



Tales Toolkit

Appendices

July 2025

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Appendix A - Tales Toolkit Assumptions and causal mechanisms

The assumed causal mechanisms are detailed in the table below. Evidence strength was assessed by the delivery team.

Note: (i) **green**- the evidence base is very strong, (ii) **green/amber**-the evidence base is strong, (iii) **red/amber**-the evidence base is developing (iv) **red**- the evidence base is limited.

#	Assumption / Causal Mechanism	Where in the ToC does the assumption apply?	Evidence	Evidence Strength
1	Pupil-teacher relationships are key to academic and social outcomes in EY	Input/Activity	Miller-Lewis et al., 2014; Torres et al., 2015	Amber/Green
2	Embedding literacy materials within play settings in kindergarten classrooms is related to children's increased engagement with these materials and the practice of literacy skills	Input/Activity	Christie & Enz, 1992; Justice & Pullen, 2003; Stone & Christie, 1996	Amber/Green
3	Teachers are open to a play-focused way of learning, but require support	Input/Activity	Bubikova-Moan et al., 2019; Pyle & Danniels., 2017	Amber/Green
4	Play based pedagogy enhances learning outcomes	Output	Ashari & Baharuddin, 2017; Zosh et al., 2017; Hirsh-Pasek et al., 2009	Green
5	Access to Quality interactions with teachers impacts social emotional development and academic learning	Output	Nutbrown et al., 2005; Melhuish et al., 2008; Siraj-Blatchford & Sylva, 2004	Amber/Green
6	Practitioners confidence in practice related to quality interaction leads to more effective settings	Output	Siraj-Blatchford & Sylva, 2004	Amber/Red
7	Rooting activity in children's own stories can contribute to the development of a shared classroom-climate where children are valued for the narratives and strengths that they can demonstrate in these sessions	Output	Nicolopoulou & Richer, 2004; Wright et al., 2012	Amber/Red
8	Narrative and imaginary play are valuable strategies for the development of spoken language and literacy within early years	Short-term outcome	Cremand et al., 2017	Amber/Green
9	Play-based learning where children can be imaginative is associated with more advanced language used by children	Short-term outcome	Bergen & Mauer, 2000; Weisberg, Zosh, et al., 2013	Amber/Green
10	Parent-teacher co-operation is associated with better learning and socioemotional outcomes	Long-term outcome	Cook et al., 2018; Kim et al., 2013; Jeon et al., 2021	Amber/Green
11	Response and structured parent-child interactions associated with increased school readiness (esp for children growing up in disadvantaged SES) (school readiness e.g. language, communication, personal, social and emotional skills)	Long-term outcome	Connell & Prinz, 2002; Dodici et al., 2003; Justice et al., 2019	Amber/Green
12	Tales Toolkit focuses on the behaviours for learning that underpin school readiness, giving children skills that will make a difference in later life; improving behaviour, concentration, using story as an effective way to facilitate interactions and develop skills associated with school readiness (e.g. socio-emotional skills, language and communication)	Long-term outcome	Duncan et al., 2007; Hillman & Williams, 2015; Curenton, 2006	Amber/Green
13	peers are powerful forces for learning - impact of mixed-SES and mixed-ability groups on those who are starting off in a disadvantaged position	Short-term outcome	EEF, 2018; Ghandour et al., 2021; Curenton, 2006	Amber/Red
14	Familiarity with Tales Toolkit structure leads increased motivation to write, narrowing the early gender gap in Literacy	Output	Henry & Rickman, 2007; Reid & Ready, 2013; Wright et al., 2012	Amber/Green
15	Children from disadvantaged backgrounds particularly benefit from quality interactions in their early years	Long-term outcome	Edwards & Jones (2018); Jones Bartoli & Shelley (in prep).	Amber/Red
16	Parents increased knowledge and confidence about child development supports learning outcomes	Overall aim	Sheffield Morris et al., 2017	Amber/Green
17	Tales Toolkit encourages playful learning by upskilling teachers providing knowledge and a method of delivery that supports with competing pressures	Short-term outcome	Conrad et al., 1992; Reiner Hess et al., 2004	Amber/Red
18	Storytelling activities can help support development of problem-solving abilities	Input/Activity	Baker (2014); our own research	Amber/Red
19		Long-term outcome	Curenton (2006)	Red

The assumed contextual assumption are detailed in the table below. Evidence strength was assessed by the delivery team.

Note: Assumption strength: How strong do you think the assumption is?

(i) **green** – this assumption will hold in the vast majority of circumstances where the programme is delivered, (ii) **green/amber** – this assumption will hold in most of the circumstances where the programme is delivered, (iii) **red/amber** – this assumption will often not hold in the circumstances where the programme is delivered, (iv) **red** – there is a good chance of this assumption not holding / do not know whether this assumption will hold or not.

Assumption risk: If this assumption does not hold, how much of an impact on programme delivery with fidelity to the original design?

(i) **green** – the programme could continue to be delivered with very minor impact, (ii) **green/amber** – the programme could continue to be delivered, but the impact would be substantial, (iii) **red/amber** – the programme could continue to be delivered, but without fidelity to original design; (iv) **red** – the programme could not be delivered.

#		Contextual Assumption	Assumption Strength	Assumption Risk
1	Training	Time and resources have been allocated for training and implementation	green	Red
2		Practitioners understand and implement the training sessions in order	green	Red
3		Schools have access to the internet and training films	Green	Red
4		Schools have access to resources to use in kit and for Tales Toolkit activities	Green	Red
5		School have scope to train together	green	Amber/Red
6	Implementation	Practitioners put training into practise with regular storytelling sessions	green	Red
7		Practitioners have a good understanding of writing development	green	Amber/Green
8		Schools have well moderated assessment systems in place	Amber/Green	Amber/Red
9		Schools have funding available to purchase additional materials needed to enable all classes to use Tales Toolkit effectively	Amber/Green	Amber/Red
10		Practitioners explore the additional material in the Tales Toolkit members area outside of training sessions	Amber/Green	green
11		Practitioners have already built a good rapport with their children and have behaviour management strategies to help manage group sessions.	green	Amber/Green
12		School provides time in the day for children to engage freely and make choices within the provision	green	Amber/Green
13		School has provided staff with safeguarding training and they are able to deal with any sensitive discussions that arise	green	Amber/Green
14		Practitioners are familiar with the EYFS curriculum and expectations	green	Amber/Red
15		Practitioners continue using Tales Toolkit after the end of the training.	green	red
16		Practitioners use the language of Tales Toolkit as outlined in the training outside of group sessions to make links with everyday problems	Amber/Green	Amber/Red
17		Practitioners follow the training and ensure Tales Toolkit sessions are a safe space for the children, no pressure, where all suggestions are valued and storytelling is an enjoyable, fun experience.	green	Amber/Green
29		Practitioners stay consistent through the training and the trial	green	Amber/Green
30		Research	School engage with us to provide feedback	Amber/Green
31	Schools are able to provide the data we need based on their current reporting and understanding		Amber/Red	Amber/Green
32	SLT	SLT show interest in whats happening in early years and value the opinion of the team	Amber/Green	Amber/Green

Appendix B Tales Toolkit Memorandum of Understanding



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Detailed information for settings

State-maintained and private, voluntary and independent nurseries are being invited to receive funded professional development through the programme, Tales Toolkit. The programme is being offered as part of a research project, which will involve settings delivering the programme for one year and taking part in a small number of surveys, interviews and programme delivery observations.

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) sets out the roles and responsibilities of settings participating in, and the parties involved in delivering and evaluating, Tales Toolkit.

This document is being sent to your setting because you have indicated an interest in participating in the project.

Please read the information below, which includes a Q&A section and contact details for the team.

Then, complete this online form: [Link to the online Memorandum of understanding form.](#)

What is Tales Toolkit and why is it important?

Information on Tales Toolkit

Tales Toolkit is a package of training and resources supporting early language and social development through child-led oral storytelling activities.

When early years practitioners deliver Tales Toolkit in their settings, they guide children through the process of creating their own story. Over time, staff support children to create stories more independently and in later stages of the programme children are supported to write, draw and make marks to represent their story. These activities are designed to support children to develop their language and communication skills, creative thinking, and problem solving, as well as laying the foundations for the development of writing skills.

Early Years practitioners receive access to:

- Five 50-minute online training videos, which they are encouraged to use in Professional Development meetings within their setting (training is designed to run over 3-4 months with activities in between embedding best practice).
- Physical resources to use in the delivery of Tales Toolkit sessions (big bags; small kit; apron; hanger; shuffle book; big book).
- Additional support: research articles linked to each session; a social media group for participants; an archive of webinars with early years experts; and downloadable resource.

The Tales Toolkit programme supports practitioners to engage in high quality interactions with children, through fun, child-led activities. High quality interactions are important for children's language development and a previous research study suggests that Tales Toolkit may have positive impacts on children's communication and language outcomes.

Links to research

Jones Bartoli, A. (2018) 'Using storytelling to promote literacy, communication and socioemotional development in the early years', Project Report: Tales Toolkit. <https://research.gold.ac.uk/id/eprint/24937>

Law, J. et al., (2017) 'Early Language Development: Needs, provision, and intervention for preschool children from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds', Education Endowment Foundation: London.
<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/evidence-reviews/early-language>

EEF (2021) 'Communication and Language Approaches' Early Years Toolkit, Education Endowment Foundation: London. <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/early-years-toolkit/communication-and-language-approaches>

EEF (2021) 'Play-based Learning', Early Years Toolkit, Education Endowment Foundation: London.
<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/early-years-toolkit/play-based-learning>

The timeline

March - July 2023 Settings sign up to the research project (first come first served!).

September 2023 - July 2024 Complete the Tales Toolkit training and deliver the programme.

The training should be completed during the autumn term 2023 and revisited through the year as needed.

Sept/Oct 2023 Survey sent to early years setting staff (baseline)

May - July 2024 Survey sent to early years setting staff (endline) and case study visits conducted, if your setting has been selected for this

What your setting will get for taking part

Early Years practitioners receive access to the training and resources set out above, which would usually cost approximately £960 plus VAT. Settings will have access to the online resources for a year and can keep all of the physical resources at the end of the project. Settings can also continue to have access to the online platform and resources at the end of the project, at a reduced re-subscription rate.

In recognition of the staff time costs associated with undertaking professional development, additional funding is available to cover approximately 50% of staff time costs for attending training: settings will be provided with £7.50 per hour per staff member who completes the 5 hours of training, for up to a maximum of 10 staff members.

If your setting is also selected to be part of the research project, staff will be asked to complete a survey about Tales Toolkit at two points next academic year. Staff who return their surveys will be entered into a prize draw, with one prize draw at baseline and another with the endline survey: a £50 prize for 1 person and £25 for 2 others.

Some settings involved in the research project will also be asked to participate in case study visits. This involves arranging a time for the evaluation team to visit your setting, to interview staff about their experiences using the programme and to observe a Tales Toolkit session. Settings selected for case studies will receive an additional £100 at the end of the programme (in July 2024).

What are the aims of the research?

As part of the Department for Education's Early Years Recovery Programme, Thames Valley Early Years Stronger Practice Hub and the Education Endowment Foundation are working together to fund Early Years settings' access to evidence-informed programmes and study the programmes' influence on practice and children's outcomes. The aims are to support education recovery following the pandemic, whilst also developing our understanding of effective professional development in the early years.

The Tales Toolkit research project will help Tales Toolkit refine their programme and allow us to find out whether the programme is ready to be provided to more settings and children. The research will focus on how Tales Toolkit is

delivered in practice, the feasibility of delivering the programme and on early years practitioners experiences of using the programme.

The evaluation will not involve collection of any personal data about children in your setting. The research is focused on the delivery of Tales Toolkit and staff member's experiences with the programme. We will not be evaluating your setting, staff or children. No individuals or settings will be named in the report arising from the study.

What settings can take part in the evaluation

Up to 30 private, voluntary and independent settings (PVI) or maintained nurseries from the following local authorities can take part in this research project:

- Bracknell Forest
- Oxfordshire
- Reading
- Slough
- West Berkshire
- Windsor and Maidenhead
- Wokingham

Maintained school-based nursery settings are also encouraged to deliver the programme to Reception classes as well as nursery classes. The programme can be delivered to 3-5 year old children as part of this research project.

Unfortunately, there are some settings that can't take part:

- Early Years settings can only sign up to receive one programme funded through the Stronger Practice Hubs initiative between 2022-2025. If you have already signed up for another programme funded through this work, please note that it will not be possible to take part in the Tales Toolkit research project.
- Settings taking part in the evaluation of the DfE Early Years Professional Development Programme are also not eligible to take part.
- Sorry, if your setting has delivered Tales Toolkit before, you are not eligible to take part.

What taking part in the evaluation involves

Taking part in the evaluation involves participating staff completing and returning surveys about your settings' 'usual' practice and experience of Tales Toolkit. There will be two surveys, one at the beginning of the project (baseline) and one at the end (endline). Practitioners will be required to complete both, so that we can see how things might have changed. These surveys will be emailed out to staff and will short and quick to complete.

Researchers would also like to visit a selection of settings for one day, to carry out observations of Tales Toolkit being used. These visits will take place during the summer term of 2024 at a time that is convenient to settings. If selected to be a case study, the research team will discuss in detail these arrangements with the settings in due course. During these visits, the research team would also like to carry out some short interviews with staff involved, to find out their views on the training and how things have gone whilst using the Tales Toolkit resources.

How we protect your data

- We adhere to the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. All data will be treated with the strictest confidence.

- All data will be transferred securely and saved in secure locations only accessible to the evaluation and delivery teams.
- We promise to respect any personal information which is under our control and to keep it safe. We aim to be clear when we collect your information about what we will do with it and let you know of any material changes to this notice.
- IES and Tales Toolkit are each independent data controllers for the data they are collecting as part of this project. Their legal basis for processing personal data is 'legitimate interest'. Goldsmiths, University of London are a data processor for Tales Toolkit. A detailed data processing agreement will be put in place between Tales Toolkit and Goldsmiths' to ensure any data shared between them will be processed securely.
- All participants are given access to Privacy Notices which explain in detail what data are collected and why as well as how data are stored, transferred and deleted. Contact details are also provided in case of queries or complaints. [Please find Privacy Notices here: <https://www.employment-studies.co.uk/evaluation-tales-toolkit> <https://talestoolkit.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Tales-Toolkit-Ltd-Privacy-Policy.pdf>)]
- Tales Toolkit will collect personal data of key staff and practitioners (i.e. name, job role, email address and telephone number) only where it is necessary. These details will be collected from settings in a password protected email form and shared securely with the evaluation team. In the process of signing settings up to the wider programme e.g. a general mailing list, some personal data (in the form of contact details) may be transferred and stored on servers located internationally (in the case of Google docs, this will be in the USA).

Frequently asked questions

Who is running Tales Toolkit?

- The EEF and Thames Valley Early Years Stronger Practice Hub are the funders of the project.
- Tales Toolkit is being jointly run by Tales Toolkit, led by the founder of the programme Kate Shelley, and a team at Goldsmiths, University in London ('the Delivery Team'). Goldsmiths' will oversee elements of the contractual and administrative elements of the project while the Tales Toolkit team lead on recruitment activity, provision of the programme to settings and supporting settings to engage with Tales Toolkit. The Delivery Team are responsible for the implementation of Tales Toolkit and will not have access to the evaluation data during the study.
- IES ('the Evaluation Team') will evaluate the programme focusing on the ease with which early years settings can implement it to expected quality standards, whether practitioners find the resources helpful, and practitioners' views of children's engagement with the intervention and whether it has an effect on language development. This will enable an assessment of whether the programme could be implemented at a larger scale.

Has the study received ethical approval?

The study has gone through IES's ethics process and has received ethical approval.

Will children's data be collected?

No child level data will be collected or processed. As part of the evaluation work, if children's names are disclosed, they will not be written down.

- All data collected as part of the evaluation activities are anonymised. Report findings are always anonymised and setting name, staff names and parents' names are never reported.

Where can I find out about the results of the study?

- At the end of the study a final report, which does not identify any individuals or settings, will be made publicly available on the EEF website Education Endowment Foundation | EEF for anyone who is interested in the findings of the research.
- IES and Goldsmiths' may also decide to disseminate the findings more widely for example, writing an article for a peer reviewed academic journal.

Who do I contact if I have further questions?

Questions about the delivery? Please contact the delivery team:

info@talestoolkit.com

Questions about the evaluation? Please contact the evaluation team:

Ceri Williams, IES

talestoolkit@employment-studies.co.uk

01273 763407

How do I join the study?

Tales Toolkit: Memorandum of understanding settings agreement

Please click on the link below and complete the online form.

The Delivery Team will securely send the Evaluation Team the information provided by you. The Evaluation Team will then contact the named person to arrange sending out the surveys to staff and visiting the settings if selected to be a case study.

In the online form we summarise the requirements of settings taking part in the research study. This form is to be completed by the setting leader / head teacher. Please read carefully before completing and sending.

Link to the online Memorandum of understanding form.

Form can be found at <https://forms.gle/FbwS5NRkn4VfryZo9>

Please email info@talestoolkit.com if you have any problems or questions.

Appendix C Tales Toolkit Parent Information Sheet



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Tales Toolkit

Parent/carer information sheet

Tales Toolkit gives children a means of exploring, creating and telling the stories that are important to them. It provides interactive, child-led resources using easy to remember symbols representing story structure. Stories are centred around four themes using symbols for a character, a setting, a problem and a solution. Anything can be part of a story, from a wooden spoon to a favourite toy, making links with hobbies, cultures, and the natural world.



Character



Setting



Problem



Solution

The resources are provided with online training and on-going support to staff in early years settings, to ensure progress across many areas of learning. The developers at Tales Toolkit have worked with top experts to develop the training, holding at the heart an ethos of play, communication and developing quality interactions. Goldsmiths, University of London are working with the Tales Toolkit team.

Staff who have used Tales Toolkit are very positive about the program:

“Tales Toolkit can constantly extend into other areas of life - children ask themselves “What’s the problem, how can we solve it? This way, they are learning things like how to take turns, how to deal with conflict, and how to respect each other.”

“We could never have predicted just how impactful and essential this resource and training would be. From the start the training has empowered and boosted confidence of all staff. We are so impressed with the language development and creative story writing of all our children, especially the boys. Thank you!”

Tales Toolkit has won numerous awards including Teach First Innovation award, Nursery World Awards and ERA awards and gained funding and support from companies such as The Lego Foundation.

Your child/ren’s nursery/school has chosen to use Tales Toolkit this year, along with a number of other settings locally. Staff will take part in the training sessions then, at least once a week, they will tell a Tales Toolkit story which all the children will be involved in. This might be with the whole class, in smaller groups, or with individual children. Staff will also make sure the resources are available for children to access in their play areas, including outside.

Thames Valley Early Years Stronger Practice Hub and the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) are working together to fund Early Year’s settings so they can access evidence-informed programmes and study the programme’s influence on practice. This project is part of the Department for Education’s Early Years Recovery Programme. The programme will be independently evaluated by the Institute of Employment Studies (IES).

What this means for your child/ren

Your child/ren’s nursery/school is taking part in a research project to find out how well Tales Toolkit works and what staff think about it.

This means a researcher from IES (who are independent, so not part of Tales Toolkit) will visit the nursery/school.

- The researcher from IES has passed a DBS check (so is allowed to come into settings with children) and they have been trained to carry out the research.

- The researcher will spend one day here in the Summer term (May to July 2024) to observe how teachers and other staff are using Tales Toolkit with the children. This means they will watch a session in the classroom and see how the resources are being used by the staff and children.
- The researcher will **not** be alone with any child/ren.
- If a child asks the researcher what they are doing, they will tell the child their name and that they are in class to learn more about what happens in pre-school/nursery/school. They will say that they are going to keep out of the way and learn by watching but that the child can ask questions if they want to.
- No personal information will be collected and no photos will be taken.
- The researcher will only take notes and **no names** will be written down.

The researcher will **not** be assessing or testing your child/ren, the focus will be on what the teacher is doing and how the children respond and engage. The researcher is also going to interview staff members about Tales Toolkit, but when they are **not** teaching.

The researcher will ensure that any cause for concern arising from self-disclosure, observation or reports from another child will be acted upon by reporting it to the Child Protection Lead and the incident will be factually reported via completion of an incident form. Any child protection matters shall be kept confidential.

Staff will also be sent surveys at the beginning and end, to find out what they think of the materials and what difference they made to their teaching. Schools/nurseries will receive £100 as a thank you for allowing the researcher visit.

Afterwards, the researchers will write up a report with their findings (which will be found here: **Education Endowment Foundation | EEF**). Everything is anonymous, which means no individual children, staff or setting will be named in the report.

Timetable

March 2023 - July 2023	Settings sign up to the research project
September 2023 - July 2024	Staff complete the Tales Toolkit training and use the materials and resources
September - October 2023	First survey sent to staff
May - July 2024	Researcher visits settings Second survey sent to staff

If you would like more information about Tales Toolkit, please contact them by email info@talestoolkit.com

If you would like to know more about the research team, please contact the Project Manager Ceri Williams

Email talestoolkit@employment-studies.co.uk

Telephone - 01273 763407

We really hope you are happy for your child's nursery to take part in the research study.

If you have any questions or concerns about what will happen when the researcher visits your child's class, please feel free to contact Ceri Williams (using the details above) and she can discuss this with you in more detail.

Many thanks.

Appendix D Tales Toolkit Staff Information Sheet

Evaluation of Tales Toolkit pilot (2023 to 2024)

What is this project about?

The Institute for Employment Studies (IES) has been commissioned by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) to carry out a research study of Tales Toolkit, a package of training and resources supporting children's early language and social development through oral storytelling.

The Tales Toolkit pilot evaluation project is a collaboration between the EEF, Thames Valley Early Years Stronger Practice Hub, Tales Toolkit Limited (the organisation that designed and delivers the programme) Goldsmiths', University of London (which led early research into the programme), and IES.

The Tales Toolkit pilot programme has been developed to support 3–5-year-old children, by providing opportunities for early years practitioners to responsively interact with children and support the development of children's language and communication skills, problem-solving skills, creativity and motivation for writing.

The Tales Toolkit package includes five 50-minute online training videos for early years practitioners and a set of physical resources used in the delivery of Tales Toolkit. Resources can be embedded across the provision for children to access in their play.

What is the purpose of the research?

The aim of this research is to explore how Tales Toolkit is delivered in practice in 30 early years settings, the feasibility of delivering the programme and early years practitioners' experiences of using the programme.

The evaluation will focus on the delivery of Tales Toolkit in maintained nurseries and Private, Voluntary and Independent early year years settings. School-based nurseries are also able to deliver the programme to their Reception classes.

Key evaluation activities will include early years practitioner surveys, observations of programme delivery, a review of the training videos and materials, and interviews with stakeholders.

IES will evaluate the programme focusing on the ease with which early years settings can implement it to expected quality standards, whether practitioners find the resources helpful, and practitioners' views of children's engagement with the intervention and whether it has an effect on language development. This will enable an assessment of whether the programme could be implemented at a larger scale.

How will my setting be involved in the research?

All settings completed the baseline survey in Autumn 2023. This survey will be repeated at the end of the Summer term (June-July 2024).

IES will also be selecting some settings to be case study settings during the Tales Toolkit programme delivery. If your Early Years setting is selected, staff from IES will contact your setting to arrange a case study visit to include interviews with practitioners including Room/Language/Early Years leads and the setting manager(s) and observations of staff delivering Tales Toolkit with children. The observation of practitioners will help the research team to identify key components of the intervention and explore how children are engaging with the delivery of the Tales Toolkit programme.

Settings who are part of the cases will receive £100 for completion of evaluation measures.

What kind of information do we collect?

The research will involve:

Online surveys (baseline and post-treatment for practitioners).

Observations of delivery: focused on practitioners in early years settings delivering the intervention to children.

Interviews with key staff (e.g. settings managers and practitioners) at two timepoints to form settings case studies (during the case study visits and at the end of the intervention)

Review of training programme provided online by Tales Toolkit.

Interviews with the delivery team at the end of delivery.

Collecting and analysing data on fidelity including delivery team data.

Personal data of key staff and practitioners (i.e. name, job role, email address and telephone number) will only be collected where it is necessary: either to send invitations to participate in the research or where it is relevant to the

interview/survey to contextualise your responses. For the purposes of sending invitations to take part in the research, this information will either be obtained from publicly available sources (e.g. your organisation's website) or supplied by your setting with your explicit consent.

No personal data of children will be collected from the settings it visits to conduct case studies. In leading these visits, IES will focus on the practitioners and other staff in the setting.

What happens to the information I share, or 'my data'?

If you are invited and choose to take part in an interview, survey or case study for this project, the data you give will be used for research purposes only. IES will produce a report that summarises the main findings from all these research activities. Individuals will not be named, nor will any information be included that could reveal your identity, except with your explicit permission. This report will be made publicly available on the **EEF website** for anyone who is interested in the findings of the research.

The Evaluation and Delivery Teams may also decide to disseminate the findings more widely for example, writing an article for a peer reviewed academic journal.

We will only retain your personal data for as long as necessary to fulfil the purposes we collected it for. Your personal information, interview and observation notes, interview and survey opinions and responses will be securely deleted from the Evaluation Team's systems six months after the project is complete (currently estimated to be May 2025).

Who do I contact to ask questions?

If you have questions about the research or would like to remove the information you have provided, please contact:

The Institute for Employment Studies

Ceri Williams, Senior Research Fellow

ceri.williams@employment-studies.co.uk

<https://www.employment-studies.co.uk/evaluation-tales-toolkit>

Appendix E - Tales Toolkit Privacy Notice

Introduction

The Tales Toolkit is an intervention that provides a package of training and resources to early years settings to support early language and social development through child-led storytelling activities. It has been designed by a dedicated organisation – Tales Toolkit – and independently evaluated at small-scale by Goldsmiths', University of London.

The Tales Toolkit evaluation project is a collaboration between the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF), Thames Valley Early Years Stronger Practice Hub, Tales Toolkit Limited (the organisation that designed and delivers the programme) Goldsmiths', University of London (which led early research into the programme), and the Institute for Employment Studies (IES).

The roles of each party named above are as follows:

The EEF and Thames Valley Early Years Stronger Practice Hub, are the funders of the project.

Tales Toolkit is being jointly run by Tales Toolkit Limited, led by the founder of the programme Kate Shelley, and a team at Goldsmiths' ('the Delivery Team'). Goldsmiths' will oversee elements of the contractual and administrative elements of the project while the Tales Toolkit team lead on recruitment activity, provision of the programme to settings and supporting settings to engage with Tales Toolkit. The Delivery Team are responsible for the implementation of Tales Toolkit and will not have access to the evaluation data during the study.

IES ('the Evaluation Team') will evaluate the programme focusing on the ease with which early years settings can implement it to expected quality standards, whether practitioners find the resources helpful, and practitioners' views of children's engagement with the intervention and whether it has an effect on language development. This will enable an assessment of whether the programme could be implemented at a larger scale.

In line with the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), this privacy notice sets out how the Delivery Team and the Evaluation Team will collect and use your personal data, and who you can contact with a query or a complaint. We promise to respect any of your personal information which is under our control and to keep it safe. We aim to be clear when we collect your information about what we will do with it and let you know of any material changes to this notice.

What is the legal basis for processing my data?

IES is an independent data controller for this evaluation. IES' legal basis for processing personal data is 'legitimate interests'. The evaluation of Tales Toolkit fulfils one of IES' core business purposes (undertaking research, evaluation and information activities) and therefore in their legitimate interest that processing personal information is necessary for the conduct of the evaluation.

Tales Toolkit Limited is an independent data controller for the data they collect for recruitment of settings and delivery of the project. Tales Toolkit's legal basis for processing data is 'legitimate interests'. The evaluation of Tales Toolkit fulfils one of Tales Toolkit's core business purposes (undertaking training, information provision and research activities) and therefore in their legitimate interest that processing personal information is necessary for the delivery of the project.

What kind of information do we collect?

The research will involve:

- Online surveys (baseline and post-treatment for practitioners)
- Interviews with key staff (e.g. settings managers and practitioners) at two timepoints to form settings case studies

- Review of training programme provided online by Tales Toolkit
- Observations of delivery: focused on practitioners in early years settings delivering the intervention to children
- Interviews with practitioners at the end of the intervention
- Interviews with delivery team at the end of delivery
- Collecting and analysing data on fidelity including delivery team data.

Personal data of key staff and practitioners (i.e. name, job role, email address and telephone number) will only be collected where it is necessary: either to send invitations to participate in the research or where it is relevant to the interview/survey to contextualise your responses. For the purposes of sending invitations to take part in the research, this information will either be obtained from publicly available sources (e.g. your organisation's website) or supplied by your setting with your explicit consent.

Staff who return their questionnaires will be entered into a prize draw, if they consent to IES using their contact details for this purpose (there will be one prize draw at baseline and another with the endline survey: a £50 prize for 1 person and £25 for 2 others).

No personal data of children will be collected from the settings it visits to conduct case studies. In leading these visits, IES will focus on the practitioners and other staff in the setting only.

How will my data be treated?

We take all reasonable steps to protect your personal information and follow procedures designed to prevent unauthorised access, alteration, loss or disclosure of your information.

Tales Toolkit will collect personal data (of key staff and practitioners) from settings in a password protected email form. (Please find Tales Toolkit's privacy notice here: <https://talestoolkit.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Tales-Toolkit-Ltd-Privacy-Policy.pdf>)

This information will be securely transferred to the Evaluation Team using OwnCloud. Personal data will be stored on an encrypted server with access restricted solely to members of the evaluation team.

We have put in place procedures to deal with any suspected personal data breach and will notify you and any applicable regulator of a breach where we are legally required to do so.

If you are invited and choose to take part in an interview, survey or case study for this project, the data you give will be used for research purposes only. IES will produce a report that summarises the main findings from all these research activities. Individuals will not be named, nor will any information be included that could reveal your identity, except with your explicit permission. This report will be made publicly available on the EEF website Education Endowment Foundation | EEF for anyone who is interested in the findings of the research.

The Evaluation and Delivery Teams may also decide to disseminate the findings more widely for example, writing an article for a peer reviewed academic journal.

We will only retain your personal data for as long as necessary to fulfil the purposes we collected it for. Your personal information, interview and observation notes, interview and survey opinions and responses will be securely deleted from the Evaluation Team's systems six months after the project is complete (currently estimated to be May 2025).

Who else has access to your information?

Goldsmiths, University of London are a data processor for Tales Toolkit. A detailed data processing agreement will be put in place between Tales Toolkit and Goldsmiths' to ensure data shared between them (for contractual and administrative purposes) will be kept securely.

The data controllers (the Delivery Team or the Evaluation Team) may disclose your information to third parties in connection with the purposes of processing your personal data set out in this notice. These third parties may include suppliers, research assistants, trusted academic partners and subcontractors who may process information on behalf of the data controllers to carry out such work as undertaking interviews or transcribing interviews. In all cases, the data controllers will ensure that these third parties enter into appropriate data processing agreements with us and that they keep your personal data secure and confidential.

We may also disclose your personal information if required by law, or to protect or defend ourselves or others against illegal or harmful activities, or as part of a reorganisation or restructuring of our organisations.

Your legal rights

Under certain circumstances, you have rights under data protection laws in relation to your personal data, including the rights to:

Request access to your personal data: this enables you to receive a copy of the personal data we hold about you and to check we are lawfully processing it.

Withdraw the information you have provided as part of the interviews or survey up to two weeks after you have submitted your response.

See: Information Commissioner's Office website for a full description of your legal rights.

If you wish to exercise any of the rights set out above in connection with this research project, please contact Suzanne Anderson, Data Protection Officer at IES on Suzanne.Anderson@employment-studies.co.uk

Who can I contact with a query about how my data will be used?

If you have any questions about how your data will be used, please contact the Project Director or Project Manager for the evaluation:

Becci Newton, Director of Public Policy and Research at IES (Project Director): Becci.Newton@employment-studies.co.uk

Ceri Williams, Senior Research Fellow at IES (Project Manager): Ceri.Williams@employment-studies.co.uk

Who can I contact with a complaint?

Under GDPR, you have the right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office at www.ico.org.uk. We would, however, appreciate the chance to deal with your concerns before you approach the ICO, so please contact IES in the first instance.

Company details for the research and delivery team and funders of the evaluation

The Education Endowment Foundation is a charity registered in England

Charity registration number: 1142111

Company number: 07587909

Registered office: Millbank Tower, 21-24 Millbank, London SW1P 4QP

Email: info@eefoundation.org.uk

The Institute for Employment Studies is a charitable company limited by guarantee registered in England.

Registration number: 931547

Charity registration number: 258930

Registered office: Institute for Employment Studies, City Gate, 185 Dyke Road, Brighton, BN3 1 TL6

Email: Ceri.Williams@employment-studies.co.uk

Tales Toolkit is a charitable company limited by guarantee registered in England.

Registration number: 09013867

Charity registration number: N/A

Registered office: Tales Toolkit Ltd, 14 Thorogood Gardens, Stratford, London, E151HG

Email: info@talestoolkit.com

Goldsmiths' College (also known as 'Goldsmiths, University of London'), is a body incorporated by royal charter

Registration number RC000715

Administrative offices: New Cross, London SE14 6NW

Appendix F Tales Toolkit Baseline Survey

<Hidden questions> [personalised link survey ONLY]

1. [mandatory & hidden] <practitioner name>
2. [mandatory & hidden] <practitioner email>
3. [mandatory & hidden] <practitioner setting name>

Introduction

You have been asked to fill in this survey because your setting is taking part in a pilot study of the Tales Toolkit programme. The study is being funded by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) and Thames Valley Early Years Stronger Practice Hub (TVEYSPH) to assess the effectiveness of the Tales Toolkit programme, where practitioners receive training and resources to guide children through the process of creating their own story.

Before the Tales Toolkit programme starts, we would like to learn a bit about your role and your regular practice. The survey should take approximately five to ten minutes to complete.

The focus of this project is with children who are 3 to 5 years old. We appreciate you may also work with children under 3 years old but please only answer the questions below in relation to your work with children **3 years and over**.

At the end of the survey you will be given the option to be entered into a prize draw with one prize of £50 and two prizes of £25 each, as a thank you for participating.

All answers are entirely confidential. Your data will be held securely in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018/GDPR and **only** accessed by the research team at the Institute for Employment Studies (IES). This information will only be used for research purposes as part of the evaluation. No-one at your school/setting, EEF/TVEYSPH or Tales Toolkit/any other third parties will see your responses.

For more information about why we are collecting this data and how your data will be used, see the [privacy policy](#).(opens in new window)

If you have any questions about the survey or the evaluation, you can contact the research team at IES by emailing talestoolkit@employment-studies.co.uk(opens in new window) or phoning the Project Manager on 01273 763407

Navigation

A small number of questions are mandatory as your responses will determine subsequent questions in the survey; these will be denoted with a *.

Please navigate through this survey using the buttons at the bottom of each page.

Reset: use the reset button at the bottom of each page if necessary to clear the answers to all questions on that page.

Save: you can save a partially completed questionnaire and return to complete it by using the save button at the bottom of the screen and returning to the survey via the link noted, which you can also choose to have emailed to you.

Submit: send your completed questionnaire to us using the submit button on the last page. Thank you.

About you [general link survey ONLY]

Please could you tell us your name and contact details so we can invite you to take part in a follow-up survey at the end of the academic year and enter you for the prize draw. The option for entering the prize draw is at the end of the survey.

We will not use your details for any other purpose and your details will be securely destroyed six months after completion of the study.

1. *Please could you tell us your full name? [mandatory]
 - a. <practitioner name>
2. *Please could you provide your email address? Please **do not** provide a general email address for your setting/school. [mandatory]
 - a. <practitioner email>
3. *Please tell us the full name of your setting or school [mandatory]
 - a. <practitioner setting name>

Your role

4. *What is your job role(s)? (Please select all that apply). [mandatory]
 - a. Early Years practitioner
 - b. Early Years Teacher
 - c. Teacher (QTS)
 - d. Teaching Assistant
 - e. Individual Needs Assistant/Learning Support Assistant
 - f. Room lead
 - g. Year group lead
 - h. Early Years lead
 - i. Setting Deputy Manager
 - j. Setting Manager
 - k. Specialist role, e.g. Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Lead/Assistant, Safeguarding Lead, Literacy Leader etc [open text – please specify]
 - l. Other, please specify [open text]
5. How many years' experience do you have directly supporting/working with children in the early years sector? (Please select one)
 - a. Less than 6 months
 - b. Between 6 months and 1 year
 - c. 1-2 years
 - d. 2-5 years
 - e. 5-10 years
 - f. Over 10 years
6. *In this academic year (September 2023 to July 2024), which age group or class cohort will you be working with? (Please tick all that apply) [mandatory]
 - a. Pre-school: 3 year olds only
 - b. Pre-school: 4 year olds only

- c. Reception: 4-5 year olds
- d. Other

Tales Toolkit

7. *Please could you confirm whether you have accessed any of the Tales Toolkit training or materials? (Please tick all that apply) [Mandatory]
- a. Yes, I have taken part in/watched one or more Tales Toolkit training sessions
 - b. Yes, I have had access to/looked at the Tales Toolkit physical materials/resources, e.g. big bag, hanger, apron, other story props, etc.
 - c. Yes, I have accessed the Tales Toolkit online resources
 - d. Yes, I have delivered Tales Toolkit before. If so, please say when and with what age group
 - e. No, I have not watched/taken part in any Tales Toolkit training sessions, and I have not had access to the physical or online materials/resources.

Your setting

8. In this current academic year (September 2023 to July 2024), will your setting or school be taking part in any projects or programmes focusing on the areas listed below, aside from Tales Toolkit? If so, please could you name these and let us know if the programme is supported by a Stronger Practice Hub, EEF or another organisation.
- a. Language and communication, literacy, creativity and/or storytelling [Open text]
 - b. Personal, social and emotional development [Open text]

Supporting children

Please only answer these questions in relation to working with children 3 years and over.

We would like to find out a bit about how you feel about supporting children in different areas of development. There are no right or wrong answers, and practitioners/teachers can vary a great deal in their confidence. Please be as honest as you can, because we are keen to learn about staff confidence across a broad range of skills.

9. How confident are you in your knowledge and skill at each of the following:
[list a grid question and respondents can specify frequency for each option] [mandatory]
- 1 - Not at all, 2 – Slightly, 3 – Somewhat, 4 – Fairly, 5 - Very much
- a. Helping children (excluding those with additional needs) make good progress in their language and communication skills
 - b. Helping children with additional needs make good progress in their language and communication skills
 - c. Helping children with identified Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) make good progress in their language and communication skills
 - d. Helping children with English as an Additional Language (EAL) make good progress in their language and communication skills
 - e. Helping children receiving Early Years Pupil Premium make good progress in their language and communication skills
 - f. Supporting children to be confident in communicating their wishes and ideas

- g. Supporting children with creative thinking and problem-solving skills
- h. Engaging children in stories and role play
- i. Supporting children with collaborative thinking and play with adults and other children
- j. Motivating children to express themselves through writing or mark-making

Interactions with children (randomised)

Please answer these questions in relation to working with children 3 years and over.

10. *Please could you rate the extent to which you do the following things when normally interacting with a child or group, answering as honestly as you can.

[list a grid question and respondents can specify frequency for each option] [mandatory]

1- Not at all, 2 – Slightly, 3 – Somewhat, 4 – A fair amount, 5 – Frequently

Questions:

- a. Wait for the child to start the conversation through words, sounds, gestures or looks
- b. Follow the child's lead in play
- c. Join in with the child's play
- d. Position yourself to be face to face with the child, be at their level
- e. Use a wide range of questions
- f. Encourage the child in turn-taking
- g. Imitate what the child has said or done
- h. Comment on what the child is doing and pay attention to what they are focused on
- i. Repeat what the child has said, using the correct form of speech if they have used incorrect pronunciation or grammar
- j. Extend what the child has said, e.g. repeating what the child has said and adding more words to turn it into a sentence
- k. Model a wide variety of words, e.g. adjectives and connectives such as 'because'
- l. Praise the child
- m. Talk slowly enough for the child to understand
- n. Have extended back and forth interactions, giving the child time to listen, process and reply

Personal, social and emotional development (PSED)

Please answer these questions in relation to working with children 3 years and over.

11. *Please could you rate the extent to which you do the following things when normally interacting with a child or group, answering as honestly as you can.

[list a grid question and respondents can specify frequency for each option] [mandatory]

1- Not at all, 2 – Slightly, 3 – Somewhat, 4 – A fair amount, 5 – Frequently

- a. Involve children in making decisions, for example, about resources or activities

- b. In group play, support children to carry out decisions and respect the wishes of the rest of the group
- c. Teach children ways of solving conflicts, for example, by modelling how to listen to someone else and agree a compromise
- d. Talk through with children how they, you and others resolved a problem or difficulty
- e. Encourage children to talk about a problem together and come up with ideas for how to solve it
- f. Give children problem solving words and phrases to use in their explanations: 'so that', 'because', 'I think it's...', 'you could...', 'it might be...'
- g. Help children explore situations from different points of view and talk together about how others might be feeling, including characters in their pretend play and stories
- h. Use dialogic story time (talking about the ideas arising from the story whilst reading aloud) to discuss books that deal with challenges, explaining how the different characters feel about these challenges and overcome them
- i. Encourage children to express their feelings e.g. if they feel hurt or upset

Creativity, play and storytelling

Please answer these questions in relation to working with children 3 years and over.

12. *Please could you rate the extent to which you do the following things when normally interacting with a child, group or in your classroom, answering as honestly as you can.

[list a grid question and respondents can specify frequency for each option] [mandatory]

1 – Not at all, 2 – Slightly, 3 – Somewhat, 4 –A fair amount, 5 – Very much

- a. Provide lots of flexible and open-ended resources for children's imaginative or pretend play
- b. Help children who find it difficult to join in pretend play or storytelling
- c. Help children to extend their ideas or narrative through sustained discussion, e.g., asking how things happened, why and what might happen next
- d. Support children to engage with sustained shared thinking. This is when two or more individuals (adult and child, or children) 'work together' in an intellectual way to, for example, solve a problem or clarify a concept
- e. Timetable a storytime at least once a day
- f. Discuss children's ideas and responses when reading books (dialogic reading), encourage children to talk about what is happening and give their own ideas
- g. Extend children's vocabulary through stories and other activities, explaining unfamiliar words and concepts and making sure children have understood what they mean
- h. Motivate children to write or try mark making by providing opportunities in a wide range of ways, e.g. crayons, chalks, pencils/pens, notepads and boards
- i. Provide access to apps or hand-made books so children can mix marks, photos/pictures and video to tell their own stories
- j. Make time for children to tell each other stories they have heard, or to visitors

Prize draw

13. As a thank you for taking part in this survey, you have the option to be entered into a prize draw with one prize of £50 and two prizes of £25 each.

*If you would like to be entered into the prize draw, please confirm below and we will contact you via the email you provided at the start of the survey: [mandatory]

- a. Yes, I would like to be entered into the prize draw
- b. No, I would not like to be entered into the prize draw

Please make sure to go to the next page and **click submit** so we receive your information

Thank you

Thank you for taking time to complete the survey.

Please click 'Submit' to send your responses.

Appendix G CECIL Survey - Practitioner Confidence and Skills Questionnaire

This short survey is designed to find out how confident you feel now as an early years practitioner. It should only take around 10 minutes to complete. Your answers will be kept confidential and used only for research purposes by the research teams. Your name and your setting's name will never be used in any report of results.

The first set of questions are designed to find out how confident you feel as an early years practitioner aiming to support children's language development. Most of the statements use wording like this: "How confident are you that ...?" We want to find out the extent to which you feel you have the knowledge/skills needed to produce a specific outcome (e.g. increased children's vocabulary). There are no right or wrong answers and practitioners vary a great deal in their confidence. Please be as honest as you can, because we are keen to learn about staff confidence across a broad range of skills.

How confident are you in your knowledge and skill at each of the following	Scale 1-5*
1. Helping typically developing children make good progress in their language skills	
2. Helping children with language delay make good progress in their language skills	
3. Helping children with EAL make good progress in their language skills	
4. Crafting good questions for your child	
5. Enabling children to ask their own questions	
6 Supporting children to be good listeners	
7 Suggesting activities that families can do to support children's language development	
8. Supporting children to be confident in communicating their wishes and ideas	
9. Motivating children to want to communicate more with peers and adults	
10. Assessing children's language to identify their need for support	
11. Engaging other early years staff in changes to language practice	
12. Making referrals for extra support for a child with language difficulties	

This next section asks about how you interact with individual children. Please rate the extent to which you do the following things, answering as honestly as you can.

What you normally do when interacting with a child or group?	Scale 1-5*
1. Wait for child to start the talking – with words, sounds, gestures or looks	
2. Follow child's lead in play	
3. Join in with child play	
4. Position yourself to be face to face with child	
5. Use a wide range of questions	

6. Encourage child in turn-taking	
7. Imitate what child has said or done	
8. Comment on what child is doing	
9. Repeat what child has said, using the correct form of speech	
10. Extend what child has said, e.g., by linking to a previous event or providing another example	
11. Model a wide variety of words, e.g., adjectives and connectives such as 'because'	
12. Praise child	
13. Talk slowly enough for child to understand	

*Scale: 1 - Not at all, 2 – Slightly, 3 – Somewhat, 4 – Fairly, 5 – Very much

Appendix H Tales Toolkit Endline Survey

<Hidden questions> [personalised link survey ONLY]

4. [mandatory & hidden] <practitioner name>
5. [mandatory & hidden] <practitioner email>
6. [mandatory & hidden] <practitioner setting name>

Introduction

You have been asked to fill in this survey because your setting is taking part in a pilot study of the Tales Toolkit programme. The study is being funded by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) and Thames Valley Early Years Stronger Practice Hub (TVEYSPH) to evaluate the Tales Toolkit programme, where practitioners receive training and resources to guide children through the process of creating their own story.

This survey follows on from the survey you may have completed in Autumn 2023 before you started delivering the Tales Toolkit programme. This survey is designed to find out more about your experience delivering Tales Toolkit, your views about it and your current practice. We understand it has been a challenging time for the sector, and even if you have not been able to deliver Tales Toolkit as intended, we would still greatly value your responses. The survey should take approximately five to ten minutes to complete.

The focus of this project is with children who are 3 to 5 years old. We appreciate you may also work with children under 3 years old but please only answer the questions below in relation to your work with children **between 3 and 5 years old**.

At the end of the survey you will be given the option to be entered into a prize draw with one prize of £50 and two prizes of £25 each, as a thank you for participating.

All answers are entirely confidential. Your data will be held securely in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018/GDPR and **only** accessed by the research team at the Institute for Employment Studies (IES). This information will only be used for research purposes as part of the evaluation and only anonymised responses will be included in the reporting.

For more information about why we are collecting this data and how your data will be used, see the **privacy policy**.[\(opens in new window\)](#)

If you have any questions about the survey or the evaluation, you can contact the research team at IES by emailing talestoolkit@employment-studies.co.uk[\(opens in new window\)](#) or phoning the Project Manager on 01273 763407

Navigation

A small number of questions are mandatory as your responses will determine subsequent questions in the survey; these will be denoted with a *.

Please navigate through this survey using the buttons at the bottom of each page.

Reset: use the reset button at the bottom of each page if necessary to clear the answers to all questions on that page.

Save: you can save a partially completed questionnaire and return to complete it by using the save button at the bottom of the screen and returning to the survey via the link noted, which you can also choose to have emailed to you.

Submit: send your completed questionnaire to us using the submit button on the last page. Thank you.

About you [general link survey ONLY]

Please could you tell us your name and contact details. The option for entering the prize draw is at the end of the survey.

We will not use your details for any purpose other than for the research. Your details will be securely destroyed six months after completion of the study.

1. *Please could you tell us your full name? [mandatory]
 - a. <practitioner name>
2. *Please could you provide your email address? Please do not provide a general email address for your setting/school. [mandatory]
 - a. <practitioner email>
3. *Please tell us the full name of your setting or school [mandatory]
 - a. <practitioner setting name>

ALL

4. *What is your job role? (Please select all that apply). [mandatory]
 - i. Early Years practitioner
 - ii. Early Years Teacher
 - iii. Teacher (QTS)
 - iv. Teaching Assistant
 - v. Individual Needs Assistant/Learning Support Assistant
 - vi. Room lead
 - vii. Year group lead
 - viii. Early Years lead
 - ix. Setting Deputy Manager
 - x. Setting Manager
 - xi. Specialist role, e.g. Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Lead/Assistant, Safeguarding Lead, Literacy Leader etc Please specify [open text]
 - xii. Other, please specify [open text]
5. *How many years' experience do you have directly supporting/working with children in the early years sector? (Please select one)
 - i. Less than 6 months
 - ii. Between 6 months and 1 year
 - iii. 1-2 years
 - iv. 2-5 years
 - v. 5-10 years
 - vi. Over 10 years
6. *In this academic year (September 2023 to July 2024), which age group or class cohort have you worked with? (Please tick all that apply) [mandatory]
 - i. Pre-school: 3 year olds
 - ii. Pre-school: 4 year olds
 - iii. Reception 4-5 year olds
 - iv. Other

Tales Toolkit at your setting/school

We would like to find out how Tales Toolkit has been going for you. Please be honest, we want to know the true picture, there are no right or wrong answers.

The training

7. *We would like to know if you have taken part in any Tales Toolkit training.
If you have, please could you confirm which Tales Toolkit training sessions you have taken part in? (Please tick box if you have done that sessions – one box for each answer) [Mandatory to tick at least one box from 1-6]
- i. Session 1: Welcome & Quality Interactions – discussing providing children with quality interactions, including tips to improve interactions in your setting
 - ii. Session 2: Big Kits – learning how to use the big bags to tell group stories
 - iii. Session 3: All the TTK Resources – learning how to use the rest of the Tales Toolkit resources, encouraging children to become independent storytellers, covering the whole curriculum, and making links with core books and projects
 - iv. Session 4: Muscles and Motor Skills – introducing Tales Toolkit writing resources and how to use them to develop muscles for writing
 - v. Session 5: Best Practice – taking time to reflect on and communicate best practice
 - vi. I have not taken part in ANY Tales Toolkit training

If you have **not** taken part in any Tales Toolkit training, please tell us why (Tick all that apply) [Mandatory].

- i. My setting didn't deliver Tales Toolkit

My setting didn't deliver Tales Toolkit with the age group I work with

I was unable to attend the training sessions

I started working at the setting later in the year and didn't receive the Tales Toolkit training

Other - Please tell us more [open text box]

14. Were you the training facilitator at your setting (i.e. had the role of managing meetings about Tales Toolkit, preparing Tales Toolkit training resources in advance and collecting feedback and worksheets)?

- i. Yes
- ii. No

Delivering the Tales Toolkit sessions

15. On average, how often do you personally deliver a Tales Toolkit session with **all** the children in your room/group/class?
- i. Never
 - ii. Less than once a fortnight
 - iii. Once a fortnight
 - iv. Once a week
 - v. Twice a week
 - vi. Three times a week

vii. Over three times a week

viii. Other - Please tell us more [open text box]

If Q9=1,2,3,5,6,7,8 (Less than or more than once a week)

16. Can you tell us why you do not deliver Tales Toolkit once a week to all the children in your room/group/class as recommended in the training? (Please tick all that apply)

i. I am new to the setting and have not done any of the training

ii. I only did some of the training

iii. I did not know that delivering once a week was recommended

iv. I do not know how to deliver it despite completing the training

v. I do not have time

vi. I share responsibility for delivering sessions with another practitioner

vii. I deliver sessions with smaller groups only (If so, how often do you do this? [open text])

viii. I am a deputy/manager/other specialist and do not usually teach

ix. Other - Please tell us more [open text box]

If Q4 = 8,9,10,11 (deputy/manager/specialist-role/other)

17. Have your staff been able to deliver Tales Toolkit at least once per week, as recommended?

i. Yes, fully

ii. Yes, partly

iii. No

iv. Don't know

18. Approximately how many hours per week do you (or your staff) spend delivering Tales Toolkit sessions (Please tick one)?

i. Less than 30 minutes

ii. Around 30 minutes

iii. Between 30 minutes and 1 hour

iv. 1 to 2 hours

v. 2 to 3 hours

vi. 3 to 4 hours

vii. Other - Please tell us more [open text box]

viii. Don't know

If Q13=1,3,4,5,6,7,8 (not the recommended 30 minutes per week)

19. Can you tell us why you (or your staff) spend more or less time than 30 minutes per week?

[Open text box]

ALL

20. Have you experienced any barriers to you/your staff being able to deliver Tales Toolkit? (Please tick all that apply)

- i. Lack of training
- ii. Staff turnover
- iii. Difficulties recruiting staff
- iv. Staff absences
- v. Difficulties maintaining staff child ratios
- vi. Size of classes
- vii. High needs of children
- viii. Children's behaviour
- ix. Funding issues
- x. Change in management or ownership of setting
- xi. Other – please tell us more (open text box)

21. Are resources freely available inside the class or room, or outside areas, for children to engage with outside of the staff led sessions?

- a. Yes, inside
- b. Yes, outside
- c. Yes, both inside and outside
- d. No

Your thoughts about Tales Toolkit (randomised)

22. Please rate the extent to which **you agree with** these statements about delivering Tales Toolkit:

1 – Not at all, 2 – Slightly, 3 – Somewhat, 4 – A fair amount, 5 – Very much 6 – Not applicable/ Don't know

[list a grid question and respondents can specify frequency for each option] [mandatory]

- i. Children are clearly engaging with the Tales Toolkit sessions
- ii. The Tales Toolkit sessions are becoming more child-led
- iii. Storytelling is collaborative
- iv. Tales Toolkit has led to more quality interactions between staff and children
- v. Children engage with Tales Toolkit outside of the staff led sessions e.g. where the resources are freely available inside the class or room or in outside areas

- vi. I've made changes or adaptations to how Tales Toolkit is delivered e.g. changed the structure of the sessions, changing the items in the bag etc (If 2,3,4,5 - Please tell us more [open text box])
 - vii. I have been able to engage in Tales Toolkit (If 1,2,3,4,5 - Please tell us more [open text box])
 - viii. I have been able to implement Tales Toolkit in my class/room (If 1,2,3,4,5 - Please tell us more [open text box])
 - ix. The costs of delivering Tales Toolkit are affordable (If 1,2,3,4,5 - Please tell us more [open text box])
 - x. I think Tales Toolkit has had a positive impact on the communication and language of children in my setting
 - xi. I think Tales Toolkit will benefit the development of the most disadvantaged children
23. [If Q4 = 8,9,10,11 (deputy/manager/specialist-role/other) You received Tales Toolkit for free with the option to apply for funding for staff time for training. Would you have found the full cost of £800 for the package and £100 for the second set of resources (including VAT) affordable?
- a. Yes (Please tell us more [open text box])
 - b. No (Please tell us more [open text box])

Your experience about using Tales Toolkit (randomised)

24. *Please rate the extent to which **you agree with** these statements about taking part in Tales Toolkit (covering the training, resources and engagement with the programme):

1 – Not at all, 2 – Slightly, 3 – Somewhat, 4 – A fair amount, 5 – Very much 6 – Not applicable/ Don't know

[list a grid question and respondents can specify frequency for each option] [mandatory]

Training and resources

- i. The Tales Toolkit resources are easy to use
- ii. The training (videos and other resources) has given me the sufficient knowledge and skills to be able to deliver the programme
- iii. I have found the training videos and other resources useful
- iv. Having everything online is better for me (if 1,2,3,4,5 – Please tell us more Open text box)
- v. I have accessed the member's page and found it useful
- vi. I have had the support I needed from the Tales Toolkit team to deliver the programme (if 1,2,3,4,5 – Please tell us more Open text box)
- vii. Taking part in the training fits into my working day and routine

Engagement

- i. I feel confident to deliver Tales Toolkit
- ii. I am motivated to deliver Tales Toolkit
- iii. I have had the support I need from my managers to deliver the programme
- iv. I have had the support I need from my colleagues to deliver the programme

- v. Planning the Tales Toolkit sessions fits into my working day and routine
- vi. Delivering the Tales Toolkit sessions fits into my working day and routine

Outcomes

- vii. Taking part in Tales Toolkit has resulted in changes or improvements to my regular practice
- viii. Tales Toolkit has been embedded into my classroom (e.g. it is part of my planning, curriculum, practice, the language is used in other activities etc)
- ix. Tales Toolkit has been embedded in the wider setting (e.g. it is part of the wider planning, curriculum, practice, the language is used in other activities etc)
- x. Taking part in Tales Toolkit has had some effects that I did not expect, e.g. for staff, children or parents (if 2,3,4,5 – Please tell us more Open text box)
- xi. Taking part in Tales Toolkit has had some negative effects, e.g. for staff, children or parents (if 2,3,4,5 – Please tell us more Open text box)

Supporting children

Please only answer these questions in relation to working with children aged 3 years and over.

We would like to find out a bit about how you feel about supporting children in different areas of development. There are no right or wrong answers, and practitioners/teachers can vary a great deal in their confidence. Please be as honest as you can, because we are keen to learn about staff confidence across a broad range of skills.

25. To what extent has your confidence in supporting language development in children aged 3 years and over improved since the beginning of Tales Toolkit?

1 - Not at all, 2 – Slightly, 3 – Somewhat, 4 – Fairly, 5 - Very much 6 – Not applicable/ Don't know

26. To what extent has your knowledge of language development improved since the beginning of Tales Toolkit?

1 - Not at all, 2 – Slightly, 3 – Somewhat, 4 – Fairly, 5 - Very much 6 – Not applicable/ Don't know

27. How confident are you in your knowledge and skill at each of the following:
[list a grid question and respondents can specify frequency for each option] [mandatory]

1 - Not at all, 2 – Slightly, 3 – Somewhat, 4 – Fairly, 5 - Very much 6 – Not applicable/ Don't know

Questions:

- i. Helping children (excluding those with additional needs) make good progress in their language and communication skills
- ii. Helping children with additional needs make good progress in their language and communication skills
- iii. Helping children with identified Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) make good progress in their language and communication skills
- iv. Helping children with English as an Additional Language (EAL) make good progress in their language and communication skills
- v. Helping children receiving Early Years Pupil Premium make good progress in their language and communication skills
- vi. Supporting children to be confident in communicating their wishes and ideas

- vii. Supporting children with creative thinking and problem-solving skills
- viii. Engaging children in stories and role play
- ix. Supporting children with collaborative thinking and play with adults and other children
- x. Motivating children to express themselves through writing or mark-making

Interactions with children (randomised)

Please answer these questions in relation to working with children 3 years and over.

28. *Please could you rate the extent to which **you do** the following things when normally interacting with a child or group, answering as honestly as you can.

[list a grid question and respondents can specify frequency for each option] [mandatory]

1- Not at all, 2 – Slightly, 3 – Somewhat, 4 – A fair amount, 5 – Frequently 6 – Not applicable/ Don't know

Questions:

- i. Wait for the child to start the conversation through words, sounds, gestures or looks
- ii. Follow the child's lead in play
- iii. Join in with the child's play
- iv. Position yourself to be face to face with the child, be at their level
- v. Use a wide range of questions
- vi. Encourage the child in turn-taking
- vii. Imitate what the child has said or done
- viii. Comment on what the child is doing and pay attention to what they are focused on
- ix. Repeat what the child has said, using the correct form of speech if they have used incorrect pronunciation or grammar
- x. Extend what the child has said, e.g. repeating what the child has said and adding more words to turn it into a sentence
- xi. Model a wide variety of words, e.g. adjectives and connectives such as 'because'
- xii. Praise the child
- xiii. Talk slowly enough for the child to understand
- xiv. Have extended back and forth interactions, giving the child time to listen, process and reply

Personal, social and emotional development (PSED)

Please answer these questions in relation to working with children 3 years and over.

29. *Please could you rate the extent to which **you do** the following things when normally interacting with a child or group, answering as honestly as you can.

[list a grid question and respondents can specify frequency for each option] [mandatory]

1- Not at all, 2 – Slightly, 3 – Somewhat, 4 – A fair amount, 5 – Frequently 6 – Not applicable/ Don't know

- i. Involve children in making decisions, for example, about resources or activities
- ii. In group play, support children to carry out decisions and respect the wishes of the rest of the group
- iii. Teach children ways of solving conflicts, for example, by modelling how to listen to someone else and agree a compromise
- iv. Talk through with children how they, you and others resolved a problem or difficulty
- v. Encourage children to talk about a problem together and come up with ideas for how to solve it
- vi. Give children problem solving words and phrases to use in their explanations: 'so that', 'because', 'I think it's...', 'you could...', 'it might be...'
- vii. Help children explore situations from different points of view and talk together about how others might be feeling, including characters in their pretend play and stories
- viii. Use dialogic story time (talking about the ideas arising from the story whilst reading aloud) to discuss books that deal with challenges, explaining how the different characters feel about these challenges and overcome them
- ix. Encourage children to express their feelings e.g. if they feel hurt or upset

Creativity, play and storytelling

Please answer these questions in relation to working with children 3 years and over.

30. *Please could you rate the extent to which **you do** the following things when normally interacting with a child, group or in your classroom, answering as honestly as you can.

[list a grid question and respondents can specify frequency for each option] [mandatory]

1 – Not at all, 2 – Slightly, 3 – Somewhat, 4 –A fair amount, 5 – Very much 6 – Not applicable/ Don't know

- i. Provide lots of flexible and open-ended resources for children's imaginative or pretend play
- ii. Help children who find it difficult to join in pretend play or storytelling
- iii. Help children to extend their ideas or narrative through sustained discussion, e.g., asking how things happened, why and what might happen next
- iv. Support children to engage with sustained shared thinking. This is when two or more individuals (adult and child, or children) 'work together' in an intellectual way to, for example, solve a problem or clarify a concept
- v. Timetable a storytime at least once a day
- vi. Discuss children's ideas and responses when reading books (dialogic reading), encourage children to talk about what is happening and give their own ideas
- vii. Extend children's vocabulary through stories and other activities, explaining unfamiliar words and concepts and making sure children have understood what they mean
- viii. Motivate children to write or try mark making by providing opportunities in a wide range of ways, e.g. crayons, chalks, pencils/pens, notepads and boards

- ix. Provide access to apps or hand-made books so children can make marks, photos/pictures and video to tell their own stories
- x. Make time for children to tell each other stories they have heard, or to visitors

Prize draw

31. As a thank you for taking part in this survey, you have the option to be entered into a prize draw with one prize of £50 and two prizes of £25 each.

*If you would like to be entered into the prize draw, please confirm below and we will contact you via the email you provided at the start of the survey: [mandatory]

- a. Yes, I would like to be entered into the prize draw
- b. No, I would not like to be entered into the prize draw

Please make sure to go to the next page and **click submit** so we receive your information

Thank you

Thank you for taking time to complete the survey.

Please click 'Submit' to send your responses.

Thank you

Appendix I Tales Toolkit pilot evaluation – Interview topic guides

Tales Toolkit – Setting Manager Topic Guide (case study visit interview)

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this interview.

The Institute for Employment Studies (IES) has been commissioned by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) to carry out a research study of Tales Toolkit, a package of training and resources supporting children's early language and social development through oral storytelling.

The aim of our research is to explore how Tales Toolkit is delivered in practice. We would also like to understand your views of the programme and your experiences of using the resources. This will support its development to improve it in the future.

Today we'd like to ask you about the following areas:

Your views on the online training sessions, materials and resources.

Your views on how the delivery the programme with the children is going.

Any impacts you think that the programme may be having on the children and your practitioners **so far**.

Everything we talk about in this interview is confidential and will only be used for the purpose of this research. IES will write a report that summarises the main findings from all our research activities. The information you share will be anonymised in the report (including any quotes), so no names are used, and any information that could reveal your identity will only be used with your explicit permission. Please feel free to answer the questions as openly and as honestly as possible, but if you would rather something did not go into the report, please let us know.

After today's interview we would also like to interview you and your staff again towards the end of the intervention, by telephone or video-conferencing in June-July 2024. These follow-up interviews will focus on perceived impacts of the pilot, costs incurred by settings and any issues which would need to be considered if Tales was rolled-out to more settings.

The report we write will be made publicly available on the EEF website for anyone who is interested in the findings of the research. The interview will take between **20 to 30 minutes** and is voluntary. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to, and you can choose to stop the interview at any point.

Before we start, do you have any questions?

With your permission, I would like to record the interview. The recording will be kept securely and only accessed by our research team. The recording will be deleted six months after the end of the project. Would that be ok with you?

[If individual does consent, please ask them to confirm once the recording has started so that we have a record].

Background (5 mins)

1. Briefly, what is your role within your setting? How long have you been at the setting? How long have you worked in education?
2. Why did you decide for your setting to get involved with Tales Toolkit? What did you hope to gain from being involved?
3. What is your personal involvement with Tales Toolkit? (*Probe: role in delivery; training facilitator e.g. printing out facilitator notes, overseeing the training sessions, printing handouts/resources for the sessions*)
 - a. (If facilitator – I would like to spend a couple of minutes just reflecting on your role as facilitator) How have you found being a facilitator so far?

- b. Were there any barriers/challenges?
- c. Is there anything that would have made your role as facilitator easier?

Training (5-10 mins)

We are interested to understand your views on the Tales Toolkit training in terms of the sessions and resources themselves and how they have been received and used in this setting.

Researcher note

There are five 50-minute online training videos, including clear instructions, interviews with experts, footage of the TT kit in use and timers for activities and discussion. Delivered over approx. 3–4 months with activities between each session to complete.

N.B. Training sessions 1 & 2 can be run close together, with a gap of around one month between sessions 2 and three.

The physical set of fabric resources is posted to the setting. A package of online support is available, including downloadable resources, recorded webinars with experts, inspiration articles from schools, further research, and a Facebook support group.

Training 1: introduction to the importance of 'quality interactions' laying a base for the correct use of Tales Toolkit.

Training 2: Tales Toolkit in group situations to develop communication, social skills and creativity.

Training 3: Children's independent storytelling across the provision and the curriculum, using all the different Tales Toolkit resources.

Training 4: Tales Toolkit writing and mark making. Training 4 is kept until at least 2 months into training so importance of oral storytelling is embedded first.

Training 5: Reflect on best practice, plan next steps to improve and gain confidence in talking about Tales Toolkit and the impact for children involved.

4. **How many of the Tales Toolkit online training videos have you watched?** *Prompt: there are five sessions in total - check how many of the 5 sessions have been completed.*
 - a. (If watched some or all) When did you watch them? *Probe: all at once or at different times.*
 - b. (If watched some or all) How and where did you watch videos? For example, did you watch the videos in staff meetings with other practitioners, or were you encouraged to watch them in your own time? Did this work well?
 - i. Did you use the timed activity breaks within the training videos?
 - ii. If you watched them with other practitioners, did you discuss the videos after watching them?
 - c. (If not watched any) Do you know if there are plans to start watching them? If so, when?
5. Have **all** staff at your setting done the Tales Toolkit training?
 - a. (If yes and not covered above) How many have done the training? How did they go about accessing it? *Probe: all together i.e. on an INSET day/staff meeting, separately in work time, in their own time.*
 - b. (If yes) Did they all complete all of the sessions? If not, why not? *Probe: challenges finding the time.*
 - c. (If no) Which staff **have** done the training? Why did some staff not do the training? *Probe: new staff (since did the training), logistics.*

6. (If all or some have done training) What did you and your staff think of the training sessions? *Probe on each of the sessions and for manager vs staff.*

Also prompt for:

- a. Content/topics and quality of the training
 - b. Schedule, length, and number of videos
 - c. If there was anything they didn't understand or were unsure about after watching the videos?
 - d. Was the training convenient to access? Were there any difficulties accessing the training videos?
Probe: any technical issues, access issues (e.g. login to the members area), logistics?
7. Have the videos been helpful for explaining how to deliver the Tales Toolkit session with children? Probe for how to use the resources, how to structure a session.
- a. If yes, why?
 - b. Were any of the sessions particularly helpful? Were any less useful?
 - c. Would you suggest any changes to the training videos? Is there any way they could be improved at all?
8. (If not covered) Have there been any challenges to you, your staff or your setting taking part in the training? If so how have these been addressed? (*Probe: support from managers*)
- a. What, if anything, could help overcome these challenges?
9. How useful are the online training resources like the different downloadable activity sheets for each training session?

Delivering the sessions (10 mins)

We would like to know more about how the delivery of the Tales Toolkit sessions is going at your setting, as well as understanding the perceptions and feedback from other practitioners at your setting.

Researcher note

The manager could also be a Tales Toolkit practitioner alongside a managerial or dual role within their setting. We want to know about their practice and other staff.

Maintained school-based nursery settings are encouraged to deliver to reception as well as nursery classes. In some settings, it may also be used with under 3's although these are not covered in our evaluation activities.

10. How has the delivery of the programme been going so far?
11. How **many children** do you/your practitioners deliver the Tales Toolkit sessions to at your setting? Across how many classes/groups are these children based?
 - a. Across how many years are these children based?
 - b. [If applicable – i.e. if practitioner works in a school-based nursery setting] Do you/your practitioners also deliver Tales Toolkit to a Reception class as well as the nursery?
12. How **often** do you/your practitioners lead Tales Toolkit sessions with the children?

[Note – it is recommended to hold sessions at least once a week]

- a. Do you think the number of sessions you/your practitioners deliver is the right amount for your class(es)? If not, would you/your practitioners like the number of sessions to be more or less than what it is now?
 - b. Are there any differences between children depending on their number of funded hours? E.g. 15 or 30 hours per week.
13. Have you/your practitioners used all of the physical resources to deliver the programme with the children and what do you think of them? *Probe: the big bags, a small kit, apron, hanger, shuffle book, a big book and, other resources like session activity sheets*
- a. Was there anything particularly useful or less useful? Why/why not?
 - b. How have you/your practitioners used them?
 - c. Have you/your practitioners used the resources in other learning environments outside of the sessions?
14. To what extent have the children in class/room/form-group setting been engaged with the programme?
- a. Is there anything they particularly like about the sessions?

Probe for whether children enjoy creating their own story, engaging with the character, setting, and problem/solution elements of a story.

- b. Do you notice any difference in their engagement with the Tales Toolkit resources inside and outside the class/group room?
 - c. Do all children enjoy the sessions?
15. **Are you/your practitioners delivering Tales Toolkit in different ways according to:**
- a. **the age of the children?**
 - b. SEND
 - c. English as an Additional Language (EAL)
 - d. Early Years Pupil Premium

16. Is there anything that works especially well?
- a. Is there anything that works less well?
 - b. Was there anything else you would have found helpful?

Additional online resources and support (2 mins)

As well as the training videos, the Tales Toolkit members area also had links to research articles, webinars with experts and other downloadable resources. In these questions we want to know your thoughts about the other resources available online and support you/your practitioners have had.

Researcher note

In addition to the practitioner training and physical resources, a package of online support is available, including downloadable resources, recorded webinars with experts, drop-in sessions, inspiration articles from schools, further research, and a Facebook support group.

17. Have you/your practitioners accessed any of the additional resources such as the research articles, drop-in sessions, or the webinars with early years experts? If yes, please tell us what you have accessed

18. Have you been using the Tales Toolkit social media groups or members area? *Probe: Facebook support group (<https://www.facebook.com/TalesToolkit>)*
19. Are any other resources or support that would be helpful for you/your practitioners' using Tales Toolkit (online or otherwise)?

Barriers and enablers (2-5 mins)

20. Have there been any enablers that have made it easier to deliver the programme?
- a. How, if at all, have you supported the practitioners to deliver the sessions?
21. Have there been any challenges to delivering the programme?
- a. How have you attempted to address these challenges? *Probe for whether any change or adaptations have been made.*
- b. What, if anything, could help you, the practitioners, or your setting to overcome these challenges?

Early impacts (5 mins)

We would now like to ask your thoughts on any early impacts the Tales Toolkit programme is making so far:

22. Have you and your practitioners enjoyed taking part in Tales Toolkit? *Probe: using the resources, leading the sessions*
- a. Is there anything you/your practitioners have enjoyed less about the programme?
23. Has taking part in Tales Toolkit had an effect on you/your practitioners' usual practice?

Thinking about the children at your setting:

24. Do you think the programme is appropriate for supporting **all** children's development? (*Probe: SEND/EAL/EYPP*)
- a. Are some children benefiting from this programme more than others?
25. Have you or any practitioners noticed any impacts from the programme on the children at the setting **so far**?

Closing questions (2 mins)

26. Is there anything else you would like to talk about that we haven't discussed?

Researcher note

Thank manager for letting us interview them about Tales Toolkit. Also remind them each setting taking part in a case study observation is entitled to a £100 payment for taking part, which will be sent out once observations are finished. This payment can be made by cheque and we can collect the correct information at this point e.g. payable to.

Details:

Also confirm that we will be completing follow up interviews with practitioners in June-July 2024 in order to find out how things have gone with the Tales Toolkit programme. We would do this research interview over the phone or online via Teams or Zoom for example, whichever works best for you.

Would you be happy to speak with us again? Y/N

Please let us know how best to contact you:

Name:

Email:

Telephone:

Tales Toolkit Practitioner Topic Guide (case study visit interview)

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this interview.

The Institute for Employment Studies (IES) has been commissioned by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) to carry out a research study of Tales Toolkit, a package of training and resources supporting children's early language and social development through oral storytelling.

The aim of our research is to explore how Tales Toolkit is delivered in practice. We would also like to understand your views of the programme and your experiences of using the resources. This will support its development to improve it in the future.

Today we'd like to ask you about the following areas:

- Your views on the online training sessions, materials and resources
- Your views and experiences of delivering the programme with the children
- Any impacts you think that the programme may be having for you and the children **so far**.

Everything we talk about in this interview is confidential and will only be used for the purpose of this research. IES will write a report that summarises the main findings from all our research activities. The information you share will be anonymised in the report (including any quotes), so no names are used, and any information that could reveal your identity will only be used with your explicit permission. Please feel free to answer the questions as openly and as honestly as possible, but if you would rather something did not go into the report, please let us know.

After today's interview we would also like to interview you towards the end of the intervention, by telephone or video-conferencing in June-July 2024. These follow-up interviews will focus on perceived impacts of the programme and any factors which would need to be considered if Tales was rolled-out to more settings.

The report we write will be made publicly available on the EEF website for anyone who is interested in the findings of the research. The Evaluation and Delivery Teams may also decide to disseminate the findings more widely for example, writing an article for a peer reviewed academic journal.

The interview will take between **20 to 30 minutes** and is voluntary. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to, and you can choose to stop the interview at any point.

Before we start, do you have any questions?

With your permission, I would like to record the interview. The recording will be kept securely and only accessed by our research team. Your setting and the Tales Toolkit team will not be able to access it. The recording will be deleted six months after the end of the project. Would that be ok with you?

[If individual does consent, please ask them to confirm once the recording has started so that we have a record].

Background (2 mins)

1. Briefly, what is your role within your setting? How long have you been at the setting?
2. Had you heard of or used Tales Toolkit before starting this programme? (*e.g. at a different setting, from children in their own family*)

Training (5–10mins)

Researcher note

There are five 50-minute online training videos, including clear instructions, interviews with experts, footage of the TT kit in use and timers for activities and discussion. Delivered over approx. 3–4 months with activities between each session to complete.

N.B. Training sessions 1 & 2 can be run close together, with a gap of around one month between sessions 2 and three.

The physical set of fabric resources is posted to the setting. A package of online support is available, including downloadable resources, recorded webinars with experts, inspiration articles from schools, further research, and a Facebook support group.

Training 1: introduction to the importance of ‘quality interactions’ laying a base for the correct use of Tales Toolkit.

Training 2: Tales Toolkit in group situations to develop communication, social skills and creativity.

Training 3: Children’s independent storytelling across the provision and the curriculum, using all the different Tales Toolkit resources.

Training 4: Tales Toolkit writing and mark making. Training 4 is kept until at least 2 months into training so importance of oral storytelling is embedded first.

Training 5: Reflect on best practice, plan next steps to improve and gain confidence in talking about Tales Toolkit and the impact for children involved.

We are interested to understand your views on the Tales Toolkit training in terms of the sessions and resources themselves and how they have been received and used in this setting.

3. How many of the Tales Toolkit online training videos have you watched? *Prompt: there are five sessions in total - check how many of the 5 sessions have been completed.*

- a. (If watched some or all) When did you watch them? *Probe: all at once or at different times.*
- b. (If watched some or all) How and where did you watch videos? For example, did you watch the videos in staff meetings with other practitioners, or were you encouraged to watch them in your own time? Did this work well?
 - i. Did you use the timed activity breaks within the training videos?
 - ii. If you watched them with other practitioners, did you discuss the videos after watching them?
- c. (If not watched any) Do you know if there are plans to start watching them? If so, when?

4. What did you think of the training videos? *Probe on each of the sessions.*

Also prompt for:

- a. Have you enjoyed the training sessions?
 - b. Content/topics and quality of the training
 - c. Schedule, length, and number of videos
 - d. If there was anything they didn’t understand or were unsure about after watching the videos?
 - e. Was the training convenient to access? Were there any difficulties accessing the training videos?
Probe: any technical issues, access issues (e.g. login to the members area), logistics?
- 5. Have the videos been helpful for explaining how to deliver the Tales Toolkit session with children?** *Probe for how to use the resources, how to structure a session.*
- a. If yes, why?

- b. Were any of the sessions particularly helpful? Were any less useful?
 - c. Would you suggest any changes to the training videos? Is there any way they could be improved at all?
 - d. Have you been able to ask any questions you had around the training?
6. *(If not covered)* Have there been any challenges to taking part in the training? If so, how have these been addressed? *(Probe: support from managers)*
7. How useful are the online training resources like the different downloadable activity sheets for each training session?

Delivering the sessions (10 mins)

We would like to know more about how you are finding delivering the Tales Toolkit sessions with the children at your setting.

Researcher note

Maintained school-based nursery settings are encouraged to deliver to reception as well as nursery classes. In some settings, it may also be used with under 3's although these are not covered in our evaluation activities.

8. How has the delivery of the programme been going so far?
9. Have you felt confident to deliver the sessions?
10. How **many children** do you deliver the Tales Toolkit sessions to at your setting? Across how many classes/groups are these children based?
 - a. Across how many years are these children based?
 - b. [If applicable – i.e. if practitioner works in a school-based nursery setting] Does your setting also deliver Tales Toolkit to a Reception class as well as the nursery?
11. How **often** do you lead Tales Toolkit sessions with the children?

[Note – it is recommended to hold sessions at least once a week]

- a. Do you think the number of sessions you deliver is the right amount for your class(es)? If not, would you like the number of sessions to be more or less than what it is now?
 - b. Are there any differences between children depending on their number of funded hours? E.g. 15 or 30 hours per week.
12. Have you used all of the physical resources to deliver the programme with the children and what do you think of them? *Probe: the big bags, a small kit, apron, hanger, shuffle book, a big book and, other resources like session activity sheets*
- a. Was there anything particularly useful or less useful? Why/why not?
 - b. How have you used them?
 - c. Have you used the resources in other learning environments outside of the sessions?
13. To what extent have the children in class/room/form-group setting been engaged with the programme?
- a. Is there anything they particularly like about the sessions?

Probe for whether children enjoy creating their own story, engaging with the character, setting, and problem/solution elements of a story.

- b. Do you notice any difference in their engagement with the Tales Toolkit resources inside and outside the class/group room?
- c. Do all children enjoy the sessions?

14. Are you delivering Tales Toolkit in different ways according to

- a. the age of the children?
- b. SEND
- c. English as an Additional Language (EAL)
- d. Early Years Pupil Premium

15. Is there anything that works especially well?

- a. Is there anything that works less well?
- b. Was there anything else you would have found helpful?

Additional online resources and support (2 mins)

As well as the training videos, the Tales Toolkit members area also had links to research articles, webinars with experts and other downloadable resources. In these questions we want to know your thoughts about the other resources available online and support you have had.

Researcher note

In addition to the practitioner training and physical resources, a package of online support is available, including downloadable resources, recorded webinars with experts, drop-in sessions, inspiration articles from schools, further research, and a Facebook support group.

- 16. Have you accessed any of the additional resources such as the research articles, drop-in sessions, or the webinars with early years experts? If yes, please tell us what you have accessed.
- 17. Have you been using the Tales Toolkit social media group or members area? *Probe: Facebook support group (<https://www.facebook.com/TalesToolkit>)*
- 18. Are any other resources or support that would be helpful for you/other practitioners' using Tales Toolkit (online or otherwise)

Barriers and enablers (5 mins)

- 19. Have there been any enablers that have made it easier to deliver the programme? *Probe: Have you had support from your manager and colleagues?*
- 20. Have there been any barriers/challenges to delivering the programme?
 - a. How have you attempted to address these barriers or challenges? *Probe for whether any change or adaptations have been made.*
 - b. What, if anything, could help you or your setting to overcome these barriers?

Early impacts (5 mins)

We would now like to ask your thoughts on any early impacts the Tales Toolkit programme is making so far:

- 21. Have you enjoyed taking part in Tales Toolkit? *Probe: using the resources, leading the sessions*
 - a. Is there anything you have enjoyed less about the programme?

22. Has taking part in Tales Toolkit had an effect on your usual practice?

Thinking about the children at your setting:

23. Do you think the programme is appropriate for supporting **all** children's development? (*Probe: SEND/EAL/EYPP*)

a. Are some children benefitting from this programme more than others?

24. Have you noticed any impacts from the programme on the children **so far**?

Closing questions (2 mins)

25. Is there anything else you would like to talk about that we haven't discussed?

26. Thank you. We will be completing follow up interviews with practitioners in June-July 2024 in order to find out how things have gone with the Tales Toolkit programme. We would do this research interview over the phone or online via Teams or Zoom for example, whichever works best for you. Would you be happy to speak with us again?

a. (If yes) Please let us know how best to contact you:

Name:

Email:

Telephone:

Tales Toolkit – Setting Manager Topic Guide (follow up interview)

Background information for interviewer

Please check notes from previous interviews with manager and with practitioners at the setting. Some questions in this guide will not be relevant depending on previous responses, and the guide should be adapted accordingly.

You should also know;

- In which month they were first interviewed;
- the number of training sessions that had been completed at the first interview;
- which of the Tales Toolkit physical resources had been used at the setting when first interviewed; and
- which (if any) of the additional resources and support they had accessed when last interviewed.

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this interview.

To remind you about our research, the Institute for Employment Studies (IES) has been commissioned by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) to carry out a research study of Tales Toolkit. The aim of our research is to explore how Tales Toolkit is delivered in practice. We would also like to understand your views of the programme and your experiences of using the resources. This will support its development to improve it in the future.

Thank you for speaking to us in [March/April/May]. In this follow-up interview we would like to ask you about the following areas:

- Any barriers you or your practitioners may have experienced in delivering the programme.
- Any costs incurred by the settings.
- Any impacts you think that the programme may be having on the children and your practitioners.

Everything we talk about in this interview is confidential and will only be used for the purpose of this research. IES will write a report that summarises the main findings from all our research activities. The information you share will be anonymised in the report (including any quotes), so no names are used, and any information that could reveal your identity will only be used with your explicit permission. Please feel free to answer the questions as openly and as honestly as possible, but if you would rather something did not go into the report, please let us know. We know this is a challenging time for the sector, and candid responses to help us understand your engagement would be welcome.

The report we write will be made publicly available on the EEF website for anyone who is interested in the findings of the research. The interview will take between 20 to 30 minutes and is voluntary. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to, and you can choose to stop the interview at any point.

Before we start, do you have any questions?

With your permission, I would like to record the interview. The recording will be kept securely and only accessed by our research team. The recording will be deleted six months after the end of the project. Would that be ok with you?

[If individual does consent, please ask them to confirm once the recording has started so that we have a record].

1. Background (2 mins)
 - a. Briefly, has your role changed at all since we last spoke in [March/April/May]?
 - b. Have there been any other wider changes to the setting? e.g. staffing changes, changes in ownership
2. Training (5-10 mins)

We are interested to understand your views on the Tales Toolkit training in terms of the sessions and resources themselves and how they have been received and used in this setting.

Researcher note

There are five 50-minute online training videos, including clear instructions, interviews with experts, footage of the TT kit in use and timers for activities and discussion. Delivered over approx. 3–4 months with activities between each session to complete.

N.B. Training sessions 1 & 2 can be run close together, with a gap of around one month between sessions 2 and three.

The physical set of fabric resources is posted to the setting. A package of online support is available, including downloadable resources, recorded webinars with experts, inspiration articles from schools, further research, and a Facebook support group.

Training 1: introduction to the importance of 'quality interactions' laying a base for the correct use of Tales Toolkit.

Training 2: Tales Toolkit in group situations to develop communication, social skills and creativity.

Training 3: Children's independent storytelling across the provision and the curriculum, using all the different Tales Toolkit resources.

Training 4: Tales Toolkit writing and mark making. Training 4 is kept until at least 2 months into training so importance of oral storytelling is embedded first.

Training 5: Reflect on best practice, plan next steps to improve and gain confidence in talking about Tales Toolkit and the impact for children involved.

3. How many of the Tales Toolkit online training videos have you now watched? Prompt: Remind them how many of the 5 they had watched at the last interview
 - a. (If watched some or all) When did you watch them? Probe: all at once or at different times.
 - b. (If watched some or all) How and where did you watch videos? For example, did you watch the videos in staff meetings with other practitioners, or did you watch them in your own time? Did this work well?
 - c. Did you use the timed activity breaks within the training videos?
 - d. If you watched them with other practitioners, did you discuss the videos after watching them?
 - e. (If not watched all) Do you have plans to start watching the next videos? If so, when?
 - f. Do individual practitioners have their own login and password to access the training and online resources or does the manager do it for everyone?
4. Have all staff at your setting done the Tales Toolkit training?
 - a. (If yes and not covered above) How many staff have done the training? How did they go about accessing it? Probe: all together i.e. on an INSET day/staff meeting, separately in work time, in their own time.
 - b. (If yes) Did all staff complete all of the sessions? If not, why not? Probe: challenges finding the time.
 - c. (If no) Which staff have done the training? Why did some staff not do the training? Probe: new staff (since did the training), logistics. (If all or some have done training)
5. (If not covered) Have any new staff joined your setting since you began the Tales Toolkit training?
 - a. (If yes) Did these staff also take part in Tales Toolkit training? How and when was/will this be done?
 - b. (If no) Do you plan to take on any new staff in the near future? If so, will they take part in Tales Toolkit training?

6. (If all or some have done training) What did you and your staff think of the training sessions? Probe on each of the new sessions and for manager vs staff.

Also prompt for:

- a. Content/topics and quality of the training
 - b. Schedule, length, and number of videos
 - c. If there was anything they didn't understand or were unsure about after watching the videos?
 - d. [If applicable] Were you able to resolve any difficulties you had accessing the training videos? Probe: any technical issues, access issues (e.g. login to the members area), logistics?
7. (If not covered) Have the videos been helpful for explaining how to deliver the Tales Toolkit session with children? Probe for mark-making (if watched session 4), how to use the resources, how to structure a session
- a. If yes, why?
 - b. Were any of the sessions particularly helpful? Were any less useful?
 - c. Would you suggest any changes to the training videos? Is there any way they could be improved at all?
8. How useful are the online training resources like the different downloadable activity sheets for each training session?
9. (If not covered) Have there been any challenges to you, your staff or your setting taking part in the training? If so, how have these been addressed? (Probe: support from managers)
- a. What, if anything, could help overcome these challenges?
10. Has anything changed about practitioners' confidence and motivation to deliver the programme since we last spoke in March/April/May?
- a. Is there anything that could be changed about the training or the resources to give the practitioners more confidence/motivation or make the programme easier to deliver?

Barriers and enablers (5 mins)

11. Have there been any contextual factors or other challenges to delivering the programme? If so, what are these? Probe for challenges related to wider changes to the setting referred to in question 2
- a. Why did these challenges occur?
 - b. [If not covered] How have these challenges affected delivery? e.g. delays, adaptations
 - c. Were you aware of these challenges before signing up to Tales Toolkit or have they happened since sign-up?
 - d. How have you attempted to address these challenges? Probe for whether any change or adaptations have been made.
 - e. What, if anything, could help you, the practitioners, or your setting to overcome these challenges?
12. Have there been any enablers that have made it easier to deliver the programme?
- a. How, if at all, have you supported the practitioners to deliver the sessions?
13. (If not mentioned in above questions) Can I ask if your setting has been involved in any other projects, programmes, or research this year that focussed on language and communication, literacy, creativity, storytelling and/or personal, social and emotional development?
- a. If yes, has this affected or impacted your setting's participation in the Tales Toolkit programme in any way?

Delivering the sessions (10 mins)

We would like to know more about how the delivery of the Tales Toolkit has gone at your setting, as well as understanding the perceptions and feedback from other practitioners at your setting.

Researcher note

The manager could also be a Tales Toolkit practitioner alongside a managerial or dual role within their setting. We want to know about their practice and other staff.

Maintained school-based nursery settings are encouraged to deliver to reception as well as nursery classes. In some settings, it may also be used with under 3's although these are not covered in our evaluation activities.

14. How has the delivery of the programme been going since we last spoke?
 - a. Have you introduced any new elements? How has that been? (e.g. mark-making, if completed training session 4)
 - b. Have there been any changes in the numbers of children you deliver to, and across how many classes/groups and years these children are based?
- i. If yes, why?
15. How often do you/your practitioners lead Tales Toolkit sessions with the children?
[Note – it is recommended to hold sessions at least once a week]
 - a. Do you think the number of sessions you/your practitioners deliver is the right amount for your class(es)? If not, would you/your practitioners like the number of sessions to be more or less than what it is now?
 - b. Are there any differences between children depending on their number of funded hours? E.g. 15 or 30 hours per week.
16. Have you/your practitioners used any more or fewer of the physical resources to deliver the programme with the children, either within or outside of the group sessions, and what do you think of them? Probe: remind them which they were already using of the big bags, a small kit, apron, hanger, shuffle book, a big book and, other resources like session activity sheets
 - a. [If yes] Was there anything particularly useful or less useful? Why/why not?
 - b. [If yes] How have you/your practitioners used them?
 - c. [If not covered] Have you/your practitioners used the resources in other learning environments outside of the sessions?
17. As you have got further in delivery (and possibly introduced new elements), have there been any changes to children's engagement with the programme and understanding of the concepts? Reference examples from past interview if relevant
 - a. Why do you think this is? (e.g. children have had more time to understand, further training has increased practitioners' understanding, introduction of new elements)
 - b. Is there anything the children particularly like about the sessions?
 - c. Probe for whether children enjoy creating their own story, engaging with the character, setting, and problem/solution elements of a story, mark-making.
 - d. Do you notice any difference in their engagement with the Tales Toolkit resources inside and outside the class/group room?
 - e. Are children playing with Tales Toolkit independently and using it outside? [If changed] Why/why not?
 - f. Do all children enjoy the sessions?

- g. Has there been any differences in engagement according to different groups e.g. those with SEND, EAL, Pupil Premium or by age?
18. [If not covered previously] Are you/your practitioners delivering Tales Toolkit in different ways according to:
- a. the age of the children?
 - b. SEND
 - c. English as an Additional Language (EAL)
 - d. Early Years Pupil Premium
19. Is there anything that works especially well?
- a. Is there anything that works less well?
 - b. Was there anything else you would have found helpful?

Additional online resources and support (2 mins)

As well as the training videos, the Tales Toolkit members area also had links to research articles, webinars with experts and other downloadable resources. In these questions we want to know your thoughts about the other resources available online and support you/your practitioners have had.

Researcher note

In addition to the practitioner training and physical resources, a package of online support is available, including downloadable resources, recorded webinars with experts, drop-in sessions, inspiration articles from schools, further research, and a Facebook support group.

- 20. Have you/your practitioners accessed any of the additional resources such as the research articles, drop-in sessions, or the webinars with early years experts since we last spoke? If yes, please tell us what you have accessed. (Remind them what they had accessed last time)
- 21. Have you used the Tales Toolkit social media groups or members area? Probe: Facebook support group (<https://www.facebook.com/TalesToolkit>)
- 22. Did you need any support from the Tales Toolkit team and if so, were you able to access this?
 - a. Do you feel you know how and where to access support if you needed it?
- 23. Are there any other resources or support that would have been helpful for you/your practitioners' using Tales Toolkit (online or otherwise)?

Early impacts (8 mins)

We would now like to ask your thoughts on any early impacts the Tales Toolkit programme is making so far:

- 24. Has taking part in Tales Toolkit had an effect on you/your practitioners' usual practice? (e.g. collaborative storytelling, quality interactions, child-led learnings)
 - a. Have you/your practitioners incorporated any Tales Toolkit approaches or strategies into their wider practice? (e.g. using language of character, setting, problem, solution)
 - b. Do you think this project has changed how you/your practitioners interact with children? If so, how?
- 25. Have you noticed if you or your practitioners are more confident in your/their ability to support the children's language and communication skills?
 - a. Are you/they more confident in your/their ability to support children who have SEND in their language and communication skills?
 - b. Are you/they more confident in your/their ability to support children who have English as an Additional Language (EAL) in their language and communication skills?

- c. Are you/they more confident in your/their ability to support children who have Early Years Pupil Premium in their language and communication skills?
 - d. Are you/they more confident in your/their ability to support children who are in differing age groups?
26. Have you noticed if you/your practitioners are more confident in your/their ability to support the children's creative and writing skills?
27. Have you noticed if you/your practitioners are more confident in your/their ability to support the children's personal, social and emotional skills?
28. Have you noticed any other impacts on practitioners at the setting?

Thinking about the children at your setting:

29. Do you think the programme is appropriate for supporting all children's development? (Probe: SEND/EAL/EYPP)
- a. Are some children benefiting from this programme more than others?
30. Have you or any practitioners noticed any impacts from the programme on the children at the setting? (Probe: creativity, literacy, storytelling, PSED)
- a) (If not), do you think it will have an impact in the future?

Other impacts, costs and suggested improvements

31. Have there been any negative or unintended consequences of the programme? (e.g. less time for other programmes, widening attainment gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils)
32. Have there been any costs to you, the practitioners, the setting or the children? This may include time costs
- a. If so, have these costs been manageable and acceptable?

In recognition of the staff time costs associated with undertaking professional development, additional funding is available to cover approximately 50% of staff time costs for attending training: settings were provided with £7.50 per hour per staff member who completes the 5 hours of training, for up to a maximum of 10 staff members.

33. [If someone at setting has taken part in all 5 training sessions] Did you as a setting access the additional funding for staff time available for staff members who took part in 5 hours of training, and if so, did this make a difference?
34. Are there any changes you would suggest to Tales Toolkit? (e.g. to make it easier to deliver or more engaging for the children)

Closing questions

Additional info if needed: The training and resources accessed by practitioners would usually cost £800 for the package and £100 for the second set of resources (including VAT). Settings will have access to the online resources for a year and can keep all physical resources at the end of the project. Settings can also continue to have access to the online platform and resources at the end of the project, at a reduced re-subscription rate.

35. Overall, what do you think of the Tales Toolkit programme?
- a. Do you think it has been beneficial for you and your setting?
 - b. Thinking back to the reasons why you decided for your setting to get involved with Tales Toolkit, has it met your expectations/ helped achieve your goals?
 - c. Would you like to continue using the Tales Toolkit programme in the future at your setting? Why/ why not?
 - d. The training and resources accessed by practitioners would usually cost £800 for the package and £100 for the second set of resources (including VAT). Would you have found that affordable?
 - e. Would you recommend the programme to other settings like yours? (Probe for settings that they would recommend it to, e.g., one with high proportion of EAL, larger settings)

36. Are there any kind of settings you wouldn't recommend it to, or you feel it wouldn't be suitable for?

37. Is there anything else you would like to talk about that we haven't discussed?

38. If you haven't already, could you please fill out the survey we emailed around? You will be given the option to enter a cash prize draw to thank you for your time. [One prize of £50, two of £25]

Thank and close

Tales Toolkit – Practitioner Topic Guide (follow up interview)

Background information for interviewer

Please check notes from previous interviews with manager and with practitioners at the setting. Some questions in this guide will not be relevant depending on previous responses, and the guide should be adapted accordingly.

You should also know what month they were first interviewed.

- In which month they were first interviewed;
- the number of training sessions that had been completed at the first interview;
- which of the Tales Toolkit physical resources had been used at the setting when first interviewed; and
- which (if any) of the additional resources and support they had accessed when last interviewed.

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this interview.

To remind you about our research, the Institute for Employment Studies (IES) has been commissioned by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) to carry out a research study of Tales Toolkit. The aim of our research is to explore how Tales Toolkit is delivered in practice. We would also like to understand your views of the programme and your experiences of using the resources. This will support its development to improve it in the future.

Thank you for speaking to us in [March/April/May]. In this follow-up interview we would like to ask you about the following areas:

- Any barriers you or your practitioners may have experienced in delivering the programme.
- Any costs incurred by the settings.
- Any impacts you think that the programme may be having on the children and your practitioners.

Everything we talk about in this interview is confidential and will only be used for the purpose of this research. IES will write a report that summarises the main findings from all our research activities. The information you share will be anonymised in the report (including any quotes), so no names are used, and any information that could reveal your identity will only be used with your explicit permission. Please feel free to answer the questions as openly and as honestly as possible, but if you would rather something did not go into the report, please let us know. We know this is a challenging time for the sector, and candid responses to help us understand your engagement would be welcome.

The report we write will be made publicly available on the EEF website for anyone who is interested in the findings of the research. The interview will take between 20 to 30 minutes and is voluntary. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to, and you can choose to stop the interview at any point.

Before we start, do you have any questions?

With your permission, I would like to record the interview. The recording will be kept securely and only accessed by our research team. The recording will be deleted six months after the end of the project. Would that be ok with you?

[If individual does consent, please ask them to confirm once the recording has started so that we have a record].

Background (2 mins)

1. Briefly, has your role changed at all since we last spoke in [March/April/May]?
2. Have there been any other wider changes to the setting? e.g. staffing changes, changes in ownership

Training (5–10mins)

Researcher note

There are five 50-minute online training videos, including clear instructions, interviews with experts, footage of the TT kit in use and timers for activities and discussion. Delivered over approx. 3–4 months with activities between each session to complete.

N.B. Training sessions 1 & 2 can be run close together, with a gap of around one month between sessions 2 and three.

The physical set of fabric resources is posted to the setting. A package of online support is available, including downloadable resources, recorded webinars with experts, inspiration articles from schools, further research, and a Facebook support group.

Training 1: introduction to the importance of 'quality interactions' laying a base for the correct use of Tales Toolkit.

Training 2: Tales Toolkit in group situations to develop communication, social skills and creativity.

Training 3: Children's independent storytelling across the provision and the curriculum, using all the different Tales Toolkit resources.

Training 4: Tales Toolkit writing and mark making. Training 4 is kept until at least 2 months into training so importance of oral storytelling is embedded first.

Training 5: Reflect on best practice, plan next steps to improve and gain confidence in talking about Tales Toolkit and the impact for children involved.

We are interested to understand your views on the Tales Toolkit training in terms of the sessions and resources themselves and how they have been received and used in this setting.

3. How many of the Tales Toolkit online training videos have you now watched? Prompt: Remind them how many of the 5 they had watched at the last interview
 - a. (If watched some or all) When did you watch them? Probe: all at once or at different times.
 - b. (If watched some or all) How and where did you watch videos? For example, did you watch the videos in staff meetings with other practitioners, or did you watch them in your own time? Did this work well?
 - i. Did you use the timed activity breaks within the training videos?
 - ii. If you watched them with other practitioners, did you discuss the videos after watching them?
 - c. (If not watched any more) Do you know if there are plans to start watching the next videos? If so, when?
 - d. Do individual practitioners have their own login and password to access the training and online resources or does the manager do it for everyone?
4. What did you think of the training videos? Probe on each of the sessions.

Also prompt for:

- a. Content/topics and quality of the training
- b. Schedule, length, and number of videos

- c. If there was anything they didn't understand or were unsure about after watching the videos?
- d. [If applicable] Were you able to resolve any difficulties you had accessing the training videos? Probe: any technical issues, access issues (e.g. login to the members area), logistics?
5. (If not covered) Have the videos been helpful for explaining how to deliver the Tales Toolkit session with children? Probe for mark-making (if watched session 4), how to use the resources, how to structure a session
 - a. If yes, why?
 - b. Were any of the sessions particularly helpful? Were any less useful?
 - c. Would you suggest any changes to the training videos? Is there any way they could be improved at all?
6. How useful are the online training resources like the different downloadable activity sheets for each training session?
7. (If not covered) Have there been any challenges to taking part in the training? If so, how have these been addressed? (Probe: support from managers)

1.3 Barriers and enablers (5 mins)

8. Have there been any contextual factors or other challenges to delivering the programme? If so, what are these? Probe for challenges related to wider changes to the setting referred to in question 2
 - a. [If not covered] How have these challenges affected delivery? e.g. delays, adaptations
 - b. How have you/the setting attempted to address these challenges? Probe for whether any change or adaptations have been made.
 - c. What, if anything, could help you or your setting to overcome these challenges?
9. Have there been any enablers that have made it easier to deliver the programme? Probe: have you had support from managers/colleagues?
10. (If not mentioned in above questions) Can I ask if you have been involved in any other projects, programmes, or research this year that focussed on language and communication, literacy, creativity, storytelling and/or personal, social and emotional development?
 - a. If yes, has this affected or impacted your setting's participation in the Tales Toolkit programme in any way?

1.4 Delivering the sessions (10 mins)

We would like to know more about how you are finding delivering the Tales Toolkit sessions with the children at your setting.

Researcher note

Maintained school-based nursery settings are encouraged to deliver to reception as well as nursery classes. In some settings, it may also be used with under 3's although these are not covered in our evaluation activities.

11. How has the delivery of the programme been going since we last spoke?
 - a. Have you introduced any new elements? How was that been? (e.g. mark-making, if completed training session 4)
12. Have you felt confident to deliver the sessions?
13. Have there been any changes in the numbers of children you deliver to, and across how many classes/groups and years these children are based?

a. If yes, why?

14. How often do you lead Tales Toolkit sessions with the children?

[Note – it is recommended to hold sessions at least once a week]

a. Do you think the number of sessions you deliver is the right amount for your class(es)? If not, would you like the number of sessions to be more or less than what it is now?

b. Are there any differences between children depending on their number of funded hours? E.g. 15 or 30 hours per week.

15. Have you used any more or fewer of the physical resources to deliver the programme with the children, either within or outside of the group sessions, and what do you think of them? Probe: remind them which they were already using of the big bags, a small kit, apron, hanger, shuffle book, a big book and, other resources like session activity sheets

a. [If yes] Was there anything particularly useful or less useful? Why/why not?

b. [If yes] How have you used them?

16. As you have got further in delivery (and possibly introduced new elements), have there been any changes to children's engagement with the programme and understanding of the concepts? Reference examples from past interview if relevant

a. Why do you think this is? (e.g. children have had more time to understand, further training has increased practitioners' understanding, introduction of new elements)

b. Is there anything the children particularly like about the sessions?

Probe for whether children enjoy creating their own story, engaging with the character, setting, and problem/solution elements of a story, mark-making.

c. Do you notice any difference in their engagement with the Tales Toolkit resources inside and outside the class/group room?

d. Are children playing with Tales Toolkit independently and using it outside? [If changed] Why/why not?

e. Do all children enjoy the sessions?

f. Has there been any differences in engagement according to age, SEND, EAL or Pupil Premium?

17. [If not covered previously] Are you delivering Tales Toolkit in different ways according to

a. the age of the children?

b. SEND

c. English as an Additional Language (EAL)

d. Early Years Pupil Premium

18. Is there anything that works especially well?

a. Is there anything that works less well?

b. Was there anything else you would have found helpful?

1.5 Additional online resources and support (2 mins)

As well as the training videos, the Tales Toolkit members area also had links to research articles, webinars with experts and other downloadable resources. In these questions we want to know your thoughts about the other resources available online and support you have had.

Researcher note

In addition to the practitioner training and physical resources, a package of online support is available, including downloadable resources, recorded webinars with experts, drop-in sessions, inspiration articles from schools, further research, and a Facebook support group.

19. Have you used the Tales Toolkit social media groups or members area? Probe: Facebook support group (<https://www.facebook.com/TalesToolkit>)
20. Did you need any support from the Tales Toolkit team and if so, were you able to access this?
 - a. Do you feel you know how and where to access support if you needed it?
21. Are there any other resources or support that would have been helpful for you/ other practitioners' using Tales Toolkit (online or otherwise)?

1.6 Early impacts (5 mins)

We would now like to ask your thoughts on any early impacts the Tales Toolkit programme is making so far:

22. Has taking part in Tales Toolkit had an effect on your usual practice? (e.g. collaborative storytelling, quality interactions, child-led learnings)
23. Have you noticed any other impacts from the programme on your own skills and confidence?
24. Has your confidence in your ability to support the children's language and communication skills changed?
 - a. Are you more confident in your ability to support children who have SEND in their language and communication skills?
 - b. Are you more confident in your ability to support children who have English as an Additional Language (EAL) in their language and communication skills?
 - c. Are you more confident in your ability to support children who have Early Years Pupil Premium in their language and communication skills?
 - d. Are you more confident in your ability to support children who are in differing age groups?
25. Has your confidence in your ability to support the children's creative and writing skills changed?
26. Has your confidence in your ability to support the children's personal, social and emotional skills changed?

Thinking about the children at your setting:

27. Do you think the programme is appropriate for supporting all children's development? (Probe: SEND/EAL/EYPP)
 - a. Are some children benefitting from this programme more than others?
28. Have you noticed any impacts from the programme on the children at the setting? (Probe: creativity, literacy, storytelling, PSED)
 - a. (If not), do you think it will have an impact in the future?

1.7 Other impacts, costs and suggested improvements

29. Have there been any negative or unintended consequences of the programme? (e.g. less time for other programmes, widening attainment gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils)
30. Have there been any costs to you, the setting or the children? This may include time costs
- a. If so, have these costs been manageable and acceptable?
31. Are there any changes you would suggest to Tales Toolkit? (e.g. to make it easier to deliver or more engaging for the children)
- 1.8 Closing questions (2 mins)
32. Overall, what do you think of the Tales Toolkit programme?
- a. Do you think it has been beneficial for you and your setting?
- b. Would you like to continue using the Tales Toolkit programme in the future at your setting? Why/ why not?
- c. Would you recommend the programme to other settings like yours? (Probe for settings that they would recommend it to, e.g., one with high proportion of EAL, larger settings is it worth paying the full cost)
- d. Are there any kind of settings you wouldn't recommend it to, or you feel it wouldn't be suitable for?
33. Is there anything else you would like to talk about that we haven't discussed?

Thank and close

Tales Toolkit – Joint Manager and Practitioner Topic Guide (follow up interview)

Background information for interviewer

Please check notes from previous interviews with manager and with practitioners at the setting. Some questions in this guide will not be relevant depending on previous responses, and the guide should be adapted accordingly.

You should also know;

- In which month they were first interviewed;
- the number of training sessions that had been completed at the first interview;
- which of the Tales Toolkit physical resources had been used at the setting when first interviewed; and
- which (if any) of the additional resources and support they had accessed when last interviewed.

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this interview.

To remind you about our research, the Institute for Employment Studies (IES) has been commissioned by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) to carry out a research study of Tales Toolkit. The aim of our research is to explore how Tales Toolkit is delivered in practice. We would also like to understand your views of the programme and your experiences of using the resources. This will support its development to improve it in the future.

Thank you for speaking to us in [March/April/May]. In this follow-up interview we would like to ask you about the following areas:

- Any barriers you or your practitioners may have experienced in delivering the programme.

- Any costs incurred by the settings.
- Any impacts you think that the programme may be having on the children and your practitioners.

Everything we talk about in this interview is confidential and will only be used for the purpose of this research. IES will write a report that summarises the main findings from all our research activities. The information you share will be anonymised in the report (including any quotes), so no names are used, and any information that could reveal your identity will only be used with your explicit permission. Please feel free to answer the questions as openly and as honestly as possible, but if you would rather something did not go into the report, please let us know. We know this is a challenging time for the sector, and candid responses to help us understand your engagement would be welcome.

The report we write will be made publicly available on the EEF website for anyone who is interested in the findings of the research. The interview will take between around 45-60 minutes and is voluntary. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to, and you can choose to stop the interview at any point.

Before we start, do you have any questions?

With your permission, I would like to record the interview. The recording will be kept securely and only accessed by our research team. The recording will be deleted six months after the end of the project. Would that be ok with you?

[If individuals do consent, please ask them to both confirm once the recording has started so that we have a record].

Background (2 mins)

1. Briefly, have your roles changed at all since we last spoke in [March/April/May]?
2. Have there been any other wider changes to the setting? e.g. staffing changes, changes in ownership

Training (5-10 mins)

We are interested to understand your views on the Tales Toolkit training in terms of the sessions and resources themselves and how they have been received and used in this setting.

Researcher note

There are five 50-minute online training videos, including clear instructions, interviews with experts, footage of the TT kit in use and timers for activities and discussion. Delivered over approx. 3–4 months with activities between each session to complete.

N.B. Training sessions 1 & 2 can be run close together, with a gap of around one month between sessions 2 and three.

The physical set of fabric resources is posted to the setting. A package of online support is available, including downloadable resources, recorded webinars with experts, inspiration articles from schools, further research, and a Facebook support group.

Training 1: introduction to the importance of 'quality interactions' laying a base for the correct use of Tales Toolkit.

Training 2: Tales Toolkit in group situations to develop communication, social skills and creativity.

Training 3: Children's independent storytelling across the provision and the curriculum, using all the different Tales Toolkit resources.

Training 4: Tales Toolkit writing and mark making. Training 4 is kept until at least 2 months into training so importance of oral storytelling is embedded first.

Training 5: Reflect on best practice, plan next steps to improve and gain confidence in talking about Tales Toolkit and the impact for children involved.

3. How many of the Tales Toolkit online training videos have you now watched? Prompt: Remind them how many of the 5 they had watched at the last interview
 - a. (If watched some or all) When did you watch them? Probe: all at once or at different times.
 - b. (If watched some or all) How and where did you watch videos? For example, did you watch the videos in staff meetings with other practitioners, or did you watch them in your own time? Did this work well?
 - c. Did you use the timed activity breaks within the training videos?
 - d. If you watched them with other practitioners, did you discuss the videos after watching them?
 - e. (If not watched all) Do you have plans to start watching the next videos? If so, when?
 - f. Do individual practitioners have their own login and password to access the training and online resources or does the manager do it for everyone?
4. Have all staff at your setting done the Tales Toolkit training?
 - a. (If yes and not covered above) How many staff have done the training? How did they go about accessing it? Probe: all together i.e. on an INSET day/staff meeting, separately in work time, in their own time.
 - b. (If yes) Did all staff complete all of the sessions? If not, why not? Probe: challenges finding the time.
 - c. (If no) Which staff have done the training? Why did some staff not do the training? Probe: new staff (since did the training), logistics.
5. (If not covered) Have any new staff joined your setting since you began the Tales Toolkit training?
 - a. (If yes) Did these staff also take part in Tales Toolkit training? How and when was/will this be done?
 - b. (If no) Do you plan to take on any new staff in the near future? If so, will they take part in Tales Toolkit training?
6. (If all or some have done training) What did you and your staff think of the training sessions? Probe on each of the new sessions and for manager vs staff.

Also prompt for:

 - a. Content/topics and quality of the training
 - b. Schedule, length, and number of videos
 - c. If there was anything they didn't understand or were unsure about after watching the videos?
 - d. [If applicable] Were you able to resolve any difficulties you had accessing the training videos? Probe: any technical issues, access issues (e.g. login to the members area), logistics?
7. (If not covered) Have the videos been helpful for explaining how to deliver the Tales Toolkit session with children? Probe for mark-making (if watched session 4), how to use the resources, how to structure a session
 - a. If yes, why?
 - b. Were any of the sessions particularly helpful? Were any less useful?
 - c. Would you suggest any changes to the training videos? Is there any way they could be improved at all?
8. How useful are the online training resources like the different downloadable activity sheets for each training session?
9. (If not covered) Have there been any challenges to you, your staff or your setting taking part in the training? If so, how have these been addressed? (Probe: support from managers)

- a. What, if anything, could help overcome these challenges?
10. Has anything changed about practitioners' confidence and motivation to deliver the programme since we last spoke in March/April/May?
- a. Is there anything that could be changed about the training or the resources to give the practitioners more confidence/motivation or make the programme easier to deliver?

Barriers and enablers (5 mins)

11. Have there been any contextual factors or other challenges to delivering the programme? If so, what are these? Probe for challenges related to wider changes to the setting referred to in question 2
- a. Why did these challenges occur?
 - b. [If not covered] How have these challenges affected delivery? e.g. delays, adaptations
 - c. Were you aware of these challenges before signing up to Tales Toolkit or have they happened since sign-up?
 - d. How have you attempted to address these challenges? Probe for whether any change or adaptations have been made.
 - e. What, if anything, could help you, the practitioners, or your setting to overcome these challenges?
12. Have there been any enablers that have made it easier to deliver the programme?
- a. How, if at all, have you supported the practitioners to deliver the sessions?
13. (If not mentioned in above questions) Can I ask if your setting has been involved in any other projects, programmes, or research this year that focussed on language and communication, literacy, creativity, storytelling and/or personal, social and emotional development?
- a. If yes, has this affected or impacted your setting's participation in the Tales Toolkit programme in any way?

Delivering the sessions (10 mins)

We would like to know more about how the delivery of the Tales Toolkit has gone at your setting, as well as understanding the perceptions and feedback from other practitioners at your setting.

Researcher note

The manager could also be a Tales Toolkit practitioner alongside a managerial or dual role within their setting. We want to know about their practice and other staff.

Maintained school-based nursery settings are encouraged to deliver to reception as well as nursery classes. In some settings, it may also be used with under 3's although these are not covered in our evaluation activities.

14. How has the delivery of the programme been going since we last spoke?
- a. Have you introduced any new elements? How has that been? (e.g. mark-making, if completed training session 4)
15. Have there been any changes in the numbers of children you deliver to, and across how many classes/groups and years these children are based?
- a. If yes, why?
16. How often do you/your practitioners lead Tales Toolkit sessions with the children?

[Note – it is recommended to hold sessions at least once a week]

- a. Do you think the number of sessions you/your practitioners deliver is the right amount for your class(es)? If not, would you/your practitioners like the number of sessions to be more or less than what it is now?
 - b. Are there any differences between children depending on their number of funded hours? E.g. 15 or 30 hours per week.
17. Have you/your practitioners used any more or fewer of the physical resources to deliver the programme with the children, either within or outside of the group sessions, and what do you think of them? Probe: remind them which they were already using of the big bags, a small kit, apron, hanger, shuffle book, a big book and, other resources like session activity sheets
- a. [If yes] Was there anything particularly useful or less useful? Why/why not?
 - b. [If yes] How have you/your practitioners used them?
 - c. [If not covered] Have you/your practitioners used the resources in other learning environments outside of the sessions?
18. As you have got further in delivery (and possibly introduced new elements), have there been any changes to children's engagement with the programme and understanding of the concepts? Reference examples from past interview if relevant
- a. Why do you think this is? (e.g. children have had more time to understand, further training has increased practitioners' understanding, introduction of new elements)
 - b. Is there anything the children particularly like about the sessions?
- Probe for whether children enjoy creating their own story, engaging with the character, setting, and problem/solution elements of a story, mark-making.
- c. Do you notice any difference in their engagement with the Tales Toolkit resources inside and outside the class/group room?
 - d. Are children playing with Tales Toolkit independently and using it outside? [If changed] Why/why not?
 - e. Do all children enjoy the sessions?
 - f. Has there been any differences in engagement according to different groups e.g. those with SEND, EAL, Pupil Premium or by age?
19. [If not covered previously] Are you/your practitioners delivering Tales Toolkit in different ways according to:
- a. the age of the children?
 - b. SEND
 - c. English as an Additional Language (EAL)
 - d. Early Years Pupil Premium
20. Is there anything that works especially well?
- a. Is there anything that works less well?
 - b. Was there anything else you would have found helpful?

Additional online resources and support (2 mins)

As well as the training videos, the Tales Toolkit members area also had links to research articles, webinars with experts and other downloadable resources. In these questions we want to know your thoughts about the other resources available online and support you/your practitioners have had.

Researcher note

In addition to the practitioner training and physical resources, a package of online support is available, including downloadable resources, recorded webinars with experts, drop-in sessions, inspiration articles from schools, further research, and a Facebook support group.

21. Have any of you accessed any of the additional resources such as the research articles, drop-in sessions, or the webinars with early years experts since we last spoke? If yes, please tell us what you have accessed (Remind them what they had accessed last time)
22. Have you used the Tales Toolkit social media groups or members area? Probe: Facebook support group (<https://www.facebook.com/TalesToolkit>)
23. Did you need any support from the Tales Toolkit team and if so, were you able to access this?
 - a. Do you feel you know how and where to access support if you needed it?
24. Are there any other resources or support that would have been helpful for you/your practitioners' using Tales Toolkit (online or otherwise)?

Early impacts (8 mins)

We would now like to ask your thoughts on any early impacts the Tales Toolkit programme is making so far:

25. Has taking part in Tales Toolkit had an effect on you/your practitioners' usual practice? (e.g. collaborative storytelling, quality interactions, child-led learnings)
 - a. Have you/your practitioners incorporated any Tales Toolkit approaches or strategies into their wider practice? (e.g. using language of character, setting, problem, solution)
 - b. Do you think this project has changed how you/your practitioners interact with children? If so, how?
26. Have you noticed if you or your practitioners are more confident in your/their ability to support the children's language and communication skills?
 - a. Are you/they more confident in your/their ability to support children who have SEND in their language and communication skills?
 - b. Are you/they more confident in your/their ability to support children who have English as an Additional Language (EAL) in their language and communication skills?
 - c. Are you/they more confident in your/their ability to support children who have Early Years Pupil Premium in their language and communication skills?
 - d. Are you/they more confident in your/their ability to support children who are in differing age groups?
27. Have you noticed if you/your practitioners are more confident in your/their ability to support the children's creative and writing skills?
28. Have you noticed if you/your practitioners are more confident in your/their ability to support the children's personal, social and emotional skills?
29. Have you noticed any other impacts on practitioners/yourselves at the setting?

Thinking about the children at your setting:

30. Do you think the programme is appropriate for supporting all children's development? (Probe: SEND/EAL/EYPP)
 - a. Are some children benefiting from this programme more than others?

31. Have you or any practitioners noticed any impacts from the programme on the children at the setting? (Probe: creativity, literacy, storytelling, PSED)

a. (If not), do you think it will have an impact in the future?

Other impacts, costs and suggested improvements

32. Have there been any negative or unintended consequences of the programme? (e.g. less time for other programmes, widening attainment gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils)

33. Have there been any costs to you, the practitioners, the setting or the children? This may include time costs

a. If so, have these costs been manageable and acceptable?

In recognition of the staff time costs associated with undertaking professional development, additional funding is available to cover approximately 50% of staff time costs for attending training: settings were provided with £7.50 per hour per staff member who completes the 5 hours of training, for up to a maximum of 10 staff members.

b. [If someone at setting has taken part in all 5 training sessions] Did you as a setting access the additional funding for staff time available for staff members who took part in 5 hours of training, and if so, did this make a difference?

34. Are there any changes you would suggest to Tales Toolkit? (e.g. to make it easier to deliver or more engaging for the children)

Closing questions

Additional info if needed: The training and resources accessed by practitioners would usually cost £800 for the package and £100 for the second set of resources (including VAT). Settings will have access to the online resources for a year and can keep all physical resources at the end of the project. Settings can also continue to have access to the online platform and resources at the end of the project, at a reduced re-subscription rate.

35. Overall, what do you think of the Tales Toolkit programme?

a. Do you think it has been beneficial for you and your setting?

b. Thinking back to the reasons why you decided for your setting to get involved with Tales Toolkit, has it met your expectations/ helped achieve your goals?

c. Would you like to continue using the Tales Toolkit programme in the future at your setting? Why/ why not?

d. The training and resources accessed by practitioners would usually cost £800 for the package and £100 for the second set of resources (including VAT). Would you have found that affordable?

e. Would you recommend the programme to other settings like yours? (Probe for settings that they would recommend it to, e.g., one with high proportion of EAL, larger settings)

f. Are there any kind of settings you wouldn't recommend it to, or you feel it wouldn't be suitable for?

36. Is there anything else you would like to talk about that we haven't discussed?

37. If you haven't already, could you please fill out the survey we emailed around? You will be given the option to enter a cash prize draw to thank you for your time. [One prize of £50, two of £25]

If they need more information: Managers and practitioners who were involved at the beginning of the programme, and therefore will have filled in the baseline survey, will have received a personalised link. Setting leads may also have received a general link to pass onto any staff who are involved in the programme but may not have completed the baseline survey e.g. if they were not at the setting at that time.

Thank and close

Tales Toolkit non-participant Discussion Guide

The Institute for Employment Studies (IES) is an independent research organisation carrying out an evaluation of the Tales Toolkit programme, a package of training and resources supporting children's early language and social development through oral storytelling, on behalf of the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF).

The aim of this interview is to understand why some settings discontinued their involvement with the Tales Toolkit programme this year and the impact this may have had on settings.

The aim of our research is to explore how Tales Toolkit is delivered in practice. We would also like to understand your views of the programme and your experiences of using the resources. This will support its development to improve it in the future.

The interview will last around 10-15 minutes and is entirely voluntary. If at any point you feel uncomfortable or prefer not to answer a specific question, that's fine. The interview can end at any point.

Everything you say will be in confidence. No individuals/settings will be named in research outputs. By continuing with the interview, you are consenting to taking part and your responses being used in the research. You have previously been sent the privacy notice for this project but let us know if you would like us to share it with you again.

Is there anything you would like to ask at this point?

With your permission, I would like to record this interview. The recording will be saved in restricted data files where only the project team can access them and will only be used for the purposes of the project research and will be deleted six months after the end of the project. Are you happy for me to take a recording?

- 1) Why did your setting decide to not continue with the Tales Toolkit programme this year (up to October 24)?
- 2) Did you start the training and/or delivery? If so, how much of the programme did you get through? (Probe for number of training and delivery sessions)
- 3) Did you experience any challenges in taking part/ continuing to take part? If so, what were those challenges? (Prompt for training and delivery related challenges)
- 4) Is there anything that would have made it easier for you to continue taking part? (Prompt for manager support, time, resources)
- 5) Is there anything that could be improved or changed about the programme that would have made it more attractive for you to take part in? (Prompt for views on intensity and content of training and/or delivery)
- 6) Are you involved in any other projects or programmes this year focusing on:
 - a) Language and communication, literacy, creativity and/or storytelling?
 - b) Personal, social and emotional development?
- 7) Do you feel you or your setting would benefit from (more) support in these areas?
- 8) Do you plan on taking part in Tales Toolkit in the future?

Anything else to add?

Thank and close

Tales Toolkit Delivery team topic guide

Thank you for agreeing to speak with us today. This is an opportunity for you to reflect back on the pilot intervention.

The topics we want to cover today include what has gone well and what has gone less well with the following aspects of the pilot, from your perspectives, as well as based on data collection processes and feedback from settings (where relevant):

- programme management and development
- set-up of the programme and recruitment of settings
- training
- on-going support to settings
- settings' delivery
- outcomes of the programme
- costs
- factors to consider when scaling up and for future delivery of the programme

The interview will take around an hour and a half. Participation is voluntary and you can stop at any time. If you do not want to answer a question, let me know and we can move on.

Before we begin, I want to run through some general information with you:

- everything discussed in the interview is confidential and will only be used for the purposes of this research.
- we will write a report based on our findings for EEF. We will not identify anyone individually but will attribute views to the delivery team. Please feel free to answer the questions as openly and honestly as possible.
- with your permission I would like to record the interview which would then be transcribed – we will be taking notes as we talk but it helps to have a back-up. The recording and transcription will be stored securely and will only be accessible to the IES team. It will be deleted 6 months after the end of the project. Is that ok?
- Do you have any questions before we begin?

Programme management and development

1. Could everyone briefly outline your roles and responsibilities on Tales Toolkit and this pilot? (Probe for how the team's responsibilities differ)
2. Did you make any changes to the programme for the pilot delivery, e.g. for use in PVI settings or to standardise it for the evaluation?
 - a. [If relevant] Do you have reflections on the process of making these changes? What were the challenges and successes here?

Recruitment and set-up

3. Was uptake of the pilot programme as expected? Why/why not?

- a. Which settings have been the easiest/most challenging to recruit to the programme? Why?
4. How important or not do you think the funding of resources was as an incentive (or even necessity) for settings to take part, and why is this?
5. How was the setup process? Were there any challenges here e.g. around the delivery of resources?

Training

6. Did settings engage with the training as intended?
 - a. Do you know how many settings completed the training? Which types of settings?
7. Were there any challenges with getting settings to access and engage in the training?
 - a. How were these challenges overcome, if at all?
 - b. Were there any access issues and if so have these been resolved? How?
8. How has the monitoring of access to the training taken place?
 - a. [Has this differed from the original plan?]
9. In your view, what worked well or less well about the training?
 - a. Does the delivery mode of training have an effect on participation and engagement?
10. What (other) feedback have you had from settings about the training (if any)?

On-going support

On general on-going support

11. How have you worked with the settings delivering Tales Toolkit and to what extent have you needed to support them throughout the pilot?
 - a. Was this as expected? Has this differed from the original plan?
 - b. Did the level of support needed vary over time?
12. What has worked well about this support process and what have been the challenges?

Engagement

13. Which settings has it been most challenging to keep engaged and why do you think this is?
14. What do you think would be needed to prevent drop-outs and further support engagement in future delivery?

Additional support

15. Have practitioners been accessing the additional support e.g. online members area?
 - a. How have they been using it?
 - b. Have you had feedback from settings on whether they find it helpful or why they are not using it?
16. How are you monitoring this access to additional support?
17. Can you talk a bit about the website – how it has changed over the course of the project and the reasons for this? Has this affected the programme delivery at all?

Delivery

18. How do you think settings' delivery of Tales Toolkit gone? (Probe for experiences of different settings)
 - a. To what extent has delivery gone as intended? How has it changed?
19. Have you been able to get a picture of the level of compliance in settings' delivery of Tales? Are settings adapting the programme?
20. What feedback, if any, have settings provided on delivery?
21. Are you aware of any barriers or enablers to settings delivering Tales Toolkit?
22. What has worked well in delivery of the programme? What are the reasons for this?
23. What have been the main challenges and reasons for this? (Probe for contextual/external factors, experiences of different settings)
24. Any there any lessons that you've learned from this part of the programme?

Outcomes

25. Have you had any evidence or feedback from settings on the outcomes of the programme, and what are these?
 - a. What types of settings have seen these outcomes? Are there any differences between PVI/maintained settings?
 - b. What outcomes would you expect to see in settings?
26. How do you think it might be possible to measure outcomes for children and practitioners in an RCT?

Costs

We need to collect any data you have on costs incurred to run the pilot, including staff time across the two organisations...

27. What staffing and resources were allocated to this project?
28. What time, cost and staffing was needed to support the training?
 - a. Was this as expected?
 - b. If not, why not?
29. What resource/input was needed to provide on-going support to settings?
 - a. Was this as expected?
 - b. If not, why not?
30. [If not covered] Has actual input in terms of time, cost and staffing been as planned? If not, how has it differed?
31. Were there any unexpected costs on your end?
32. What has been the cost to settings? Has this varied by setting type?
33. If you have this information, how does Tales Toolkit compare price-wise to other products on the market?
34. Do you know how many settings took up the offer of payment for the training? If you don't have this information now, I can ask for it in an email.

a. Do you know why this is?

35. Do you expect settings will continue to access the resources next year? Will this require continued input from the delivery team?

Scaling up, future delivery

36. What are the key lessons learned from this pilot? Is there anything you would like to update or change about Tales Toolkit going forward based on this experience?

37. How did the joint delivery work, what were the strengths or weaknesses of this approach?

38. How would you envision delivering Tales Toolkit at scale, e.g. 80-100 settings? Would you make any changes to the current delivery or support model?

a. Do you anticipate any challenges with scaling up the programme to more settings? If so, how could/have these been overcome? (Probe on contextual factors as well internal challenges e.g. engaging all types of settings, costs of physical resources, monitoring)

b. What would be the enablers to scaling up the programme?

39. [If not covered] Thinking about the specific areas of the project, what do you think are the barriers and enablers with scaling up:

a. The training to more settings? Would this require more resource/support from the delivery team?

b. The support model? Would you be able to maintain this support model at scale-up? (including the additional online support)

c. The project set up and sending resources to settings?

40. [If not covered] Are there any costs or time requirements that you anticipate would increase significantly in future or if this programme were delivered at scale?

41. If you ran this programme again, what would you do differently? E.g. for scaling up, working with PVIs?

42. Do you have any other key reflections on the pilot programme or anything else to add?

Thanks and close

Appendix J Tales Toolkit pilot evaluation – Observation tool

Aim

The aim of the observation is to understand how Tales Toolkit is being delivered in practice with children across a variety of settings. We want to examine the interactions between practitioners and children to gain insights about the children’s engagement with the sessions, and to understand approaches used by practitioners, including any changes or adaptations they may make.

We are particularly interested in how the Tales Toolkit sessions are delivered within settings by the practitioners, whether the content is appropriate and if practitioners feel there are any barriers or enablers to running the programme. The aim is to understand how practitioners deliver the sessions and use the resources with children, and how the children respond during the sessions to see if there is fidelity of delivery across settings.

Before the session, ask the adult(s) in the room to redirect any children who have come over to you to chat, because you are just there to observe.

Confidentiality and consent

Staff – agreement is assumed as staff have already agreed to these observations (arranged by leads/managers). No recordings – only notes will be taken.

Children - do not write any child’s name down – use child A/B etc.

No child level data will be collected or processed.

Safeguarding procedures will be in place - researchers will not be alone with any child/ren. Researchers will ensure that any cause for concern (i.e. emotional abuse, physical abuse, neglect or sexual abuse) arising from self-disclosure, observation or reports from another child will be acted upon by reporting it to the Child Protection Lead at the setting and the incident will be factually reported via completion of an incident form. Any child protection matters shall be kept confidential.

What we’re looking at: Tales Toolkit Session Activities

Following each of the five training sessions, practitioners are expected to lead Tales Toolkit sessions at least once a week for all children in the room/class. Each session will require a space for all children to sit together – either inside or outside – and the Tales Toolkit kits, each containing teacher-chosen prompts. Teachers will ask children to reveal the prompts from each kit in term, and together they will create a story based on the Character, Setting, Problem and Solution prompts. Through completion of all the tasks during the training session the teacher should have provided support for children to tell stories independently. Practitioners are expected to set up their provision so that children can access Tales Toolkit resources independently along with props they can use to create stories.

During setting visits, evaluators may observe activities between practitioners and children at the setting.

Types of activities that evaluators hope to observe are:

Activity	Description
How practitioners engage with children during the Tales Toolkit sessions	Whether there is collaborative story-telling, quality interactions (e.g. ShREC), child-led learnings. Use of sound, space and movement.

How children respond to the Tales Toolkit sessions	How children enjoy the session, how they engage with different activities and aspects of the programme. Any indication of confidence levels from child responses to Tales Toolkit delivery.
How practitioners use the Tales Toolkit resources	Using the resources in their classrooms, if they are used in other learning environments, such as outside
If there are any adaptations to the programme	Whether the programme content is appropriate to the setting, whether the practitioner is able to deliver the programme with fidelity. What changes have been made and why have they been made? E.g. child need.

Researcher Note

It's important to reassure staff (and children if they ask) that you are not observing them as such, it's not about them doing it right or wrong, this is not an evaluation. This is a pilot project, which means we are exploring how practical Tales Toolkit is to use with this age group, in different types of settings and with different children. We aim to see what works wells, whether there are any difficulties/barriers, and if anything can be improved in the future.

Choose a spot at the back or edge of the room, and sit quietly (try and blend in!)

If children do ask you what you are doing, gently reassure them that it is nothing for them to worry about and that you are just in class today to learn more about what happens in pre-school/nursery/school. Tell them that you're going to keep out of the way, and learn by watching. You can tell them your name, and that they can ask questions if they want to.

What we're looking for

We are looking to capture data about:

- **When and where** the Tales Toolkit sessions take place in the day. How do the practitioners incorporate delivery of the programme into the nursery day? How is it framed or introduced? Where does the session take place within the setting? How many staff and children are present and where are they in the space? Where are the resources in the room (e.g. is there a Tales Toolkit corner? Can children go and get the props themselves (e.g. free flow provision), or are they spread out across the class/hung up/in a cupboard? **Is there an outdoor play area?**).
- How practitioners **engage and motivate** the children with different aspects of the Tales Toolkit programme. What techniques do they use to do this? How do they use the Tales Toolkit resources to encourage the children? Are they using approaches such as quality interactions (e.g. ShREC) to motivate the children to engage in story-telling approaches?
- **How are practitioners using the Tales Toolkit resources** as part of the session? Do they use all of the resources,(the big bag, the small kit, the apron, hanger, shuffle book and big book?) Are there any resources that aren't used in the session? Do they only use the resources in the session, or are they used in any other environments in the setting? N.B for a group story session it may only be either the big bag or small kit depending on the group size. What props do practitioners decide to use with the big bag?
- How do **the children respond** during the Tales Toolkit session? Are they all able to engage with the practitioner during the session? Do they respond positively, negatively or are they indifferent? Are there any parts of the session they particularly enjoy? Are there any parts of the session that work less well, or lose their engagement?

- Are the sessions adapted **to the needs of children in the setting? If observable**, are there children with EAL, SEND or EYPP for example? Are there any changes that the practitioner has made to deliver the session in their setting?
- Any **non-verbal cues** – body language, eye-contact etc.

AEIOU Framework

As the visits will take place over a number of settings, there is potential for observations to cover a range of activity types. An AEIOU framework is a simple approach to organising ethnographic data which can be used for a range of scenarios. This allows researchers to identify and compare features across a range of different activities to identify common or key elements. AEIOU refers to 5 elements to be coded: Activity, Environment, Interaction, Object, and User¹. We will use this framework flexibly and focus on elements that are most relevant to each situation.

- **Activities** are goal-directed sets of actions—paths towards things people want to accomplish. What are the modes staff/children work in, and the specific activities and processes they go through?
- **Environments** include the entire arena where activities take place. What is the character and function of the space overall, of each individual's spaces (e.g. spacing for group work), and of shared spaces? How do children appear to feel in this space?
- **Interactions** are between a person and someone or something else; they are the building blocks of activities. What is the nature of routine and special interactions between staff/children, between staff/children and objects in their environment?
- **Objects** are building blocks of the environment. What are the objects and devices staff/children have in their environments and how do they relate to their activities (e.g. Tales Toolkit resources, tables, outside area)?
- **Users** are the staff/children whose behaviours, preferences, and needs are being observed. Who is there? What are their roles and relationships?

Please record the:

- Time devoted to the session
- Practitioner's style e.g. challenging, directive, responsive, flexible, engaged, child-led
- Children's engagement / interaction e.g. passive, pro-active, engaged, disengaged etc.

¹ Description of framework elements quoted from: <https://help.ethnohub.com/guide/aeiou-framework>

- Use of resources by practitioners and children - how are these introduced?
- Demographic characteristics of the setting where relevant for context

Tales Toolkit observation record

Date	Observation or interview	Setting Name	Location within the setting inc class/room	Practitioner/ Manager initials	Age group of children	Start time of session	End time of session	Follow-up interview (Y/N)

Activities – how do practitioners incorporate delivery of the sessions into the day? What approaches do they use (e.g., quality interactions)? Are the activities adapted to the needs of children in the setting?	Environments – where do the Tales Toolkit sessions take place in the setting? Where are the resources used? Is there an outdoor play area?	Interactions – how do practitioners engage with the children during the sessions? Do they use story-telling approaches? How do they use the resources to engage the children? Any non-verbal cues?	Objects – do practitioners use all of the resources in the bags, the small kit, the apron, hanger, shuffle book and big book? Are there any resources that aren't used? Article 1.	Users – How many children are taking part in the sessions? Do children engage and enjoy the Tales Toolkit sessions?

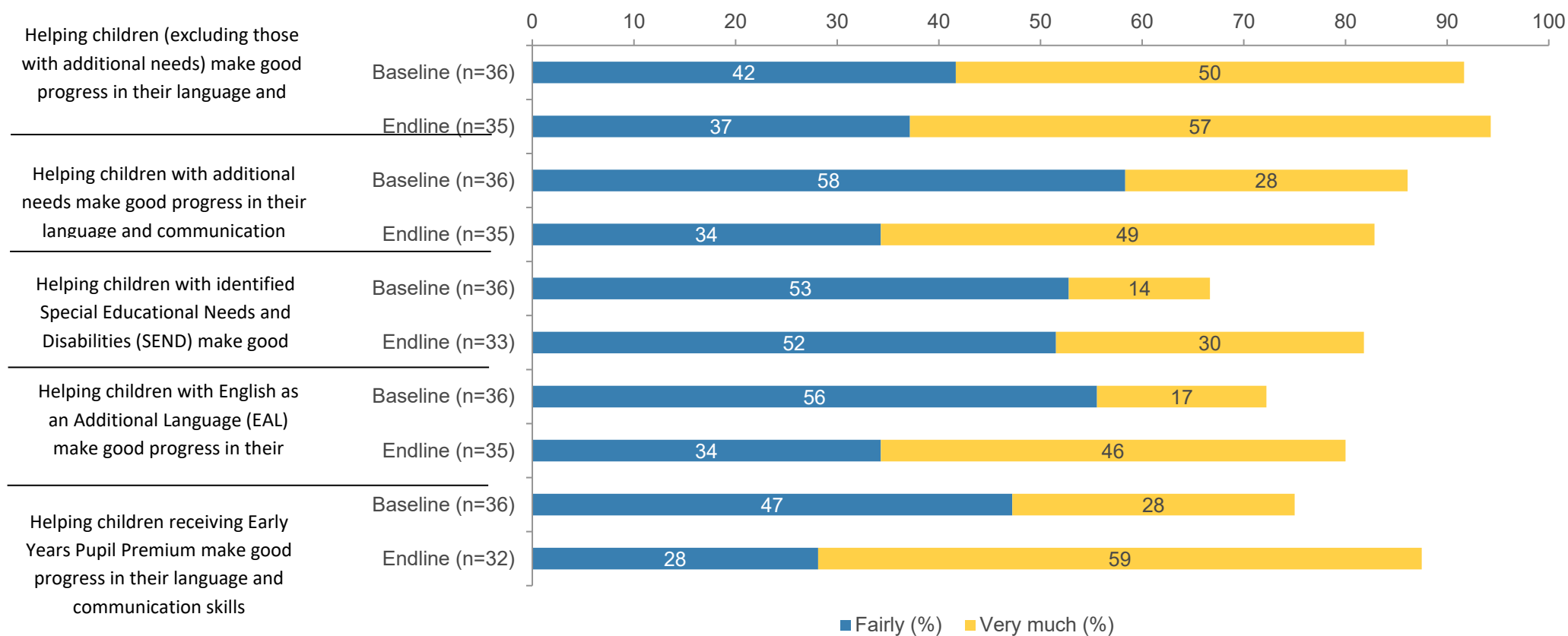
Article II. Appendix K Practitioner Survey Longitudinal Responses

Supporting language development

'How confident are you in your knowledge and skill as each of the following' (per statement)

1 - Not at all, 2 – Slightly, 3 – Somewhat, 4 – Fairly, 5 - Very much (6 – Not applicable/ Don't know excluded)

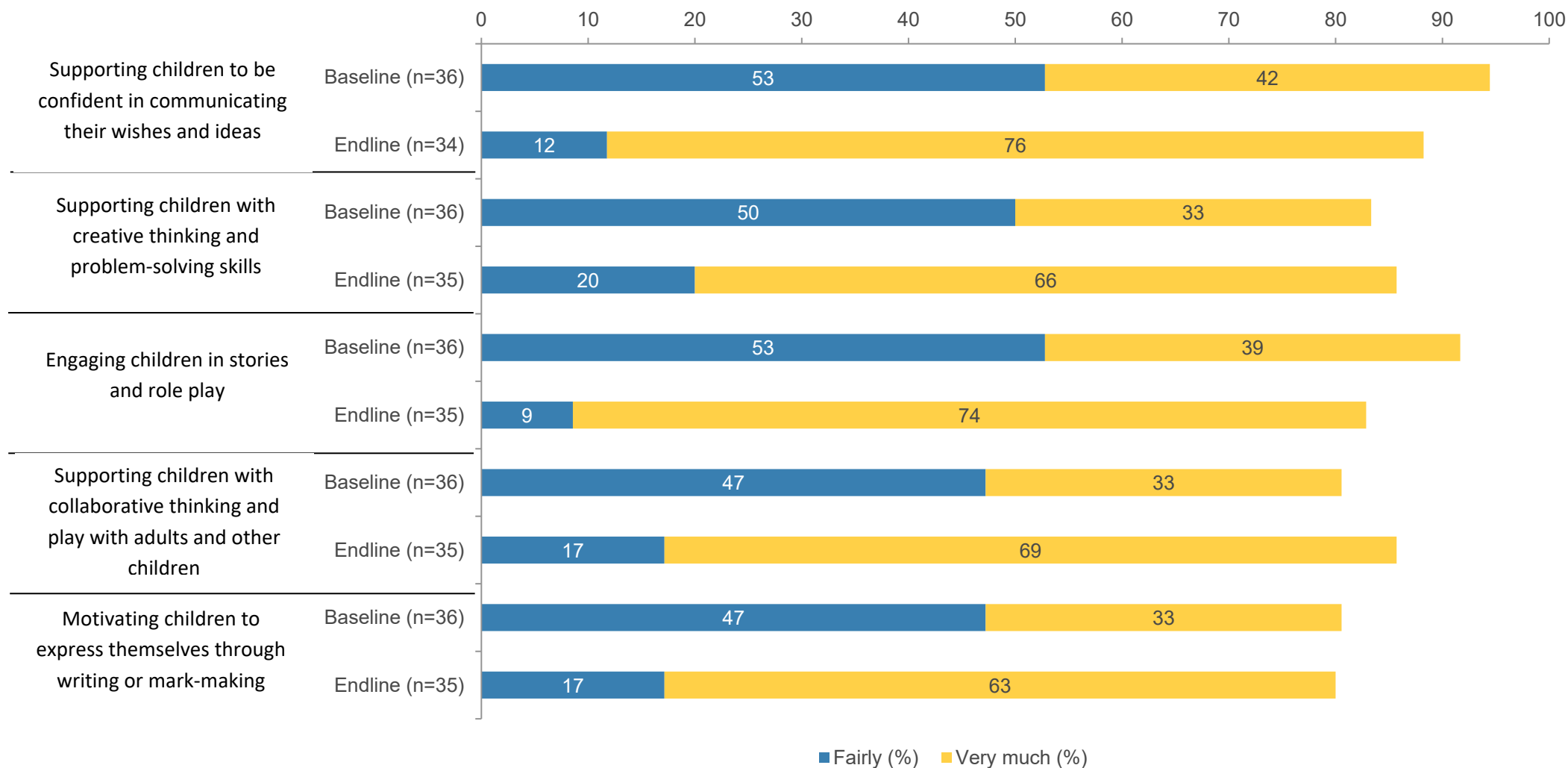
Appendix K Figure 1: Supporting children in their language and communication skills



'How confident are you in your knowledge and skill as each of the following' (per statement)

1 - Not at all, 2 – Slightly, 3 – Somewhat, 4 – Fairly, 5 - Very much (6 – Not applicable/ Don't know excluded)

Appendix K Figure 2: Supporting children in their narrative storytelling skills



'How confident are you in your knowledge and skill as each of the following' (per statement)

1 - Not at all, 2 – Slightly, 3 – Somewhat, 4 – Fairly, 5 - Very much (6 – Not applicable/ Don't know excluded)

Appendix K Table 1: Supporting children - supporting children in their language and communication and narrative storytelling skills (Aggregate means)

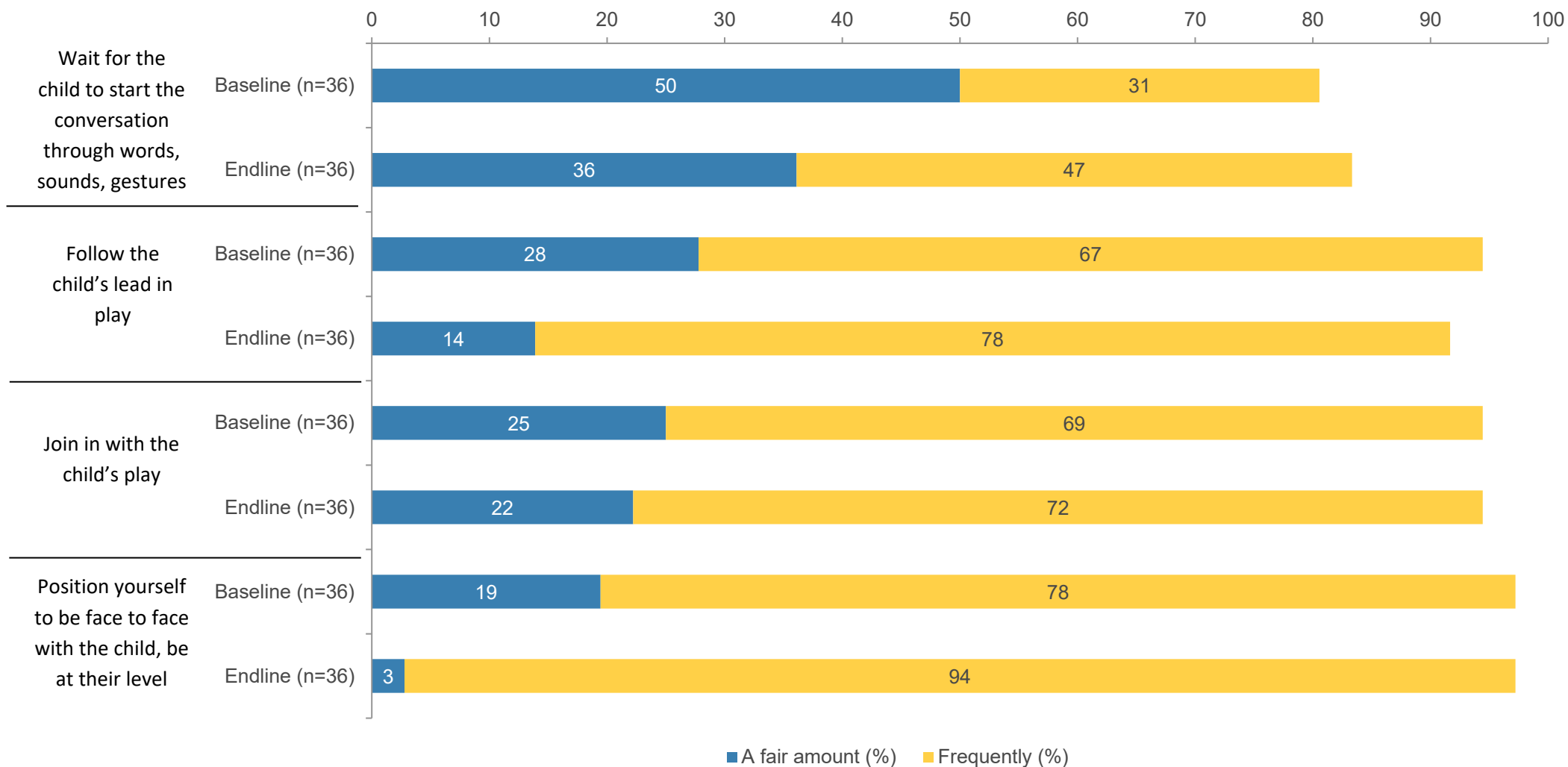
	Helping children (excluding those with additional needs) make good progress in their language and communication skills	Helping children with additional needs make good progress in their language and communication skills	Helping children with identified Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) make good progress in their language and communication skills	Helping children with English as an Additional Language (EAL) make good progress in their language and communication skills	Helping children receiving Early Years Pupil Premium make good progress in their language and communication skills	Supporting children to be confident in communicating their wishes and ideas	Supporting children with creative thinking and problem-solving skills	Engaging children in stories and role play	Supporting children with collaborative thinking and play with adults and other children	Motivating children to express themselves through writing or mark-making
Baseline mean	4.42	4.11	3.72	3.83	4.00	4.36	4.14	4.31	4.14	4.11
N	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36
Endline mean	4.46	4.23	4.06	4.11	4.38	4.56	4.43	4.51	4.49	4.37
N	35	35	33	35	32	32	35	35	35	35
Don't Know/Not applicable	1	1	3	1	4	4	1	1	1	1
Change over time	0.04	0.12	0.34*	0.28	0.38*	0.20	0.29*	0.21	0.35*	0.26

*Data included in main report.

Quality interactions

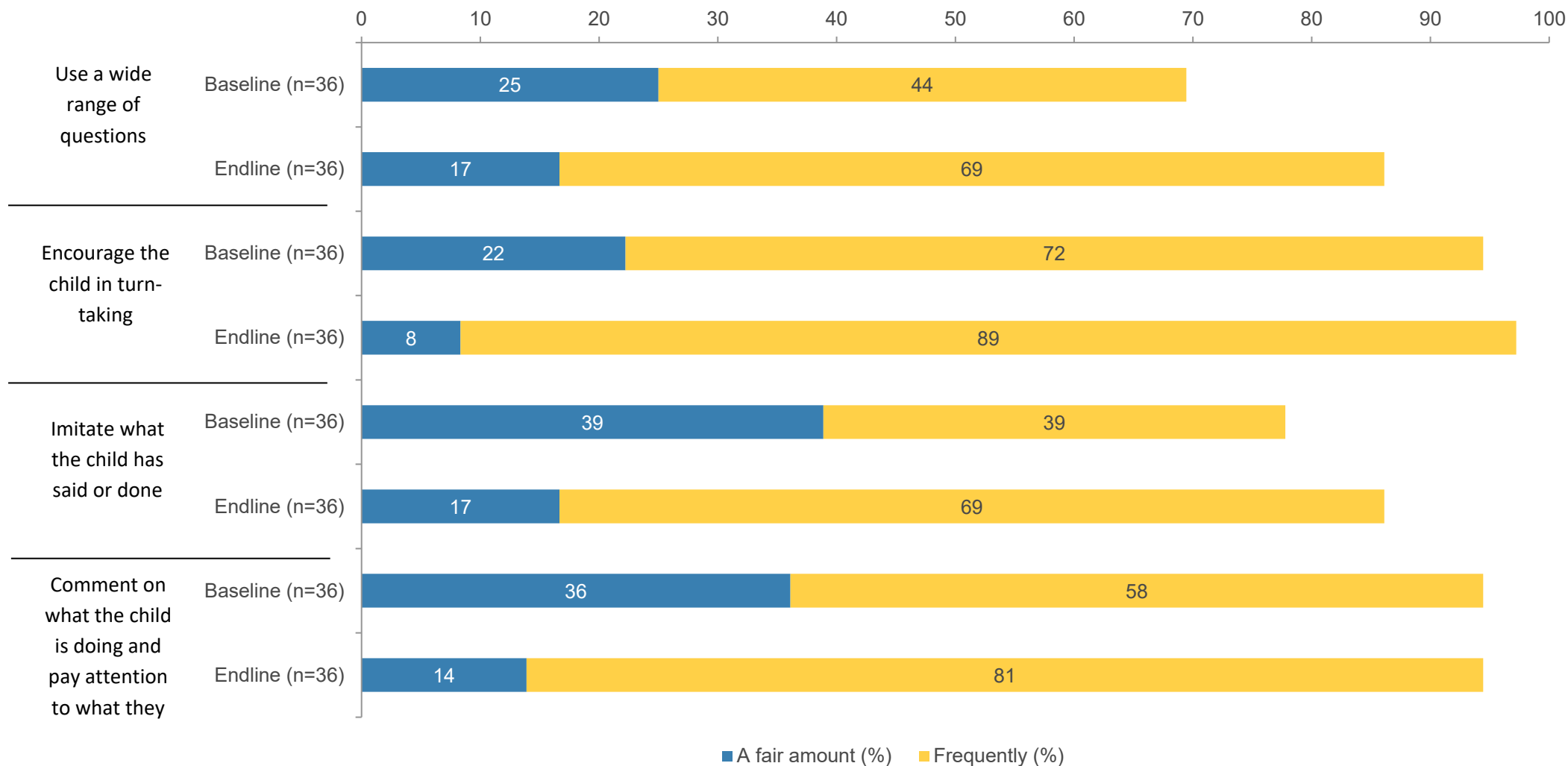
'Please could you rate the extent to which you do the following things when normally interacting with a child or group' (by statement)

Appendix K Figure 3: Engaging with children



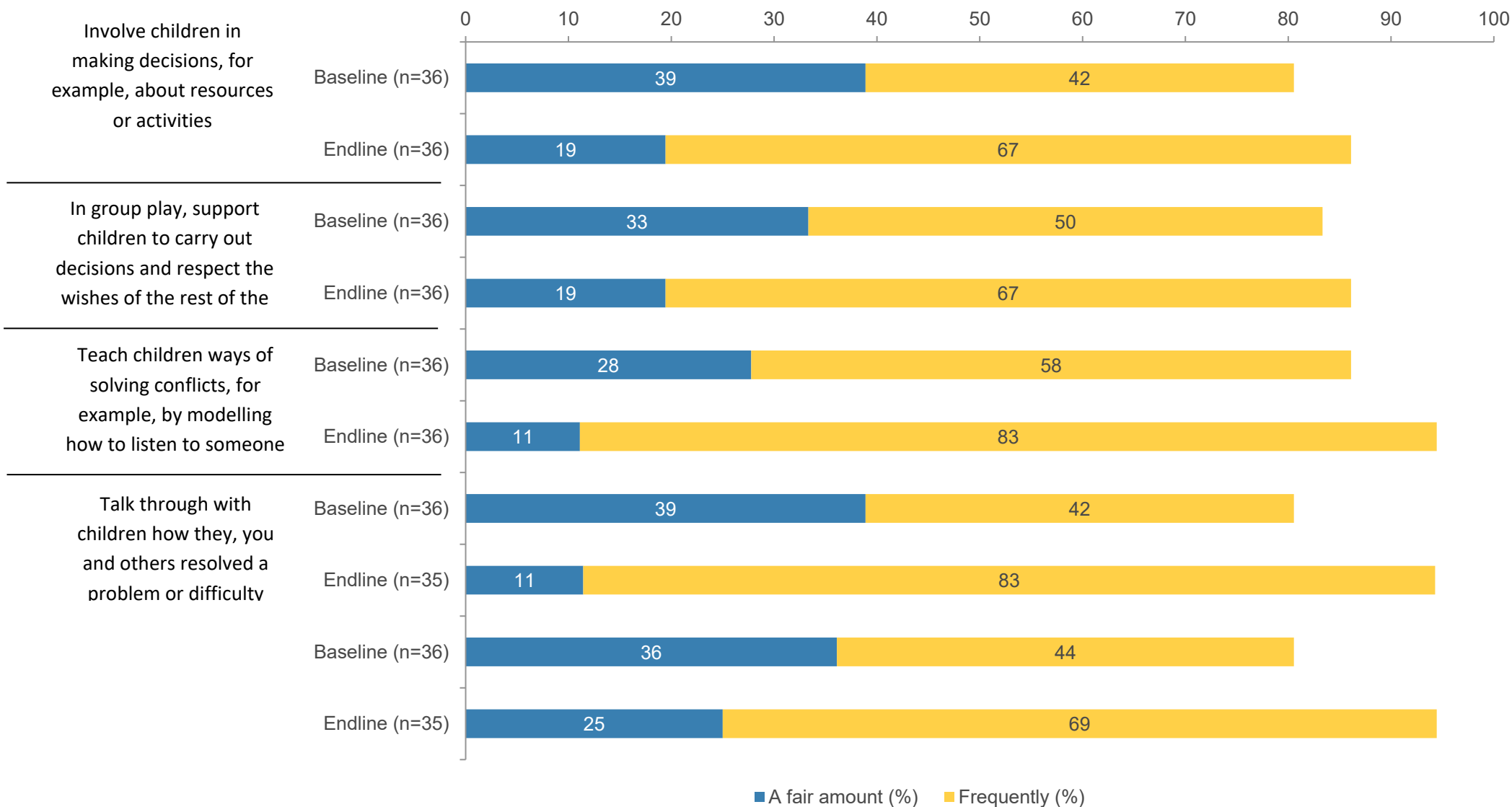
'Please could you rate the extent to which you do the following things when normally interacting with a child or group' (by statement)

Appendix K Figure 4: Initiating a conversation



'Please could you rate the extent to which you do the following things when normally interacting with a child or group?' (by statement)

Appendix K Figure 5: Extending and supporting children's language



'Please could you rate the extent to which **you do** the following things when normally interacting with a child or group, answering as honestly as you can' (per statement)

1- Not at all, 2 – Slightly, 3 – Somewhat, 4 – A fair amount, 5 – Frequently (6 – Not applicable/ Don't know excluded)

Appendix K Table 2: Quality interactions - engaging with children and initiating a conversation (Aggregate means)

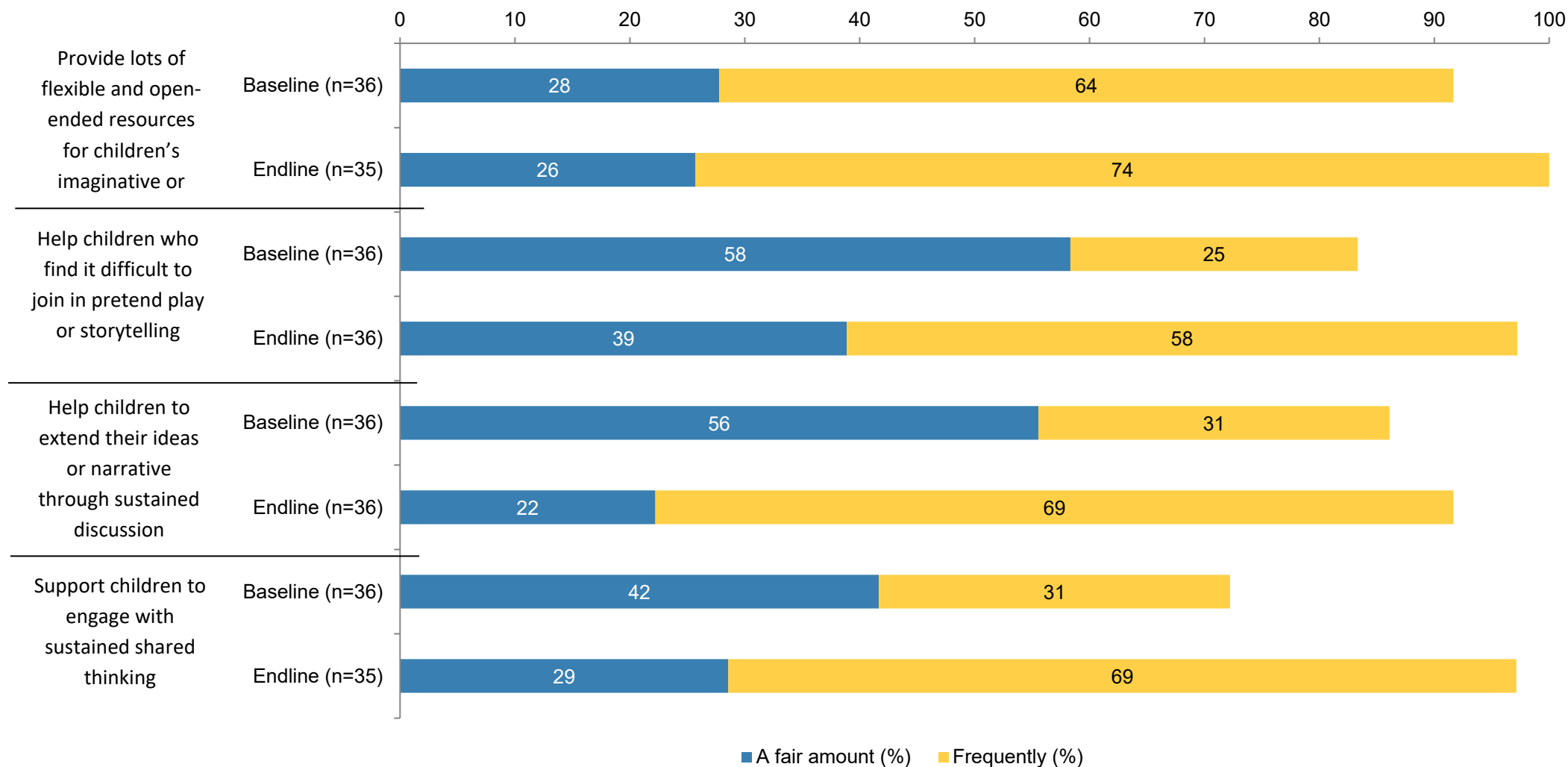
	Wait for the child to start the conversation through words, sounds, gestures or looks	Follow the child's lead in play	Join in with the child's play	Position yourself to be face to face with the child, be at their level	Use a wide range of questions	Encourage the child in turn-taking	Imitate what the child has said or done	Comment on what the child is doing and pay attention to what they are focused on	Repeat what the child has said, using the correct form of speech if they have used incorrect pronunciation or grammar	Extend what the child has said, e.g. repeating what the child has said and adding more words to turn it into a sentence	Model a wide variety of words, e.g. adjectives and connectives such as 'because'	Praise the child	Talk slowly enough for the child to understand	Have extended back and forth interactions, giving the child time to listen, process and reply
Baseline mean	4.06	4.61	4.64	4.75	4.14	4.67	4.06	4.53	4.58	4.56	4.33	4.75	4.58	4.44
N	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36
Endline mean	4.28	4.64	4.64	4.89	4.53	4.83	4.42	4.72	4.83	4.67	4.75	4.83	4.75	4.78
N	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36
Don't Know/Not applicable	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Change over time	0.22	0.03	0.00	0.14	0.39*	0.17	0.36*	0.19	0.25	0.11	0.42*	0.08	0.17	0.33*

*Data included in main report.

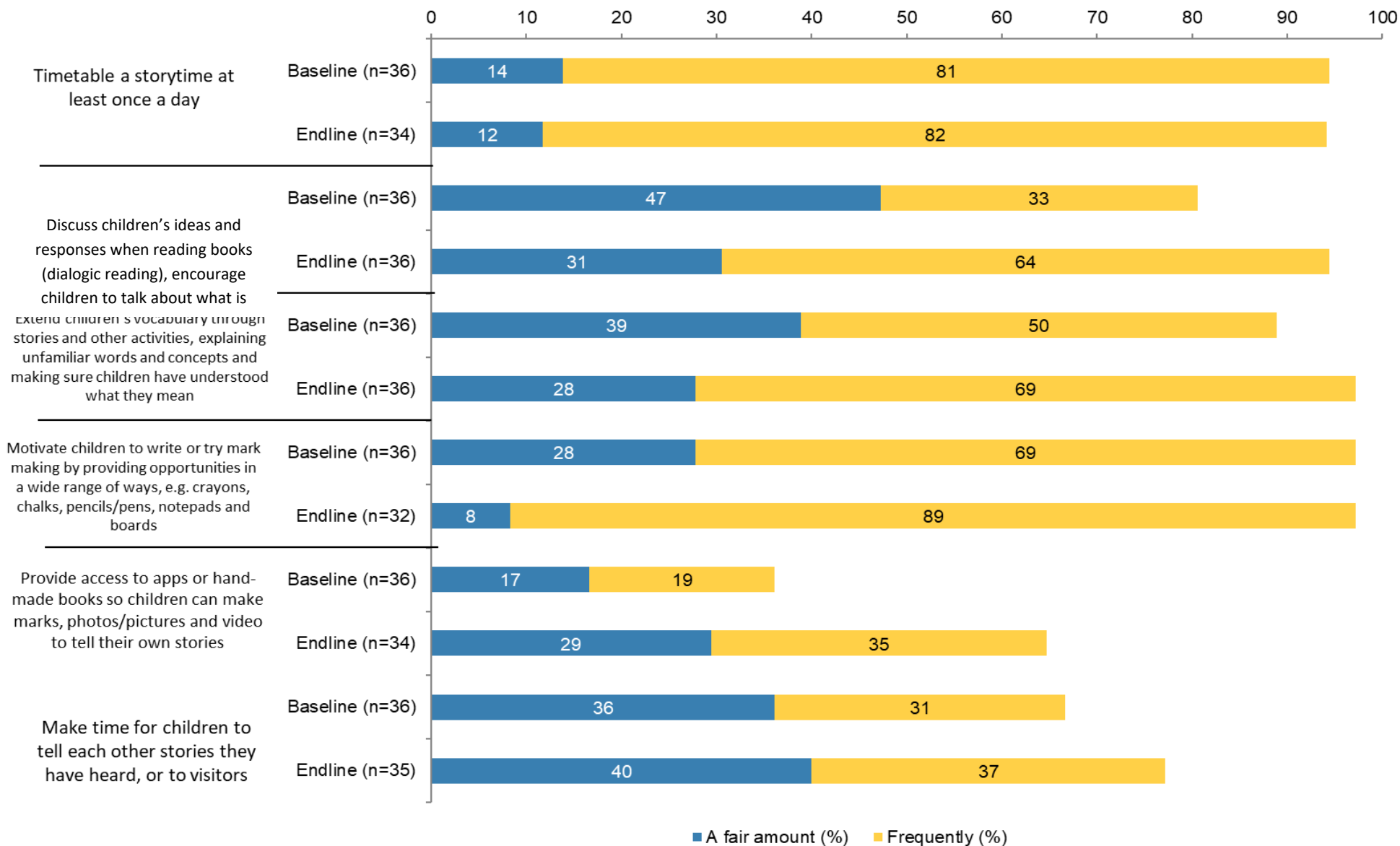
Creativity and collaborative storytelling

'Please could you rate the extent to which you do the following things when normally interacting with a child, group or in your classroom' (by statement)

Appendix K Figure 6: Creative play



Appendix K Figure 7: Storytelling



'Please could you rate the extent to which you do the following things when normally interacting with a child, group or in your classroom, answering as honestly as you can'

1 – Not at all, 2 – Slightly, 3 – Somewhat, 4 – A fair amount, 5 – Very much (6 – Not applicable/Don't know excluded)

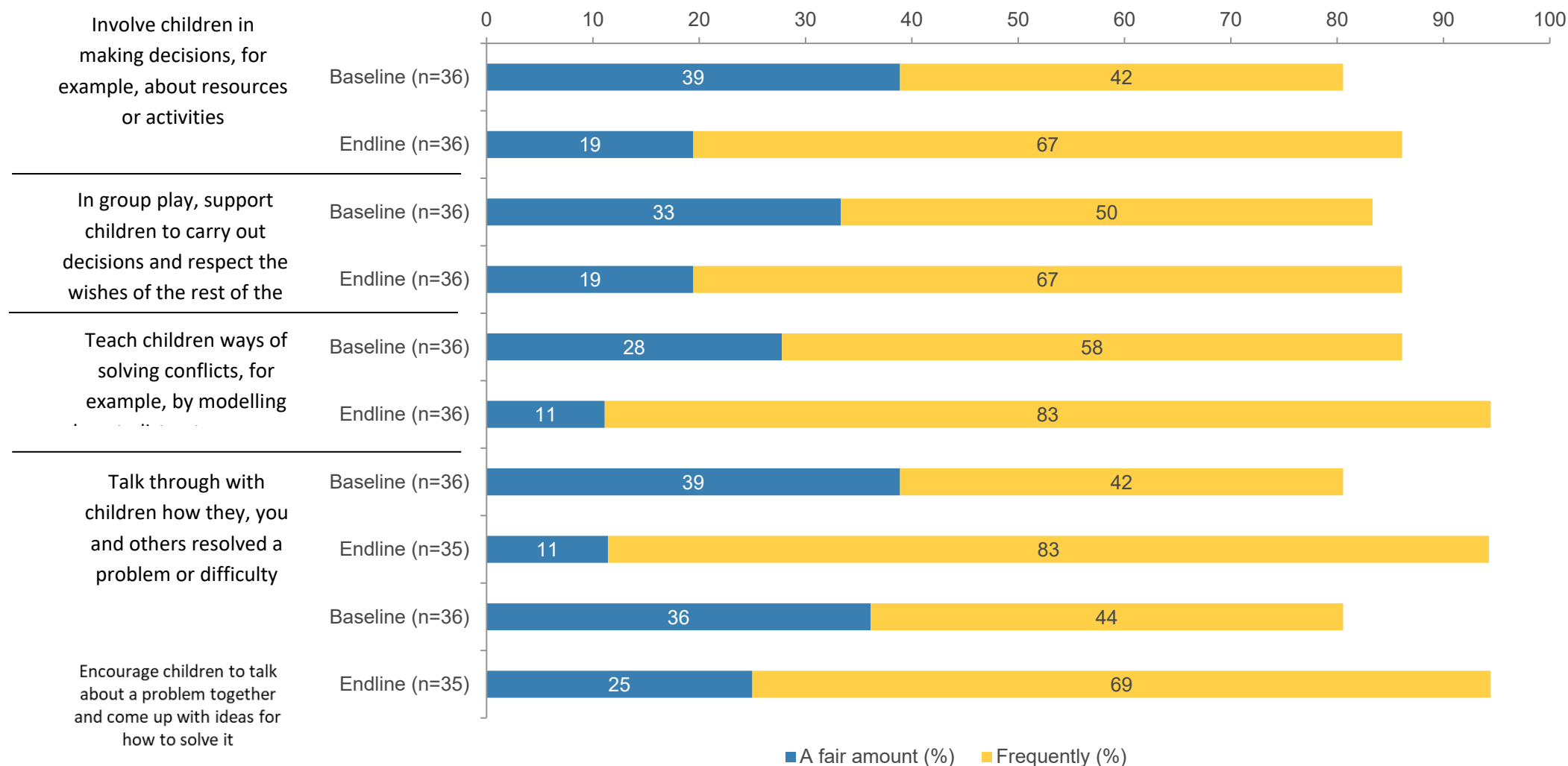
Appendix K Table 3: Creativity, play and storytelling (Aggregate means)

	Provide lots of flexible and open-ended resources for children's imaginative or pretend play	Help children who find it difficult to join in pretend play or storytelling	Help children to extend their ideas or narrative through sustained discussion	Support children to engage with sustained shared thinking	Timetable a storytime at least once a day	Discuss children's ideas and responses when reading books (dialogic reading), encourage children to talk about what is happening and give their own ideas	Extend children's vocabulary through stories and other activities, explaining unfamiliar words and concepts and making sure children have understood what they mean	Motivate children to write or try mark making by providing opportunities in a wide range of ways, e.g. crayons, chalks, pencils/pens, notepads and boards	Provide access to apps or hand-made books so children can make marks, photos/pictures and video to tell their own stories	Make time for children to tell each other stories they have heard, or to visitors
Baseline mean	4.56	4.08	4.17	4.03	4.75	4.11	4.39	4.67	3.17	3.92
N	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36
Endline mean	4.74	4.56	4.58	4.66	4.74	4.58	4.67	4.86	3.76	4.03
N	35	36	36	35	34	36	36	36	34	35
Don't Know/Not applicable	1	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	2	1
Change over time	0.19	0.47*	0.42*	0.63*	-0.01	0.47*	0.28	0.19	0.60*	0.11

*Data included in main report.

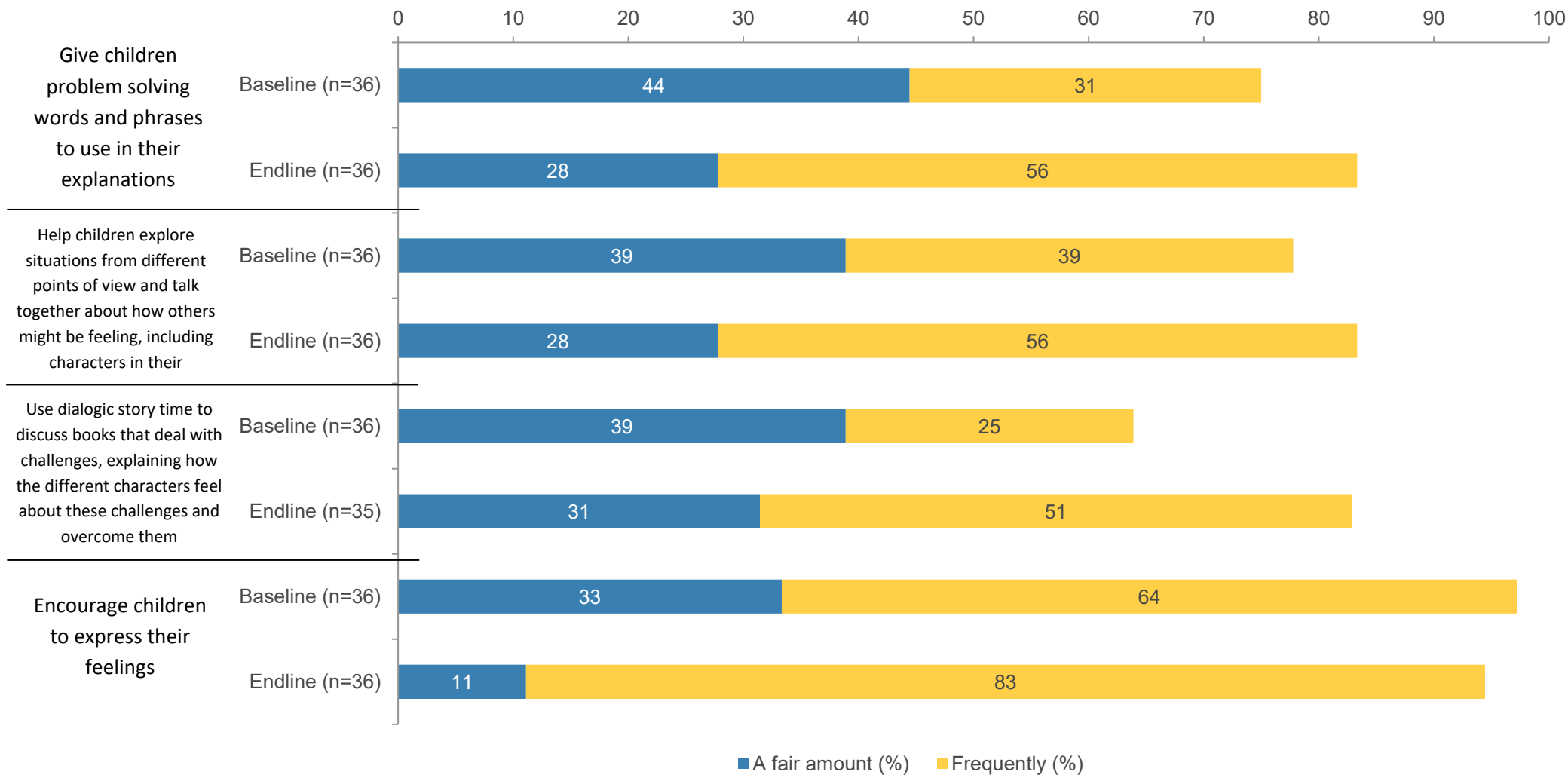
Supporting children’s personal, social and emotional development

‘Please could you rate the extent to which you do the following things when normally interacting with a child or group’ (by statement) Figure 8: Decision-making and problem-solving



‘Please could you rate the extent to which you do the following things when normally interacting with a child or group’ (by statement)

Appendix K Figure 9: Using language to empower and explore



'Please could you rate the extent to which you do the following things when normally interacting with a child or group, answering as honestly as you can.' (per statement)

1- Not at all, 2 – Slightly, 3 – Somewhat, 4 – A fair amount, 5 – Frequently (6 – Not applicable/ Don't know excluded)

Appendix K Table 4: Supporting children's personal, social and emotional development- Decision-making, problem-solving and using language to empower and explore (Aggregate means)

	Involve children in making decisions, for example, about resources or activities	In group play, support children to carry out decisions and respect the wishes of the rest of the group	Teach children ways of solving conflicts, for example, by modelling how to listen to someone else and agree a compromise	Talk through with children how they, you and others resolved a problem or difficulty	Encourage children to talk about a problem together and come up with ideas for how to solve it	Give children problem solving words and phrases to use in their explanations	Help children explore situations from different points of view and talk together about how others might be feeling, including characters in their pretend play and stories	Use dialogic story time to discuss books that deal with challenges, explaining how the different characters feel about these challenges and overcome them	Encourage children to express their feelings
Baseline mean	4.22	4.33	4.44	4.22	4.25	4.06	4.17	3.81	4.61
N	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36
Endline mean	4.50	4.58	4.75	4.74	4.61	4.31	4.36	4.26	4.75
N	36	36	36	35	36	36	36	35	36
Don't Know/Not applicable	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
Change over time	0.28	0.25	0.31*	0.52*	0.36*	0.25	0.19	0.45*	0.14

*Data included in main report.

Appendix L Tales Toolkit pilot evaluation – Job Role categorisation

Combined job role	Job role(s)
Manager	Setting Manager
	Setting Deputy Manager
	Setting Manager AND Setting Deputy Manager
Manager - mixed role	One or more of above + any other Teacher or Practitioner role below
Teacher	Teacher QTS
	Early Years Teacher
	Teacher QTS AND Early Years Teacher
Teacher - mixed role	One or more of above Teacher roles + any other Practitioner role below
Practitioner	Teaching Assistant
	Early Years practitioner
	Individual Needs Assistant/Learning Support Assistant
	Room lead
	Early Years lead
	Specialist role, e.g. Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Lead/Assistant, Safeguarding Lead, Literacy Leader etc
Practitioner - mixed role	Any combination of two or more Practitioner roles above
Other	Other

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