



STORYTIME™
FOUNDATION

Empowered Families, Thriving Children
Whānau mana tū, tamariki ora

Annual Report to Te Rau Puāwai Education Trust (November 2025)

Storytime Foundation is deeply grateful for the generous support of Te Rau Puāwai Education Trust. Your support enables us to deliver our **First 1000 Days** programme in South Auckland and Northland. This programme is now known as **Strong Beginnings for our Children – Hei Takinga Rangatira mō ngā Tamariki**. It supports vulnerable whānau by helping them to bond, read, talk, sing and fully engage with their tamariki.

Your support enables us to also reach whānau with parents or caregivers in prison (and outside), via a reading and bonding programme known as **Taonga mō ngā Tamariki**. We gift **Tamariki Carepacks** (books, games, paints, crayons and other resources) and run **Child Centric Visiting**. This helps build a close, positive connection between a child and their parent or caregiver, adds structure and joy to their engagement, and reduces recidivism.

Reading with babies and young children is more than just a pleasant activity. The early years of a child's life are critical for brain development. Engaging them with books and stories is fundamental to developing cognitive, emotional, social, and language skills. The benefits extend far beyond the preschool years, with a positive lifelong impact on academic achievement, mental health, relationships, and social skills.

Primarily, Storytime Foundation improves literacy, connection, and wellbeing for children born into vulnerable families across Aotearoa who are experiencing adverse circumstances. We could not do this without the support of organisations such as Te Rau Puāwai Education Trust, or without valued partners such as the Department of Corrections, Whānau Āwhina Plunket, Family Start/Tamariki Ora providers, early childhood centres, libraries, and iwi organisations, among many others. Thank you.

With your support, our Storytime Foundation programmes are building confidence, nurturing attachment, and restoring whānau bonds through reading, storytelling, and connection. As one mother says:

“
It's the first time I've felt
like I can give my child
something that will last.
”





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Successful outcomes in 2025



9,314
books gifted – up to
8 per whānau



1,073
new families reached –
2,511 now taking part



75%
of parents/caregivers
now read regularly with
their children



79%
of parents/caregivers
now more aware of the
benefits of reading



124
tamariki took part in
child-centred prison
visits



70
parents in prison (and
outside) joined a reading
and bonding workshop



650
carepacks gifted to
vulnerable tamariki

South Auckland and Northland



Key learnings and observations

Literacy inclusion

Many families include caregivers who struggle with reading. We now emphasise “sharing stories” and using pictures and talk, rather than focusing solely on reading text. This approach removes stigma and increases enjoyment, trust, and connection.

Therapeutic impact

For those in rehabilitation from drugs or alcohol, reading has proved unexpectedly therapeutic. Parents in recovery use reading with their children as a structured daily ritual that reinforces belonging as well as staying clean or sober.

Cross-agency collaboration

Partnerships with Whānau Āwhina Plunket, Family Start, Department of Corrections, and iwi organisations have deepened, increasing cultural safety and the sustainability of service delivery.



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Storytime Foundation

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“

The Storytime sessions give our parents something positive to focus on. As Corrections officers, we can see the pride in them when they read to their children.

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