing within Abstract</li><li>4. Written in English</li><li>5. Age birth to 12 years</li></ol>
Results	N = 115

The titles and abstracts of the (N=115) papers identified through the systematic literature search were viewed and (N=111) papers were excluded based upon the inclusion criteria shown in Table 2.



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Table 2.

### *Additional Exclusion Criteria for Literature Search 1*

Exclusion criteria	Number
1. Not concerned with reading	6
2. Not concerned with reading in pairs	55
3. Not concerned with the impact that reading together had on readers' relationship	46
4. Not a research study	3
5. Duplication of paper included in the results of search 2.	1

The application of the exclusion criteria resulted in four papers being selected from the search. A hand search of the references in these four papers, applying the same exclusion criteria, failed to yield any relevant papers. A citation search using the database Scopus was also conducted using the same exclusion criteria, identifying a further three papers relevant to the review question (Total N = 7). Details of the exclusion process for first systematic literature search can be found in Appendix B, p.164.

A summary of the literature search strategy in relation to Review Question 2. is outlined in Table 3.

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Table 3.

### *Systematic Literature Search 2*

Search date	15.6.19
Databases	Academic Search Complete, Child Development and Adolescent Studies, ERIC, PsycINFO
Search terms used	(‘shared reading’ OR ‘paired reading’ OR ‘reading together’ OR ‘parent-child reading’ OR ‘adult-child reading’ OR dialogic reading) AND (‘foster care*’ OR ‘foster parent*’) AND (‘foster child*’ OR ‘Looked after child*’ OR LAC OR ‘child* in care’ OR CIC OR ‘child* looked after’ OR CLA).
Parameters	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Peer reviewed published articles</li><li>2. Published within the last 20 years</li><li>3. Terms appearing within Abstract</li><li>4. Age birth to 12 years</li></ol>
Results	N = 3

The titles and abstracts of the (N= 3) papers identified through the systematic literature search were viewed and one paper was excluded based upon the inclusion criteria shown in

Table 4.

Table 4.

*Additional Exclusion Criteria for Literature Search 2*

Exclusion criteria	Number
1. Not concerned with foster carers/children	1
2. Not focused on the impact that reading together had on the readers' relationship	0

The application of the exclusion criteria resulted in two papers being selected from the search. A hand search of the references in these two papers applying the same exclusion criteria failed to yield any relevant papers. A citation search using the database Scopus was also conducted and the same exclusion criteria applied. This identified one additional paper, later excluded through a process of full-text reading. Details of the exclusion process for the second systematic literature search can be found in found in Appendix C, p.165.

A list of the nine studies selected to contribute to the literature review are shown in Table 5. in the order that they appear within the text.

Table 5.

*A List of the Studies Included in the Systematic Literature Review*

Studies identified through systematic literature search one
Seden, J. (2008). Creative connections: Parenting capacity, reading with children and practitioner assessment and intervention. <i>Child and Family Social Work</i> , 13, 133-143.

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Seden, J. (2009). Enhancing outcomes through children's literature. <i>Vulnerable Children and Youth Studies</i> , 4(2), 142-147.
Brown, A., Howard, V. & Martin, J. G. (2019). Shared reading for strengthened relationships among those experiencing maternal incarceration. <i>Library Quarterly</i> , 89(3), 203-216.
Hall, M., Levy, R., & Preece, J. (2018). "No-one would sleep if we didn't have books!": Understanding shared reading as family practice and family display. <i>Journal of Early Childhood Research</i> , 16(4), 363–377.
Lam, S.F., Chow-Yeung, K., Wong, B. P. H., Lau, K. K. & Tse, S.I. (2013). Involving parents in paired reading with pre-schoolers: Results from a randomised controlled trial. <i>Contemporary Educational Psychology</i> , 38, 126-135.
Xie Q-W., Chan C.H.Y., Ji Q. & Chan, C. L. W. (2018). Psychosocial Effects of Parent-Child Book Reading Interventions: A Meta-analysis. <i>Paediatrics</i> , 141(4), 1-12.
Ganotice, F. A. Jr., Downing, K., Mak, T., Chan, B. & Lee, W. Y. (2017). Enhancing parent-child relationship through dialogic reading. <i>Educational Studies</i> , 43(1), 51-66.
<b>Studies identified through systematic literature search two</b>
Osborne, C., Alfano, J. & Winn, T. (2010). Paired reading as a literacy intervention for foster children. <i>Adoption and Fostering</i> , 34(4), 17-26.
Forsman, H. (2017). Foster carers' experiences of a paired reading literacy intervention with looked-after children. <i>Child and Family Social Work</i> , 22, 409-418.

Each of the papers was then explored separately in the following literature review. A table outlining the features of these nine studies, including their strengths and weaknesses, can be found in Appendix D, p.166.

## **2.3. A Critical Analysis of the Literature**

### **2.3.1. Can reading together in pairs have an effect on the readers' relationship?**

“Children are made readers on the laps of their parents”

This much cited quote, attributed to children's author Emilie Buchwald, conjures up an image of an archetypal parent-child interaction characterised by the display of affection, warmth and attachment. For many, this is an experience typical of childhood and one which positively shapes early attitudes towards books and reading. For those brought up within the care system, however, this is an experience that may be missing from their childhood.

A search of the literature to find out what is known about reading together in terms of its value in developing the readers' relationship indicates a paucity of research in this area. However, the following six papers provide some evidence to suggest that relational benefits could be a substantive, if largely unrecognised outcome of reading together.

#### ***2.3.1.1. Qualitative evidence for the effect of shared reading.***

The systematic literature review identified four qualitative studies relating to review question one, two of which were by Seden (2008, 2009). The first, (Seden, 2008) explored 33 parents' views of reading with their children to find out whether the simple and everyday act of reading together could build and strengthen attachments between children and carers. The intention was that this information could be used by social care practitioners to inform both their assessment of family need and their potential strategy for intervention. This was the second paper in a series of articles by the author (Seden, 2006, 2008, 2009) discussing parent/child reading based on the same data. Through face-to-face, semi-structured

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interviews, parents had been asked their views on 'parenting capacity' and how they felt reading together could enhance their own parenting capabilities. Responses were analysed using thematic analysis in relation to the parenting capacity dimensions of The Framework of the Assessment of Children in Need and Their Families (Department of Health, (DoH), 2000), used at the time to guide practitioner assessment.

It was found that parents associated the process of reading with the three dimensions of parenting capacity: 'emotional warmth, basic care and stability' (DoH, 2000) and that all parents viewed reading with their children as a positive means of being together. The vast majority (31) said that reading created and maintained closeness and a sense of stability for the child. Respondents also associated reading with a number of positive interpersonal encounters and qualities such as 'love and cuddles', quality time, bonding and emotional closeness and comfort. "Throughout the study, time after time, parents expressed the importance of reading together with their children to build warm and caring relationships....without the word attachment, the parents were describing an activity which promoted secure attachment, emotional closeness and empathic responsiveness in their families" (Seden, 2008, p.137).

Seden (2008) concluded that the act of reading together contributes much to the quality of the relationship between carer and child and that reading can enhance parenting capacity by encouraging physical closeness and emotional warmth. It can create a feeling of safety and stability for children which is important for their social, emotional and psychological development. She surmised that a greater understanding and appreciation of the potential of SR could enhance assessment and intervention practice.

Seden (2008) provides a compelling case for reading together as a means of promoting positive, caring relations as well as reading ability and her methodological approach allows for a rich description of the participants' experience. The sample used

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included carers with a range of socio-economic, educational, ethnic and cultural backgrounds and, both those in receipt of additional family support (N = 22), and those bringing up their children without professional intervention (N = 11). The inclusion of parents with such widely differing backgrounds and experiences of parenting adds weight to the claim that SR may be an effective method for developing carer/child relations, whatever the family's prior experience or circumstances. However, Seden (2008) remains vague about the process of analysis undertaken making it difficult to critique the findings.

In a follow-on article Seden (2009) set out to strengthen her case for the benefits of using parent or carer/child reading when working with vulnerable children and those in care, by demonstrating how the data collected and referred to in the first two studies (Seden, 2006, 2008) fit with government's Every Child Matters outcomes (Department for Education and Skills, 2008). As a result of her appraisal, Seden (2009) proposed that "In terms of 'being healthy', reading with children contributed to their basic care; attachment, closeness, attention; physical contact, relaxation, special times; and emotional warmth and stability. The process of reading was shown to be especially important for building a relationship" (Seden, 2009, p.145).

It is important, though, to note two factors undermining the strength of evidence from this later study. First, while the article is helpful in emphasising how the original findings fit with Every Child Matters outcomes guiding practice at the time, reliance on the same data means the paper does not provide additional empirical evidence for the relational benefits of SR. Secondly, the fact that this paper is the third in a series of articles (Seden, 2006, 2008, 2009) discussing the same initial piece of research, suggests a high level of interest and investment in the subject that may call into question the researcher's impartiality and increase the risk of bias in how the data has been presented in terms of its contribution to existing knowledge and/or understanding.

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A recent study by Brown, Howard, & Martin (2019), however, appears to strengthen the claim that reading together can produce relational benefits for parents and their children and provides evidence that this may be possible in even the most difficult of circumstances. The research drew on information from interviews with six federally incarcerated mothers who had taken part in a Canadian ‘Mother-Child Read Aloud Program’, along with letters written by both the children and their caregivers and sent to the programme’s organisers about their experiences of the intervention. While the mother/child pairs were not together in person for the book reading, they nonetheless shared the experience, with recordings made of the mother reading, sent to their children the next day. Using a qualitative, case-study approach involving open-ended interview questions the women were able to control the content of the conversation and give in-depth responses, resulting in a rich and thorough representation of their experiences. This approach, the authors claimed, gave greater credibility to their findings which indicated strong evidence for the ability of SR to improve these parent/child relationships.

Thematic analysis of the data found that both the mothers and their children had experienced a range of benefits as a result of the intervention, including better communication and a strengthening of bond between them. Some mothers described a sense of ‘togetherness’ and ‘connection’ brought about by the sharing of books, despite the obvious physical separation. Their children also valued the recordings, which were eagerly anticipated and received, and the books provided an easy and positive springboard to subsequent telephone conversations – conversations that one participant acknowledged had often previously been difficult. The researchers concluded, “The common thread throughout the interviews and letters was that the Mother-Child Read Aloud Program helps incarcerated mothers bond with their children in the simplest, most fundamental way – through sharing books” (Brown et al., 2019, p.208).



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An appraisal of the study's design shows that the researchers took a number of steps to reduce the risk of bias and increase the trustworthiness of their findings. These included taking an inductive, iterative approach to their analysis of the qualitative data, using more than one method of data collection (interviews and letters) and using a second coder to corroborate their coding and findings. In addition, a detailed account of the circumstances facing the participants and their children was given, especially in relation to their vulnerability and the impact that the incarceration had on their relationships, helping to increase the transferability of the findings to other populations of incarcerated parents and their children. However, this information also highlights the difficulty in applying these findings to other, less extreme contexts in which SR takes place. Importantly though, it could be equally be argued that with the intervention having had such a positive impact under such unpromising circumstances, Brown et al.'s (2019) paper provides an interesting and persuasive argument for the power of SR as a vehicle for strengthening readers' relationships.

Hall et al.'s (2018) research also explored SR from the parent's perspective. Drawing on data collected from a much larger study looking at the day-to-day details of family life and relationships, the researchers set out to explore and understand the role that reading together has in families. Using techniques from grounded theory to analyse the data from semi-structured interviews with 29 parents of pre-school children, three main themes were identified; reading as a family practice, reading as a form of 'family display' and children's agency. Example extracts used to illustrate these themes highlighted a number of interactions conducive to the development or maintenance of positive relationships.

Drawing on the work of Morgan, (1996) and Finch, (2007) and their concepts of 'family practices' and 'family display', Hall et al. (2018) make the point that it is relational dynamics that make a family rather than structure or function. Families are therefore defined more by what they do, i.e. 'family things' than who they are, and that reading together is a

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prime example of a ‘family thing’. “Just as families are crucial to reading, reading practices play an important role in family life” (Hall et al., 2018, p.364). Reporting their findings, the researchers claimed that while many of the parents read to their children to develop their literacy skills they also “used shared reading as a tool to cement family practices and support their unique and individual constructs of “doing” family” (Hall et al., 2018, p.364). Like mealtimes, for example, reading together was firmly embedded into family routine providing important opportunities for interaction as well as helping to establish and facilitate daily structure. For the parents, these interactions provided opportunities for them to parent by creating time together and engaging in an activity that prompted physical closeness between them and their children, with shared enjoyment and the chance for greater communication that they might otherwise not have had.

According to Hall et al. (2018) reading together was also an important symbol, signalling to both those within and outside the family that because they were doing ‘family things’ this made them a ‘family’. Hence, reading together is fundamental to the overall construct of ‘doing family’. Furthermore, the practice of reading together was viewed by parents as a means of establishing and confirming family relationships by symbolising parental care. For example, one mother saw sharing books as both a sign and outcome that her new partner and her daughter were becoming ‘family’.

The researchers concluded that parent-child reading is more than simply an activity to advance the language and academic skills of children but also a significant symboliser of ‘family’ to its members and the outside world and both aids and represents familial relationships. They argue that it is “naïve” to view home-based parent-child reading as educational, advocating instead that that SR interventions should be promoted and developed as an extension of what it is to be family rather than an activity that is somehow different or additional to what families do already (Hall et al., 2018, p.375).

This study was careful to include participants from a range of social and cultural backgrounds and by drawing participants from two samples from different cities was successful in broadening the ethnic diversity of the participant group. However, as the researchers acknowledge, this also resulted in two different approaches to sampling with the potential that the two groups could hold potentially different and distinct ideas about reading at home which could ordinarily undermine the trustworthiness of their results. As they point out, however, their interest was in understanding families rather than comparing families, meaning that any difference between the two samples is unlikely to have an impact on the conclusions made overall. The researchers use of three independent coders during the early stages of analysis also bolsters the trustworthiness of the findings. Again, however, although perhaps understandably in view of the children's ages, the data does not include the perspectives of children on parent-child reading practices.

### ***2.3.1.2. Quantitative and mixed design evidence for the effect of shared reading.***

A randomised controlled trial (RCT) was conducted by Lam et al. (2013) to investigate whether reading together, in the form of paired reading, would have a positive impact on the children and the adults involved, whether the effects of the programme on children would be mediated by the changes in the parents and finally, whether paired reading would benefit families on low incomes most. From a population of 527 Chinese parents of level 2 children, attending 10 Hong Kong preschools (mean age, 4.7 years), 195 volunteered to take part in the research. The participant families had incomes ranging from high to low. The children were randomly assigned to either an experimental or waitlist control group with the reading programme implemented first to the experimental group and then to the control condition. Following training by coaching teachers, the pairs read together for 10-15 minutes

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for a minimum of four times a week for seven weeks. The children were assessed pre and post-intervention in terms of word recognition and reading fluency, while parents completed questionnaires to record how they perceived their child's reading competence and motivation, the parent-child relationship and how they rated specific and general self-efficacy. The family's income was also recorded.

Statistical analysis undertaken at the end of the programme indicated that those children assigned to the experimental group showed greater improvements in both word recognition and reading fluency and were felt by their parents to be better at reading and more motivated. Parents from the experimental group also reported higher self-efficacy in helping their children with reading and in supporting them more generally. In addition, the programme was found to have enhanced parent-child relationships, which Lam et al (2013) argued was the result of the specific paired reading interactions, rather than just the time the parents and child spent together.

However, care needs to be taken when considering the results and interpretation. While inferences from the findings may be made locally, for instance, it would be harder to generalise conclusions to children in other educational contexts in view of the significant differences between logographic and alphabetic written language and the impact this has on the process of learning to read. In addition, methodological limitations need to be considered. RCT's are held up by many to be the gold-standard of scientific enquiry and the best means of evaluating whether or not an intervention is effective due to their ability to tightly control for potentially moderating variables and minimise bias. A review of Lam et al.'s (2013) study shows that the control of conditions was carefully considered to ensure that any changes could be attributed to the paired reading and not to other variables. However, as the authors themselves suggest, greater validation may have been achieved had additional methods of data collection been included. Furthermore, the purely quantitative approach taken provides

limited insight into how the paired reading was experienced by the participants, particularly with regard to relational benefits and, as has been argued by many in the field of social science, is poorly suited to investigating and describing subjective phenomenon such as intimate relationships (Heaviside, 2017).

In a meta-analysis of RCT's, Xie et al. (2018) aimed to assess the current state of research on parent/child book reading (PCBR) interventions in relation to their impact on the psychosocial functioning of children and parents. After a comprehensive and systematic search of the literature, studies were selected or rejected following the implementation of a set of clear inclusion and exclusion criteria. Nineteen interventions were subsequently included representing data from 3,264 families and their results combined. Results showed a small but significant effect size, leading the authors to conclude that PCBR can have a positive influence on the psychosocial functioning of both parent and child and could be effective in improving the quality of relationship between them. In addition, it was found that both parties benefited to approximately the same degree “Thus, prioritizing 1 group of participants over another (whether children or parents) may ignore the potential of PCBR interactions” (Xie et al., 2018, p8). The review also indicated that the psychosocial effects of PCBR were similar irrespective of the child’s age, sex, socio-economic or cultural background or high/at-risk status and was unaffected by the length of the study and ‘dosage’. In contrast to Lam et al (2013), “It is suggested in the meta-analysis that shared reading as a meaningful interaction between children and parents rather than specific reading techniques might be the key to the positive psychosocial effects of PCBR interventions” (Xie et al., 2018, p.9).

The authors point out several limitations that need taking into account when interpreting the findings from the meta-analysis. For instance, the adoption of strict inclusion criteria limiting the number of PCBR studies reviewed. They also note that in some cases, the

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design of a study made it difficult to extract the effect that PCBR had on psychosocial benefits, as some studies combined other interventionist elements alongside the reading, such as parenting or behavioural programmes. They note too that many of the studies reviewed did not use validated scales to assess the psychosocial effects of the PCBR interventions especially in relation to the quality of parent-child relationships. “PCBR is not only a process of communicating information or learning skills but also a socially created, interactive process. Using validated scales to assess its effects on parent-child relationships may improve our understanding about the dynamics of PCBR interactions” (Xie et al., 2018, p.9). Again, the question as to whether a quantitative, rather than qualitative approach is the best means of capturing this information may be questioned. Despite these limitations, the results of the meta-analysis support previous findings which suggest that interventions that involve reading together could have relational benefits for those who take part.

In the last of the papers reviewed in this section, Ganotice et al. (2017) investigated whether taking part in a DR intervention (Whitehurst, 1992, cited by Ganotice et al., 2017) could improve relations between Hong Kong Chinese parents and their children. “Given that storytelling is a social experience involving interaction between adults and children, it seems likely that parent-child relationships might also be enhanced through the use of dialogic reading strategies in addition to its positive impacts on literacy” (Ganotice et al., 2017, p.52).

Forty-eight Hong Kong Chinese parents and their primary school children (aged between 3 and 12 years) who had been identified by their teachers as having relational problems with their parents took part in the study. The participants formed two experimental groups; parents and children in the early primary school years one and two and parents and children in primary school years three and four. To assess the effect of the intervention the Parent-Child Relationship Inventory (PCRI), devised by Gerard (1994), was administered before and after the DR training in order to assess parents’ attitudes towards parenting and

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their children. The training took place over a period of three months and involved three phases; an introductory session, training before the intervention and training again at the end, with each taking approximately two hours. The parent/child reading sessions were conducted for 20 minutes, initially twice a week, and then at least three times a week, for 12 weeks. The PCRI (Gerard, 1994) was then re-administered at the end of the intervention and t-tests performed to assess the effect of DR on parental attitudes.

In support of some of the previous papers reviewed, the results suggested that the SR activity had provided important opportunities for enhancing parent-child relations for those who had taken part, "the quality time spent for the parent to read with their children within the DR framework is hypothesised to function as an opportunity for parent and child to establish better communication as an added value to the cognitive-and language-related skills" (Ganotice et al., 2017, p.61).

How relatable these results are to carers and children within Western cultures and contexts, however, again needs to be considered. Aside from the differences in written language, there are likely to be differences in family dynamics and parenting practices between cultures that could result in different outcomes for carers and their children. For instance, (Ganotice et al., 2017) note that many Eastern cultures, including the Chinese culture, place a high premium on family harmony. So again, while the results from this study may be generalised locally it but may be harder to apply them to other populations.

### **2.3.2. Can reading together in pairs have an effect on the relationship between foster carers and the children they care for?**

Two studies are reviewed to explore the current picture of reading together

activities and their impact on the relationship between foster carers and the children they care for. Both of which (Forsman, 2017; Osborne et al., 2010) are concerned with the effect of paired reading interventions specifically.

### ***2.3.2.1. Foster carer and foster child paired reading interventions.***

Inspired by an earlier study by Menmuir (1994), which suggested that paired reading interventions could enhance the educational development of CiC, Osborne et al. (2010) set out to further evaluate the potential of paired reading interventions for this particular group of children. As well as investigating whether paired reading could improve the reading ability of the foster children involved, they were also keen to explore whether the active inclusion of carers in learning interventions, such as paired reading, would yield other valuable by-products associated with the academic success of CiC. Namely, more stable home placements and a greater interest and support from carers for their children's educational progress (Martin & Jackson, 2002, cited by Osborne et al., 2010; Stein, 1997). With the aim of improving on Menmuir's (1994) research, Osborne et al. (2010) adopted a mixed-methods design, taking an objective pre and post-intervention measure of reading age and collecting qualitative feedback from carers in order to "illuminate" their findings (Osborne et al. 2010). The project was run over 16 weeks, with carers given training and encouraged to read with their children for at least 20 minutes, three times each week.

The authors reported, in addition to significant improvement on reading scores, that feedback from carers pointed to a number of socio-emotional benefits associated with their participation, "carers also reported that taking part in the programme had enabled them to share valuable one-to-one time with their child. This was considered as important as the improvements in his or her reading ability" (Osborne et al., 2010, p.22). This led Osborne et al. (2010) to conclude that the benefits of paired reading "may extend beyond literacy skills



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alone and have a positive benefit on the children's confidence and enthusiasm for reading, as well as the relationship between carer and child" (Osborne et al., 2010, p.22).

Several features of the study's design and the authors' reporting suggest caution is needed when interpreting the findings and drawing conclusions from their results. First, no details of the analysis were presented, limiting critique and making external scrutiny difficult. "The assessment of the quality of the evidence supporting any inferences is an especially important feature of any research and must be open to scrutiny" (British Education Research Association, 2018, p. 10). Second, the high level of participant dropout reported (nearly 50%) is likely to have affected the validity of the results obtained. While some of the initial 68 children failed to complete the programme, some of the data from those that had, was not available as this had not been returned by the school. It is not possible to know how the inclusion of this data would have affected the findings. As Hoerger (2010) notes, a high dropout rate can increase the potential of a sample becoming less representative and less generalisable to the wider population. Furthermore, only 16 of the 35 participating carers provided feedback and contributed to the qualitative data set. It is unclear as to why this number may have been so low and, as such, bias on behalf of those collecting and returning the data (the participating schools) cannot be ruled out.

Osborne et al.'s (2010) results suggest that carers valued the chance to spend one-to-one time with their children. "One possibility is that sharing time together during paired reading might lead to a closer relationship between the child and carer, and ultimately a better and more stable placement", (Osborne et al., 2010, p. 23) and so, irrespective of reading ability, potential relational benefits could make paired reading a valuable intervention for foster children.

In a more recent study, Forsman (2017) explored the views of foster carers who had participated in a paired reading scheme with the children in their care with the purpose of

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discovering which factors supported or hindered programme compliance. The paired reading programme had been implemented in seven Swedish local authorities, involving 107 children aged between 7 – 12 years, with reading sessions taking place for 20 minutes, three times a week for 16 weeks, as in the Osborne (2010) study. A study by Vinnerljung et al, (2014, cited by Forsman, 2017) had already found that the programme had improved the children's vocabulary and, on average, their reading age by 11 months.

Through a process of compilation and content analysis of weekly monitoring sheets, in which carers recorded how much they had read and how the reading was going, Forsman (2017) allocated participants to one of four participant categories relating to compliance: (i) dropouts; (ii) insufficient reading; (iii) sufficient but problematic reading; (iv) sufficient reading, with at least three carers from each category interviewed (N = 15). The carers were asked to describe how they had conducted the programme, what they felt were the positive and negative aspects of the intervention and what they felt had either facilitated or hindered compliance. They were also asked about their expectations of the programme, how they felt it had impacted on the child's reading ability and whether participation had affected relations within the family and everyday family life. Data from these semi-structured interviews was then analysed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In addition, case studies (Creswell, 2012; Yin, 2013, cited by Forsman, 2017) were undertaken using the interview data from one of the carers from each of the compliance categories.

Findings indicated that carers attitudes towards the intervention was a key factor affecting compliance and, as Forsman (2017) noted, that some carers viewed the potential of having one-to-one quality time with their children and the chance to get to know their child's needs better as motivating factors for taking part in paired reading. This suggests that these carers had identified one-to-one time and the closeness that reading together provided as valued parts of their parenting practice and something for which paired reading might provide

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opportunities. For some, reading sessions were deliberately made ‘cosy’ and the one to one nature of the activity valued by both partners. One of the carers stated, “He thought that this way of reading was so nice and wanted me to read with him at all times. I think that it was special for him to get close to me, to spend time with me and to get my full attention” (Forsman, 2017, p.414).

However, not all carers, felt this way about the paired reading. Analysis of all the data, found that where the intervention was less successful and not as popular, certain process and attitudinal factors were often present. It is possible that if more substantial evidence of the relational benefits of reading together activities such as paired reading was available, that these carers could have felt more motivated to take part and therefore, invested more in the process.

Forsman’s (2017) study is important in providing some initial insight into how different carers view and experience SR interventions and adds weight to Osborne et al.’s (2010) claim that reading together could benefit relationships as well as improve reading. The findings also suggest that promoting the potential relational benefits of reading together activities, alongside the academic benefits, could be an important motivator for recruiting some foster carers to paired reading programmes and for guiding their role within them.

With the study’s design, care was taken to represent a range of carers experiences, including those that chose to dropout, as well as those that had completed the intervention with full compliance. The choice to adopt both semi-structured interviews and case-studies strengthens both the transferability and credibility of the findings, providing a relatively large quantitative sample and the opportunity to delve deeper into the views of carers with differing experience of reading with their children.

### **2.4. Overview of the Literature Review**

This review of the literature into the effect that SR has on the relations of readers, and on the relationship between foster carers and children in particular, suggests there had been little research carried out in this area. However, all of the studies found and included in the review indicate that reading together activities are beneficial for improving the readers' relationship.

Overall, parents and carers saw the practice of SR as a positive means of improving the relationship they had with their children, with many recognising that the interventions they had undergone had provided opportunities for creating and demonstrating a range of positive relational qualities associated with secure attachment. In all studies, improvements in the relationship between parent/carer and child were reported as a result of the reading intervention. Moreover, relational benefits were reported for participants representing a diverse range of cultural, geographical, economic and educational background, thus supporting the idea that the act of SR embodies key components for developing positive relationships. However, several limitations within the studies were identified through the review which must be taken into account when determining their value in terms of informing and guiding future research, particularly in relation to research design and applicability.

Those that adopted a qualitative design, it is proposed, were better placed to provide detailed accounts of the improvements in relationships, for example, Seden (2008), Brown et al. (2019) and Forsman (2017), and provided greater insight into how these improvements were experienced than those that took a quantitative approach (Ganotice et al., 2017; Xie et al, 2008). In addition, while the level of heterogeneity in terms of participant characteristics, educational contexts and family dynamics present within the studies reviewed could be seen as advantageous in terms of validating the benefits of SR activities, it also limits the

contribution that individual studies can be considered to make to a more general understanding of the impact of reading together.

One final, but outstanding feature of the studies included in this review is the absence of children's views of whether the reading together activities improved the relationships they had with their parents/carers. While one study sought to assess the impact of SR on the children indirectly, (Brown et al., 2019) none set out to gain these directly.

### **2.5. Purpose and Orientation of the Current Research**

Results of the literature review suggest that while there is a growing body of evidence showing the benefits of SR activities for CiC, there are none that focus solely on the relational impact. In view of the importance of foster carer-child relationships, anecdotal reports from carers from within the author's LA and the limited findings from research conducted thus far, it is argued that a systematic exploration into the potential relational benefits of reading together activities is a legitimate and valuable focus for enquiry. The intention of this would be two-fold. First, to directly inform the work of the local EPS with this group of children, not only in the planning and promotion of future SR schemes to key stakeholders including the VS, foster-parents and children, but also in the design of other academic interventions for this vulnerable group of children. Second, to make a contribution to the body of research on effective interventions for children in care and offer qualitative information in terms of paired reading in particular. Due to the "open-ended exploratory nature" of this qualitative research (Willig, 2008, p.20) the design will be drawn from the research questions and aligned with the researcher's epistemological position.

Davie (1993) describes children as the 'ultimate consumers of the product of education' and, as such, their experiences and views should be considered fundamental in educational research. As children are the participants and the focus in terms of the outcome of SR

interventions, it seemed both sensible and right that their views are sought when endeavouring to understand if and how a reading together activity affects carer/child relations. The UN Convention on the rights of the Child (1989) highlights the importance of gaining children's views on matters that concern them (Articles 12 and 13), while legislative documents such as Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE, 2014b), make clear the duties that professionals such as EPs have in eliciting the views of children about the work done on their behalf. Having the opportunity and support to develop strong relationships is known to play a vital part in improving the lives of CiC (Gypen et al., 2017). Having their views represented in this research, was therefore, considered essential.

### **2.6. Research Questions**

The current study aims to answer the following research questions:

Main Question: Can participation in shared reading produce relational benefits between foster carers and the children in their care?

To help answer the main question, two subsidiary questions are considered:

- What aspects of their participation in shared reading do foster carers and foster children particularly value?
- What relational benefits do foster carers and foster children experience through their participation in a shared reading intervention?

## **Chapter 3. Methodology**

### **3.1. Introduction**

Previous chapters have outlined the background to this research and provided a critical overview of the current research base. This chapter will present the ontological and epistemological positions taken by the researcher and the research methods used. Details about participant recruitment, data collection and ethical considerations will also be outlined, as well as the data analysis method used, and the steps taken to enhance the validity, reliability and trustworthiness of the findings.

### **3.2. The Ontological and Epistemological Framework**

Creswell (2009) points to four kinds of research purpose; evaluative, explanatory, emancipatory and exploratory. While most of the research referred to in the literature review aims to determine the impact of SR interventions on the readers' relationship and hence, is evaluative in nature, the purpose of this research is exploratory. It is aimed at understanding what the literature review suggests is a relatively under-researched area: the relational effect of SR for foster carers and foster children from the perspective of the participants themselves. Exploration such as this calls for a different research approach to the quantitative studies referred to in the review, one that is more suitable to capturing the nuanced and highly subjective nature of interpersonal relationships and involves data collection methods that can enable a rich description of participant experience to emerge.

Underpinning any research is the ontological, epistemological and methodological nature of the paradigm through which the research is undertaken. It is therefore critical to establish these during the preliminary stages of research (Miller, 2016). While the question

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driving ontology is “what is there to know?” (Willig, 2008, p.13) and is concerned with an individual’s view of the nature of reality, epistemology asks “what can we know?” (Willig, 2008, p.13) and relates to how knowledge is created or acquired. Prior to the era of post modernism these were straightforward concerns, with the approach taken predetermined by the predominant realist ontological paradigm and its associated positivist epistemological stance which had emerged and reigned since the Age of Enlightenment (Andrews, 2017). Fundamental to both is the assumption that ‘truth’ about reality can be determined by the objective observation and quantitative, causal measurement of objects or events, including human behaviour. From the 1950’s onwards with the emergence of post modernism however, a shift began towards a model of research that many felt could better accommodate the need for ecological validity required in real world research and could provide a deeper, more meaningful understanding of human behaviour and the social world (Neisser, 1976, cited in Robson & McCartan, 2016). Relativism, positioned at the polar opposite of realism, holds that realities are multiple and relative and socially constructed rather than objectively determined and perceived (Andrews, 2017). This researcher takes the view that there is not one single reality to be discovered but rather a myriad of truths, fashioned from the participants’ personal and subjective experiences. Consequently, this study adopts a relativist ontology.

The most dominant epistemological paradigm linked to relativism is social constructionism (Burr, 2015). This qualitative approach reasons that meaning is constructed by people as they interact and interpret the world around them. This study aims to explore how “...particular experiential phenomena (an event, process or relationship) have been understood from the perspective of particular people, in a particular context” (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009, p.29) and acknowledges that, rather than being passive recipients, both adults and children are active agents in how they create meaning from experience. The



focus of the current research, therefore, lies with how participants make sense of and define for themselves the impact of SR on their relationship, rather than on finding and seeking to explain a causal link between SR and relationships based on a definition of ‘relationship’ pre-defined by the researcher (Robson & McCartan, 2016). Thus, a constructivist epistemology is assumed with the intention of providing a deeper and richer understanding of the participants’ experiences.

### **3.3. Participants**

The research was conducted in a LA EPS within a rural county in which the researcher was working as a TEP. Paired reading programmes were a well-established part of the LA’s approach to improving the educational attainment of children in care, with several programmes held each year within the county. These were implemented by the VS in partnership with the EPS, with schemes running for 16 weeks. Congruent with the researcher’s epistemological stance and qualitative methodology the study used “small, purposively-selected and carefully-situated samples” (Smith et al., 2009, p.29). As a result, a group of parents and children already existed for the opportunity. As such, a homogenous, non-probability sample was obtained from the 2018 – 2019 cohort of paired reading participants, with all participants who had completed the intervention in full invited to take part. In total 22 children and 19 carers were invited, representing 19 families. Consent was received for four key stage two, primary school children, and six carers responded giving their consent. Three of the carers and children who took part were from the same household/family, the other child and three carers had no association. Due to these numbers all of the respondents were included in the data collection process and so no selection process was necessary.

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Inclusion criteria for participation in the paired reading intervention had already been determined separately by the EPS:

Criteria for selection of children in care:

- reading age identified as approximately two years below expected levels
- primary school-aged children
- children are in a stable foster care placement
- children are in a stable school placement

Criteria for selection of foster carers:

- a commitment to adhere to the programme for 16 weeks (which includes a minimum of three reading sessions of 15 minutes in length each week) and a commitment to communicate with the VS team on a weekly basis
- ability to attend the foster carer training
- reading skills in advance of the child in care

The children who participated in this research were all key stage two, primary school-aged and attended mainstream primary schools. Ethnicity and gender did not form part of the selection process. Contact information was gained for both sets of participants via the county's VS. Email invitations were sent to all of the foster carers that had completed the paired reading programme that year, inviting them to take part in a semi-structured telephone interview. Information about the research and a consent form was attached to each email. In addition to written consent, verbal consent was confirmed again later at the data collection stage. For the foster children, contact details for their individual supervising social workers

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were obtained and the social workers contacted individually via email with information about the research and a consent form. Once consent had been obtained from a social worker, contact was made with the child's carer to arrange the home-visit. Written consent was obtained from the child during the home visit prior to data collection. The carers and children interviewed were provided with a debrief sheet at the end of the interview reminding them of their right to withdraw from the study prior to the data-analysis stage. See Appendix H, p.191 to Appendix O, p.207 for the carer, social worker and child information sheets, consent forms and debrief information.

According to Sandelowski (1995) the main goal of qualitative sample size selection is to ensure that it is small enough to be manageable and large enough to provide "a new and richly textured understanding of experience" (p.183). To accommodate this recommendation and to ensure the size of data was manageable and feasible in terms of the project, six adult and six child participants were considered an ideal number. The actual number of participants recruited was six foster carers (one male and five females) and four, key stage two foster children (two females, two males). Three of the adult participants were also carers to three of the child participants. An outline of participant characteristics is presented in Table 6.

Table 6.

### *Age and Time in Current Placement of Foster Children*

Age of Child	Time in Current Placement
7 years	1 year 3 months
11 years	10 years
9 years	11 months
9 years	4 years

### 3.4. Strategies for Data Collection

To obtain the qualitative data, semi-structured interviews were used to create a detailed picture of both the carers and the children's views of their experience. With the foster carers these interviews were conducted by telephone. With the foster children the semi-structured interviews were held face-to-face using an adapted form of the Kinetic Family Drawing (Burns & Kaufman, 1970, 1972) as a springboard for further discussion and a simple sorting activity. Each of these techniques is congruent with the constructivist epistemology underlying the researcher's position. The decision-making process involved in selecting these techniques and methods is outlined below.

“The selection of a method or methods is based on what kind of information is sought, from whom and under what circumstance” (Robson & McCartan, 2016, p.241).

When carrying out social research, researchers can broadly choose between directly observing what is going; on finding out by asking those involved, through interviews, or questionnaires or tests; or by looking for evidence through documentary analysis (University of East London, Bunns, n.d.). As the aim of this research was to explore participant perspectives of an intimate nature, both interviews and questionnaires were considered potentially suitable.

While questionnaires are valued by social researchers for their transparency (Hakim, 2000), interviews are seen to provide the opportunity to delve deeper and check meaning, and thereby make potentially greater claims for internal validity which is defined as how closely the data represents the participants' actual experience (Campbell & Stanley, 1963, cited in Robson & McCartan, 2016). They are also especially useful for obtaining a subjective account of participant experience (University of East London, Bunn, n.d.). As such, the

interview is a relevant tool for understanding social phenomena from a constructivist approach. (Kvale, 1996).

### **3.4.1. Interviews as a method of data collection.**

There are several different types of interview including structured, semi-structured and unstructured, telephone interviews, online interviews and focus groups. While both structured interviews and semi-structured interviews contain pre-determined questions, semi-structured interviews are more flexible and adaptable as a technique; the questions can be changed or omitted, explanations given and the order of presentation of the questions can be changed.

### **3.4.2. Foster carer semi-structured interviews.**

It was decided to use semi-structured interviews to gain the views of carers. This format would allow a degree of both guidance and structure in the process but also the freedom to explore and check out interviewee responses. It was originally intended that the foster carer data would be collected using semi-structured interviews within focus groups (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990). This technique was judged to be particularly suited to the focus and scope of the research questions chosen, to the scale of the data sought and the homogeneity of the group of participants involved; foster carers of primary school-aged children that had participated in a paired reading scheme within the same time-frame and with the same level of training and support. It was anticipated that the multiple interactions involved in focus groups would allow for a greater and deeper exchange of ideas between the participants and the researcher and the dilution of ‘researcher power’ due to their being outnumbered by participants. The foster carers already met monthly giving the potential, it

was thought, for this technique to be used without creating additional time demands on the participants. However, a lack of interest from participants meant a change of plan was needed. The data was therefore collected via semi-structured telephone interviews and captured through audio recording. Once a consent form had been received, carers were contacted via email or telephone to arrange a convenient timeslot for the interview to take place. See Appendix E, p.178, for Carer Interview Schedule.

### **3.4.3. Child semi-structured interviews.**

The semi-structured interview technique was also used to collect the child data with interviews conducted face-to-face at the child's home. It was felt necessary to meet the children within their own homes to create as comfortable and secure an environment as possible in view of their age and personal histories. It was also considered a priority to ensure that the data was collected within a short timeframe following the end of the paired reading programme to maximise the children's recall of their experiences of the process. The intention was to carry out all data collection within a two-month period from the end of the programme.

### **3.4.4. Other Forms of Child Data Collection**

Gersch (1996) advocates the use of non-directive methods when seeking the views of children, such as Personal Construct Psychology (PCP) developed by Kelly in 1955. A drawing technique from PCP, the Kinetic Family Drawing (KFD) was therefore adapted and used at the beginning of the interviews as a way of creating a joint focus for initial discussion and supporting the child's recollections of the paired reading process.

### ***3.4.4.1. Rationale for using and adapting the KFD.***

“Young children usually express themselves more naturally and spontaneously through actions rather than words. Thus, figure drawing provides an excellent method of exploring the world of the child” (Burns & Kaufman, 1971, p.13).

An adapted version of the KFD was used at the beginning of each interview (Burns & Kaufman, 1970, 1972). This projective technique is considered to be a particularly engaging and accessible method for gaining insight into the perspectives of children on their familial relationships and is especially well suited to the developmental drawing abilities associated with primary school-aged children. Namely, the drawings produced can usually be understood by others, show relationships between objects and people and are constructed reliably from their own viewpoint (Piaget, 1958). It is often used in psychotherapy and art therapy and is seen as an especially useful means of gaining insight and initiating discussion into a child’s perceptions of their intimate and family relationships (Kim and Suh, 2013). Ubha and Cahill (2014) describe the use of KFD drawings in research as a fun and non-threatening qualitative way of capturing children’s attachment representations.

Information about the child’s experience is normally obtained both from the drawings themselves and from interpretations subsequently made of the content of the drawing. With these interpretations co-constructed through discussions with the child to avoid the researcher’s sole interpretations being imposed upon the drawings. However, its reliability to some degree remains contested (Handler & Habenicht, 1994) and it has been criticised for introducing too high a risk of researcher bias during interpretation. For this reason, and because this study was not concerned with assessing the efficacy of KFD, the decision was taken to use the drawings simply as a means of rapport building, as a useful tool for

supporting recall and for promoting further discussion. Hence, no attempt was made to implement Burns and Kaufman's (1970, 1972) full interpretation criteria.

### ***3.4.4.2. Process of administering the KFD.***

This adapted KFD activity was administered by the researcher within a suitably private environment as arranged with the carer beforehand. To prepare the children for the drawing exercise they were asked briefly about their experience of the paired reading intervention, including the name of the person they read with/to. The children were then given a plain piece of A4 paper and a pencil, with the instruction "draw yourself reading with (the name of the carer recalled by them)". The KFD activity was administered by the researcher as outlined by the guidelines provided by Burns and Kaufman (1970, 1972) and as a means of facilitating further discussion of their experience of reading together with their carers during the paired reading programme. The semi-structured interview technique was used to guide this discussion with questions based upon the research questions. Examples of questions are: How are you feeling in this picture? What was it like reading with (their carer)?

### ***3.4.4.3. Pilot child interviews.***

A pilot to test out the appropriateness and effectiveness of the child interview questions and drawing technique was conducted with four children (three girls and one boy). As a result, changes were made to some of the interview questions and an additional method of data collection, a simple sorting exercise, was added into the interview schedule, see Appendix F, p.182 and Appendix G, p. 187.



## 3.4.4.4. *Sorting activity.*

A simple sorting activity was created with the aim of providing a scaffold to support the children in expressing their views and as a means of triangulation. The activity was positioned after the KFD activity and main interview questions to in order to provide a further opportunity for children to express their views. This involved showing the child a series of cards each depicting a word that the researcher had chosen to specifically suggest either positive or negative relational qualities, as outlined in Table 7.

Table 7.

*Words Depicting Positive or Negative Relational Qualities*

Happy	Liked	Uncomfortable	Friendly
Good	Sad	Enjoyment	Bad
Cared for	Loved	Safe	Bored
Criticised	Comfortable	Supported	Well

The cards were then presented to the child one by one with the child asked to choose which statement best matched the word in their hand and to place the word on that statement card. The statements presented were:

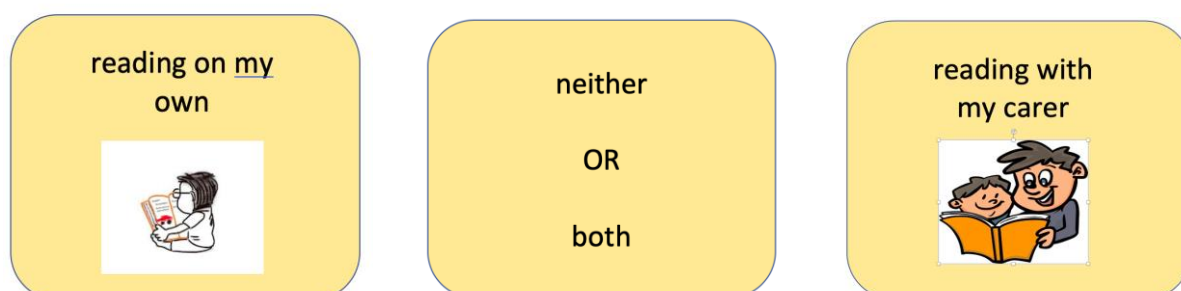


Figure 1. Sorting Activity Statement Cards. This figure illustrates the three statements cards used.

The results of the activity were recorded on a sheet containing the list of the words, with

O = reading on own    T = reading together    B = both/Neither.

See Appendix G, p.187 for child interview schedule.

### **3.5. Procedure and Timing**

The research was conducted in one overall phase with child and carer interviews all taking place within a period of a few weeks. It was originally planned that the timing of the interviews would be within a few weeks following the participants' completion of the paired reading programme and prior to the school summer break, to facilitate recall and to ensure access to the VS team who work term-time only. However, due to a lack of participant response from the first paired reading programme group targeted, it was necessary to widen the search and invite participants from other paired reading programmes that had been completed across the county earlier in the year. Hence, for some of the participants, several months had passed between their completion of the paired reading programme and their interview.

### **3.6. Data Analysis**

Data collected through the semi-structured interviews was analysed using thematic analysis. This technique was chosen as it effectively accommodated important aspects of the research design including: the intended scale and scope of the project, the underlying ontological and epistemological paradigm of the research, the data collection methods used, and the exploratory and inductive approaches taken.

### **3.6.1. Qualitative data-analysis techniques.**

With its attempt “to look beyond how, how often and how many” (Bunn, n.d., p.5) qualitative research has become increasingly established as a legitimate and popular methodology within educational psychology research. Consequently, there are now many options of data analysis for the qualitative researcher to choose from (Given, 2008 cited by Bunn, n.d.). The one most often used to analyse interview data is thematic coding.

Thematic coding is the term used for a group of qualitative analytical methods aimed at identifying patterns or themes within a data set that are interesting and relevant to the research questions and phenomenon being explored. Each have their different aims and follow their own specific processes. Two dominant approaches within this group, compatible with the underlying ontological and epistemological positions of the research, were carefully considered before being discounted. The first of which was grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967 cited in Braun & Clarke, 2013). The primary purpose of grounded theory is to generate and develop theory ‘grounded’ in the data (Robson & McCartan, 2016). This is similar to the current research, in that both seek to apply theoretical understanding after analysis and the identification of themes relevant to the research question or questions. However, research using a grounded theory route is often explanatory in nature and therefore generally focused on gaining an understanding of the processes underlying experience (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Furthermore, grounded theory research commonly adopts a theoretical sampling approach, whereby, participants are selected sequentially depending on how the data analysis and theory development progresses (Braun & Clarke, 2013). This contrasts with the current research which aims to explore rather than explain factors at work during SR activities and is based on convenience sampling due to the specific group of participants being available for this research following the pre-planned paired reading intervention. For these reasons, grounded theory was discounted as a suitable analytical tool. The second

approach considered was Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (Smith, et al., 2009). This aims “to explore in detail how participants are making sense of their personal and social world” (Smith & Osborn, 2007, p.53) with respect to experiences of a phenomena of interest (Smith, et al., 2009). For researchers interested in finding and exploring themes within an individual’s account of reality, IPA is the primary method of choice. However, as this study was concerned with finding themes across a group of participants it was thought IPA may not be as suitable as other methods that are available, such as the thematic analysis technique outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). Furthermore, even advocates of the approach express some concern that the level of technicality involved can be too easily underestimated and lead to “poorly constructed, primarily descriptive projects” in the hands of the novice qualitative researcher (Hefferon & Gil-Rodriguez, 2011, p.757). As a result, it was decided that thematic analysis would be the most suitable technique for this study.

### **3.6.2. The advantages of thematic analysis.**

“Through its theoretical freedom, thematic analysis provides a flexible and useful research tool, which can potentially provide a rich and detailed, yet complex account of data”

(Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.78).

Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) is a widely used technique for qualitative data analysis within psychological and educational research. The advantages of this analytical approach lie mainly in the fact that, unlike grounded theory and IPA, thematic analysis is not tied to a particular theoretical perspective or epistemological framework and so can answer different types of research questions aimed at exploring people’s perceptions and experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The approach to theory taken in this research is inductive and

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therefore data driven rather than driven by the analyst's theoretical interests (Patton, 1990). Thus coding and theme development are directed by the content of the data itself (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and analysis undertaken without needing to fit themes into a pre-determined coding frame, or with the researcher's analytic preconceptions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). While thematic analysis can be used in a deductive, theoretically led manner, it easily and effectively accommodates an inductive approach.

Rather than simply summarising and organising data under the research questions, thematic analysis aims to interpret and make sense of the data. There are two levels at which thematic analysis can be performed, the semantic and the latent (Boyatzis, 1998). With a semantic approach, patterns are first identified within the data by the analyst and then organised into themes. These themes are then subject to a process of summarisation and description. This is done at a purely semantic level, with no attempt made by the analyst to look for deeper meaning behind the participants' words. The process then moves forward from this purely descriptive stage to interpretation, at which point the importance of the patterns is considered in terms of their greater significance for the phenomenon investigated. It is at this point that previous research and theories are referenced. Conversely, a latent approach seeks to move beyond the purely descriptive and instead petitions the researcher's conceptual and theoretical frameworks in order "to identify or examine the underlying ideas, assumptions and conceptualisations – and ideologies - that are theorised as shaping or informing the semantic content of the data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.84). This second approach is particularly suited to a social constructionist epistemology which aims to shine a light on the underlying discourse that informs social behaviour and thinking. As this research was undertaken without pre-determined theoretical or conceptual frameworks, and sought to represent the participants' perceptions as presented, it was decided that analysis would be

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undertaken at the semantic level. This approach to coding was also considered more compatible with the constructivist stance adopted by the researcher.

As one of the more accessible forms of thematic coding, thematic analysis is also particularly suited for a small-scale, time limited study and to one whose outcome is expected to be shared with stakeholders (Robson & McCartan, 2016).

Braun and Clarke's (2006) approach to thematic analysis involves a six-phase process. A description of how these six phases were implemented in the current research is documented in Table 8.

Table 8.

### *Researcher's Implementation of the Braun & Clarke's Phases of Thematic Analysis*

Braun and Clarke's phases of thematic analysis	Description of the researcher's implementation of the thematic analysis phases
Phase 1. Familiarisation with data	To gain an overall impression of the dataset the researcher first listened to the interviews several times and read and re-read the transcripts, noting down things of interest, such as general ideas expressed, specific issues raised and the use of language. These initial 'noticings' (Braun & Clarke, 2013) would later support the process of code generation.
Phase 2. Generation of initial codes	A 'complete coding' approach was taken (Braun & Clarke, 2013) whereby all data relevant to the research questions underwent initial coding. Peer checking was used to offer alternative interpretations and help minimise bias. In this analysis, the codes provided a summary of the explicit (semantic) content of the data and were hence, data-derived, mapping directly onto the participants' words. Work was undertaken to reduce codes to concise phrases or to single words to represent ideas, issues, and/or concepts expressed by the participants. The same system of coding was applied systematically across both adult and child data. See Appendix

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	P, p.2008 for a full list of the codes and example extracts for each.
Phase 3. Searching for themes	After this initial coding stage, the codes were reviewed and grouped into candidate themes and sub-themes with all of the relevant data gathered under each potential theme.
Phase 4. Reviewing themes	Codes and themes were continually reviewed to ensure a fit with both the entire data set and the coded extracts. This process was guided through discussion with peers and supervision.
Phase 5. Defining and naming themes	Work was ongoing at this phase in order to define the specific boundaries and scope of each theme and the overall picture presented by the analysis. Supervision was used to reflect upon the researcher's interpretation of the data and to ensure that the themes chosen adequately described the codes they represented.
Phase 6. Writing up	Vital and vivid extracts were then selected to illustrate the different features of each theme and provide a convincing narrative of the researcher's understanding and interpretation of the data.

The clarity and transparency afforded by Braun and Clarke's (2006) step-by-step model of thematic analysis, has been recognised by previous researchers such as Boyatzis (1998), Braun and Clark (2006) and Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2006) to strengthen claims of validity which influenced the researcher's selection of thematic analysis over other thematic approaches.

To summarise, while other methods of thematic coding are available, thematic analysis was considered the most apposite for this research due to its ability to accommodate all aspects of the current research design including the methods of data collection, the exploratory purpose and inductive approach, and the scale and scope of the project.

### **3.6.3. Descriptive statistics for the sorting activity.**

The responses given by the children as a group for each of the three categories in the sorting activity were added together and entered into a table in order to provide an overall picture of the children's views of SR compared to reading on their own and offer a means of triangulation with the interview data.

### **3.7. Trustworthiness of the Research**

While quantitative research seeks to produce results which are reliable and objective and can be generalised to a given population (Willig, 2008), qualitative research is concerned with describing and understanding a phenomenon, and with meaning and how people make sense of their world (Kornbluh, 2015). This difference in approach has led to the widely held belief that an alternative set of evaluative criteria is needed to assess the quality of qualitative research to those used to assess quantitative research, and that the term 'trustworthiness' rather than validity is more appropriate (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To address the potential threats to trustworthiness inherent in real world research, Maxwell (1996, cited in Robson & McCartan, 2016) proposes three main areas that require the researcher's particular attention in terms of design: description, interpretation and theory. Maxwell warns that deficiencies in these areas might impact trustworthiness by producing inaccurate descriptions of participant contributions or producing misinterpretations of participant views through the imposition of frameworks or meaning, or by failing to consider alternative explanations for the phenomena studied. Steps taken to enhance the trustworthiness in the design are outlined:



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### Description:

- Semi-structured interviews were chosen to enable the researcher to check out interviewee responses.
- To enhance the participants openness the researcher ensured that the child interviews took place at home, in a confidential and relaxed environment where they would feel comfortable.
- To avoid misinterpretations the researcher also carried out member-checks with participants by clarifying statements made and by checking with them details of the drawings they had made.
- Audiotaping was used to accurately capture participants' responses to the researcher's questions.
- The accuracy of transcriptions was checked by replaying these recordings.

### Interpretation:

- The absence of a framework avoided this being imposed upon the data, inadvertently influencing the interpretation.
- The choice of thematic analysis allowed the interpretive steps taken to be clearly demonstrated and made available for scrutiny through the provision of appendices.
- A second coder was used during analysis to highlight, address and minimise bias.
- An audit trail of all activities undertaken throughout the research process was provided in the appendices.

Theory:

- The inductive approach taken allowed themes to be generated from the data rather than from the researcher's pre-existing expectations or assumptions.

“Bias refers to the idea that the researcher might (inadvertently) have influenced the results, so that they cannot be trusted” (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p36). These unintended actions on behalf of the researcher may include their choice of topic, their sampling process or choice of instrument, or their behaviour during data collection and analysis. While avoiding bias is a primary concern within positivist-empiricist models of research, it is understood to be an inevitable part of the process by those adopting a qualitative paradigm and therefore unavoidably implicated in the research. Hence, as well as recognising the potential for bias and taking measures to minimise this through the research design, there is also an emphasis placed within qualitative research on the researcher maintaining a reflexive position to reduce the extent to which they might influence findings due to their own assumptions and expectations.

### **3.8. Reflexivity**

“Reflexivity assumes that the study of human behaviour necessarily includes the behaviour of the psychologist. Any picture of reality must involve knowledge about the subject, about the researcher, and about knowledge itself. No one researcher can concern herself or himself with all aspects, but no claims about data should be made without taking into consideration all facets of the acquisition of knowledge” Ungar (1983, p28).

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Each stage of the research process, from the initial act of choosing the research topic, deciding why and how the research will be conducted, interpreting the results and arriving at conclusions, is influenced by the researcher's values, experiences and beliefs. The researcher must therefore recognise this and do what they can to make their "agenda and value-system explicit from the outset" (Scotland, 2012, p.12). It was necessary, therefore, for the researcher to acknowledge that her views regarding education more widely are influenced by non-mainstream educational philosophies, including the Waldorf pedagogy, founded by Rudolf Steiner, and the humanistic, militant ideas espoused by Paulo Freire (2000). These philosophies have inevitably shaped her ideas about the most effective and desirable way of educating and supporting children and obliged her to reflect on how these personal perspectives might have impinged on the conclusions reached. In addition, as a TEP the researcher was aware of the significant role that relationships and secure attachment can play in healthy child development. It was, therefore, possible that the interest and value that the researcher placed on relational benefits, compared to educational benefits, was greater than those interviewed. To minimise the risk of this influencing the research design or application it was necessary for the researcher to be mindful of her position in this regard. In response, the research questions, interviews and analysis, were designed to elicit participants' own views about the value of SR and several measures were taken throughout the research process to mitigate against potential bias or at least make the risk of bias explicit. These measures included:

- Keeping a research diary as a space to reflect on key decision areas, such as choice of research topic, and to record the researcher's response to the research at different points, see Appendix Q, p.217.

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- Using supervision sessions to consider philosophical positions, their implications for the research and ethical issues raised by the research topic and design.
- Taking steps to minimise the inevitable power relationships between researcher and participants. For example, during home-visits, being aware of the researcher's role, not just as a researcher but as a professional from the LA EP team. Therefore, being sensitive to the fact that foster carers are also employees of the LA whose practice and home-lives are regularly appraised.
- Choosing methods of data collection that increased accessibility and taking steps to minimise researcher power and maximise feelings of security and confidence during data collection.
- Selecting a method of analysis that acknowledges the subjectivity that takes place within analysis. Braun and Clarke (2006) embrace this notion arguing that the 'spirit of engagement' with their method is to be 'knowing and reflexive'.

### 3.9. Ethical Issues and Considerations

Approval for this study was sought and obtained from the appropriate university ethics committee boards and professional codes of conducts were adhered to (British Psychological Society (BPS), 2014), to ensure the interests of participants were safeguarded (Robson & McCartan, 2016), see Appendix R, p.219. Further permission was gained from the LA's Principal Educational Psychologist, the Assistant Head of the VS and the county's Fostering Manager. Consent was also obtained from each child's supervising social worker and from the child themselves prior to data collection. The children were given information regarding the study and its purpose via their social worker prior to meeting the researcher. Consent was also required from the foster carers for their own participation. Informed

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consent was secured through the presentation of a comprehensive and accessible information sheet given to each carer, social worker and child prior to the consent form being completed. This outlined the participant's rights to withdraw from the research, modify their consent or have their data destroyed up to three weeks after data collection. After which period, it would no longer be possible to identify and 'detach' their individual contributions from the data due to the process of data analysis. Participants were also reminded of their rights regarding consent immediately prior to data collection.

The researcher was sensitive to any non-verbal signs of a wish to withdraw from the study and to the ongoing nature of consent (Mukherji & Albon, 2018). Debriefing was provided both verbally and in writing following participation. The researcher also provided their own contact details for participants to use if any individual needs arose following the data collection stage.

Risks to participants and potential power dynamics were minimised through the research design: by having a small number of participants; using low risk data collection methods which promoted participant agency; choosing private, confidential settings for data collection; and through the researcher's skills in interviewing and self-monitoring via a research diary.

To maintain participant anonymity, personal information was treated and kept confidentially in accordance with The Data Protection Act 2018 and a data management plan approved by the university. The transcripts created were anonymised through the use of pseudonyms and the removal of identifiable information to protect the participant's identity. All data and any additional information gathered as part of the research process, including consent forms and drawings are to be destroyed once the research component of the course has been completed successfully.

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Being able to give voice to the children taking part in SR activities was considered central to this research but called for careful consideration of the ethical implications of researching such a vulnerable group of children. The BPS (2014) states that children in care are automatically given vulnerable status in terms of research and that their vulnerability to exploitation is to be safeguarded in part by “Methods that maximise the understanding and ability to consent of such vulnerable person to give informed consent should be used whenever possible” (BPS, 2014, p.31). In accordance with this principle, the children’s legal guardians, their supervising Social Workers, were fully informed about the research that the children were being asked to take part in before giving consent. Care was also taken to ensure that the information provided to the children was written in a form deemed accessible and appropriate for their age. The researcher’s planning and actions were therefore governed by guidance provided by the BPS and the University of East London (BPS: Code of Ethics and Conduct, 2018; BPS: Code of Human Research Ethics, 2018, University of East London: Code of Practice for Research Ethics, 2015)

Narratives around this particular group of children, their age, developmental stage, communication and language needs and the potential emotional impact of being asked about relationships, had all been carefully considered in the planning and delivery stages. It was felt that having the opportunity to explore the potential benefits of SR activities for this group of key stage two children justified what had been assessed to be the minimal risks of negative emotional effects on the children. In addition, home-based interviews were arranged to minimise anxiety and create and maintain a sense of security.

### **3.10. Summary**

To summarise, this research was designed to gain participants' views of their experience of SR with respect to its relational effects and was underpinned by a relativist, constructivist paradigm, emphasising the socially constructed and subjective nature of social phenomenon such as relationships. To answer the research questions, this exploratory study used a flexible, qualitative approach to gain carer's and children's views and examine how they made sense of their experience. An inductive approach was adopted with data analysed using thematic analysis.

## **Chapter 4. Findings**

### **4.1. Introduction**

This chapter presents the themes and subthemes identified through the analysis of the qualitative data collected. The themes and subthemes, which correspond to the views and perspectives of the foster carers and foster children interviewed, are presented in a thematic map, see Figure 2. This is followed by a description and interpretation of each theme, with quotes from the original transcripts providing an illustration of the various points made. Findings from both the carer and child data are organised together under the relevant theme headings. Descriptive data from the sorting activity is provided in Table 10. An excerpt of the transcription of one the of the interviews is provided as an example of content in Appendix S, p.224. An example of the coding process of one of the interviews is also provided in Appendix T, p.225. Appendix P, p.2008 shows a full list of the code labels, an example extract, and the related themes and subthemes identified. To maintain the anonymity of the participants, the names of service providers, the LA and individuals have been replaced with generic terms. The chapter will conclude with a summary of the whole data set.

### **4.2. Qualitative Analysis**

Through the use of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), five themes were identified from the data set. Further analysis also revealed several corresponding subthemes. The themes and subthemes identified are outlined in Table 9.



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Table 9.

*Themes and Subthemes Identified through the Process of Thematic Analysis*

Theme	Subtheme
The Importance of Reading	Reading Together is important
	Reading together is an important academic activity
	Reading together is an important social activity
Important Experiences Intrinsic to Shared Reading	
Shared Reading Creates Opportunities for Relational Development	A lack of interventions supporting relational development
	Verbal communications
	Non-verbal communications
The Impact of Shared Reading	Intrapersonal benefits
	Interpersonal benefits
	Benefits for reading ability, practice and self-efficacy
A critique of Shared Reading	

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A thematic map was produced to illustrate the themes and subthemes identified from the data set and to show how these are linked, see Figure 2.

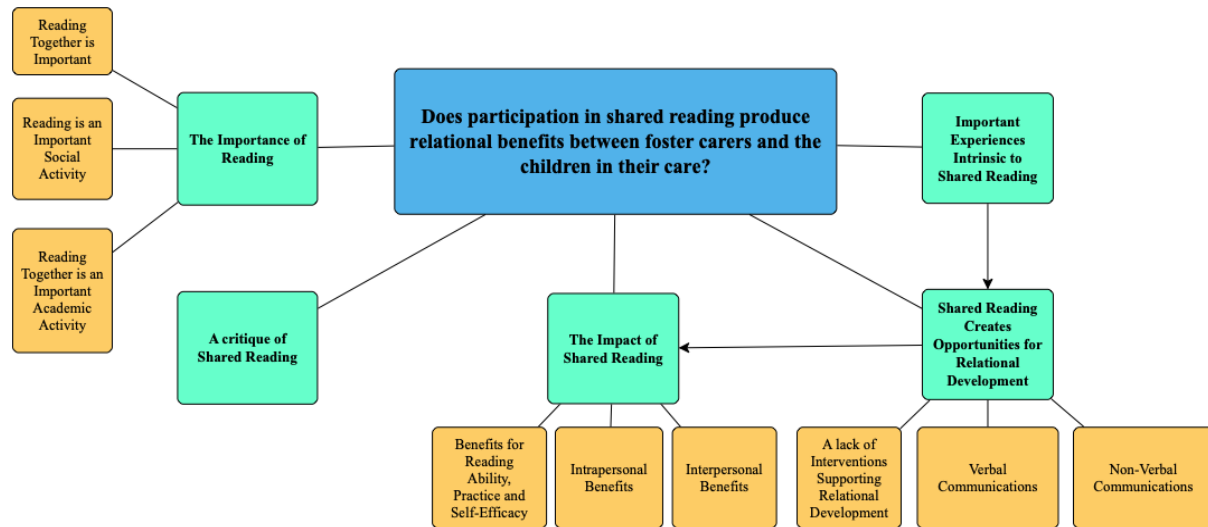


Figure 2. Thematic Map. This map illustrates the themes and subthemes within the dataset.

### 4.2.1. The Importance of Reading.

The importance of reading was a key theme within the data. Within this theme, three subthemes were identified to reflect the different ways that participants spoke about the value of reading: reading together is important, reading together is an important social activity and reading together is an important academic activity, see Figure 3.

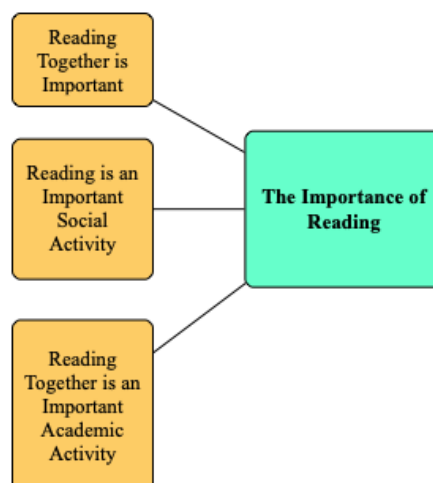


Figure 3. Thematic Map Section 1. This figure illustrates the subthemes related to the importance of reading.

**4.2.1.1. Reading Together is Important.**

All carers viewed reading together as important and had either tried or succeeded in establishing a regular family practice of reading together.

*“We had the routine where she would read her schoolbooks to me and I would read to her”*

*(Carer interview Jean, line 10)*

*“Because we’ve got four boys we have to set some boundaries so one of the boundaries we set was they have to read for 10/15 minutes every night or four pages of a book every night”*

*(Carer interview John, line 15)*

*“It’s something that we have tried in different ways since we’ve had her” (Carer interview*

*Kate, line 61)*

*“I always do try and read for five or ten minutes every day with [CHILD]” (Carer interview*

*Paula, line 45)*

*“At school I read on my own at the end of the day. And then at night-time she reads to me”*

*(Child interview Amy, line 125)*

While all carers saw reading together as an important activity and had tried to incorporate it into family practice, the reasons and motivations they gave for reading together and taking part in the paired reading intervention varied.

**4.2.1.2. Reading is an Important Academic Activity.**

Most carers conceptualised reading as primarily an academic activity and as such were motivated to take part in the paired reading intervention based on its potential for generating academic benefits.

*“I am a bit of a stickler with any children being able to read. Because if they can read they can do lots of other things....” (Carer interview Paula, line 4)*

*“....So for them to sort of hold a course and talk about it and just give you ideas, just appealed to me really” (Carer interview Paula, line 46)*

*INT: “So what made you want to take part in the paired reading scheme?*

*CARER: “Mainly it was the fact that he was really, really struggling with his reading”  
(Carer interview John, line 1)*

*“they had identified [CHILD] as someone who could do this and where [CHILD] is behind in her development we wanted to do anything we could to encourage her to do well at school” (Carer interview Kate, line 5)*

*“I just sort of sell the thing to [CHILD] that if he can read, he can read his games on the PC or on the Play Station and all sorts of things like that, you know. And I just think it’s important. You can’t even do maths really unless you can read, can you” (Carer interview Paula, line 8).*

*INT: “what made you want to take part in the paired reading scheme?”*

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*CARER: “So I think when I was at one of the boys’ reviews it was just suggested by [VS officer] because of the age, the reading age of my eldest was a lot younger than what his actual age is, so it was recommended to us to do it with him” (Carer interview Val, line 1)*

Most of the children also described reading with their carers in terms of academic development.

*INT: “And what do you think’s making [CARER] feel happy?”*

*CHILD: “That she’s helping me”*

*INT: “That she’s helping you. So helping you makes her feel happy. Why do you think that makes her feel happy? Why do you think she feels happy helping you?”*

*CHILD: “Because then it helps me to read” (Child interview Amy, lines 65)*

*INT: “if [paired reading] did work, how would we be able to tell?”*

*CHILD: “Because I’d be reading faster” (Child interview Owen, lines 153)*

*INT: “What do you think might be making [CARER] feel happy?”*

*CHILD: “That I’m reading”*

*INT: “What’s it about you reading that makes her feel happy?”*

*CHILD: “That I’m saying the words correctly” (Child interview Sophia, lines 89)*

*INT: “Why are you feeling happy?”*

*CHILD: “Because learning to read helps with your education”*

*INT: “And what about your mum? Why is your mum feeling happy?”*

*CHILD: “Because I’m reading and she knows I’m going to get a good education”.*

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*INT: Which do you like best? Reading on your own or reading with your mum?*

*CHILD: Reading with my mum.*

*INT: OK. And what is it about reading with your mum that you like?*

*CHILD: So she can correct me.*

*INT: OK, so she's there to correct you.*

*CHILD: Yes (Child interview Toby, line 124)*

*INT: "If a friend asked you whether they should do paired reading, what would you tell them?"*

*CHILD: "It would help with your education" (Child interview Toby, line 148)*

### **4.2.1.3. Reading is an important social activity.**

Two carers, however, described their motivation for reading together and participating in the paired reading intervention in terms that extended beyond the territory of academic learning, to include caring and relational dimensions.

*"We had the routine where she would read her schoolbooks to me and I would read to her. We set that quite early for her bedtime routine because she really struggled on going to sleep. So that was part of our whole evening routine. I would read to her before she actually went to sleep" (Carer interview Jean, line 12)*

*"another issue with [CHILD] is, she's very hard to bond with. She has got attached to us and she is settled and there's definitely the bond there but it's very challenging".....(Carer interview Kate, line 47)*

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..... *“So I was hoping that anything like this that meant that we were actually doing something together would help with the bond” (Carer interview Kate, line 54)*

Only one child described paired reading in terms other than academic:

*INT: “If a friend asked you whether they should do the paired reading, what would you tell them?”*

*CHILD: “You could if you wanted to because it’s fun and you can tons of stuff and that. And there’s tons of things that you can, there are tons of books that they can see” (Child interview Sophia, line 170)*

### **4.2.2. Important experiences intrinsic to shared reading.**

Through the process of analysis, several key experiences of SR were identified within the data that were considered relevant to relational development. These concerned the role of the carer in the reading activity and qualities such as predictability, closeness, choice, collaboration and enjoyment. Carers described how different their role in the paired reading process felt to the role they normally experienced when supporting their child with reading or homework:

*“You know, if she got words wrong it didn’t matter because it wasn’t corrected in the same way as obviously her schoolwork. It’s just such a lovely time of evening for her, for both of us if I’m honest” (Carer interview Jean, line 26)*

*CARER: “when you were trying to get him to do homework or something, obviously it’s a bit of a battle. But with that there was never any problems”*

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*INT: “OK, so he seemed keener. There was something about it that meant he was keener to do it”*

*CARER: “Yes, well different to just doing work. I think, yes, it felt very different to doing homework” (Carer interview Val, line 58)*

This was not the experience, however for all of the reading pairs:

*“it’s just, she sees it as, no she does work at school, she doesn’t do that at home” (Carer interview Kate, line 38)*

Children described the carers role both in terms of a traditional tutoring role, for example, to help the child with “tricky words” (Child interview Amy, line 112) or to help by “correcting” the child’s reading errors (Child interview Toby, line 24) and a “caring” role (Child interview Sophia, line 283). In one case, the regularity and routine of the activity was also considered helpful in creating a positive interaction and communicating a shared commitment:

*“It’s just such a lovely time of evening for her, for both of us if I’m honest” (Carer interview Jean, line 27)*

*“I think because the consistency of it and the fact that you know, I think she appreciated that you took, that somebody has taken time to actually sit there with her and do that” (Carer interview Jean, line 46)*

The element of choice was also highlighted as a significant factor in their experience of paired reading.



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*“It was the fact that it was a choice to do this. It wasn’t that she had to read for ten minutes every night as part of her schoolwork. It was, you know, we chose to do this” (Carer interview Jean, line 22)*

Physical and emotional closeness was a valued feature of the SR experience and was directly associated with improvements in the carer-child relationship.

*“She’d see it and we’d sit together. And it’s that closeness. It’s just really enhanced everything that we’d started to put in place” (Carer interview Jean, line 14 )*

*“I think it has helped our relationship inasmuch as it was something that she chose to do every night because she enjoyed that one to one closeness” (Carer interview Jean, line 37)*

*“we have become a lot closer with him reading to me a lot” (Carer interview John, line 54)*

One of the children also seemed to value the closeness they had experienced during the paired reading sessions.

*INT: “What’s making you feel happy?”*

*CHILD: “The thing that we’re both reading together and we’re in the same room and we’re talking about horses”.*

*INT: “What is it about being in the same room and talking that you liked?”*

*CHILD: “That I like someone being there with me” (Child interview Sophia, line 51)*

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Elements of the paired reading process which emphasised the shared nature of the activity appeared to be valued by both the carers and the children.

*INT: “Who chose the books when you were reading together?”*

*CHILD: “We both did” (Child interview Sophia, line 115)*

Enjoyment was a major theme identified in the data and was experienced by both parties.

*“I think she must have enjoyed it because she still wants to do it” (Carer interview Jean, line 191)*

*“It worked out good for him and it made reading a lot more enjoyable” (Carer interview John, line 25)*

*“He was always happy to do it” (Carer interview Val, line 52)*

*“It was fun and joyful and I liked the book” (Child interview Sophia, line 99)*

Several carers reflected on how SR was different in comparison to similar carer-child activities, especially in terms of the levels of stress they experienced.

*“It is a one-to-one but it’s a one-to-one that there isn’t a huge amount of pressure” (Carer interview Jean, line 209)*

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One carer in particular described how paired reading had reduced the stress around reading, but also in the home more generally, which had led to improved relations between him and his foster child.

*“[VS officer] put us forward for the paired reading and I’m glad he did because it took a lot of stress off [CHILD] and it took a lot of stress off of us mainly because there’s nothing worse than trying to see someone do phonics that doesn’t want to do it and finds it really difficult” (Carer interview John, line 7)*

*“because he knew he didn’t have to get it right there was less stress for him and he managed to do it and he wants to do it every night now and he knows he hasn’t got to worry about it”  
(Carer interview John, line 67)*

*INT: “Do you think paired reading has any particular strengths as an intervention in terms of developing the relationship between carers and children?”*

*Carer: “Yes I do because I think it takes a lot of stress off both people because they’re not having to sound words out and they’re not being forced that you have to get that word right. I think it takes a lot of stress off them and it definitely takes a lot less stress off the parents”  
(Carer interview John, line 82)*

*“the paired reading has helped a lot because it’s made it less stressful and he’s much happier now when he comes home after lunch and he knows he’s got to do the reading, he’s much happier to just do it. He’s not stressed out, he’s not worried about it. It has brought us closer together in that respect” (Carer interview John, line 106)*

*INT: “He’s been more affectionate?”*

*Carer: “More affectionate with me over the last few months. He’s been a lot calmer but he still has his moments”*

*INT: “And do you think that’s something to do with the paired reading and the time together?”*

*Carer: “It could be part of it yes. It’s not one hundred percent of it, as I say there’s other things in it as well, but it’s definitely taken a lot of pressure off” (Carer interview John, line 197)*

### 4.2.3. Shared reading creates opportunities for relational development.

These experiences of SR created opportunities for enhancing the relationship between the carers and the children in their care, see Figure 4.

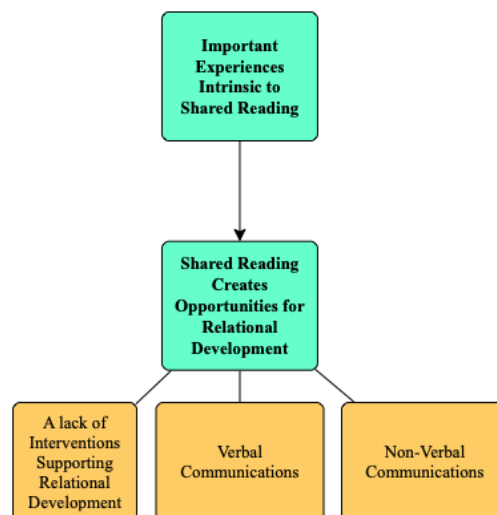


Figure 4. Thematic Map Section 2. This figure illustrates the link between themes and subthemes.

Three aspects of the data were identified as relevant to this central theme.

### ***4.2.3.1. A lack of interventions supporting relational development.***

All of the carers struggled to identify other interventions or training that they had undertaken or been offered which had been helpful in supporting the development of the relationship between themselves and the children in their care.

*“I think on our fostering skills things when we very, very first started, they talked about relationships to an extent and building relationships. But no, I don’t think we’ve done any other courses where it’s worked on relationships” (Carer interview Paula, line 137)*

### ***4.2.3.2. Verbal communications.***

Some of the carers described how taking part in the paired reading had created opportunities for greater communication between themselves and their children.

*“With me and [CHILD] it’s actually led to conversations. One of the books we read was Jacqueline Wilson, The Suitcase Kid, and it’s about a family that’s split up and the child’s spending time with mum and dad and afterwards she’d lay in bed and she’d start talking. It’s little things like that where sometimes these books can trigger something and start that conversation” (Carer interview Jean, line 210)*

*“Yes, you feel closer because you can actually enjoy telling him something rather than knowing that you’ve got to try and get him to read a book. It’s ‘How are we doing?’, ‘What are we doing this week?’” (Carer interview John, line 144)*

*Carer: “whilst he might not necessarily be reading he’s certainly talking about what’s in the pictures and what have you and that all helps your relationship doesn’t it?”*

*INT: “In what way do you think it helps?”*

*Carer: “Well just from the fact that you’re talking because I think so many children these days want to sit on their Play Station or their laptop or their tablet and they might be talking to other children on their gaming but it’s not quite the same as having a social conversation is it?” (Carer interview Paula, line 62)*

#### **4.2.3.3. Non-verbal communications.**

According to the experiences of the participants, SR provided conditions and opportunities highly conducive to positive interaction and relational development through a range of non-verbal communication. The commitment required by the carer to complete the intervention provided an opportunity to communicate to the child their importance and the willingness of the carer to invest time in their welfare. This was perhaps most clearly represented in Jean’s account:

*“it made her, I think she realised, I think it helped her to realise that I wasn’t going to give up on her. I was invested in her as much as she was starting to be invested in me. And so I think it did help” (Carer interview Jean, line 57)*

*“It was the going to the shop, it was the looking for books with her. Because it wasn’t just you know, we grabbed a book off the side, we’ve sort of bought a lot of books that we can read together” (Carer interview Jean, line 74)*

## RELATIONAL BENEFITS OF SHARED READING

*“to take 15 to 20 minutes out of your day to sit quietly to read together, even if you have to start with one sitting one side of the room and the other the other side, it’s the point that you’ve taken that time out of the day” (Carer interview Jean, line 206)*

Both carers and children valued the experience of togetherness:

*“the fact that she had someone who was listening to her and taking part with her rather than laying in bed and reading a book on her own” (Carer interview Eve, line 48)*

*“we sat there together, we did this together” (Carer interview Jean, line 62)*

One of the carers noted how the SR had revolutionised the time they spent reading together:

*“It was a chore, it wasn’t a joy it was a chore before. Now it’s quite a joy to hear him actually read even though he gets some words wrong still and you have to say ‘Well hang on, go with that one again’ and stuff like that. He doesn’t just throw the book up in the air and go ‘I’m not doing it then’ and storm off” (Carer interview John, line 96)*

One of the carers spoke about how the paired reading had become one of the ways that her and her child spent quality time together:

*INT: “So it’s something about just the, it’s like an opportunity to actually be together?”*

*CARER: “Yes. I mean we live by the sea so we quite often go for a walk and we cycle to school as well and I think they’re quite good opportunities to have a chat” (Carer interview*

*Paula, line 69)*

## RELATIONAL BENEFITS OF SHARED READING

Carers accounts suggest that the children in particular valued the protected one-to-one time essential for paired reading.

*“we’ve always encouraged all of our girls, because they have a bedtime story anyway and they always have that one to one. But I think because we were doing it a bit more in depth and for a bit longer than a normal bedtime story she, she liked that. She was excited. She was waiting for me. She was waiting for her turn, you know” (Carer interview Eve, line 70)*

*“for her, it’s probably like “Ooh look, this is me, it’s something just we’re doing”. It’s just me doing the paired reading. [B] is not doing it and so and so’s not doing it. Do you know what I mean? It’s something special for her, and me” (Carer interview Eve, line 102)*

*“A lot of foster children in particular come into care through neglect so to an extent I think most of them are attention seeking. So if you’re giving them attention through the paired reading then they love it don’t they” (Carer interview Paula, line 89)*

*“I think it has helped our relationship inasmuch as it was something that she chose to do every night .....She would rather do that than watch The Voice or Britain’s Got Talent or something like that which for a child her age is quite a massive thing” (Carer interview Jean, line 34)*

*“obviously it’s that one to one time and it is something, although it’s them doing work it’s something special that they get to do with you on their own. So you know, with that in mind it is really good and it is really positive” (Carer interview Val, line 36)*



## RELATIONAL BENEFITS OF SHARED READING

Several participants also highlighted the mutual enjoyment experienced during the SR sessions.

*“I think it is a really positive experience. Not just for the child but you know for me as well. It was, yes, we’ve really enjoyed it” (Carer interview, Jean, line 5)*

*INT: “Do you prefer reading on your own or do you prefer reading with [CARER] or someone else?”*

*CHILD: “I prefer reading with [CARER]”*

*INT: “And what is it about reading with [CARER] that you particularly like?”*

*CHILD: “She likes reading” (Child interview Sophia, line 127)*

### **4.2.4. The impact of shared reading.**

Participants described the impact of SR for them and their children. In all but one case, carers felt that the paired reading had been positive in terms of their relationship. These descriptions have been classified into three separate subthemes which represent: interpersonal benefits for child and carer; intrapersonal benefits for the child; improvements in reading, changes to reading practice and increases in child motivation and interest towards reading, see Figure 5.

## RELATIONAL BENEFITS OF SHARED READING

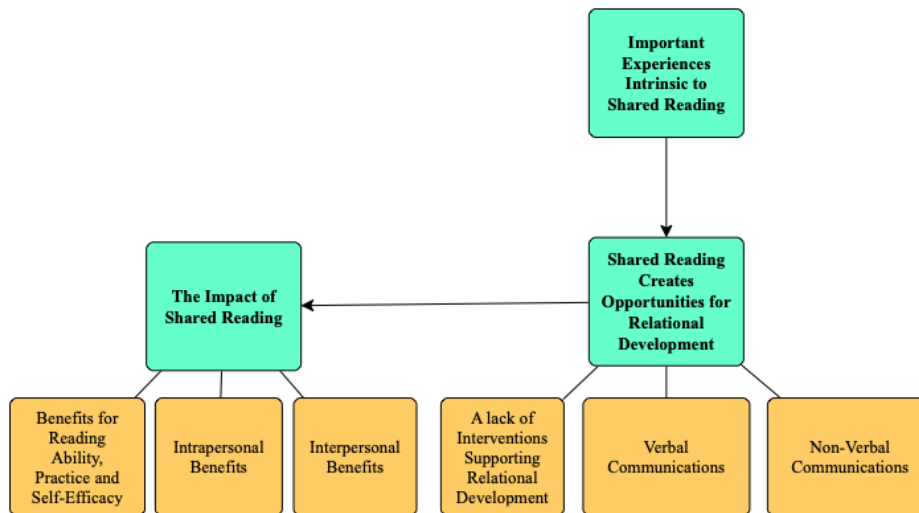


Figure 5. Thematic Map Section 3. This figure illustrates the link between themes and subthemes.

### 4.2.4.1. Interpersonal benefits.

According to the American Psychological Association (APA) Dictionary of Psychology, interpersonal relations are:

1. The connections and interactions, especially ones that are socially and emotionally significant, between two or more people.
2. The pattern or patterns observable in an individual's dealings with other people.

Most carers reported that the paired reading intervention had benefitted the relationship they had with their child.

*“She enjoys some one-to-one time but I think because [CHILD], although she’s been with us for years, in terms of, for a child, that’s not long. So she’s still working through a lot of things. But she enjoyed the interaction and the one to one. I think that done us good” (Carer interview Eve, line 54)*

## RELATIONAL BENEFITS OF SHARED READING

*“I think it definitely helped our relationship” (Carer interview Jean, line 34)*

*“I’d like to think that she thinks that it made our relationship better and that it has brought us closer” (Carer interview Jean, line 181)*

*“It’s important it’s arrived in his life and, yes, it’s a good thing and we’re really happy with it and it has brought us closer together” (Carer interview John, line 120)*

*“It has reduced the stress in the caring for him” (Carer interview John, line 117)*

*“He’s been a little bit more affectionate” (Carer interview John, line 194)*

*“I mean we already had a good relationship but it helped with the relationship with that child” (Carer interview Val, line 34)*

When talking about the benefits of the paired reading intervention, carers spoke of a range of outcomes that related to the relationship between themselves and their child or between the child and family unit more widely. One of these was an increased awareness of the other’s needs or feelings:

*“at one point it was [CHILD] actually said to me “Would you really like to read this as well?” So she was obviously getting enjoyment out of it but she wanted to make sure I was as well” (Carer interview Jean, line 77)*

*“it’s made me realise, well sort of reaffirmed how difficult she finds doing these sorts of things, the focussing and the thinking. It sort of reaffirmed that but I was aware of that before that” (Carer interview Kate, line 110)*

## RELATIONAL BENEFITS OF SHARED READING

*“I’ve always thought that she’s been very vulnerable and this is just a front but doing this together has actually sort of made me realise that “Yes, you know what? She is a very vulnerable little girl” (Carer interview Jean, line 125)*

*“He used to object to me reading with him because I was, I couldn’t understand how it was a problem for him” (Carer interview John, lines 55)*

*“some nights you don’t want to sit there, and you don’t want to read and all the rest of it. You’d like to put your children to bed, kiss goodnight and get on with whatever you’ve got to do. But it’s made me realise that time, how important that time is to her” (Carer interview Jean, line 129)*

Some of the participants’ comments suggested that taking part in the paired reading scheme had helped to imbue the carer’s beliefs and values about reading onto the child.

*‘we’ve always tried to encourage them to have books. But now she’s got her own books...  
...She’s now getting her own little collection which she loves” (Carer interview Eve, line 78)*

*I think because we now both really enjoy books so it was the whole process” (Carer interview Jean, line 73)*

*INT: “what is it about reading with [CARER] that you particularly like?”*

*CHILD: “She likes reading” (Child interview Sophia, line 132)*

## RELATIONAL BENEFITS OF SHARED READING

For one carer-child pair, the positive interactions they had experienced during paired reading had generalised to their other situations and joint activities.

*“It helped with a lot of other things, a lot of other issues that she was going through. I think because of that she had a huge amount of trust in me that helped that as well” (Carer interview Jean, line 60)*

*“It’s also you know, she thinks that, she likes to do, more things together. She likes to cook together. And she’s very much um, whereas before we made cakes ..... she’d have her own agenda ..... we’d have our own agenda about how this should be made. So there was slight conflict as much as “No, we do have to put the water in there because otherwise it won’t bake” It was more of a joint experience and we would follow the instructions and now the thing is if I’m in the kitchen she’ll say to me “Are we cooking? What are we cooking?” A lot of it’s done together rather than [CHILD] go off on her own sort of agenda and you try and pull her back and get it right. There’s that sort of joint for doing this together and this is what we have to do” (Carer interview Jean, line 87)*

All carers reported that they had a good relationship with their foster child prior to the intervention. For some, this explained why they had not noticed any changes in the relationship.

*INT: “Has taking part in the paired reading scheme affected how you view him at all?”*

*Carer: “Probably not because he’d already lived with us for probably four or five years”.*

*But again, it certainly didn’t hinder. I’m sure it helped in a small way” (Carer interview*

*Paula, line 81)*

## RELATIONAL BENEFITS OF SHARED READING

*“As I say, we already had quite a good relationship so I didn’t notice any changes with us, no” (Carer interview Val, line 42)*

Most of the participants had, to varying degrees, integrated SR into family life:

*“I just carried on with mine everyday sort of ten minutes” (Carer interview Paula, line 126)*

*INT: “Do you still read with your mum?”*

*CHILD: “Yes”*

*INT: “Do you do it every day or once a week or just sometimes?”*

*CHILD: “Sometimes” (Child interview Toby, line 166)*

### **4.2.4.2. Intrapersonal benefits.**

The APA Psychology Dictionary defines intrapersonal as, “describing factors operating, or constructs occurring, within the person, such as attitudes, decisions, self-concept, self-esteem, or self-regulation”. In the interviews, several participants reported benefits for self-concept self-esteem and self-regulation.

*“She has grown in confidence” (Carer interview Eve, line 142)*

*“It’s amazing to see how she’s blossomed just by something so tiny and how much that means to her” (Carer interview Jean, line 127)*

## RELATIONAL BENEFITS OF SHARED READING

*“you know what, it doesn’t matter if it’s changed [CHILD]’s reading age, it doesn’t matter if it’s brought her on in her reading, just doing it and still doing it has made such a difference to her as a person” (Carer interview Jean, line 168)*

*“On the whole he’s been a lot calmer” (Carer interview John, line 192)*

*“if you have got some good books with some good pictures then that’s enhancing their life’s experiences as well isn’t it. Because they’re going to come across words that they don’t know that you can talk about. And also the books might be talking about things that they have never done or know or experienced. So it’s widening their life spectrum isn’t it really I suppose” (Carer interview Paula, line 75)*

*“I’ve got calm reading” (Child interview Amy, line 51)*

One carer in particular felt that taking part in the paired reading intervention had resulted in fundamental changes for their child in terms of their sense of belonging and in feeling comfortable with dependence.

*“she always has been very, very independent in any case. And I think she was more of a care giver, especially at home and felt a lot of responsibility for looking after mum, checking that mum was OK. I think she lived on a lot of toast because she could actually do that herself. But now I think she realises that it’s just brought her into, you know what, it is OK, someone is going to look after me. Someone is always going to be there. It’s just given her that sense and sense that yes, she is a massive part of our family, a massive part of my life” (Carer interview, Jean, lines 109)*

*“We’re her fourth placement so she was really, really up in the air and didn’t know when she was going to next move. Everybody else had sort of given notice on her. And I think it just enhanced that sense of belonging” (Carer interview, Jean, line 54)*

#### **4.2.4.3. Benefits for reading ability, reading practice and self-efficacy.**

One of the carers reported that taking part in the paired reading scheme had enhanced their reading practice:

*“it was something that we did in any case so it just enhanced what we were actually doing and put a sort of purpose to it as well” (Carer interview Jean, line 144)*

Although the focus of the interview was on how paired reading might have affected the relationship between foster carer and foster child, a number of the carers attributed improvements in their child’s reading to the paired reading intervention.

*“He does read a lot more words now than what he did before, if that makes any sense”  
(Carer Interview John, line 59)*

*“..it definitely was positive, you know the actual reading like the speed of reading definitely increased and the knowing of words, especially when words were repeated more than once in a page, he was definitely learning more words. So in that sense there was definite improvements with the reading. From start to finish I could see, definitely I could see improvements” (Carer interview Val, line 65)*



In addition, participants spoke about how paired reading had increased their child's self-efficacy. According to Bandura (1977, 1982, 1986) self-efficacy is a term that refers to person's belief in their ability to complete a task or activity competently or not and is affected by factors including sense of mastery, vicarious modelling and social persuasion.

*"I think the way I see her grow in confidence. I mean, I thought she was a good reader anyway. But watching her do this, she has gained confidence through it and talks about it, and picks out pictures, and quite excited by it" (Carer interview Eve, line 42)*

*"It's opened her eyes to what she can do and what there is to read. It's not just got to be a book. She can pick things out on the telly. She can have the subtitles on her film and read, do you know what I mean?" (Carer interview Eve, line 86)*

*"he will actually bring a book up to me and say, "Can I read a book now?" I think it's because he knows that he has less trouble with words and I'll help him out and then he can read more pages quite quickly. And yes, he seems a lot happier reading" (Carer interview John, line 51)*

#### **4.2.4.4. Link between values and reported impact.**

During the process of identifying and organising themes a link was made between the carers' perceptions regarding the value of reading and their feedback regarding the impact of the SR intervention. This is represented on the thematic map see Figure 6.

## RELATIONAL BENEFITS OF SHARED READING

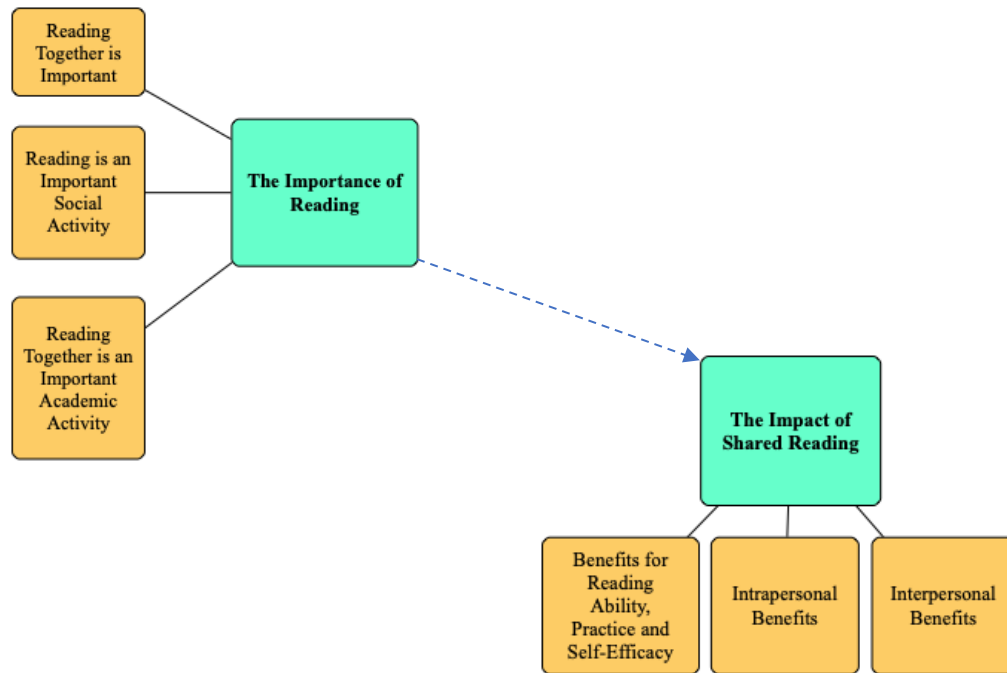


Figure 6. Thematic Map Section 4. This figure illustrates the link between values and reported impact.

One carer, Eve, specifically stated that improving the relationship she had with her foster child had not been the reason she had chosen to take part in the scheme and, despite recognising some social and emotional benefits for her child and suggesting that SR could benefit the relationship of other reading pairs, reported less of an impact on the relationship than others.

*INT: “Were you hoping that it would do more in terms of your relationship?”*

*CARER: “No, I wasn’t. No, No, I didn’t set myself any bars or any standards because I think you could be bitterly disappointed and maybe consider either one of you a failure. So I didn’t do that. So what I’ve achieved from it is seeing her growing in confidence, see her reading go right up. You know, I’m more than happy with that” (Carer interview Eve, line 61)*

## RELATIONAL BENEFITS OF SHARED READING

*“although she’s been with us for years, in terms of, for a child, that’s not long. So she’s still working through a lot of things. But she enjoyed the interaction and the one to one. I think that done us good” (Carer interview Eve, line 55)*

In contrast, Jean who was already using reading as a social activity with her child reported a greater shift in the relationship:

*“I mean even if [CHILD]’s reading age has not changed I think it’s given her more confidence and I think it’s given her that special time which I think is really important”*  
*(Carer interview Jean, line 230)*

*“It has helped our relationship to become close” (Carer interview Jean, line 62)*

### **4.2.4.4. A critique of shared reading.**

Irrespective of whether the intervention had been considered useful or successful for their own relationship, all of the carers interviewed saw paired reading as a valuable intervention and referred to the potential that paired reading has for producing relational benefits for those in foster care.

*“I think it’s just made us, I think it made her feel more special to me, because we were having that one to one time in her eyes” (Carer interview Eve, line 100)*

## RELATIONAL BENEFITS OF SHARED READING

*“I think it should be rolled out across the board. Everyone should do it” (Carer interview Jean, line 1)*

*“I think it would help a lot of children to build a better relationship with their foster carers”  
(Carer interview Jean, line 150)*

*“I’m just thinking about other children I’ve had placed here in previous years and down to sort of my own adopted children, I can imagine that because it is such an alien concept that it would be something that you would have to work on and just keep plugging away at it. Because I think the benefits of getting there would be amazing” (Carer interview Jean, line 158)*

*“I mean I’ve looked after children and the majority of them do get a lot of interventions and to see this as another academic intervention is slightly missing the point. To me it’s slightly missing the point because it is so much more than that” (Carer interview Jean, line 270)*

*“I can see how it would bring like the two people who are doing it, closer. That being focussed on the same thing together and being in that window together. I could see how it would work” (Carer interview Kate, line 169)*

*“Now that I know how to do it I would use it for other children and even though [CHILD] might not have liked it, other children it work for other children” (Carer interview Kate, line 134)*

Some of the carers, however, reflected on the fact that SR might not work for every child.

*“I know some children will take to it and others won’t and it depend on the child. But I do, you know, I think I’d recommend it to anyone” (Carer interview Val, line 90)*

For one of the carers, the intervention had not been a success due to the child’s reluctance to engage.

*“It was a shame because I think with some children I reckon that they would probably love doing it and it would work out really well but with [CHILD] being what she’s like, it was so challenging. She just didn’t want to do it..” (Carer interview Kate, line 25)*

This reluctance was attributed to the child’s individual interests and needs; in particular the child’s need to interact with her carer through less intensive and more play-like activities.

*“she hates doing anything that involves reading, writing, sitting still, focussing on something. All those kinds of things she just says that they’re boring and that she doesn’t want to do them. She can be very difficult about it” (Carer interview Kate, line 11)*

*“she’s in this sort of, she just wants to be in this state of having fun all the time so she just wants to play and be silly and run around and play like physical games” (Carer interview Kate, line 78)*

*“if we’re doing something physical that is in a rhythm with each other, that seems to work and there’s a connection. And I can tell that there’s a connection there and I don’t know how to explain but we are kind of locked in on each other doing the same thing. And I was hoping that that would carry on with the reading, that we would get into a rhythm with each*

## RELATIONAL BENEFITS OF SHARED READING

*other..... But it just never worked out. She was just so resistant to reading” (Carer interview Kate, line 97)*

It was common for the carers to compare the paired reading favourably to the phonics teaching method which currently dominates the teaching of reading.

*“I would certainly do it again. I liked the paired reading. I like it. I like it better than the phonics. I think it makes the story flow. It keeps their attention rather than having to stop and keep building up words. By the time you’ve built up a word they’ve lost the momentum as a story, I just think it’s good (Carer interview Eve, line 187)*

For one particular reading pair, switching from the phonics teaching method to paired reading transformed their experience of reading together:

*“He was trying to do phonics and it was a real chore for him to do the phonics, every word, literally every word was sounded out. Even the smallest words sounded out. He had no interest in it. It was very frustrating for us and for him” (Carer interview John, line 3)*  
*It’s important it’s arrived in his life and, yes, it’s a good thing and we’re really happy with it and it has brought us closer together in the fact that we can sit down and talk rather than tell him and get angry with each other (Carer interview John, line 120)*

It proved harder to get an appraisal of the intervention from the children based on their interview responses alone. However, all of the children spoke favourably of the paired reading intervention, describing it in a variety of positive ways such as “fun” (Child interview Sophia, line 99), “nice” (Child interview Toby, line 70) with one exception:

*INT: “So there’s nothing that you enjoy reading about”*

*CHILD: “I don’t like reading, it’s boring if it’s in a book”*

*INT: “Is there anything that you would like to say about the paired reading or about reading generally....?”*

*CHILD: ‘Yes don’t do paired reading because it doesn’t do anything’*

*(Child interview, Owen, line 225)*

An additional activity was designed as a scaffold to help the children express their views about SR.

#### **4.3. Results from the Sorting Activity**

Three of the four children completed the sorting activity. The fourth child (Owen) was not invited to take part in this activity. In line with ethical considerations, the researcher strove to attune and respond to indications that the participants felt either unable or unwilling to continue with the interview at any point. Subsequently, one child (Owen) did not complete the sorting activity as, although he had given consent to the interview, his overall engagement and presentation suggested he did not want to continue. The results presented in Table 10. therefore, provide an overall picture of three of the children’s views of SR compared to reading on their own.

## RELATIONAL BENEFITS OF SHARED READING

Table 10.

### *Descriptive Results from the Sorting Activity*

Card	Reading Together	Neither or Both	Reading on Own
Happy	1	2	
Good	2		1
Cared for	2	1	
Liked	2		1
Loved	2		1
Comfortable	2	1	
Enjoyment	2	1	
Safe	2	1	
Supported	2	1	
Friendly	3		
Well	2		1
Criticised	2		1
Sad	2		1
Uncomfortable	2		1
Bad	2		1
Bored	2		1

Results from the sorting activity indicate that the children preferred reading with their carer than reading on their own.



### 4.4. Summary

Thematic analysis performed on the qualitative data from both foster carers and key stage two foster children identified five themes and several corresponding subthemes relevant to the research question. All carers saw reading together as an important family activity. However, while some perceived the paired reading intervention as an opportunity to develop their relationship with the child in their care, most approached the intervention with the primary aim of improving their child's reading. Child participants also viewed paired reading essentially as an academic pursuit. A number of key participant experiences conducive to positive interaction and relational development were identified within the data. Analysis suggested that the intervention had created opportunities to enhance the relationship between the foster carers and children through a range of verbal and non-verbal communications and had resulted in interpersonal and intrapersonal benefits and positive outcomes in terms of reading ability, self-efficacy and future reading-together practice. All carers felt positive about the intervention itself. In all but one case, carers felt that the paired reading had been a positive experience in terms of their relationship with their child. Three of the four children expressed positive feelings about the paired reading activity. Results of a sorting activity conducted with three of the four foster children interviewed supported the qualitative data in suggesting that the children felt more positively about SR than they did about reading on their own.

In the following chapter, these findings will be discussed with direct reference to the research questions underpinning the work. Consideration will be given to the relevance and contribution of the findings to theory and professional practice and a review of the methodology will be undertaken, with the aim of guiding the direction of future research.

## **Chapter 5. Discussion**

### **5.1. Introduction**

Chapter four outlined the findings from a thematic analysis of the qualitative data collected and presented descriptive results used as a means of triangulation. In this chapter the results will be explored in more detail in relation to the initial research questions and then in reference to existing literature. How the results relate to relevant psychological theory and to the lives of CiC will also be considered. This will be followed by a detailed review and critique of the methodology used in the current research and subsequent limitations of the findings with consideration given to the implications for future research. The discussion will then expand to include plans for the dissemination of the results to stakeholders and the implication of the findings for EPs and others that work to support looked after children and their carers. The chapter will conclude with a summary of the findings from the current research and their implications for future practice.

### **5.2. The Research Questions Revisited**

The research sought to address the main question ‘Can participation in shared reading produce relational benefits between foster carers and the children in their care?’ To help answer this question, two subsidiary questions were posed:

- What aspects of participating in SR do foster carers and foster children particularly value?
- What relational benefits do foster carers and foster children experience through participation in a SR intervention?

Through analysis of the data it was possible to identify themes relating to and answering these questions.

### **5.2.1. What aspects of shared reading are particularly valued?**

All of the carers and three of the four children interviewed referred to aspects of SR that they valued. What they valued about SR appeared to have been shaped by their underlying thoughts and beliefs about the value and purpose of reading itself. The fourth child expressed a dislike for reading whether on his own or with his carer. The shared aspect of the reading appeared to be irrelevant to his experience of the intervention.

#### ***5.2.1.1. The importance and value of reading.***

All of the carers saw reading as important and had tried or managed to instil reading together as a regular activity at home. The reasons they gave for reading together implied that they predominantly held one of two beliefs about the primary value and purpose of reading, that reading is an important academic activity or that reading is an important social activity. Interpretation suggests that the predominance of one or the other of these beliefs may have subsequently shaped the participants' motivation for agreeing to take part in the intervention and influenced their expectations with regards to what SR could achieve. Most of the participants' descriptions of their reading practice at home indicated that they valued reading primarily as an academic activity and that their interest in taking part in the SR intervention was solely to improve their child's reading ability. Conversely, despite highlighting a range of socio-emotional benefits in their accounts of SR, most of these carers continued to focus on academic benefits when evaluating the intervention.

### ***5.2.1.2. Important experiences.***

The participants described a range of positive experiences of SR which are intrinsic to the dynamics of the SR process. Carers described how their role felt more collaborative and supportive in comparison to similar activities, such as homework support, and was more gratifying than supporting their child with other literacy methods such as phonics. Children also appeared to appreciate the difference in role. Enjoyment was a dominant feature of the SR experience and one that both carers and children seemed to value. For one carer in particular [John], this was in stark contrast to the usual experience of reading with his child with the difference attributed to the shared nature of the activity. This emphasis on collaboration and partnership rather than instruction was also credited with creating a more natural, relaxed and equitable experience which the participants appreciated.

Carers and children associated SR with both physical and emotional closeness. They recognised that SR led to positive social interactions and transactions and produced social and emotional benefits for the child. Paired reading is prescriptive in terms of when and for how long the SR sessions should take place. For some of the participants this predictability and regularity increased anticipation and a sense of togetherness and security.

### ***5.2.1.3. A critique of shared reading.***

All of the carers described SR in positive terms, irrespective of whether the intervention had proved easy or successful in their instance and they considered SR to be a useful vehicle for developing closer relationships between foster carers and foster children. Some reflected on the fact that the approach may not work for all children, depending on the child's personality or stage of social development. Three of the four children interviewed described the intervention positively and associated the experience with a range of positive feelings and words. It was common for carers to compare SR favourably to phonics

approaches and to value the opportunities for success and collaboration that SR allowed in comparison.

### ***5.2.1.4. Summary.***

Most participants valued reading together for its potential to improve reading ability more than the possibility it might have for improving the relationship they had with the child in their care. Several experiences intrinsic to the SR process were valued by participants and were identified as creating an environment in which relationships could thrive. Most of the carers and children evaluated their SR experience positively and all carers perceived SR as valuable in its potential to improve relationships between foster carers and foster children.

### **5.2.2. The relational benefits experienced through shared reading.**

Most of the information relating to this question came from the carers' interviews, either as descriptions of their own experience or interpretations of their child's behaviour. Several of the carers believed that the SR created opportunities conducive to relational development as well as beneficial for the emotional development and the child's academic progress.

#### ***5.2.2.1. Shared reading creates opportunities for relational development.***

Participant descriptions of SR suggested that the intervention created a range of conditions and opportunities conducive to positive social interaction and the development of relationships and that these were generated through a mixture of verbal and non-verbal communications. This included opportunities to:

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- prioritise and invest in the child
- be involved in the child's life
- help the child
- interact and talk together
- show pride and/or pleasure in the child's progress
- cooperate in a shared activity
- spend quality time together
- experience shared enjoyment

The carers valued SR for providing these opportunities, noting that while they might be possible within normal informal family interactions, having time set aside regularly throughout the week secured and ensured these opportunities. Carers struggled to identify other support, such as interventions or training, which had impacted their relationship.

### ***5.2.2.2. The impact of shared reading.***

How carers spoke about the impact of the SR intervention appeared to depend on whether they felt there was room for development in the relationship that they had with their child prior to participation and how they viewed the value of reading together more generally. Some of the carers reported no difference or only small changes in the relationship but remarked on a range of interpersonal and intrapersonal benefits they had observed. This suggests that SR can help to create experiences which support the emotional development of children and enhance the social skills that they can use to make and maintain positive relationships with others in the future. The following intrapersonal changes were highlighted:

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- An increased sense of belonging and comfort with feelings of dependency and interdependency, and an increased sense of security.
- Exposure to social and emotional learning through vicarious experiences and a way of talking about and exploring difficult experiences that the child may have had or be concerned about or may be about to encounter.
- An increase in self-confidence, greater self-regulation and a change in attitude towards reading more specifically.

Benefits for the relationship between carer and child included:

- An increased awareness of others needs and feelings. In some accounts, this appeared to be reciprocal, with both carer and child gaining a better understanding of one another.
- A greater sense of closeness.
- The development of trust towards carer.
- A reduction in stress experienced by the adult in caring for the child more generally.
- The transference of family values from foster carer to child.

Conversely, when considering the impact of SR, however, most of the carers focused on the impact it had made on their child's reading ability and self-efficacy, with overall feedback indicating that the intervention had led to an improvement in the children's motivation and interest in reading and to a greater confidence in their reading ability. This focus on academic outcomes, however, is perhaps unsurprising considering the carers' motivations for taking part in the intervention and their positioning of reading as primarily an academic activity.

### **5.2.3. Summary.**

In conclusion, participant accounts suggest that SR practice can facilitate relational development between foster carers and the children in their care by creating opportunities for positive social interactions through a range of verbal and non-verbal communications. Furthermore, these interactions can support the development of emotional and social skills relevant to the maintaining of current relationships and the building of new relationships, as well as improving reading ability. While participants described both social and emotional benefits, most focused on the potential benefits of SR on outcomes related to academic progress.

### **5.3. Links to Existing Research**

Chapter two presented a review of the existing literature in order to examine what was already known about SR in terms of its value in enhancing the readers' relationship, with a particular interest in its effects on the relationship between foster carers and foster children. This information was derived from studies adopting very different methodologies and involving participants with a diverse range of cultural, familial, situational and educational experiences. It is important to compare this body of results with the findings from the current research in order to consider how the new data reflects, contradicts or shapes current understanding, especially with regards to the potential of SR for those in care.

#### **5.3.1. Important experiences intrinsic to shared reading.**

From the systematic literature review it emerged that the practice of reading together was associated with a range of positive experiences and qualities that promote positive



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attachments and the development of healthy, secure relationships. These were also seen within the results of the current study.

The parents in Seden's (2008, 2009) studies described how reading together had brought a sense of both physical and emotional closeness, warmth, fun and relaxation to often mundane everyday interactions. Participants in Hall et al.'s, (2018) study made similar reports, associating reading with their children with enjoyment, cuddles and greater communication. In the current research, participants used similar terminology and drew on similar concepts to describe their own experience such as 'one to one closeness', 'caring', 'joyful' and 'less stressful'. While Seden (2008, 2009) concluded that the process of reading together was especially important for building relationships, she also hypothesised that such interventions could be useful for repairing or re-establishing relationships. This hypothesis informed the research by Brown et al. (2019) in which they explored whether SR could help the relationship between mothers and children separated by the mother's incarceration. The results from this study implied that the SR had indeed strengthened the mother-child relationship in several ways: that hearing the mother's voice had triggered a sense of closeness, that shared investment in a book had served to enhance the bond between mother and child, and that the book symbolised the mother's care and love for her child. Despite the obvious and vast difference in circumstance, feedback from participants in the current research suggested similar experiences: even reluctant readers were happy to take part in the SR sessions; the activity invoked feelings of closeness between carer and child, and collaboration that for some extended beyond the SR sessions; and created a different role for carers that emphasised their nurturing and caring role. A few carers commented on how less stressful SR felt in comparison to other helping roles. Lam et al (2013) point out that parent-child tutoring is more often associated with tension and conflict (Levin et al., cited in Lam et

al., 2013), claiming that it is the quality of the interaction involved in the SR intervention and element of enjoyment experienced that attributes to the relational improvements observed.

### **5.3.2. Shared reading creates opportunities for relational development.**

Participants' experiences in the current study also resembled those reported in the previous literature in terms of the opportunities that SR created for enhancing carer/child relationships, with a strong correspondence in verbal and non-verbal communications reported. Ganotice et al.'s (2017) conclusion that opportunities for quality time, generated through the SR, was a key facilitating factor in establishing better communication between the pair is supported by the current findings. Several carers described how the intervention provided a positive structure for spending time together and a regular, uninterrupted and valuable space in which they could talk with their children. Time they otherwise would not have had, due to the child choosing instead to engage in other interests such as gaming or watching television or simply the interruptions that come with a busy household. The importance of this one-to-one time also links with the results reported by Seden (2008), Osborne et al. (2010), Hall et al. (2018) and Brown et al. (2019) who describe improved communication due to SR practices. Participants in many of the studies appeared to particularly value enjoyment that both they and their children shared during the activity (Brown et al., 2019; Osborne et al., 2010; Seden, 2008) with Seden summing up the participants' experience of SR activities as "a good way to be together" (Seden, 2008, p.137).

### **5.3.3. The impact of shared reading.**

Participants in the current study also described similar outcomes for SR to those reported in previous studies. The data here indicates that SR has a positive impact on parent/carer-child relationships and results in various but similar intra and interpersonal benefits associated with SR practice such as a greater sense of belonging and stability for the child and a general feeling of togetherness. Taking a sociological standpoint, Hall et al.'s, (2018) study indicated that reading together played a vital role in family life and that enjoying a book together was both a vehicle for creating family bonds and confirmation that these family bonds existed. Seden's (2008) and Hall et al.'s, (2018) findings also suggested that parent-child reading increased parental empathy and receptivity to their children. This corresponds with a number of cases in the current study in which interviewees described having gained greater insight into their child's needs or having had their thoughts confirmed. SR is also seen to be associated with a number of socio-emotional benefits. One carer described how she believed books gave her child the opportunity to explore ideas and worlds outside of his own experience. This resonates with Seden's (2008) finding, that reading together offered the participants the chance for informal teaching and learning with the content of books sometimes provoking questions and discussions about other topics or aspects of life.

Xie et al. (2018) concluded that the PCBR interventions had significantly impacted the psychosocial functioning of both parents and children. In the current study, one of the carers in particular described how taking part in the SR had reduced the amount of stress he felt as a carer and had led to more demonstrative affection from his foster son.

Most of the participants in the current research valued in particular the impact SR had on their child's reading ability, their practice of reading together at home and on the child's

self-efficacy in terms of reading, including increased interest and confidence in reading.

Again, these findings resonate with many of the studies reviewed.

One interesting and potential by-product which was not explored in the current research is the impact that SR might have on the self-efficacy of the adult readers. This was referred to in the study by Lam et al (2013) who claimed that the parent coaching they had undergone, and experience of SR had helped the adults acquire skills and strategies, such as effective praise, that could be generalized to other situations in which they tutored their child. This could be an interesting topic for future investigation and is especially relevant to this population and other children for whom educational achievement is an area of priority. In line with all of the reviewed studies, the intrapersonal and interpersonal benefits reported in the current findings are seen as key outcomes of SR rather than just a valuable by-product.

### **5.3.4. The importance of reading.**

One of the key themes in the current research was the attitude that carers had towards the SR intervention itself. While all of the carers saw reading at home with their child as important, there were some differences within the participant group as to why they chose to take part in SR, what they hoped to gain from their participation and what aspects they focused on when evaluating its impact. However, for all but one participant, the principal focus was educational. In contrast, more of the carers in Forsman (2017) study were specifically motivated by what they saw as an opportunity to get closer to their child and improve their understanding of the his or her needs.

Forsman (2017) also found that the carer's attitude prior to the paired reading had an impact on the outcome of the intervention. It was found that carers who saw reading and education as important generally, and as especially important for children in care, and believed the intervention could yield relational benefits also, showed greater commitment and

compliance to the programme. This was also true for those who were only interested in the intervention as a tool for improving their relationship. This suggests that emphasising the relational benefits from SR might increase recruitment by attracting those with a particular interest in relational development and as a result might increase programme fidelity even more.

### **5.3.5. Summary.**

A systematic literature review conducted at the beginning of this research process highlighted how little investigation had been carried out into the value SR had for developing the relationships of readers, and much less into its effect for those in foster families. By taking a qualitative approach, the current study has aimed to contribute to the literature by offering an in-depth subjective account of participants' experiences. Having compared themes reported in the previous research, with the themes identified in the current research, it can be seen that they are largely consistent. The main areas of correspondence are shown to be within the range of positive experiences supposedly intrinsic to the dynamics and process of SR, which are seen to facilitate opportunities for relational development and have a positive impact on the carer and child and their relationship. In view of the diversity of the participants across the studies, in terms of culture, language, family situation and needs for parenting support, this correspondence adds credence to the idea that SR could be of benefit for adults and children when relationships are key. The current research, therefore, appears to add empirical weight to the growing body of evidence which suggests SR can deliver considerable relational, social and emotional benefits for its users and is relevant to the needs of foster children and their carers.

### **5.4. Links to Existing Context and Theory**

To consider in more depth the meaning and value of these findings, it is necessary to position them within the context of the lives of foster children and their carers and what is already understood about relationships through psychological theory. The introduction to this research outlined the importance for CiC of being able to develop strong, positive and stable relationships with key adults and how critical these relationships are for protecting the child from many of the negative outcomes associated with being in care. It was also noted that due to the highly negative and traumatic experiences many of these children have experienced that the behaviour of foster children can often make this task more difficult. Hence, interventions that can promote and enhance this process by providing fertile conditions and opportunities for relational development are of interest to those in education, social care and to EPs. It is argued, that the findings from this research demonstrate that SR has this potential for this particular group of children.

#### **5.4.1. Close encounters: Interpersonal relationships and Attachment Theory.**

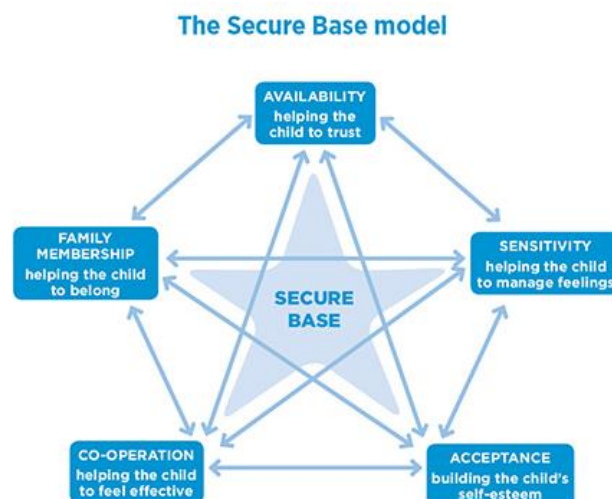
As suggested in the introduction to this thesis the developmental theory of attachment is a central concept in the orientation of this research. By revisiting this theory in light of the results it is possible to claim that SR involves many behaviours and experiences associated with secure attachment. When considering the main functions of attachment: providing a sense of security (Gerhardt, 2004), regulating affect and arousal (Bretherton, 1985, 1990; Crittenden, 1990; Main et al., 1985), developing expression of feeling and communication, and providing a base for exploration (Ainsworth 1979, Bowlby, 1988), feedback from participants suggest that many experienced most, if not all of these.

However, while all of the carers reported having a positive relationship with their children prior to the intervention, as previously stated, forming positive bonds with foster

children is often not an easy task. The current research suggests that interventions such as SR may be one tool for supporting the sort of interactions which are conducive to the development of trust and attachment in a simple and relatively non-threatening way.

### ***5.4.1.1. Building a secure base.***

According to accounts given by participants in the current research, the experience of SR included many of the elements found to be present in interventions specially designed to support the development of substitute caregiver attachments. An example is Schofield and Beek's (2014) Secure Base Model. Based on earlier research by the authors, (Beek & Schofield, 2004) the model concentrates on five dimensions of caregiving considered important for developing attachment between children and their foster or adoptive parents. Schofield and Beek's (2014) claim that over time, positive caregiving across these five dimensions, will help to provide a substitute secure base comparable to that achieved by most children through their interaction with their initial caregiver (Lou, Taylor & Di Folco, 2018)



*Figure 7.* The Secure Base Model. Illustrating Schofield and Beek's (2014) five dimensions of caregiving.

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It is argued that components of these five dimensions are seen reflected in the feedback from the participants in the current research:

- **availability:** predictability, special one to one time, prioritising/investing in child, opportunities for one to one time, helping
- **sensitivity:** increased understanding and empathy for the child's needs
- **acceptance:** collaboration and opportunities to show pride in the child's increased abilities and confidence
- **co-operation:** helping the child to receive results
- **family membership:** family values and a sense of belonging

This finding appears meaningful for a SR intervention (paired reading) that is seen predominantly as a literacy intervention.

### *5.4.1.2. The attunement principles.*

The APA dictionary of psychology defines attunement as: the matching of affect between infant and parent or caregiver to create emotional synchrony. Attunement principles, (Kennedy, Lander, and Todd, 2011), which have their origins in attachment theory, may indicate why SR is described by the participants in research as useful for enhancing relational development. Developed alongside The Video Interactive Guidance Programme (Kennedy, Lander & Todd, 2011), a programme aimed at supporting attunement, the 'principles for attuned interactions and guidance' were originally formulated by Trevarthen (1998) and are defined as "a framework for developing and enhancing attachment and communication in relationships by demonstrating the key behaviours which facilitate successful reciprocal



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interactions between caregiver and child” (Cubeddu & MacKay, 2017, p.264). An outline of these principles is shown with each of the principles illustrated by examples of typical behaviours which compare with the experiences, opportunities and outcomes described by the participants in the current study.

- ***being attentive:*** giving time, having fun, showing interest and sharing enjoyment in the interaction
- ***encouraging and receiving initiatives:*** active listening, showing emotional warmth, being friendly/playful, smiling
- ***developing attuned interactions:*** receiving and then responding, waiting attentively for your turn, having fun, cooperating and helping each other
- ***guiding including scaffolding:*** scaffolding - judging the amount of support required and adjusting accordingly, giving information when needed, providing help when needed
- ***deepening discussion:*** supporting goal-setting and collaborative discussion, reaching new shared understanding

It is through these behaviours and interactions that new internal working models can be made.

### **5.4.2. Maslow’s hierarchy of needs.**

Maslow’s hierarchy of needs (1943) provides another simple but useful way of demonstrating how SR can support foster children to develop socially and emotionally as well as educationally. Developments that help the child fulfil their potential, and in doing so, guard against some of the negative outcomes associated with being in care.

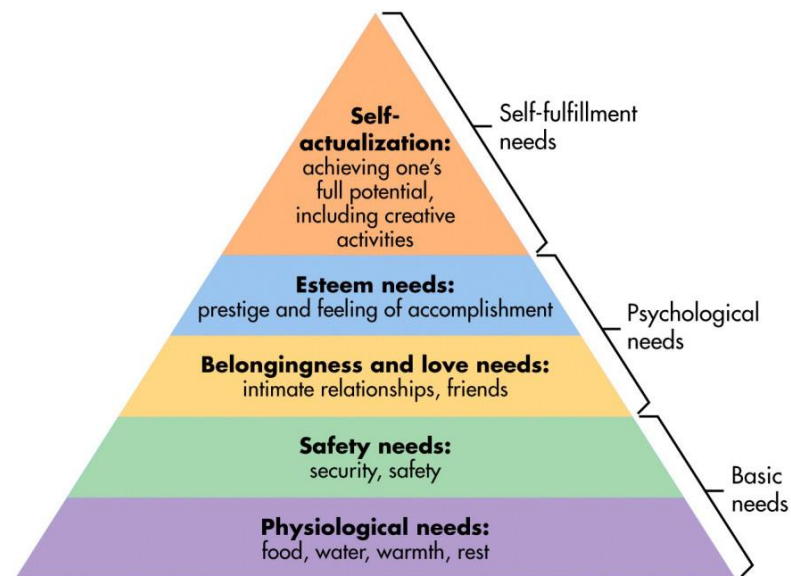


Figure 8. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. This figure illustrates Maslow's theory of human need.

Basic needs are met through the sense of security and safety obtained through aspects of SR such as predictability and the experience of 'cosiness' often associated with reading together. A sense of belonging and of being loved and cared for is invoked by the level of investment needed to complete the intervention. While esteem needs are met through carer feedback and the child's increased sense of competence in reading.

### 5.4.3. Why other people matter.

The relationships that children in care develop can prove vital to their future well-being. Just one positive relationship with a caring adult can provide compensatory and protective effects for children at risk of negative outcomes (Zimmerman et al., 2013; Lou, et al., 2018) and in consequence significantly contribute to their resilience.

There are many different definitions of resilience (Southwick, Bonanno, Masten, Panter-Brick & Yehuda, 2014) but also a broad consensus that an individual's resilience is

generally determined by a combination of internal and external factors including biological, psychological, social and cultural influences (Brown & Rhodes, 1991; Compas, 1987; Garmezy, 1994; Grotberg, 2003; Matsen, 2001; Ungar, 2003; Werner & Smith, 2001). "In the context of exposure to significant adversity, resilience is both the capacity of individuals to navigate their way to the psychological, social, cultural, and physical resources that sustain their well-being, and their capacity individually and collectively to negotiate for these resources to be provided in culturally meaningful ways." (Ungar, 2008, p.8). Importantly for CiC and those that support them, however, an individual's capacity for resilience is not fixed but believed to be dynamic, ongoing and active (Tugade and Fredrickson, 2004).

Close relationships have long been identified as crucial for resilience (Zimmerman, et al., 2013), providing a secure base and a sense of belonging and support. "Those relationships give you a profound sense of emotional security and the feeling that someone has your back, because they do" (Southwick et al., 2014, p.5). Foster families are a key potential domain for providing these experiences and building these important resources (Gilligan, 1997).

Interventions, therefore, such as SR, support foster carer and child relationships by enhancing a sense of closeness, trust and collaboration, emphasising the adult's helping and supportive function, and in doing so accentuate their capacity as a reliable resource in future times of need. This could be viewed as especially valuable for this population of children.

Furthermore, by supporting the development of social competency, SR increases a child's ability to build more effective relationships with others throughout their life span.

#### **5.4.4. The value of reading.**

One of the key themes identified in the current research was concerned with how participants perceived and valued reading, as primarily an academic activity or as a valuable social activity, and how this might have influenced their decision to take part in the

intervention and how they reflected on its impact afterwards. Interestingly, while all of the carers and most of the children reported having observed significant socio-emotional experiences and outcomes from SR and saw these as useful for enhancing the relationships in other foster families, all but one of the carers and most of the children evaluated their own experience principally in academic terms. This discrepancy is striking considering the importance of relationships for this particular group of vulnerable children and the fact that relational benefits had featured in the paired reading presentation and training day in the form of feedback from previous adult and child participants. Social Constructionist Theory may help to explain this apparent paradox.

### ***5.4.4.1. Social Constructionist Theory.***

Social constructionist theory is a broad and complex theoretical perspective that emerged in the 1960's and dominates current thinking within contemporary EP practice (Fransella, Bell & Bannister 2004). A main tenet of social constructionism is that knowledge of the world is not derived from its 'objective' nature, rather we construct our knowledge of it through our daily interactions (Burr, 2015). Kelly (1955) proposes that we all have constructs that define our identity which can change over time. We use these constructs in an attempt to perceive, understand, predict and control the world. They are our own individual way of making sense of our experiences. Sitting within and informing social constructionist theory is the idea of 'discourse' defined as "any practice (found in a wide range of forms) by which individuals imbue reality with meaning" (Ruiz Ruiz, 2009, p.2).

Discourse Theory which originated in the ideas of philosopher Michael Foucault (1972) asserts that there are a set of ideas held by the power holders and decision makers within a society about various aspects of social and/or political life. Dominant discourses within a society at any given time provide an often tacit frame of reference within which ideas and

phenomena are understood and perceived by the majority. As such, these discourses can and do influence an individual's understanding and view of phenomena such as reading together. With respect to the current research, it could be hypothesised that the participant's expectations and experience of SR were shaped and constructed in part by the current political and social ideas regarding the purpose of home-based reading practice.

### *5.4.4.2. Current discourse around reading.*

Some argue that for the last two decades, starting with the Labour Government's National Literacy Strategy (Department of Education and Employment, 1998) to today's education policy the discourse relating to reading has been dominated by an overly academic agenda. An agenda which emphasises the academic worth of reading as a vital gateway to future academic achievement, which of course it is, but is so fervent and absolute in nature that it is to the detriment of many of the other vital benefits that reading, and especially parent-child reading, can have. The teaching of reading for many has become too mechanistic, in part due to the exclusive use of phonic methods within schools. This unease is evident in the frequently passionate rhetoric of those who advocate for an alternative approach to be taken in the teaching of reading and of literacy in general. One which emphasises reading as a social interaction and focuses on enjoyment and the fostering of a life-long enthusiasm for reading.

In a three-part statement representing the views of the National Association of Advisers in English, the National Association for the Teaching of English and the United Kingdom Literacy Association (Richmond et al., 2016) the authors set out a passionate argument for a rethink on how literacy is taught and assessed in UK schools, arguing that the current system, dictated by the statutory requirements, is not fit for purpose according to the

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basic seven principles of literacy teaching that they put forward in the document. “The achievement of competence in any aspect of language is principally owed to the enjoyable experience of that aspect of language. Instruction in an aspect of language has a secondary but nonetheless very significant role to play in this achievement” (Richmond et al., 2016, p.2).

This bears a similarity with points expressed by Hall et al., (2018). Citing Levy (2008), they describe how home-based parent-child reading practices are dominated by school-based constructions of literacy. As a result, they argue, interventions designed to encourage parent-child reading are “grounded in the assumption that the main purpose of shared reading activity in the home is to support children’s “schooled” reading” (Hall et al., 2018, p.364), a fact that underplays and undermines the strengths inherent in parent-child reading. This message is further strengthened and powered by the notion that reading with your child is synonymous with ‘good parenting’. Finch’s (2007) concept of ‘family display’ suggests, it is not just what is practiced that is important but also what is seen to be practiced. Hence family behaviour is often dictated by social norms.

While findings from this and the previous research suggest that parent-child reading has so much to offer foster children and their families in terms of developing or cementing family cohesion and a sense of belonging, it might be argued that there needs to be a more balanced representation of the benefits of SR. Hall et al., (2018) make the point that while interventions aimed at increasing parent-child reading are situated within a highly educational discourse rather than building on what families already do, they are likely to be less effective in the long term than they might otherwise be.

### 5.4.4.3. *'It's not phonics'.*

Another of the themes that came through strongly for some of the carers was that SR was valued simply for not being phonics. This may reflect an underlying desire of both carers and children to experience time together, and time together that embodies and accentuates those characteristics intrinsic to positive, intimate human adult-child relationships. This, it could be suggested, is missing in the home-reading practice that is typically encouraged by school's which is led by a phonics teaching approach. It is possible then that the wider discourse within which reading is being taught in schools is having an impact on the practices of reading together at home. As social constructionist theory and Foucault's (1972) concepts of discourse would suggest, parents and carers are likely to be influenced by contemporary, prevailing messages regarding the purpose and value of reading and the most effective methods for helping children to develop their reading skills. From this perspective, it is perhaps not surprising that carers, supportive of their child's academic development, would focus predominantly on what it can deliver in terms of reading progress and less on reading for pleasure and the social and emotional benefits that can arise from this.

Social constructionist theory offers us a reminder that individuals come with their own values, beliefs and ideas to interventions that can impact their engagement and evaluation. Despite the persuasive findings from this and previous studies about the potential benefits of SR interventions for social and emotional development as well as educational progress, it is argued that these could be easily missed by potential participants. EPs and other stakeholders may want to consider, therefore, how the potential, substantive benefits of SR may be best communicated.

### **5.4.5. Summary.**

The aim of this section has been to contextualise the findings in relation to what is already known about the lives of CiC and about the development of relationships in psychological theory. Through this process, it has been possible to demonstrate the potential that SR has for both fosters carers and foster children. First, by outlining the role that SR could play in forming compensatory attachments and outlining a number of attachment behaviours apparently intrinsic to the dynamics and process of SR; and second, by considering the potential that SR may have for increasing the longer-term resilience of CiC through these attachment experiences and a range of social and emotional benefits available through SR. Finally, it has also been possible to reflect on why SR may have been experienced and described by the participants interviewed in the way that it was and the implications this might have for those recommending and promoting SR interventions.

## **5.5. A Review of the Current Research**

The research has a number of methodological strengths and limitations specifically relating to the recruitment of participants, data collection methods, data analysis and the researcher's own position within the research, with several measures taken to minimise the risks of bias and increase the trustworthiness of the findings.

### **5.5.1. Recruitment.**

An important aim of this research was to include the views of the children involved in the LA's paired reading scheme. As previously stated, this was deemed important as children are not only the main benefactors of interventions of this kind, and therefore in a prime position to report on its effects, but because amplifying the voice of children and especially



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CiC in matters that concern them is an issue of moral and professional integrity. This goal was achieved, despite the obstacles often associated with researching vulnerable groups including children and those in care (BPS, 2014). However, while there were a potential 22 child participants within the LA who had completed the programme between 2018 and 2019, and all were invited to take part in the research via their social worker, only a small fraction of the social workers responded to the invite and, therefore, only a small fraction of voices heard. Whether this was due to busy workloads or to the research being assessed as unsuitable for the individual children is unknown. It is important, however, that this issue of access is considered in the planning of similar, future research and steps taken to overcome this potential barrier.

Despite the high level of consistency between the results from this and previous research, care should be taken when attempting to generalise findings from this research due to the small sample size of both carers and children. While there was no deliberate selection bias on behalf of the researcher in terms of which views were heard, as all members of the paired reading cohort were invited to take part, and all who responded were included, it is possible that those that had particular opinions or experiences were more motivated than others to accept the invite. As we know nothing of the experiences and views of those that did not choose to take part, this creates the possibility that the views expressed represent only a small number of the participants of the paired reading programme and that other, perhaps even majority views, are missing from the data. Furthermore, the participants had taken part in only one particular example of SR, paired reading, and so it is possible that other SR practices may have been experienced differently. In addition, the carers were recruited via a shared initiative between the EPS and the VS team, rather than, for example, a family support service, which may have influenced the carers' understanding of the aims of SR.

Being absent from the promotion, training and administration of the paired reading intervention itself allowed the researcher limited direct contact with the participants prior to the data collection stage, thus minimising the potential for response bias. To minimise researcher bias and provide further transparency, thought processes and reactions were also recorded in a research diary and discussed within formal academic supervision.

### **5.5.2. Data collection methods.**

A number of setbacks and logistical issues meant that it was not possible to use a focus group approach to collect the carer data as intended and it became necessary to adopt a different strategy for collecting the data using telephone interviews. In view of the geographical spread of the foster carers within the LA and the timescale of the research project, it was decided that telephone interviews would be the most feasible and effective way to proceed. This approach proved successful, perhaps largely due to the convenience and greater sense of anonymity that it afforded carers. However, while focus groups are prone to group-think (Janis, 1972), can be dominated by certain views over others, and take considerable skill on the part of the researcher, it is possible that this strategy could have resulted in more data being made available for analysis, and perhaps a broader range of views being represented in the findings.

The sorting activity administered as part of the child data collection process helped to strengthen the voice of the foster children in this research by offering a further opportunity for the children to express their views. While this offered some degree of triangulation in terms of the child data (Denzin, 1970, cited in Braun & Clarke, 2013) in retrospect, the researcher believes that the mosaic approach outlined by Clark and Moss (2001) incorporating methods such as collaging, could have provided a richer and fuller representation of their views. The collage method in particular would have offered children the opportunity to select

images to represent their memories and feelings about the SR intervention and provided a more accessible and visual means of collecting and representing the views of the children.

### **5.5.3. Data analysis.**

The data was analysed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) following an orthographic (verbatim) transcription of the audio-data, meaning that only what was said was analysed. While a more in-depth account of participant experience may have been possible with the inclusion of information such as the participant's body-language, the approach taken was considered appropriate for gaining an overview of participants' experiences of SR and chosen in light of the limited amount of qualitative research in this area and the scope of the current research project. Future researchers may wish to adopt different techniques in data collection and analysis in order to provide deeper and more contextual understanding of the participants' experiences.

Using Braun and Clarke's (2006) criteria for assessing the quality of thematic analysis it is possible to recognise a number of strengths within the process of data analysis undertaken in this research. For example, the time taken by the researcher to familiarise themselves with the content of the dataset helped the researcher to develop the "analytic sensibility" needed to move beyond simply taking the data at face value. In addition, the choice to conduct complete coding allowed for a "thorough, inclusive and comprehensive" coding of the data available, with each data item given "equal attention" in the coding process (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.96). This is important in order to minimise selectivity and bias at this early stage of the coding. Peer checking of the initial coding process was also undertaken to increase the credibility of the subsequent findings. Relevant extracts were collated under each theme and care was taken to ensure themes were relevant to the original data and that they were "coherent, consistent and distinctive" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.96).

Member checking (Seale, 1999, cited in Braun & Clarke, 2013), which is the practice of checking the analysis of the data with the participants in order to check the authenticity of the researcher's process of analysis, would have further increased the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings. This practice, however, was not undertaken in this research, primarily due to the difficulty the researcher had in accessing the participants.

### **5.5.4. Ethical issues.**

While it is expected that all participants' rights will be protected during research, it is rightly recognised that when vulnerable individuals are involved extra steps must be taken to ensure their well-being and safety (BPS, 2014). In response, a number of measures were taken in line with relevant guidance to safeguard the vulnerable participants in the current research. One example was concerned with the issue of consent. The BPS guidelines state that researchers must ensure "that participants... are given ample opportunity to understand the nature, purpose and anticipated outcomes of any research participation, so that they may give consent to the extent that their capabilities allow" (BPS, 2014, p.31). It is, however, also necessary to monitor this and view assent as an ongoing, rather than one-off event. A commitment to these specific aspects of ethical practice were demonstrated in the researcher's actions, firstly in the design of child friendly information, consent and debrief forms and secondly in the sensitive monitoring of affect and behaviour that resulted in one of the children not completing the sorting activity. Based on the researcher's experience, reflections and adherence to the guidelines it is felt that the measures taken sufficiently protected the participants throughout the research process.

Unlike other caregivers such as biological and adoptive parents, foster carers are all employees of the LA. The researcher was aware that she was interviewing the participants

not only as a research student but also as a TEP, and therefore a LA professional. The effect of which could have led participants to feel potentially more vulnerable in terms of being seen as a ‘good parents’, as the area of scrutiny was both professional and personal in nature. By contacting the carers via the VS team and conducting the interviews by telephone, the researcher hoped to reduce any power dynamics the situation might induce and put the participants at greater ease.

### **5.5.5. Reflexivity.**

Consistent with the researcher’s epistemological stance, the researcher’s position is acknowledged to be an active one within the process of analysis. Throughout the research, the researcher kept a reflective diary to record her thoughts and feelings in reaction to the research process and to highlight and guard against potential biases. Within this diary it was acknowledged, for example, how the decision-making process regarding the choice of topic will have been influenced by the researcher’s personal experience as a parent, her thoughts about the importance of reading together and its effectiveness in terms of educating children.

All qualitative analysis involves some level of researcher interpretation. Hence, “our personal experiences shape how we read data” (Braun and Clarke, 2013, p.205). Supervision sessions were used to reflect on how the researcher’s interests might have influenced decisions taken during this research and to minimise the risk of bias during the process of identifying themes.

*I get so immersed and worry about the validity of any findings. Am I simply imposing my own interpretation on the data and that someone else would come up with something completely different? Would I, if I was looking at it another time? I am wary about*

*amplifying certain voices over others, not deliberately, but because they fit more with what I was expecting to find. Am I seeing participant comments as irrelevant, if they don't fit with my expectations?*

Reflective diary entry, 25<sup>th</sup> January 2020

Peer checking during the coding process was also used to help reduce the impact that the researcher's own views and values had on the findings.

### **5.6. Applying the Findings to Other Contexts**

Unlike quantitative research, qualitative research does not seek to produce results that are generalisable to a given population regardless of context. Instead, the emphasis is on producing findings that can lead to a better understanding of the phenomena studied and on transferability: the extent to which the findings can be applied to other, similar contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). According to Merriam (1995) it is up to the consumer of qualitative research to decide the extent to which findings from a study can be applied to other contexts, but the responsibility of the researcher to provide the information needed for this decision to be made. To assist the consumer in making this decision the researcher provided a detailed description of the specific context and circumstances of the study including the methodology, participants and interpretations of the data. With this information it may be therefore possible to speculate that a SR intervention can provide relational benefits for individuals where the following criteria are met:

- The children are within key stage two.
- They are in a stable foster care placement.
- They have a stable school placement.

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- Participants have completed a 16-week paired reading programme, following the stages as set out by Topping (2014) and received training and/or support from professionals.
- Participants live within a rural local authority.

The more similar the population is to the one described, the more appropriate any inference would be. The further the population diverges from this criterion the more caution is needed when assuming transferability.

This concept of transferability is described by Firestone (1993) as the ‘case to case model’. Another form of generalisability identified by Firestone (1993) as relevant to qualitative research is ‘analytic generalisation’. This refers to the generalisation of a theory of the phenomenon being studied, “Here the data gained from a particular study provide theoretical insights which poses a sufficient degree of generalisability or universality to allow theory projection to the other contexts or situations” (Sim, 1998, p. 350). Analytic generalisation is considered to provide an understanding of how SR might benefit other children and young people.

While this research was strongly informed by attachment theory, its inductive nature meant that its intention was not to challenge or support any particular theory but to apply theory to the findings. Yet, by mirroring the findings of other studies looking at the effect of reading together and SR practices on relationships, this research provides some evidence to suggest that SR, and paired reading in particular, could produce the opportunities and conditions and social-emotional benefits from which attachment can flourish. Thereby offering relational benefits for children in care of any age and their long-term carers, or indeed between children and young people and any caregiver or key adult, where there has been prior negative attachment experiences and relationships.

In conclusion, while it is necessary to heed Lincoln and Guba's (1985) warning that caution must be taken by the researcher not to claim that their findings can be generalised to other contexts, it is possible to infer through Firestone's (1993) model of analytic generalisation that interactions, such as those created and facilitated by SR, can enhance relationships between adults and children under a broader set of circumstances where attachment is an issue.

### **5.7. Implications for Future Research**

All of the carers in the current research reported having positive relationships with their foster children prior to the SR intervention. It would be useful to extend this research to explore the impact of SR for those with less positive relationships prior to intervention or the effect of SR in cases where a child had more recently joined the family. It might also be interesting to explore further with carers (and perhaps teachers) their attitudes towards the purpose of reading together at home, which, while it proved to be an important feature in the participant feedback, was not an aim of the current research and was beyond the scope of the current investigation. A brief survey of participants to determine their stance on literacy vs relational benefits, prior to their participation in a SR programme, could give greater insight into whether this has an impact on the outcomes of SR.

It is with regret that the methods used in the current research did not prove more effective in gathering a greater quantity of data from the child participants and thereby provide a richer and more in-depth account their experience. This is therefore an area of research that remains largely unexplored but still has the potential to offer valuable insights into the mechanisms within SR and how these might be exploited in the design and delivery of other interventions involving both CiC and key adults.



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These findings are based on retrospective interviews on the carers' perceptions of a SR intervention, rather than direct observation. Video Interactive Guidance (Kennedy, Landor & Todd, 2011) could be a useful technique for exploring further and revealing the impact that reading together has on the interactions of readers. Video evidence would not only have the potential to provide useful information to the individual readers but could prove a useful tool for demonstrating the efficacy of SR to a wider audience.

A legitimate area for future exploration could also be whether the relational benefits suggested by this research also extend to other shared activities, including activities involving screens such as gaming, or whether it is only the sharing of books that elicits such benefits.

In summary, recommended areas for future exploration include:

- the impact of SR for those with problematic foster carer/child relationships
- the effect of SR on new foster carer/child relationships
- the relationship between attitudes towards the purpose of reading together at home and SR experiences and outcomes
- further research aimed at gaining children's views of SR
- the use of Video Interactive Guidance to capture and record the impact of SR on relationship development
- the relational benefits of shared foster carer/foster child gaming activities

### **5.8. The Dissemination of Results**

Results from the current research will be shared with the VS link EP and disseminated to the EPS as a whole via the annual, whole service conference. The VS and Fostering Team will also be provided with a short report outlining the main findings of the research.

### **5.9. Application to the Role of Educational Psychologist**

From the research it is possible to conclude that the benefits of SR extend beyond improvements in literacy skills to include a wide range of social and emotional benefits that can enhance the relationship between foster carers and the children in their care. This has implications not only for the promotion of SR in the EPS in which the researcher is currently placed but for all EPs supporting CiC.

At present, the focus of interventions such as paired reading is on those who require additional support with literacy. For example, for the paired reading scheme in this instance, the criteria stipulated that the child's reading age should be at least two years below that of their chronological age. However, the added-value provided for carer-child relationships, though increased resilience and social and emotional development implied by these findings, suggests that SR could have a much wider reach. As Osborne et al. (2010) suggest, the potential benefits for relational development could make SR an appropriate intervention for strong readers as well as poor readers where communication or bonding may be an issue. This has implications for the recommendation of SR at an individual level and for the promotion of SR schemes to stakeholders and potential participants.

However, the research also suggests that EPs may need to be more proactive in their promotion of SR as an intervention with social and emotional benefits, whilst preserving interest in the substantial educational benefits of SR. EPs may also need to be mindful of the current discourse regarding the purpose and value of adult-child reading activities and the effect this may have on the mindset of stakeholders and potential participants.

Furthermore, while the current research has focused on the relationship between foster carer and foster child, the relational benefits could just as easily be harnessed to develop relationships between vulnerable young people more generally and key adults, such

as teachers, which would be especially important for children who experience multiple changes in educational placement.

### **5.10. Summary**

This research gives a detailed analysis of the experiences of participants of a SR intervention. It was intended that the findings would not only inform the work of the researcher's local EPS but also make a unique contribution to the body of research on SR interventions for CiC by focusing on relational impact and including the views of the children involved. Findings appear largely consistent with the those reported in existing literature, reinforcing the assertion that SR activities can be a highly valuable intervention for improving the relationship of readers. Five key themes were identified. These suggest that the participants had experienced important qualities intrinsic to SR which had created opportunities for relational development and had a positive impact on a range of intra and interpersonal skills, attitudes towards reading, reading ability and home-based reading practices. Overall, carers perceived SR as a valuable intervention for CiC. In a novel contribution to this area of research the findings also highlighted how, despite experiencing a range of social and emotional benefits that can enhance relationships and increase resilience for foster children, participants continued to view SR through an educational lens. It is reasoned that this may have implications for how EPs recommend and promote SR and that criterion may need to be broadened. Recommendations are made for the direction of future research.

### **5.11. Conclusion**

It is hoped that this research has helped to throw a spotlight on the substantial benefits of SR for vulnerable children such as CiC. For many families, story book reading is an institution that both forges and symbolises the relationship they have with their child. This research has indicated that this activity may be an underappreciated and underused but highly valuable tool in the effort to improve the lives of CiC. With research highlighting the importance of improving the education of CiC it is understandable that this remains firmly on the agenda of those that support these children. However, these findings suggest that it is essential that in the drive to extol the educational benefits of SR, EPs do not allow the relational benefits intrinsic to this accessible, simple and largely enjoyable activity to be overlooked or underestimated, but recognised and harnessed in order to reach a much wider population of vulnerable children.

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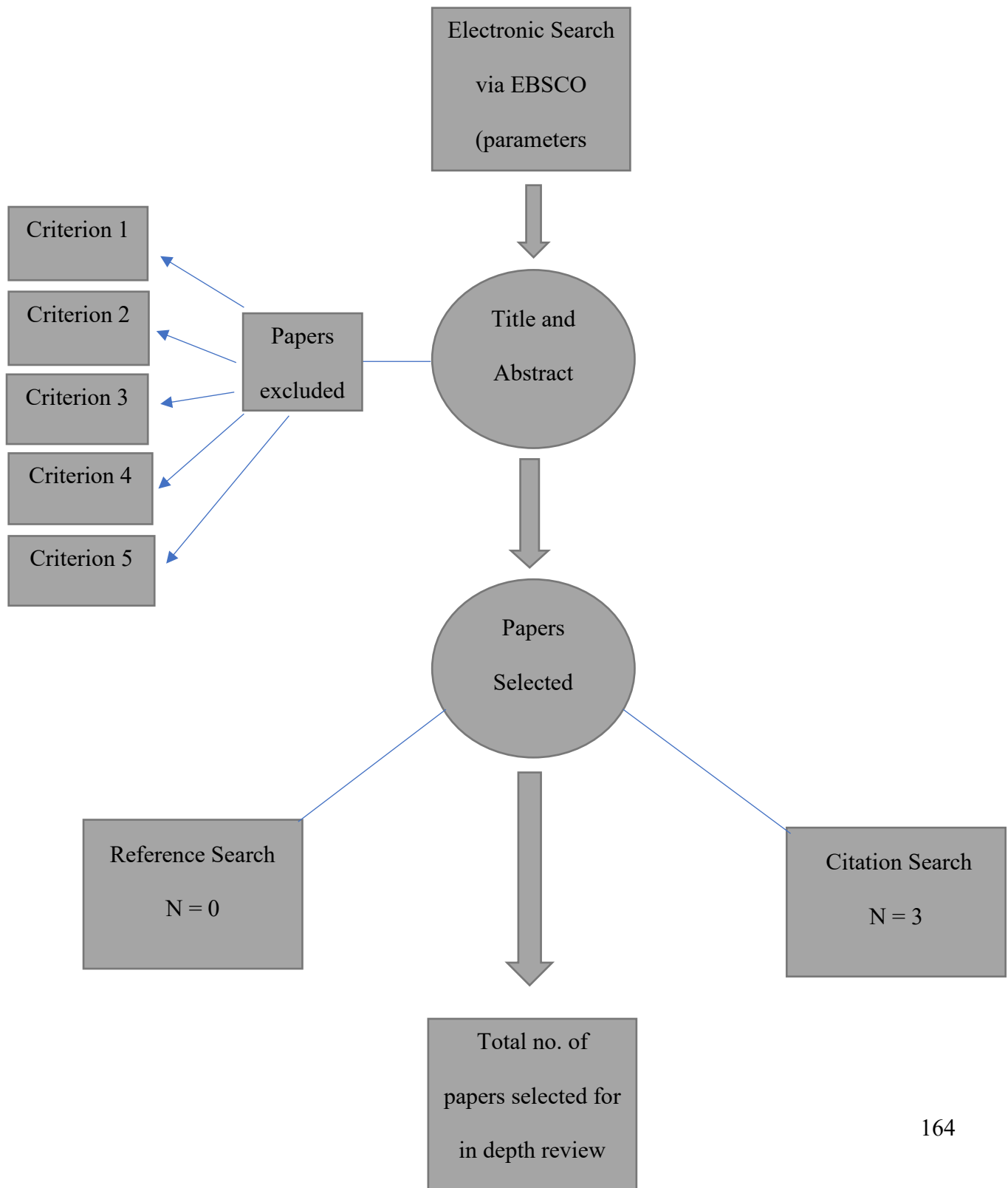
## Appendix A

### A Rationale for Preliminary Inclusion and Exclusion Parameters

Study Feature	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria	Rationale
Type of literature	The study has been peer reviewed	The study is not peer reviewed, or is a dissertation	Peer reviewed research has higher credibility based on a comprehensive assessment process
Published date	Published within the last 20 years	Published more than 20 years ago	This was considered a reasonable limitation in view of the number of results found
Abstract content	The abstract includes the combined search terms	The abstract does not include the combined search terms	To narrow the search and thereby devise a more specific search strategy
Language of study	The whole study is available in the English language	All or part of the study is not available in the English language	The entire study can be evaluated for the review as translation services are unavailable.
Participant age	Concerned with children aged birth and 12 years	Concerned with children over the age of 12 years	To include children that entered foster care before the end of primary-school age in line with the population of the present study

Appendix B

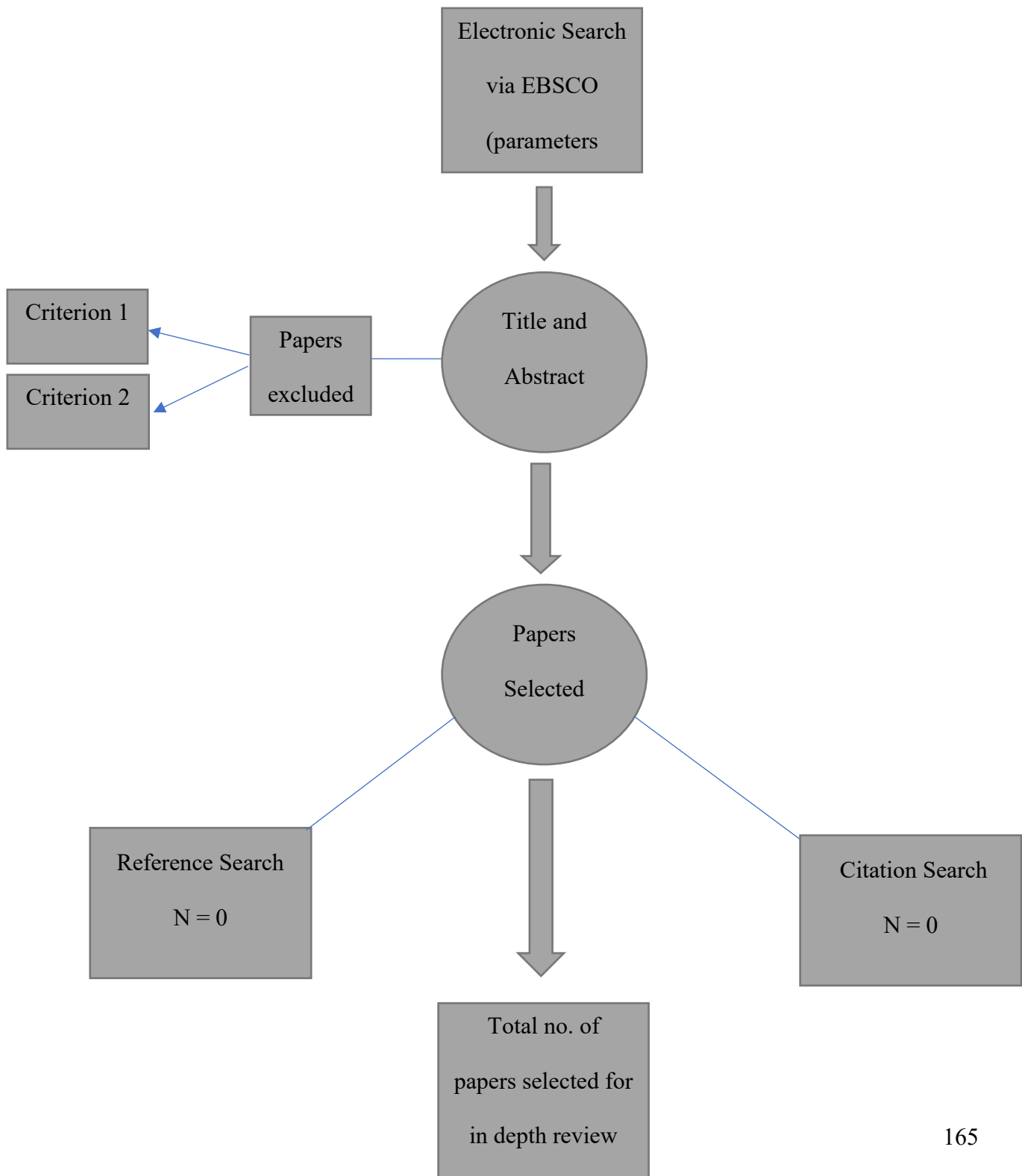
A Flow Chart Detailing the Systematic Process by which Research was Selected for the  
Literature Review (Search 1.)



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### Appendix C

A Flow Chart Detailing the Systematic Process by which Research was Selected for the Literature Review (Search 2).



## Appendix D

## Literature Review Articles

Tables 1. and 2. provide details of the articles relevant to this research. They are organised under their related review question, in order of their appearance in the review.

Table 1.

*Literature relating to review question one: 'What is the effect of reading together on relationships?'*

Author, date, title	Research purpose/aims	Participant details	Design and Methodology	Findings	Critical appraisal
Seden, J. (2008). Creative connections: Parenting capacity, reading with children and practitioner assessment and intervention. <i>Child and Family Social Work</i> , 13, 133-143.	To find out what parents believe reading contributes to their parenting capacity and to inform the assessment and intervention of children's services practitioners.	Two purposive samples were recruited. 33 parents/carers from 33 different families. 22 were using family support projects, 11 were bringing up children without using family support services. None were involved in statutory social care intervention at the time.  Inclusion criteria: current parenting experience of	Qualitative approach employing face to face, semi-structured interviews consisting of both open and closed questions and analysed using Thematic Analysis.  Data was analysed in relation to parenting capacity dimensions of The Assessment Framework for Children in Need and their Families (Department of Health, 2000).	The process of reading was found to be important in relation to three dimensions of parenting: emotional warmth, basic care and stability. Reading was linked to closeness, togetherness and stability. Parents described reading together as an activity which promoted secure attachment, emotional closeness and empathic	All participants gave informed consent and were given published anonymised outcomes.  The qualitative approach taken allows for a rich description of the participants' experiences.  The large sample size strengthens transferability of the findings.  The sample criteria employed delivered a range of parents from different social economic groups and educational backgrounds including 2 parents that could not read (but listened to their children read and/or looked at picture books with them) and contained a mix of (self-identified) ethnicities and origins. This, alongside

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		children aged 0 – 12 years and experience of reading with the children.		responsiveness in their families.	<p>the inclusion of families using/not using family support services increases the applicability and usefulness of findings.</p> <p>The key concept of ‘Parenting capacity’ was clear and based on the Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and Their Families.</p> <p>There are clear indications given as to how the findings could be used by practitioners both in assessment and intervention.</p> <p>The process of analysis is vague making it difficult to critique and replicate.</p> <p>Only parent views were obtained.</p>
Seden, J. (2009). Enhancing outcomes through children’s literature. <i>Vulnerable Children and Youth Studies</i> , 4(2), 142-147.	Following on from Seden (2008), outlined below, this article aims to further illustrate how social care practitioners can use parent/child reading in their assessment and interventions with children in need and CIC.	The data used was collected from the same sample of 33 parents/carers recruited for the Seden (2008) study.	Findings from the 2008 study (using qualitative data and analysed using thematic analysis) are discussed in relation to Every Child Matters outcomes (Department for Education and Skills, 2008).	Findings suggested that reading together contributed to several aspects of being healthy for children and was especially important for developing relationships between parent/carer and child.	This paper is the third in a series of articles that discusses data from an original piece of research by Seden (2006) for her PHD thesis. This suggests a high level of interest and investment in the subject of reading together, as a means of enhancing parenting capacity and the relationships between children and their carers/parents. This detail could be affecting the researcher’s neutrality and lead to bias in how the data is presented in terms of its contribution to existing knowledge and/or understanding.
Brown, A., Howard, V. & Martin, J. G. (2019). Shared reading for strengthened relationships among	To explore the outcomes of a SR programme for incarcerated women and their children from the perspective	A purposive sample consisting of six mothers who had previously taken part in the Mother-Child Read Aloud Program.	Qualitative case study design.  Data was derived from responses to open-ended interview	Sharing books through the Mother-Child Read Aloud Program had helped incarcerated mothers’ bond with their	The study gives a voice to a group of people whose views are not often heard. The researchers’ motivations (social justice), their aims and epistemological stance are clearly stated.

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those experiencing maternal incarceration. <i>Library Quarterly: Information, Community, Policy</i> , 89(3), 203-216.	of the prisoners involved.	Two of which remained incarcerated, four of which had since been released from prison and returned to their communities.	questions within six interviews and the content of 94 anonymised letters sent by children and their caregivers to the reading programme's organisers. This was then analysed using Thematic Analysis. An inductive, iterative approach was taken to the analysis of the both the interview and letter.	children and delivered benefits for the mothers (improved sense of self-worth, focus and positive identity) and benefits for their children (increased self-esteem and confidence and a greater interest in reading).	<p>Justification is given for the choice of design and is congruent with the researchers stated aims and ideological approach. Hence, subjective information was sought through open, semi-structured questioning producing an in-depth and thorough exploration of views. The authors noted that this approach also allowed participants (members of a vulnerable, essentially powerless group) to have greater control over their participation.</p> <p>Transferability was considered in the researchers' choice of the Mother-Child Read Aloud Program which, they argue was not only convenient but contained many of the characteristics present in other SR programmes.</p> <p>The methodology is clearly presented: interview questions used are presented in the paper and characteristics common to this group of participants described in detail.</p> <p>Steps were taken to reduce researcher bias and ensure that the data accurately represented the participants' lived experiences: Triangulation was used to increase the credibility of the findings: inconsistent or unanticipated themes were looked for and reported: and intercoder agreement was secured through the independent assessment of codes and findings.</p>
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					<p>It is noted, however, that the independent assessor used was directly linked to the Mother-Child Read Aloud Program (the executive director of the organisation who developed the programme) and therefore neutrality could potentially have been compromised.</p> <p>Only mothers viewed were gained directly through interview, however, children's views were gained via content of the letters.</p>
<p>Hall, M., Levy, R., &amp; Preece, J. (2018). "No-one would sleep if we didn't have books!": Understanding shared reading as family practice and family display. <i>Journal of Early Childhood Research</i>, 16(4), 363–377.</p>	<p>To gain parents' perspectives of the role that reading together has within their own families with the aim of informing how interventions may be best used to support SR practices within families.</p>	<p>A socially and culturally mixed sample of 29 parents of pre-school children aged 3 to 5 years, from two cities within the United Kingdom.</p>	<p>Qualitative, semi-structured interviews. The study used data from a larger, previous project.</p> <p>Data was analysed using the grounded theory technique.</p>	<p>Three themes were identified from the data: reading as a family practice, reading as a form of 'family display' and children's agency.</p> <p>While families are attracted to the educational benefits of reading with their children, reading at home also serves a number of other important family functions including the signalling and facilitating of family routines and the support and demonstration of family bonds.</p>	<p>The coding stages were carried out by three researchers independently. Results were compared and three identified core themes agreed. The use of separate coders greatly strengthens the trustworthiness of the findings.</p> <p>Drawing participants from two samples and from different cities broadened the ethnic diversity of the sample. However, as the researchers acknowledge, this also resulted in two different approaches to sampling, with the potential that the two groups could hold potentially different and distinct ideas about reading at home. The researcher, however, point out that their interest was understanding families rather than comparing families which means any difference is less likely to have an impact on the generalisability of the findings.</p> <p>Children's perceptions of reading together at home were not included in the data.</p>

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<p>Lam, S., Chow-Yeung, K., Wong, B. P. H., Lau, K. K. &amp; Tse, S. (2013). Involving parents in paired reading with pre-schoolers: Results from a randomised controlled trial. <i>Contemporary Educational Psychology</i>, 38, 126-135.</p>	<p>To find out whether:</p> <p>Paired reading has a positive impact on the reading of Chinese children.</p> <p>Paired reading has a positive impact on parents.</p> <p>Paired reading effects on children are mediated by changes in parents.</p> <p>Paired reading is more helpful to families with low income.</p>	<p>195 Hong Kong pre-schoolers from 10 pre-schools (mean age = 4.7 years) and their parents from families with a wide range of family income. Participation was voluntary and the sample obtained from a population of 527 all of whom were parents of children at level 2 in the 10 preschools.</p>	<p>Quantitative – Randomised Controlled Trial. Pre-schoolers were randomly assigned to experimental or waitlist control groups. The paired reading programme was first implemented to the experimental condition and then to the control condition.</p> <p>Effect was measured in terms of word recognition; reading fluency; parent perceived competence; parent perceived motivation; parent-child relationship; parent specific self-efficacy; parent general self-efficacy; family income; statistical analyses.</p> <p>Pre-test and post-test data were collected from both groups by senior teachers trained to perform the reading tests. Data from parents was</p>	<p>Pre-schoolers in the experimental group showed better word recognition and reading fluency than those in the control group. They were also said by their parents to be more competent and motivated when reading.</p> <p>Parents who had read with their children reported higher self-efficacy in helping their children with reading and reported more positive changes in parent-child relationship.</p> <p>An interaction effect between family income and condition was not found.</p>	<p>Conditions within the study were tightly controlled with numerous steps taken to ensure that the effects of the program, if any, were due to the paired reading process and not background differences of the participants. Participants were randomly assigned to either the control or the experimental group with both groups containing similar demographics. Participants were at the same level of education. Groups were similar (with no significant difference) in age, gender, and adult reader characteristics; age, gender, relation status (mother/father/other), employment status and annual family income. The two groups of pre-schoolers were taught by the same teachers within their classrooms in each school and were similar in age and gender ratios.</p> <p>To ensure treatment fidelity, substantial training on paired reading was given to both the parents and the coaching teachers with reference to a 33 item paired reading skills checklist. The coaching teachers underwent a preliminary second phase of training and supervision focused on their coaching skills. Reading took place in school for two of the minimum four reading sessions a week over the seven weeks, in the presence of the coaching teacher, who observed and gave feedback to parents on how they might improve their teaching. A record book was used by each parent to ensure compliance with the paired reading process during the home reading sessions.</p>
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			<p>collected via a questionnaire given to them by the school.</p> <p>Statistical analyses: Manova was used on the experimental group to first rule out function of relative status (mother, father, other) on any of the intervention effects. Data from the paired readers was then combined for further analysis. Paired sample t-tests were performed on the pre and post measures. Mediation analyses were applied to see whether parental changes mediated the programme effects on the child outcomes. Any association between family income and condition was examined through the use of a series of two-way ANCOVA on the post-test measures with the pre-test measures as covariate.</p>		<p>The 10 pre-schools, from which the children came, were considered to be demographically comparable to most preschools in Hong Kong and therefore findings have a high level of external validity locally. How easily the findings can be generalised to children within other countries, such as the UK is questionable, however, in view of the substantial differences in educational systems and written language systems (logographic/alphabetic).</p> <p>The duration of the paired reading intervention was shorter than the other studies included in the review (7 rather than 16 weeks).</p> <p>Lam et al. (2013) adapted the paired reading process, to add purposeful questioning to support comprehension as endorsed by Overett and Donald, (1998). As the authors note, there is no way of knowing whether, or how, this may have affected the results.</p> <p>The quantitative design did not allow for an in-depth exploration of participants' perceptions of relational improvements. The authors suggest that the validity of findings based on parent reported effects, including relational benefits, would have been strengthened if supported by information from other sources.</p> <p>The children's views were not obtained.</p>
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<p>Xie Q-W, Chan C.H.Y., Ji Q., &amp; Chan, L. W. (2018). Psychosocial Effects of Parent-Child Book Reading Interventions: A Meta-analysis. <i>Paediatrics</i>, 141(4), 1-12.</p>	<p>To systematically review and synthesize the effects of parent-child book reading (PCBR) interventions on psychosocial functioning of children and parents.</p>	<p>Study selection: Randomized Controlled Trials (RCT's).</p> <p>19 interventions were included (3264 families).</p>	<p>Systematic review. A standardised coding scheme was used on data extracted regarding sample, intervention and study characteristics.</p>	<p>PCBR interventions significantly improved the psychosocial functioning of children and parents compared with controls. Two moderator variables contributed to between-group variance: method of data collection and rater, (reported by others less than self-reported). There was no significant difference between effects of PCBR interventions on psychosocial outcomes of parents or children.</p>	<p>The meta-analysis had a clear goal with the aim of better understanding a relatively underexplored area.</p> <p>The researchers undertook a comprehensive and systematic search of the literature and applied clearly outlined inclusion and exclusion criteria in order to identify RCT's relevant to their review.</p> <p>The reporting of the meta-analysis followed the PRISMA reporting standard (Moher, Liberati, Tetzlaff &amp; Altman, 2009, cited by (Xie et al., 2018).</p> <p>Steps were taken to minimise the effects of publication bias (the non-publication – and therefore non-inclusion) of studies with negative results).</p> <p>The methodology quality score was calculated independently by two investigators using the CONSORT (2010) checklist ensuring that only high-quality studies were included.</p> <p>The standardised coding scheme used to extract data items regarding sample, intervention or study characteristics was made explicit. Interrater reliability of the study codes were checked and inconsistencies discussed before the majority of the studies were coded.</p> <p>An account of how the results were synthesised is clearly outlined in the paper.</p>
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					<p>The strict inclusion criteria adopted meant only a limited amount of PCBR studies were included in the review. Studies not employing an RCT design were excluded with the rationale that research not adopting this design would be of poor quality. This limited the information available regarding the impact PCBR may have on the readers relationship.</p> <p>The authors acknowledge the questionable homogeneity of the studies included in the review in terms of the measures of psychological functioning included. They conclude that the internal validity was limited by the number of studies included which had not controlled for potentially moderating variables, and therefore, the reviews findings should be viewed with caution and the review considered as an exploratory.</p>
<p>Ganotice, F. A., Downing, K., Mak, T., Chan, B. &amp; Lee, W. Y. (2017). Enhancing parent-child relationship through dialogic reading. <i>Educational Studies</i>, 43(1), 51-66.</p>	<p>To investigate the potential affective/psychosocial efficacy of shared dialogic reading (DR) for parents who demonstrated relational concerns with their primary school children.</p>	<p>48 Hong Kong, Chinese parents of primary school children (aged between 3 and 12 years), identified by their teachers as having relational problems with their parents.</p>	<p>Quantitative experimental design, taking a two-group, different participants pre and post-test form with tests administered before and after dialogic skill training.</p>	<p>Paired t-tests showed an improvement in parent-child relationships following the DR intervention.</p> <p>Significant improvements were seen in the areas of 'satisfaction with parenting and communication' although these</p>	<p>Fidelity checks were conducted to ensure consistent implementation of the DR training and programme compliance was assured through the use of parent diaries.</p> <p>The authors note four limitations of the research:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The absence of a control group undermining internal and external validity.</li> <li>2. The inability to explore the long-term effects of DR on parent-child relations.</li> <li>3. The potential of more favourable results as a result of some differences in compliance as reported by the parents</li> </ol>

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		<p>The participants formed two experimental groups:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Parents and children in Primary 1-2</li> <li>2. Parents and children in Primary 3 -4.</li> </ol>		<p>improvements were less significant for the older group of children (Primary 3-4). Both groups showed improvements in the area of 'social desirability'</p>	<p>(some parents read for longer than instructed).</p> <p>4. High attrition rates among participants (57.10%). Although a sample t-test suggested participants did not significantly differ in relation to pre-test measures from those that discontinued the training, their reasons for discontinuing are unknown and may have been relevant to the findings.</p> <p>Participants were limited to the pre-determined constructs within the Parent-child relationship inventory (Gerard, 1994) to record their views which may not have adequately or fully reflected their experience.</p> <p>Contextual parenting factors highlighted by the authors within the paper (e.g. minimal contact with fathers) may limit the generalisability of the findings to Western families and to foster families more specifically.</p> <p>The researchers administered the pre and post-tests, led the introduction and the DR training sessions. This lack of distance in research methodology may have given scope for unintended bias.</p> <p>While the authors stress that they did not explicitly mention the potential relational benefits of DR until after post-testing, the introduction phase included a presentation and video outlining the importance of certain practices during DR which would have promoted and emphasised relational</p>
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					<p>aspects and therefore may have affected participant behaviour.</p> <p>Only parents' views of the parent-child relationship were obtained.</p>
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Table 2:

*Literature relating to review question two: 'What research exists on reading together interventions with foster carers and foster children?'*

Research paper	Research purpose/aims	Participant details	Design and methodology	Findings	Critical appraisal
Osborne, C., Alfano, J. & Winn, T. (2010). Paired reading as a literacy intervention for foster children. <i>Adoption and Fostering</i> , 34(4), 17-26.	To examine whether directly involving carers in the reading process (paired reading intervention) would improve the literacy levels of their children.	35 carers and their primary school-age children. Chronological age range of children at the start of intervention 5 years 10 months – 11 years 6 months, mean age 9 years 4 months. Mean reading age 8 years 0 months, range 4yrs 3 months - 10 years 2 months.	<p>Mixed design.</p> <p>Quantitative – Reading ability was assessed in terms of (1) reading age pre and post intervention using the Salford Sentence Reading Test and (2) ratio gain (change in reading age and chronological age).</p> <p>Qualitative data (feedback from carers) was taken from weekly monitoring sheets completed by school staff.</p>	<p>The results showed an average improvement in the reading age of 12 months over the 16-week period. This increase was statistically significant (<math>t(34) = 9.32, p &lt; 0.001</math>). With a mean ratio gain of 2.96 months (level of progress for each month of intervention) with greater gains seen for poorer readers.</p> <p>Carer feedback of paired reading was positive in terms of improving reading ability and suggested</p>	<p>Qualitative sample was relatively large (<math>N = 16</math>).</p> <p>The author makes clear the study's implication for CIC in terms of higher academic expectations and an understanding that interventions such as paired reading can support the education of CIC.</p> <p>No justification or detailed account is provided for the research design or qualitative data collection techniques.</p> <p>Details of how the quantitative and qualitative data was analysed or the process of interpretation conducted are not provided, significantly undermining dependability.</p>

## RELATIONAL BENEFITS OF SHARED READING

			No information is given regarding the process of analysis.	benefits may extend to improvements in children's confidence and motivation.	<p>Credibility and confirmability of the qualitative data are undermined by the data collection techniques. Data collection was carried out by school staff directly involved in the paired reading programme via weekly monitoring sessions and completion of monitoring sheets. The data included in the study was dependent on which data the school returned (Population N = 68/evaluative data returned N = 35/qualitative sample N = 16). The data could therefore have been subject to a high level of bias and selection.</p> <p>As data was collected by school staff and not the researcher it was not possible to clarify and confirm respondent's answers which reduces credibility of the study's findings.</p> <p>Only carers' views were obtained directly.</p>
Forsman, H. (2017). Foster carers' experiences of a paired reading literacy intervention with looked-after children. <i>Child and Family Social Work</i> , 22, 409-418.	An exploration of the variation in foster carers' experiences of conducting the paired reading intervention aimed at gaining insight into the factors that facilitate or limit	15 participating carers from a Swedish paired reading programme.	<p>Qualitative design.</p> <p>Semi-structured telephone interviews.</p> <p>Two approaches were used in data analysis:</p>	<p>Paired reading can improve the reading skills of CIC.</p> <p>Some carers felt that paired reading could lead to improvements in carer/child relations.</p>	<p>The sampling technique used allowed researcher to capture a wide range of carers' experiences including both successful and unsuccessful cases.</p> <p>The two approaches used in data analysis allow greater transferability due to the relatively</p>



## RELATIONAL BENEFITS OF SHARED READING

	programme compliance.		<p>Case study - summarising the experiences of four carers from each of the four participant categories: drop-out; insufficient reading; sufficient but problematic reading; sufficient reading.</p> <p>Data from across the participant groups was analysed using Thematic Analysis.</p>	<p>Factors affecting programme compliance were: A positive carer attitude; integrating the reading into everyday life (which evolved around motivating the child and prioritising the reading sessions); and flexibility in delivering the intervention.</p>	<p>large sample size (semi-structured interview, N = 15) alongside a more-depth exploration of carers views (case study), increasing credibility.</p> <p>Heterogeneity of participants may have impacted their experience: experience of fostering ranged from (1.5 to 30 years) carers had varying levels of prior paired reading experience</p> <p>The research is based in Sweden. Differences in social care and education systems may mean that findings cannot be generalised to the UK population.</p> <p>Case Studies: The allocation of participants to the four categories is described by the author as 'crude' and was based on completed weekly monitoring sheets. How accurate were these and would another researcher have made the same decisions regarding category allocation?</p> <p>The study relies on carers perspectives gained from retrospective interviews rather than on observations of reading sessions.</p> <p>Only carer views were obtained directly.</p>
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Appendix E

Carer Interview Schedule

**Carer Telephone Interview Schedule**

**Introduction to interview:**

**To ensure the following points are included –**

- Introductions
- Thanks for participating
- Reminder of purpose of research
- Reminder of right to withdraw
- Confirm consent for interview and audio-recording (remind how data will be stored)
- Ask if any questions

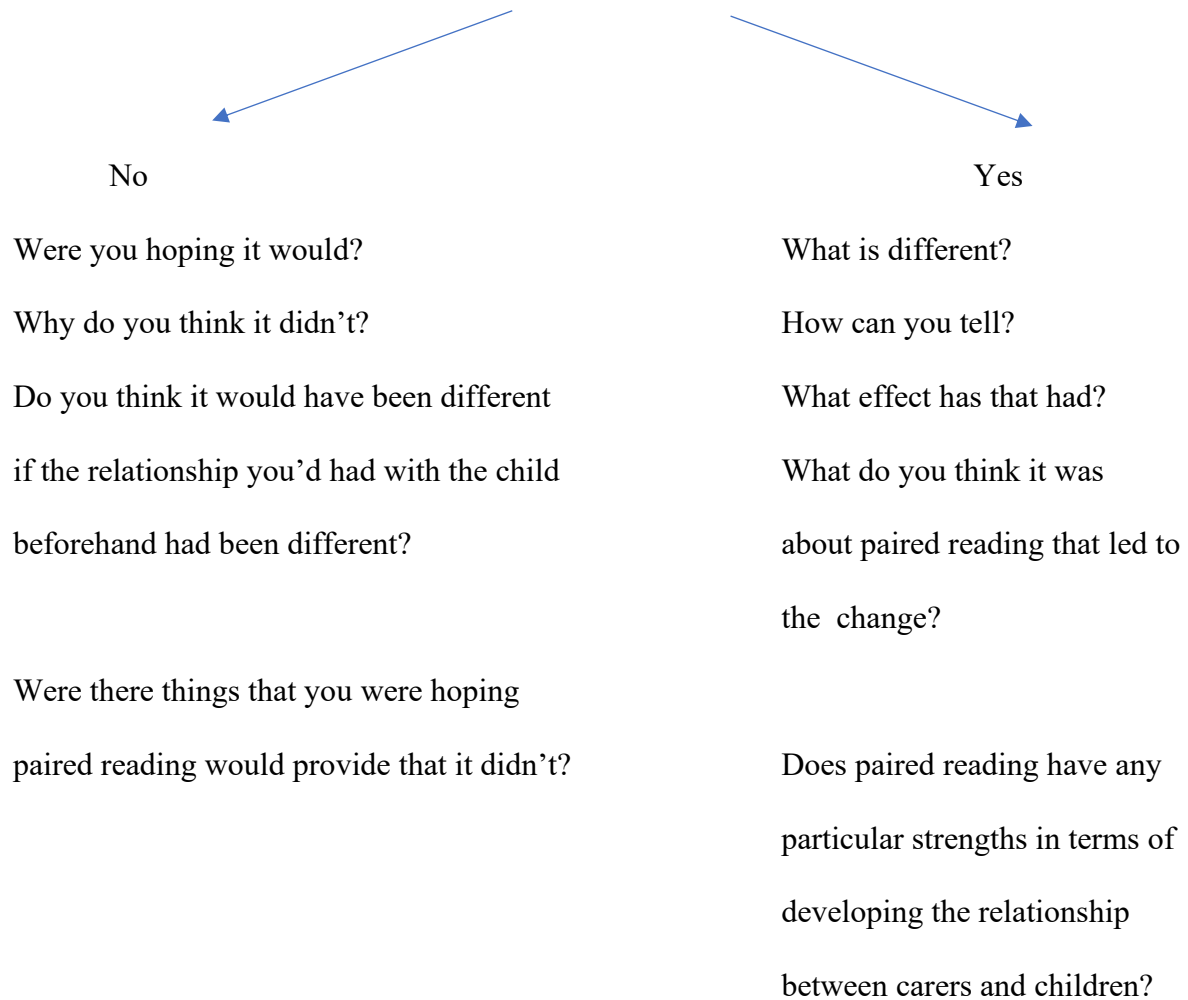
**START RECORDING**

**Semi-structured Interview**

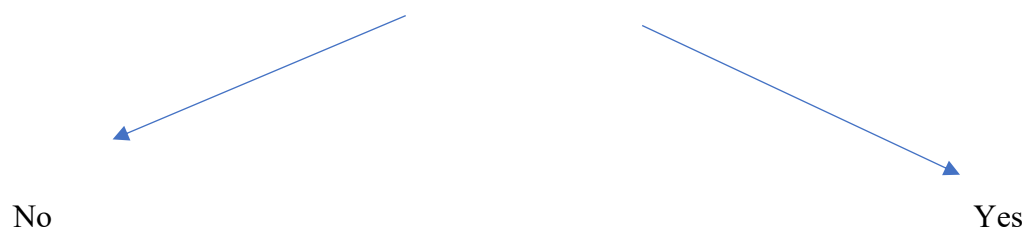
1. What made you want to take part in the paired reading scheme?
2. How have you found taking part in the paired reading scheme?
3. What aspects of paired reading did you particularly value?

## RELATIONAL BENEFITS OF SHARED READING

4. Has taking part in the paired reading scheme changed the relationship you have with the child in your care?



5. Has taking part in the PR scheme affected your perception of the child in your care?



## RELATIONAL BENEFITS OF SHARED READING

Has the 16 weeks of paired reading had any impact  
on your understanding of the child?

In what way?

In what way?

Do you think it might have been different

If your relationship had been different beforehand?

6. Has taking part in the paired reading scheme affected how you feel about being a foster carer?

No

Yes

Did paired reading bring anything new to how you  
view the role of foster caring?

In what way?

7. Have you taken part in other interventions in your role of foster carer that you have found  
useful in developing the relationship you have with your child?

No

Yes

In what way were they useful? Not as useful?

Were they more or less useful than paired

## RELATIONAL BENEFITS OF SHARED READING

reading in developing the relationship? Were

there any similarities with paired reading?

Were there any differences?

8. What do you think your child would say if I asked them whether taking part in paired reading had had an impact on your relationship?
9. Is there anything about paired reading and relationships that you would like to say that I haven't asked you about?

Ending:

- Thank you for taking part and for giving up your time
- Any questions?
- Email address to send debrief sheet including details of their right to withdraw their data (up to 3 weeks after today's date), how their data will be stored and used and researcher's contact details.

**Thank you for taking part and for giving up your time**

**Give out debrief sheet**

### Appendix F

#### Pilot Planning, Content and Learning

Information derived from the pilot will not be used as research data but only to test the suitability of the KFD activity and interview questions. Any subsequent adjustments to the interview schedule will be made before the end of the 16-week period to avoid delaying data collection.

The Kinetic Family Drawing Technique (KFD), developed by Burns & Kaufman, 1970: 1972, will be used with each child individually as a prompt to discussion around how they viewed and valued the paired reading in terms of their relationship with their paired reading partner (their carer).

Kinetic Family Drawing Technique: To prepare the children for the drawing exercise, they will be asked briefly about their experience of the paired reading intervention, including the name of the person they read with/to. The KFD activity will be administered by the researcher with reference to the guidelines provided by Burns and Kaufman (1970, 1972). The children will be given a plain piece of A4 paper and a pencil, with the instruction “draw yourself reading with (the name of the carer recalled by them)”. Once produced, the drawing will be used as an initial focus for further discussion with the child. about the child’s views of paired reading in terms of their relationship with their carer. .

A semi-structured interview technique will be adopted to guide this discussion with further questions asked based upon the research questions. Example of a questions are: How are you feeling in this picture? What was it like reading with (their carer)?

The children will be seen individually by the researcher, at their home, within a suitably private environment as arranged with the parent/carers beforehand. The child’s informed, verbal consent will be verified beforehand via a telephone conversation with the parent/carers. Prior to

## RELATIONAL BENEFITS OF SHARED READING

data collection, it will be made clear to the child that they have the right not to participate or to withdraw their participation, without reason, during the session.

### **Pilot Interview Schedule**

- Introductory comments
- List of topic headings and possible key questions to ask under each heading
- Set of associated probes/prompts
- Closing comments

Research questions:

⇒ What relational benefits do children in care experience through participation in a PR intervention?

⇒ What aspects of participating in PR do children particularly value?

#### 1) Introductory comments

Thank you for meeting me today. My name is....., and I work..... I am interested in finding out what children think and like about reading at home with someone they live with, like their Mum or their Dad. I am here to find out what you think and feel about it.

I am going to ask you to do a drawing for me and then we are going to talk about the drawing, and I may ask you some other questions about reading at home. [Check s/he is happy to do this with me]. It is OK if you want to stop at any time, just let me know. What we talk about will be private and although I would like to take the drawing with

## RELATIONAL BENEFITS OF SHARED READING

me, if that is OK, I won't show it to anyone and I won't tell people about what we talk about unless you say something that I feel I need to tell someone about in order to make sure you are safe. If I need to do this, then I will tell you first. I am also going to take notes just so that I can remember what we have spoken about, but again, these notes are just for me to see and no-one else.

### 2) Who do you read with at home?

Activity – *“Draw yourself reading with .....”*

(if necessary - drawing does not have to be perfect, try to draw whole people - more than matchstick people. There is no time-limit).

### 3) Tell me about your drawing?

Prompts:

What is each person doing in the drawing?

General prompts: What is this/who is that/where are you/can you tell me more about that?

### 4) How are you feeling in the drawing while reading with .....?

Prompts:

What is it that's makes you feel like that?

### 5) How is ..... feeling in the drawing while reading with you?

Prompts:

What is it that makes them feel like that?



## RELATIONAL BENEFITS OF SHARED READING

- 6) What is it like reading with ....?  
Prompts: Are there things you particularly like about reading together?
- 7) Do you prefer reading on your own or reading with .....?  
What is it about reading on your own/reading with ..... that you like?
- 8) What do you like best about reading with .....?
- 9) Is there anything else about reading with ..... that you would like to say?

### Closing comments:

- Summarise to check out my understanding of child's answers.
- Thank him/her and tell child how helpful meeting with them has been.
- Check s/he is OK with me taking their drawing.
- Remind child that their drawing, what I have written down and what they have said will be kept private and safe (unless it is necessary to share them due to concerns about their safety) and that the picture and my notes will not be kept with his/her name on them.
- Thank you (sticker)

### Learning from pilot:

The questions need to be more direct and/or a techniques to help children express views.

The children spoke mostly about the process in terms of it affected their reading development or their attitude towards their ability to read.

The Year 2 Children appeared more able to expand on their answers, whereas the Reception Year children gave one-word answers and were less descriptive.

### Ideas for changes to questions/format:

Include another simple activity to help the children express their thoughts about reading with parent/carer. Perhaps a sorting activity with pre-prepared words (negative and positive).

## RELATIONAL BENEFITS OF SHARED READING

Include questions: –

“If a friend asked you what was good about reading with .....What would you tell them?”

“What did you like best about reading with .....? What are your favourite things about reading together?”

Appendix G

Child Interview Schedule

**Child Interview Schedule**

**Introduction to interview. To ensure the following points are covered:**

- Read through child info and consent forms and complete.
- Ask the child who they read with for the paired reading.
- Inform them that: “I am going to ask you to do a drawing for me and then we are going to talk about the drawing, and I am going to ask you some other questions about reading with .....
- Check they are happy to do this with me.
- It is OK if they want to stop at any time, just let me know.
- Confidentiality: What we talk about will be private. Although I would like to take the drawing with me, if that is OK, I won’t show it to anyone and I won’t tell people about what we talk about unless they say something that I feel I need to tell someone about in order to make sure they are safe, but if I need to do that , then I will tell them first. I am also going to audio record just so that I can remember what we have spoken about, but again, this is just for me to hear and no-one else.

**START RECORDING**

## RELATIONAL BENEFITS OF SHARED READING

### Semi-structured Interview

1. Activity – “*Draw yourself reading with .....*”

(State if necessary - drawing does not have to be perfect, try to draw whole people - more than matchstick people. There is no time-limit).

2. Tell me about your drawing?

Prompts: What is each person doing in the drawing?

Prompts: What is this/who is that/where are you/can you tell me more about that?

3. How are you feeling in the drawing while reading with .....

Prompts: What is it that's makes you feel like that?

4. How is ..... feeling in the drawing while reading with you?

Prompts: What is it that makes them feel like that?

5. What is it like reading with ....?

Prompts: Are there things you particularly like about reading together?

What do you like best about reading with .....

6. Do you prefer reading on your own or reading with .....

What is it about reading on your own/reading with ..... that you like?

7. If a friend asked you whether they should do paired reading what would you tell them?

## RELATIONAL BENEFITS OF SHARED READING

8. Is there anything else that you would like to say about reading with .....?

9. Sorting activity:

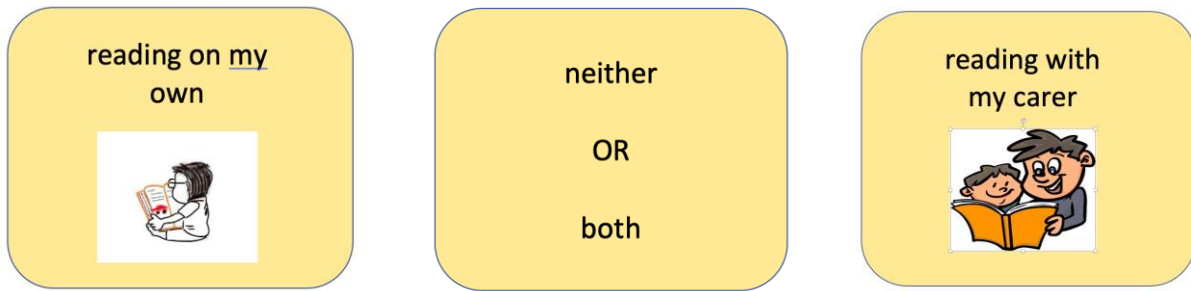
The child will be shown a series of cards each depicting one of the words (with accompanying picture) listed below:

Happy	Sad
Loved	Uncomfortable
Safe	Criticised
Comfortable	Bad
Friendly	Bored
Liked	Well
Good	Enjoyment
Cared for	Supported

Each card will be discussed to check the child's understanding of the word where necessary.

The cards will then be mixed up and presented to the child one by one with the child being asked to place the word on a larger card relating to one of the following statements:

## RELATIONAL BENEFITS OF SHARED READING



The results of the activity to be recorded on a sheet containing a list of the words, with

O = reading on own    T = reading together    B = both/Neither.

### Closing comments:

- Summarise session and check out understanding of child's answers, if appropriate.
- Thank them, tell them how hard they have worked and how helpful meeting with them has been.
- Remind child that their drawing and what they have said will be kept private and safe (unless it is necessary to share due to concerns about their safety) and that the picture and my recording will not be kept with her name on them.
- Offer chance to ask any questions.
- Give and run through debrief sheet.
- Offer a range of stickers to choose from.

Appendix H

Carer Information Sheet

**Carer Information Sheet**

Hello,

My name is Deanne Bell. I am currently attending the University of East London to train to become Educational Psychologist and am working for the Local Authority's Educational Psychology Service. I am carrying out a research study to look at the impact that taking part in a reading together activity might have on the relationship between foster carers and the children they look after.

You are invited to be involved with this research. The following outline provides more information about what is involved. Please spend some time reading this before deciding whether you would be happy to take part. A separate information sheet and consent form will be sent to the supervising social worker allocated to the child in your care for consent for the child's involvement. If consent for their involvement is given, they will also receive an information sheet. I will also explain the research to them and gain their consent for taking part in the activity. You can choose to participate in this study even if the child in your care is not taking part. Likewise, they can choose to take part even if you decide not to.

## **Outline of Research**

### **Title of research:**

*Does participation in a reading together activity produce relational benefits for foster carers and the children in their care?*

### **Why am I carrying out this research?**

I would like to hear from foster carers and foster children about their views of the paired reading scheme in respect to the impact it might have on the carer/child relationship. Previous feedback from carers has suggested that taking part in shared reading benefits not only the child's literacy skills but also the quality of the relationship they have with the child in their care. I believe that finding out more about how carers and children experience the paired reading scheme could help improve the planning and delivery of similar schemes and improve how other interventions aimed at children in care are designed.

### **What does the study involve?**

At the end of the 16-week paired reading period I will invite you to take part in a confidential, individual telephone interview at a time and day of your choosing. The interview, which will last for approximately half-an-hour, will be audio-taped to allow your views about the intervention to be recorded as efficiently and accurately as possible. This recording will remain confidential and will not be heard by anyone other than myself and will be destroyed once the research is complete, as outlined below.



All information provided within the interview will remain confidential unless you say something which may mean you, the child in your care or someone else is in danger. If you ask to stop or wish to withdraw your participation at any point up to, or during the interview, this will happen straight away.

### **What will happen with the information?**

Once I have gathered information from the different carers and children involved, I will write a report. This will contain the information gathered but will not include your name or any other information which may identify you or the child in your care. You will be given a different name within the report so that you remain anonymous.

Information gathered from the study including audio recordings and any notes will be stored in a safe place at the Local Authority Educational Psychology Service and destroyed after a maximum of five years.

### **Your right to withdraw**

You have the right to withdraw your consent or decide not to continue with participation at any point during or before your participation. You can also ask for any data collected as a result of your participation to be withdrawn and destroyed on request for a period of up to three weeks after participation. After this point it will not be possible to identify and remove individual data due to the process of analysis used.

### **Any questions?**

## RELATIONAL BENEFITS OF SHARED READING

If you would like to discuss anything in this letter or have any questions, please ask by contacting me on TELEPHONE NO. or at EMAIL ADDRESS. and I will be happy to speak with you.

If you are happy for to take part in this research, please sign the attached consent form and return it to me either today, via return email, or by post to: Deanne Bell, EMAIL ADDRESS, Education Psychology Service ADDRESS.

Thank you very much,

Deanne Bell,

Trainee Educational Psychologist

# RELATIONAL BENEFITS OF SHARED READING

## Appendix I

### Carer Consent Form

#### Carer Consent Form

This consent form relates to the following research study:

*Does participation in a reading together activity produce relational benefits for foster carers and the children in their care?*

PLEASE SIGN YOUR INITIALS IN ALL BOXES

1. I have read the attached information sheet about the research study which I have been asked to participate in. It has been explained to me what the purpose of the research is, and I understand what it will involve. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and discuss any details.

☐

2. I understand that my involvement and any data gathered within this will remain strictly confidential, and only the researchers involved will have access to the data. I understand that my involvement may be audio recorded. I understand how any data will be stored and what will happen with it once the research project is over.

☐

3. I understand that I am able to withdraw myself from the study at any time without needing to give a reason and that I can ask for my data be destroyed up to three weeks after collection.

☐

4. I hereby fully consent to my taking part in this study

☐

## RELATIONAL BENEFITS OF SHARED READING

Carer's name \_\_\_\_\_

Carer's signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your time.

Appendix J

Carer Debrief Sheet

## **Carer Debrief Sheet**

### **Reading Together Research Study**

Thank you for participating in today's telephone interview and in my research, which is intended to gain a better understanding of how taking part in a reading together activity might affect relationships. This information will be analysed and the findings written up as part of my doctoral thesis which is due to be completed by September 2020.

The information you have given will be anonymised, used and stored securely according to The Data Protection Act 2018, the BPS Code of Human Research Ethics (2nd edition, 2014) and the Code of Ethics and Conduct (The British Psychological Society, 2018) and kept for up to five years at which point it will be destroyed.

You have the right to ask that your individual data be destroyed within three weeks from today, without giving a reason. After which, it will no longer be possible to identify your individual contribution due to the process of analysis used.

Should you have any questions about this research, require support as a result of taking part or would like to request that your data is destroyed, you can contact me on TELEPHONE NO. or at EMAIL ADDRESS, Education Psychology Service ADDRESS:

Thank you for your time,

Deanne.

Appendix K

Social Worker Information Sheet

Hello,

My name is Deanne Bell. I am a student studying for a Professional Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology and am on placement with the LOCAL AUTHORITY Educational Psychology Service. I am carrying out a research study to look at the impact that taking part in a reading together activity might have on the relationship between foster carers and the children they look after.

The child in your care taking part in the paired reading scheme is invited to be involved with this research and the following outline provides more information about what this entails. Please spend some time reading this before deciding whether you would be happy for the child to take part. You are welcome to share any information in this letter with the child, if you wish to do so. If you give consent, I will provide a separate, more accessible format of this letter for you to pass on to their carer or share with them yourself. I will also explain the research to them in person and gain their consent before asking them to take part in the activity.

**Title of research:**

*Does participation in a reading together activity produce relational benefits for foster carers and the children in their care?*

### **Why am I carrying out this research?**

I would like to hear from foster carers and foster children about their views of the paired reading scheme in respect to the impact it might have on the carer/child relationship. Previous feedback from carers has suggested that taking part in shared reading benefits not only the child's literacy skills but also the quality of the relationship they have with the child in their care. I believe that finding out more about how carers and children experience the paired reading scheme could help improve the planning and delivery of similar schemes and improve how other interventions aimed at children in care are designed.

### **What does the study involve?**

At the end of the 16-week paired reading period I will contact the foster carer and make arrangements to visit the child at home. Having introduced myself to the child, explained my role and reminded them of the reason for my visit I will ask them to draw a picture of themselves reading with their carer. This will then be used as an initial prompt to further discussions which will be audio-recorded regarding their experience of reading together with their carer. With the child's consent I will then take the picture and audio recordings and use their views as research data. The drawing and any information shared during the session will remain confidential and not be seen or heard by anyone other than myself unless safeguarding concerns are raised. At which point LOCAL AUTHORITY County Council's safeguarding policy will be followed.

**What will happen with the information?**

Once I have gathered information from the different carers and children involved, I will write a report. This will contain the information gathered but will not include the name of the child or any other information which may identify them. They will be given a different name within the report in order to provide anonymity.

Information gathered from the study including drawings, audio-recordings and any notes will be stored in a safe place at the Local Authority Educational Psychology Service during the research. All data will be destroyed after a maximum period of five years.

**Your right to withdraw**

You have the right to withdraw your consent for the child's participation at any point. You can also ask for any data collected as a result of the child's participation to be withdrawn and destroyed on request for a period of up to three weeks after participation. After this period, it will not be possible to identify and remove individual data due to the data analysis methods used.

**Any questions?**

If you would like to discuss anything in this letter or have any questions, please ask by contacting me on TELEPHONE NUMBER and I will be happy to speak with you.

If you are happy for the child to take part in this research, please sign the attached consent form and return it to me by email or by post to: Deanne Bell, EMAIL ADDRESS, Education Psychology Service, ADDRESS.



## RELATIONAL BENEFITS OF SHARED READING

Thank you very much,

Deanne Bell,

Trainee Educational Psychologist

Appendix L

Social Worker Consent Form

**This consent form relates to the following research study:**

*Does participation in a reading together activity produce relational benefits for foster carers and the children in their care?*

PLEASE SIGN YOUR INITIALS IN ALL BOXES

1. I have read the attached information sheet about the research study which the child I have legal responsibility for has been asked to participate in. It has been explained to me what the purpose of the research is, and I understand what it will involve. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and discuss any details.

☐

2. I understand that the child's involvement and any data gathered will remain strictly confidential, and only the researcher involved will have access to the data. I understand how any data will be stored and what will happen with it once the research project is over.

☐

3. I understand that I am able to withdraw my consent for the child's participation in the study at any time without needing to give a reason and for data to be destroyed up to three weeks after collection.

☐

4. I hereby fully consent to the child taking part in this study

☐

## RELATIONAL BENEFITS OF SHARED READING

Social Worker's signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your time.

Appendix M

Child Information Sheet

Hello,



My name is Deanne and that is my photograph. I'm a student and I work with children and their families as a trainee Educational Psychologist.



I am interested in finding out what children and adults think about the paired reading scheme that you and your carer are taking part in. When the reading scheme has finished, I will be talking to some of the foster carers taking part and to some of the children and then writing about what they say. This might be read by others who are interested in taking part in similar activities in the future.

You are invited to take part in this project. If you would like to take part, I will come and see you at home and ask you to draw something. We will then talk together



## RELATIONAL BENEFITS OF SHARED READING

about what you have drawn and about the paired reading scheme. I will record what we say. If you say it's OK, I will then take the drawing and the recording with me, but I will not show your drawing to anyone and will keep it safe and will not tell anyone what you have said.

Even if you say yes now, you can still change your mind later and you don't have to say why. You may like to talk about this with someone close, maybe someone at home or at school, to help you to decide. If you have any questions, they could let me know.

If you decide you would like to take part, let your carer or social worker know.

Thank you



Appendix N

Child Consent Form

**Child Consent Form**

Deanne has explained to me what this project is about  
and what we will be doing today.

☐

I understand that what we say will be recorded and  
that Deanne may write about what I have said.

☐

I understand that she will not share my drawing  
or what I have said with anyone unless she needs  
to, to keep me safe.

☐

I am happy to take part take part.

☐

Name:

Date:

Appendix O

Child Debrief Sheet

Child Debrief Sheet

Reading Together Research Study

Thank you for meeting with me today and for telling me about your experiences of reading with your foster carer. This will help me find out what children and adults think about schemes like paired reading.

I will now take the drawing with me, but I will not tell anyone what you said or show your drawing to anyone and will keep it safe. If you change your mind in the next three weeks and no longer want me use what you have said or drawn in my study, you can ask an adult to let me know and you don't have to say why. You can also ask them to contact me if you have any questions.

Best wishes,

Deanne

## Appendix P

## List of Codes, Example Extracts and Themes, Subthemes Identified

Code	Example Extract	Theme (subtheme)
A way of being involved in child's life	<p>Int: So it's something about just the, it's like an opportunity to actually be together.</p> <p>Paula: Yes. I mean we live by the sea so we quite often go for a walk and we cycle to school as well and I think they're quite good opportunities to have a chat.</p>	Opportunities (non-verbal)
Awareness of other	Jean: ..at one point it was [CHILD] actually said to me "Would you really like to read this as well?" So she was obviously getting enjoyment out of it but she wanted to make sure I was as well.	Outcome (interpersonal)
Benefitted relationship	John: It has reduced the stress in the caring for him.	Outcome (interpersonal)
Choice	Jean: It was the fact that it was a choice to do this. It wasn't that she had to read for ten minutes every night as part of her schoolwork. It was, you know, we chose to do this.	Important experience



## RELATIONAL BENEFITS OF SHARED READING

Closeness	<p>Int: What's making you feel happy?</p> <p>Sophia: The thing that we're both reading together and we're in the same room and we're talking about horses.</p> <p>Int: What is it about being in the same room and talking that you liked?</p> <p>Sophia: That I like someone being there with me.</p>	Important experience
Collaboration	Jean: we chose to do this.	Important experience
Communication	<p>Jean: With me and [CHILD] it's actually led to conversations. One of the books we read was Jacqueline Wilson, The Suitcase Kid, and it's about a family that's split up and the child's spending time with mum and dad and afterwards she'd lay in bed and she'd start talking. It's little things like that where sometimes these books can trigger something and start that conversation.</p>	Opportunities (verbal)

## RELATIONAL BENEFITS OF SHARED READING

Confidence in reading	Eve: She has grown in confidence. Her schoolwork, I mean she's done so well in the last academic year. Her confidence has grown and part of that has got to be that she's now more confident in her reading.	Outcome (reading)
Cooperation	John: He doesn't just throw the book up in the air and go "I'm not doing it then" and storm off which he would do if he was doing phonics.	Opportunities (non-verbal)
Enhanced reading together	Jean: it was something that we did in any case so it just enhanced what we were actually doing and put a sort of purpose to it as well.	Outcome (Reading)
Enjoyable	Sophia: It was fun and joyful and I liked the book.	Important experience
Family values	Sophia: Do you prefer reading on your own or do you prefer reading with [CARER] or someone else?  Sophia I prefer reading with [CARER]. Int And what is it about reading with [CARER] that you particularly like? Sophia She likes reading.	Outcome (interpersonal)
Generalisation	Jean: It's also you know, she thinks that, she likes to do, more things together. She likes to cook together. And she's very much um, whereas before we made cakes before and bits and pieces like that.	Outcome (interpersonal)

## RELATIONAL BENEFITS OF SHARED READING

	<p>It was very much she'd have her own agenda .....We would just you know; we'd have our own agenda about how this should be made. So there was slight conflict .....now thing is if I'm in the kitchen she'll say to me "Are we cooking? What are we cooking?" A lot of it's done together rather than [CHILD] go off on her own sort of agenda and you try and pull her back and get it right. There's that sort of joint for doing this together and this is what we have to do.</p>	
Hard to verbalise relational benefits	Jean: I'm trying to think of how to word it because it's very much a feeling isn't it.	Opportunities (non-verbal)
Helping	<p>Int: Tell me about that. What was it like? What was the best thing about that?</p> <p>Amy: [CARER] helping me.</p>	Opportunities (verbal)
Improvement in reading ability	<p>Val: But it definitely was positive, you know the actual reading like the speed of reading definitely increased and the knowing of words, especially when words were repeated more than once in a page, he was definitely learning more words. So in that sense there was definite improvements with the reading.</p>	Outcome (reading)
Integration into family practice	Jean: We're still doing it.	Outcome (reading)

## RELATIONAL BENEFITS OF SHARED READING

Interest in reading	Eve: It's opened her eyes to what she can do and what there is to read. It's not just got to be a book.  She can pick things out on the telly. She can have the subtitles on her film and read, do you know what I mean?	Outcome (reading)
Intrinsic to paired reading	Kate: I can see how it would bring like the two people who are doing it, closer. That being focussed on the same thing together and being in that window together.	Critique (intrinsic)
Issue of dependence, interdependence and independence	Jean: I think she was more of a care giver, especially at home and felt a lot of responsibility for looking after mum, checking that mum was OK. I think she lived on a lot of toast because she could actually do that herself. But now I think she realises that it's just brought her into, you know what, it is OK, someone is going to look after me.	Outcome (SEMH)
It may not work for every child	Val: I know some children will take to it and others won't and it depend on the child.	Critique (individual and relational factors)
It's not phonics	John: He was trying to do phonics and it was a real chore for him to do the phonics, every word, literally every word was sounded out. Even the smallest words sounded out. He had no interest in it. It was very frustrating for us and for him because he found it so stressful. Because it's something he doesn't like doing anyway. I mean [VS officer] put us forward for the paired reading and I'm glad he	Critique (intrinsic)

## RELATIONAL BENEFITS OF SHARED READING

	<p>did because it took a lot of stress off [CHILD] and it took a lot of stress off of us mainly because there's nothing worse than trying to see someone do phonics that doesn't want to do it and finds it really difficult.</p>	
Less stressful	<p>INT: Do you think paired reading has any particular strengths as an intervention in terms of developing the relationship between carers and children?</p> <p>John: Yes I do because I think it takes a lot of stress off both people because they're not having to sound words out and they're not being forced that you have to get that word right. I think it takes a lot of stress off them and it definitely takes a lot less stress off the parents,</p>	Important experience
More than a learning activity	<p>Jean: We had the routine where she would read her schoolbooks to me and I would read to her. We set that quite early for her bedtime routine because she really struggled on going to sleep. So that was part of our whole evening routine. I</p>	The importance of reading (social)
Opportunity for one to one time	<p>Paula: Well just from the fact that you're talking because I think so many children these days want to sit on their Play Station or their laptop or their tablet and they might be talking to other children on their gaming but it's not quite the same as having a social conversation is it?</p>	Opportunities (non-verbal)

## RELATIONAL BENEFITS OF SHARED READING

Opportunity to show pride	John: It was a chore, it wasn't a joy it was a chore before. Now it's quite a joy to hear him actually read	Opportunities (non-verbal)
Other interventions	INT: OK. Have you taken part in any other interventions in your role as a foster carer that you have found useful in developing the relationship with whatever child you have?  Kate: No, I haven't actually. This was the first one.	Opportunities (lack of interventions)
Paired reading = good	John: It's important it's arrived in his life and, yes, it's a good thing and we're really happy with it and it has brought us closer together in the fact that we can sit down and talk rather than tell him and get angry with each other.	Critique
Paired reading = bad	Owen: Is there anything that you would like to say about the paired reading or about reading generally or anything that you'd like to ask me? Owen Yes don't do paired reading because it doesn't do anything.	Critique
Predictable	Jean: I think because the consistency of it and the fact that you know, I think she appreciated that you took, that somebody has taken time to actually sit there with her and do that.	Important experience
Prior relationship	Val: As I say, we already had quite a good relationship so I didn't notice any changes with us, no.	Outcome (interpersonal)

## RELATIONAL BENEFITS OF SHARED READING

Prioritising/investing in child	Eve: I think it's just made us, I think it made her feel more special to me, because we were having that one to one time in her eyes. They are all special anyway. But for her, it's probably like "Ooh look, this is me, it's something just we're doing". It's just me doing the paired reading. [x] is not doing it and so and so's not doing it. Do you know what I mean? It's something special for her, and me.	Opportunities (non-verbal)
Reading together is important	John: Because we've got four boys we have to set some boundaries so one of the boundaries we set was they have to read for 10/15 minutes every night or four pages of a book every night.	The importance of reading (important)
Reasons for participating	Kate: where [CHILD] is behind in her development we wanted to do anything we could to encourage her to do well at school.	The importance of reading (academic)
Role of carer	John: It's important it's arrived in his life and, yes, it's a good thing and we're really happy with it and it has brought us closer together in the fact that we can sit down and talk rather than tell him and get angry with each other.	Important experiences
SEMH	Eve: Her confidence has grown and part of that has got to be that she's now more confident in her reading.	Impact of SR (Intrapersonal)

## RELATIONAL BENEFITS OF SHARED READING

Sense of belonging	Jean: It's just given her that sense and sense that yes, she is a massive part of our family, a massive part of my life.	Impact of SR (Intrapersonal)
Shared enjoyment	Jean: It's just such a lovely time of evening for her, for both of us if I'm honest	Opportunities (non-verbal)
Special, one to one time	Eve: I think because it was just her own time with me. It's quite a busy household. I think it was just her own time with me.	Opportunities (non-verbal)
Supports attachment	Val: I think I'd recommend it to anyone. If they've got the time to do it and spend that time with that child I do think it would help with the bond and the relationship for definite.	Impact of SR (interpersonal)
Togetherness	Jean: we sat there together, we did this together.	Impact of SR (interpersonal)



### Appendix Q

#### Examples of Research Diary Entries

16<sup>th</sup> July 2019

I am struck by the way that most of the carers and some of the children talk about the intervention. Even when I ask questions directly about what it felt like their answers refer to how it compares to phonics or how the carer helped them with difficult words rather than what it was like as a shared activity and whether it was fun etc. It's really making me wonder what the results will be like and what that means about the research design (interview questions) or the overall research question.

22<sup>th</sup> November 2019

I am aware that one of the factors in deciding to have my own children educated within the Steiner school system was a concern I had about the mainstream teaching of reading which I believed over-intellectualised the process of learning to read and broke it down into component parts (phonics) removing all the joy and magic along the way. This all seems a long time ago now, but I find I am having to constantly reflect on these ideas and own them to ensure I remain true to the social constructionist values inherent in my study and defend against bias as I start to think about analysing my results.

25<sup>th</sup> January 2020

Having heard and thought so much about qualitative research and analysis I am finding it strange to actually be doing it and am not sure what I think of it. I feel like such a novice. At times I am finding it a really uncomfortable process. I get so immersed and worry about the validity of any findings. Am I simply imposing my own interpretation on the data and that someone else would come up with something completely different? Would I, if I was looking at it another time? I am wary about amplifying certain voices over others, not deliberately, but because they fit more with what I was expecting to find. Am I seeing participant comments as irrelevant, if they don't fit with my expectations? I keep thinking about articles I have read when I have questioned the author's interpretation. At other times, I think 'yeah – there are real patterns here – it's not just me'.

## RELATIONAL BENEFITS OF SHARED READING

22<sup>nd</sup> February 2020

I have just looked back at my literature review and am shocked at how much my findings match those of the studies I looked at. Even the wording of the themes are the same. I'm not sure what I think about this. On the one hand it feels like a validation of my analysis and findings, on the other I feel a bit disappointed that I am not coming up with something amazingly new and insightful – does replication equal boring?

Appendix R

Ethics Approval Form

School of Psychology Research Ethics Committee

NOTICE OF ETHICS REVIEW DECISION

For research involving human participants

**BSc/MSc/MA/Professional Doctorates in Clinical, Counselling and Educational Psychology**

**REVIEWER: Mark McDermott**

**SUPERVISOR: Mary Robinson**

**STUDENT: Deanne Bell**

**Course:** Doctorate in Child and Educational Psychology

**Title of proposed study:** Does participation in a reading together activity produce relational benefits between foster carers and the children in their care?

**DECISION OPTIONS:**

1. **APPROVED:** Ethics approval for the above named research study has been granted from the date of approval (see end of this notice) to the date it is submitted for assessment/examination.
2. **APPROVED, BUT MINOR AMENDMENTS ARE REQUIRED BEFORE THE RESEARCH COMMENCES** (see Minor Amendments box below): In this circumstance, re-submission of an ethics application is not required but the student must confirm with their supervisor that all minor amendments have been made before the research commences. Students are to do this by filling in the confirmation box below when all amendments have been attended to and

## RELATIONAL BENEFITS OF SHARED READING

emailing a copy of this decision notice to her/his supervisor for their records.

The supervisor will then forward the student's confirmation to the School for its records.

- 3. NOT APPROVED, MAJOR AMENDMENTS AND RE-SUBMISSION REQUIRED** (see Major Amendments box below): In this circumstance, a revised ethics application must be submitted and approved before any research takes place. The revised application will be reviewed by the same reviewer. If in doubt, students should ask their supervisor for support in revising their ethics application.

### DECISION ON THE ABOVE-NAMED PROPOSED RESEARCH STUDY

*(Please indicate the decision according to one of the 3 options above)*

1

#### **Minor amendments required** *(for reviewer):*

Comments:

I thought this was a very well written application.

Great care has been taken.

Minor amendment:

I note on page 11 that the xxxxx Educational Psychology Service and Virtual School xxxxx require ethical clearance to be confirmed before providing written consent. Clearance is provided here. However, that said, data collection must not ensue until xEPS and VSx have provided written consent and approval for the research to take place.

## RELATIONAL BENEFITS OF SHARED READING

**Major amendments required** *(for reviewer):*

**Confirmation of making the above minor amendments** *(for students):*

I have noted and made all the required minor amendments, as stated above, before starting my research and collecting data.

Student's name *(Typed name to act as signature):*

Student number:

Date:

*(Please submit a copy of this decision letter to your supervisor with this box completed, if minor amendments to your ethics application are required)*

### **ASSESSMENT OF RISK TO RESEACHER** *(for reviewer)*

Has an adequate risk assessment been offered in the application form?

YES / NO

Please request resubmission with an adequate risk assessment

## RELATIONAL BENEFITS OF SHARED READING

If the proposed research could expose the researcher to any of kind of emotional, physical or health and safety hazard? Please rate the degree of risk:

☐

HIGH

Please do not approve a high risk application and refer to the Chair of Ethics. Travel to countries/provinces/areas deemed to be high risk should not be permitted and an application not approved on this basis. If unsure please refer to the Chair of Ethics.

☒

MEDIUM (Please approve but with appropriate recommendations)

☐

LOW

### Reviewer comments in relation to researcher risk (if any).

I note in section 25 that the researcher intends to use a buddy system. Given the research involves home visits, it is imperative that this system is used in every instance. (It is excellent that it has been included). Similarly, the use of a co-researcher in the focus-group activity is also essential on each occasion, as specified,

## RELATIONAL BENEFITS OF SHARED READING

**Reviewer** (*Typed name to act as signature*): M.R.McDermott

**Date:** 21 March 2019

*This reviewer has assessed the ethics application for the named research study on behalf of the School of Psychology Research Ethics Committee*

Appendix S

An Excerpt of an Interview to Provide an Example of Content

that one again'' and stuff like that. He doesn't just throw the book up in the air and go ''I'm not doing it then'' and storm off which he would do if he was doing phonics.

INT So has taking part in the paired reading affected your perception of him at all, just as a person, as a child?

John Yes, we know he's a clever boy anyway and we know he's come with a lot of stuff but the paired reading has helped a lot because it's made it less stressful and he's much happier now when he comes home after lunch and he knows he's got to do the reading, he's much happier to just do it. He's not stressed out, he's not worried about it. It has brought us closer together in that respect, but he's happy to do things which is nice. If he does it he knows he'll get a reward for it and we get a reward because we're not stressed out.

INT Yes, so has taking part in the paired reading affected how you feel about being a foster carer?

John It's made the challenges less for him, I mean with having a boy it's like a challenge with all of them. I'm quite aware of what foster caring is all about. It has reduced the stress in the caring for him. I think it's a brilliant scheme actually, it's a lot easier for the child and he does try and read a few things when we're out and about that he never would have said before. It's important it's arrived in his life and, yes, it's a good thing and we're really happy with it and it has brought us closer together in the fact that we can sit down and talk rather than tell him and get angry with each other. Instead of reading the books he used to throw them across the floor and stomp off.

INT Yes, so instead of it being a negative experience it's now something that you're both having a positive experience of.

John Yes we're definitely having a positive experience of that.

INT Have you taken part in any other interventions in your role as a foster carer that you've found useful in developing that closeness or the relationship you have with the child?

John Not really no. We've known he's had problems for about three or four years and we've concentrated on trying to get the right help. It doesn't always help that he doesn't do what he's supposed to do when he's supposed to do it, like these meeting things, it doesn't help. But it is nice when you can actually talk to him rather than have him aggressive and closed down.

INT So it sounds like what you said is that as well as helping him with his reading which has then helped him feel more confident and more positive towards just reading in general that there's something about it that has made you also feel closer.



## Appendix T

## An Example of the Coding Process of One of the Interviews

Jean	<p>Yes because she always has been very, very independent in any case. And I think she was more of a care giver, especially at home and felt a lot of responsibility for looking after mum, checking that mum was OK. I think she lived on a lot of toast because she could actually do that herself. But now I think she realises that it's just brought her into, you know what, it is OK, someone is going to look after me. Someone is always going to be there. It's just given her that sense and sense that yes, she is a massive part of our family, a massive part of my life. And I think she quite enjoys that.</p>	<p>Independence -&gt; interdependence</p> <p>Paired reading -&gt; sense of healthy dependency/interdependence and reliable care.</p> <p>Attachment</p> <p>Sense of belonging</p>
INT	<p>Yes I bet. Has taking part in the paired reading scheme affected how you see her? Did you find out anything about her or realise anything about her that perhaps you wouldn't have if you hadn't done that paired reading together?</p>	
Jean	<p>No I don't think it's done that. I think it's made me, it's sort of confirmed what some of the issues that I had in my mind, it has confirmed that. A lot of it in her own self-belief. And because she comes across as such a confident happy little girl and it sort of actually showed...I've always thought that she's been very vulnerable and this is just a</p>	<p>Confirmed carer's understanding of child's needs.</p>

## RELATIONAL BENEFITS OF SHARED READING

	front but doing this together has actually sort of made me realise that “Yes, you know what? She is a very vulnerable little girl” It’s amazing to see how she’s blossomed just by something so tiny and how much that means to her. Because you tend to, you know, some nights you don’t want to sit there and you don’t want to read and all the rest of it. You’d like to put your children to bed, kiss goodnight and get on with whatever you’ve got to do. But it’s made me realise that time, how important that time is to her.	<p>Paired reading -&gt; Personal growth/emotional and social development (child)</p> <p>Prioritising child</p> <p>Importance of making time for child – importance of child seeing the time invested in them.</p>
INT	OK. Has taking part in the paired reading affected how you feel about being a foster carer?	
Jean	Oh no, I love it in any case. I absolutely love it. No but I think as an intervention I think because it is, it is quite structured but as an intervention it is a really nice intervention.	<p>Values structure of paired reading.</p> <p>Positive view of paired reading</p>