

**Report on Feedback**

**from the**

**Reading Together Workshops run by**

**Reading Together Project schools in 2014**

**Report prepared by**  
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# 1 Introduction

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In 2014, through the Reading Together Project, the Reading Together<sup>R</sup> Programme was extended to involve a total of 824 schools. This report examines feedback from workshops run by 100 of these schools.

The Reading Together Project aims to lift the reading level of the long “tail” of children who are underachieving as readers, many of whom are Māori and Pasifika from underprivileged communities. As in 2012 and 2013, the proportion of Māori and Pasifika students in the Reading Together Project in the reporting schools was significantly higher than that of Year 1 to 8 students nationally. Correspondingly, the proportion of Māori and Pasifika families participating in the Reading Together workshops was greater than the proportion of those learners nationally.

Ethnicity	Years 1 to 8 National roll (2012) <sup>1</sup>	Reporting schools total roll	Workshop participants (2014)
% NZ Māori	24.1	37.2	37.0
% Pasifika	10.2	22.9	16.5

In order to allow identification of long term trends in the outcomes that participants identified as being of particular value to them, classification of the feedback from the workshops uses the same categories as in previous years. While it must be remembered that the categories are not mutually exclusive, it can be seen that the responses continue to follow a broadly similar pattern to previous years.

	2012	2013	2014
Strategies participants found most useful	21%	29%	34%
Improvement in emotional support for learner	27%	33%	32%
Positive outcomes for the learner	26%	22%	23%
Positive outcomes for the family	25%	16%	12%

Although some statistical analysis is included, the focus of this report is a qualitative analysis of the participants’ comments made in the feedback recorded by the facilitators of the workshops. Therefore, extensive use of quotes has been made throughout the report. These quotes are verbatim, using the spelling and grammar as recorded in the feedback provided..

The workshop facilitators strove to provide a welcoming, informal atmosphere for the workshops. The choice of a time and venue for the workshops that met the needs of the local community, provision of transport, childcare and shared food allowed groups to relax and freely share their thoughts and experiences. To find that they were not the only parents experiencing difficulties in supporting their children with reader was a relief to many participants. Caregivers were able to forge closer ties with other parents in their school community and also with their children’s teachers.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.educationcounts.govt.nz](http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz)

Some facilitators made use of a range of strategies such as library visits, book vouchers and gift bags containing items such as stickers and stationery to maintain interest in attending the workshops. However, despite their efforts only 50% of participants managed to attend all four workshops.

The flow-on effect from the workshops also benefitted the school age and pre-school children in the family, and the skills learned were passed on to other whānau members.

*It has helped me explain things to dad so they can read together and it's now more fun for both of them*

The workshops enabled caregivers to understand how valuable they are in the learning process.

*Reading Together made me feel empowered. I didn't feel like I was being lectured. It made me want to read with my child.*

The participants in the workshops learned to implement strategies to aid the process of learning to read, with the emphasis on reading becoming an enjoyable shared activity for both the child and the caregiver.

*Reading has become fun and not a chore. With skills I've learnt in the workshops I've seen reading in a different light.*

These strategies included setting aside a regular time for reading that is free from other distractions, and giving the learner time to work out a word rather than correcting immediately. The importance of fluency and reading for comprehension was emphasized, rather than focusing on single words being correct. Reading was transformed from being an often dreaded chore to being a pleasurable experience for both child and caregiver.

*I have learned not to make my child correct all words, to wait, prompt and let them work it out. I have learnt not to force the issue. This has meant less pressure with my son having more times to correct himself before I jump in. This had made homework reading more pleasurable for us both.*

Participants became aware that learning to read is a complex process and that their expectations of their learner had often been unrealistically high. This realization allowed them to empathise with the learner, becoming more patient and providing positive feedback for the learner. As the stress around reading reduced, the learner became more confident and the growth in their enthusiasm for reading was the most noteworthy benefit of the programme for both caregivers and teachers.

This comment from a caregiver sums up the impact of the programme:

*This workshop has been a real eye opener to me. My little one has just started school and seeing the look in her eyes when we have our reading moments has truly been a moment when you see she has a brighter future and it all starts now at their younger ages. If I can benefit from this course, I know others will.*

## 2 Methodology

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The Reading Together<sup>R</sup> Programme consists of a set of four workshops. Up to fifteen parents or caregivers participated in each set of workshops. The method of selecting participants varied from school to school: some attended in response to advertisements in local newspapers, others from notification about the workshops in the school newsletter, while others were “shoulder tapped” by the school.

The schools that participated in the programme provided information about the gender, ethnicity, relationship to the child, other siblings at the school, and the attendance of each of the workshop participants. In addition the workshop facilitators were invited to provide feedback by reporting comments made by the participants about the Reading Together<sup>R</sup> Programme. This report categorises the reported comments in order to analyse those areas which the participants found of specific benefit.

The reporting format varied from school to school. While most reported in a questionnaire format, some reported verbal comments while others grouped comments. Because of this variation in reporting format, responses were categorised to reflect recurring themes. To allow a degree of comparability, this analysis in most cases uses the same categories as used in the 2012 and 2013 Reading Together reports.

The four categories with their 2014 frequency (rounded up) are:

- Strategies that the workshop participant found most useful (34%)
- Improvements in empathy and emotional support for the learner (32%)
- Positive outcomes for the learner (23%)
- Positive outcomes for the family/whānau/community (12%)

The categories were then refined into further subcategories. Each time any of these subcategories occurred in a statement, it was counted as a response in that subcategory. A single comment might therefore have been counted as a response in several subcategories. For example, the comment

*Not being too pushy with his reading. Being very patient and letting him fix words instead of rushing. Overall it's fun for me and him.*

was recorded as a response in the following two subcategories of the section *Strategies that the workshop participant found most useful*

- Increased patience
- Wait time, slow down, don't rush

As well as the sub-category:

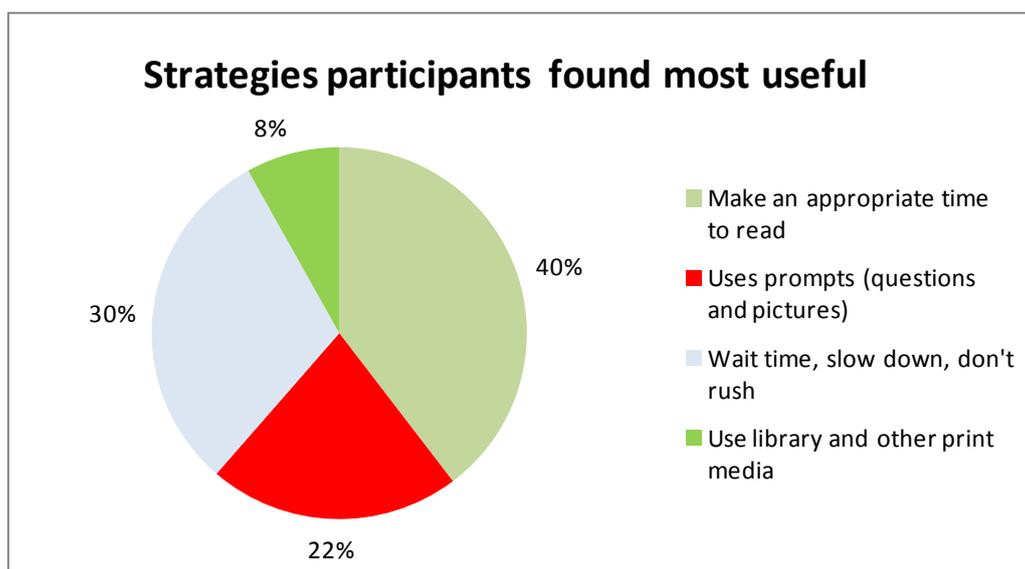
- More confident, enjoying reading more

in the section *Positive outcomes for the learner*.

### 3 Analysis

#### A *Strategies that the workshop participant found most useful*

34% of the responses recorded strategies that the participant had found particularly useful (21% in 2012 and 29% in 2013). These fell into four broad subcategories as shown on the chart below.



The pattern of responses within this category reinforces those reported in 2012 and 2013.

Strategies participants found most useful	2012	2013	2014
Make an appropriate time to read	38%	34%	40%
Uses prompts (questions and pictures)	21%	18%	22%
Wait time, slow down, don't rush	31%	36%	31%
Use library and other print media	10%	12%	8%

#### (i) **Finding an appropriate and regular time to read**

The importance of a reading time was recognized by participants but fitting it into a busy lifestyle continued to be a source of difficulty.

*Even as the busiest mum, or should say person in the house, trying to break away from my busyness can be tough, but we need to make time for our child*

*Hardest part was my routine (and) the time I finished work it's a bit too late. When it's time for me to read with him, he's really tired.*

One strategy devised to cope with this was:

*Time [was a problem], so I decided to read at the breakfast table and on the way to school (The facilitator commented: all the participants went home and tried this and found that first thing in the morning was a good time to read).*

However many families found that reading at bedtime made a relaxing and enjoyable end to the day.

*Reading before bed, no hassle to go to bed now. It's not just hop into bed and go to sleep, they can have half an hour to read before lights off.*

*We have bought a bedside lamp and we look forward to reading in bed each night now.*

*It's hard finding a quiet place in my house so I'm trying harder for a calm bed time*

Participants came to realize the importance to the child that the caregiver focuses on the reading and eliminates other distractions.

*My child, my partner and I sat down and had a meeting at home. We talked about all the things that distracted us when we read. Our child said, he didn't like it when we text while we are reading to him. We all signed a contract that we wouldn't do this anymore and we have decided that we will read together before dinner.*

*I have learned not to multitask and schedule an exclusive time for reading. It is important to keep the child's interest going. My husband helps me now to take over the kids for reading. I hope more people can come and enjoy the workshops. I love it.*

*Firstly give your child a space where they feel comfortable. Switch off TV and radios to give them quiet time to read with you and understand the text.*

**(ii) Use prompts (discussion of the story and the pictures)**

Many caregivers had failed to realize that the use of prompts such as pictures and discussion of the book are important learning aids for the new reader.

*I know how to introduce the book before starting the reading, by looking at the title and pictures and talking about what it might be about. I didn't know you could do that.*

*I didn't realise the pictures were such an important part of reading*

*I will definitely try to talk and discuss the reading rather than just reading through the words*

**(iii) Wait time, slow down, don't rush**

Many caregivers found this a valuable strategy as they had previously failed to give the readers time to work out the word for themselves.

*I learned different ideas on reading with your child. The hardest part was slowing down and giving her more time to work things out, not rushing in to tell her the words.*

*It's helped me make it more enjoyable, by not rushing in, by letting her work it out and having more fun by talking about the book. She learned that reading can be real fun. This was a good thing.*

*I learned patience and to keep quiet till they ask for help. Wait and correct if needed. I try not to but in.*

*Knowing to stop and give my child a chance to fix their mistakes themselves is great, before I used to rush in and fix the problem for them.*

**(iv) Using the library and other media**

The library sessions continued to be appreciated and often contributed to a new interest in reading from the whole family.

*It has, being on a busy schedule, me and my husband have taken the time to spend more reading moments with our children, on weekends more library visits than usual which is a bonus.*

*The library sessions were great, they showed me different areas in the library which I never knew existed. Especially showing me age appropriate books. Thank you so much, very enjoyable, great "teachers".*

There was also an awareness of the value of other forms of print media in stimulating interest in reading.

*To remember how children must feel reading at their age. And to make reading fun. Any (age appropriate) reading is good from comics, picture books to chapter books, don't restrict what they want to read.*

*My child is now finding reading fun. She has also learnt that the reading books she brings home is not the only thing she can read. She is now reading the flyers in the mail.*

*Yep always like reading with them and them to me, but when they see words on signs and say it back that's always cool. Little brother always wants to get involved, that's cool as well.*

## ***B Improvements in empathy and emotional support for the learner***

Many workshop participants had felt frustrated when the child mis-read or forgot words. Expectations of the learner were often unrealistic. When asked what the most valuable thing she had learnt in the workshops, one participant responded

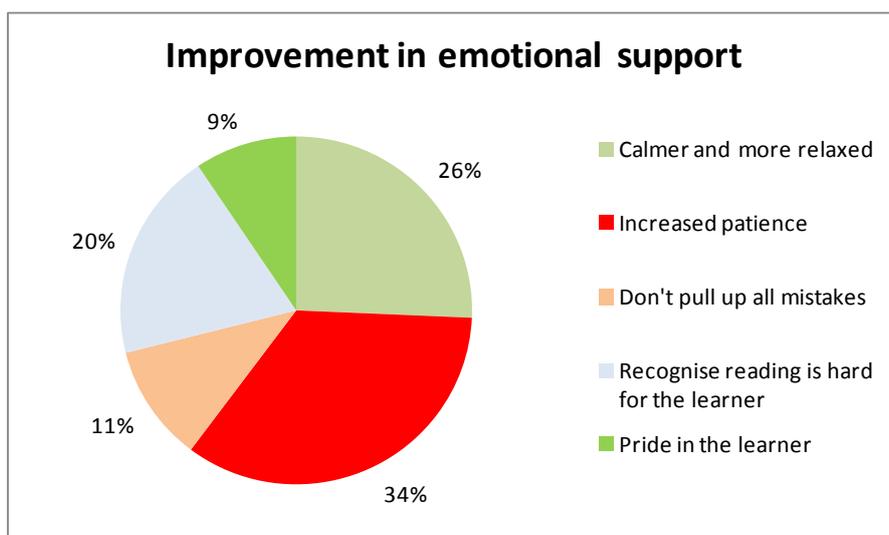
*That I was the one with the problem instead of my child. Finding my own patience.*

The workshops helped them realize that learning to read is a difficult process and showed them ways to support the learner reader.

*Be patient. Give more encouragement. Hard when children are tired. Children now want to carry on reading. Child no longer cringes when it is time to read and is more confident towards reading.*

32% of the responses mentioned an improvement in the participant’s empathy and emotional support for the learner (27% in 2012, 33% in 2013).

The responses could be grouped into the five subcategories as shown on the graph below.



<b>Improvement in emotional support for the learner</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>
Calmer and more relaxed	14%	27%	26%
Increased patience	20%	38%	34%
Don't pull up all mistakes	32%	10%	11%
Recognise reading is hard for the learner	10%	18%	20%
Pride in the learner	24%	7%	9%

It can be seen that the frequency of responses is similar to that in 2013.

**(i) Calmer and more relaxed atmosphere**

A calmer, more relaxed attitude to reading was noted as being beneficial for both child and caregiver.

*Sometimes I use to get hoha but I like it now, it's better*

*I learned to relax and use the wait time technique and not to pull them up on every little thing. She is more keen to read as we are both more relaxed and it is enjoyable for both of us.*

*Both of us are less frustrated. Staying calm when she wants to stop reading and me to read to her. We take turns in reading. She is excited about reading now. I like the idea of a family reading time. We go to the library more*

**(ii) Increased patience**

The single most remarked upon outcome in this category was that the participant needed to have patience with the learner.

*I have learnt how important it is to praise my child. I also realise that it's really important to stay calm, without getting "hoha." I'm learning to be more patient and helpful, so I can support my child with his reading.*

*Be patient. Make time for reading. No more shouting to him when he takes too long to read*

*Pressure is off because I don't rush him anymore. I have learnt to be more patient and let him work things out for himself and this has made him more confident and comfortable. He knows he is now not going to get in 'trouble' if he can't remember a word.*

*Having patience with my child while he's reading and making time to read. It's taught me how to look at reading from a child's perspective so it has opened my eyes and given me insight*

**(iii) Don't pull up every mistake**

Rather than focusing on the child reading single words, the participants realized the value of reading for fluency and comprehension.

*This has been working well and I (Mum) am not focussing on making him read everything perfectly. This is saving us from arguing and is keeping the reading times enjoyable.*

*It has helped me focus on the importance of the story flow, instead of just constantly correcting missed words/letters. That replacing words with similar meaning words is allowed.*

*Knowing what to do when they are stuck and keeping the enthusiasm up for reading. Realising that it is more important to keep the flow of the story over getting a word right.*

**(iv) Recognised that reading is difficult for the child**

The workshops enabled the caregiver to empathise with how hard it is for a child to learn to read.

*It has helped me understand how it is for him learning to read. I loved this programme, it was very insightful and has given me a great understanding about what he is going through with learning to read.*

*I particularly enjoyed the Brock story as it made me more aware of how a child sees words even though they are repeated throughout the book.*

*My daughters reading has improved so much in terms of myself being more patient giving her time when things are not going as I expected e.g. letting her read a book and seems to always get stuck on simple words so joining this programme let me relax and know that every 5 year old are pretty much going through the same experience. She learnt her alphabet within 3 weeks of this programme.*

**(v) Pride in the learner**

Recognition of how hard the children were working in order to learn to read led caregivers to realize the value of giving the learner positive reinforcement. They took pride both in the learner and in their own part in the learning process.

*Another thing is it makes me so proud to notice that my boy has to remind me to read a book everyday instead of me having to remind him. He loves to read now.*

*Every child are unique and display many needs. Support and praise your child regularly and always say you love them. Keep them busy and yearning for wisdom*

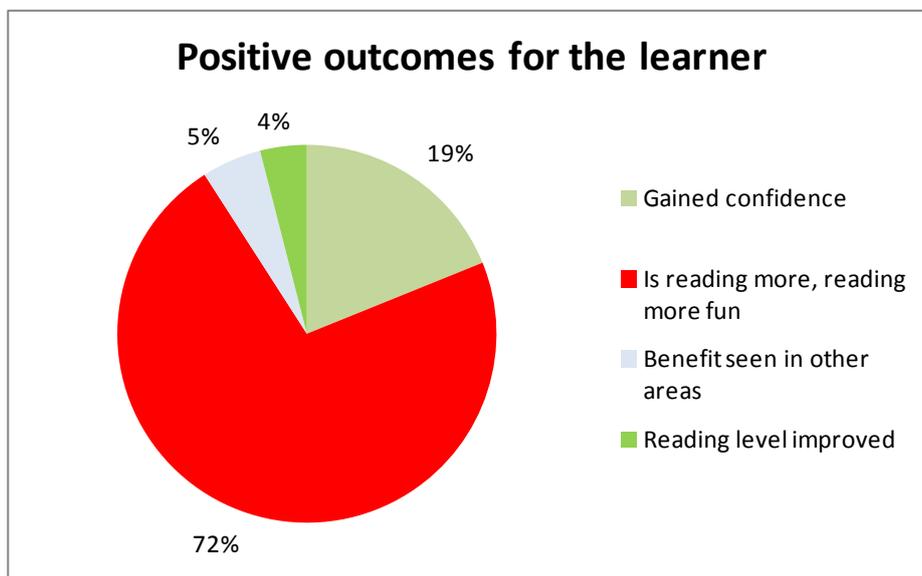
*I'm just so proud of myself (achieving) and family especially my child by achieving so much in reading a lot of books without frustrated.*

*Make it fun. Don't force reading. If have to read to them, no need for panic. Don't sound out words. Praise, praise, praise. Read and look through book before making a start.*

*Made reading more interesting since I started praising him on his reading. He likes to read now. He is able to retain more words since we go back if a new words comes.*

### C Positive outcomes for the learner

23% of the workshop participants’ responses remarked on specific positive outcomes for the learner (26% in 2012, 22% in 2013). The chart below indicates the broad subcategories these responses fell into. As the learners became more confident and relaxed they began reading more. Reading came to be a pleasurable activity for both caregiver and child. Flow-on gains were also noticed in other areas.



Positive outcomes for the learner	2012	2013	2014
Gained confidence	33%	19%	19%
Is reading more, reading more fun	58%	67%	72%
Benefit seen in other areas	9%	9%	5%
Reading level improved	NA	4%	4%

#### (i) The learner is more confident

As the reading experience became more relaxed, the readers’ confidence grew.

*Enjoy reading books. When I encouraged rather than growled I noticed a confidence shine through. They also see reading as important for me.*

*She has increased confidence when she is reading. We now read more as a family. We ask lots of questions when she is reading to ensure she understands what she is reading. The book voucher was a great bonus!*

*Helping my child understand the context of the story, not just the words and to have patience. I learnt to make reading fun. My child has become more confident in giving reading a go. I am surprised how many words he knows!*

*I have learnt to understand what the children are going through, and how hard it can be for them. Having more patience has helped. Talking about the story and some of the harder words has helped him retain the information better. As he gets further in his reading his confidence is better and he'll try to read other things like signs and anything he comes across.*

*I learnt to be patient, to discuss the book and to read books that interest her. It has built her confidence and encouraged her to read more. A great workshop!*

**(ii) The learner is reading more/reading is more fun**

The single most remarked upon outcome of participation in the workshops was that reading had become fun for the learner rather than a dreaded chore.

*I know how to make reading fun now and I've got some good strategies on what to do when my child gets stuck on a word. I'm not giving the answers all the time. I'm more there as a guide. Before I was rushing through the reading and now we go slower and make it fun.*

*Reading programme has made reading important for me personally (mum) and has also made my children more interested to grabbing any book they get their hands on even if it's hard to read.*

*F now has a library card. He is no longer forced to read his journal book. He is reading more often.*

*My child is now finding reading fun. She has also learnt that the reading books she brings home is not the only thing she can read. She is now reading the flyers in the mail.*

*Reading has become fun and not a chore. With skills I've learnt in the workshops I've seen reading in a different light.*

Caregivers commented that the child now looked forward to reading.

*Since last session we had my boy has improved since then. Loves reading books re: animals, locomotives. I love reading any book: if he's interested I let him read or continue .*

*J really enjoys reading with me and is much more happy in general when reading a new book that may be a challenge. It is now quality time spent together rather than a chore.*

**(iii) Benefitting other areas**

The improved attitude to reading flowed on to other areas of learning, particularly writing and spelling, and also into home life.

*This programme has helped my child gain more interest in wanting to read. Not only has it helped him want to read more but it's made him pay more attention in class, which has something he lacked on in class.*

*This programme was an eye opener for me. It helped me understand how important reading is. Once his confidence in reading was there, he excelled in all class activities. I am very thrilled and grateful that I did this course. Thank you Whaea P and Mrs P.*

*It has extended beyond reading at home, there are other things he does now that he never done before.*

*Now he pretends to write a coaching manual for scrum techniques and now he writes positives about every player (his toy bears)*

**(iv) Reading competence has improved**

While the predominant comment was that the learner was now more enthusiastic about reading, some caregivers were also enthusiastic about the improvement in their learners reading competence.

*I enjoyed the resources and activities from the course and have used them on my child at home too. I have noticed that her reading has improved a lot too since I've been attending this course.*

*I have been to see my child's teacher to check on his reading progress and am pleased to know he has moved up several levels this year. I am so pleased with him but will have to check now on my older child in the senior area.*

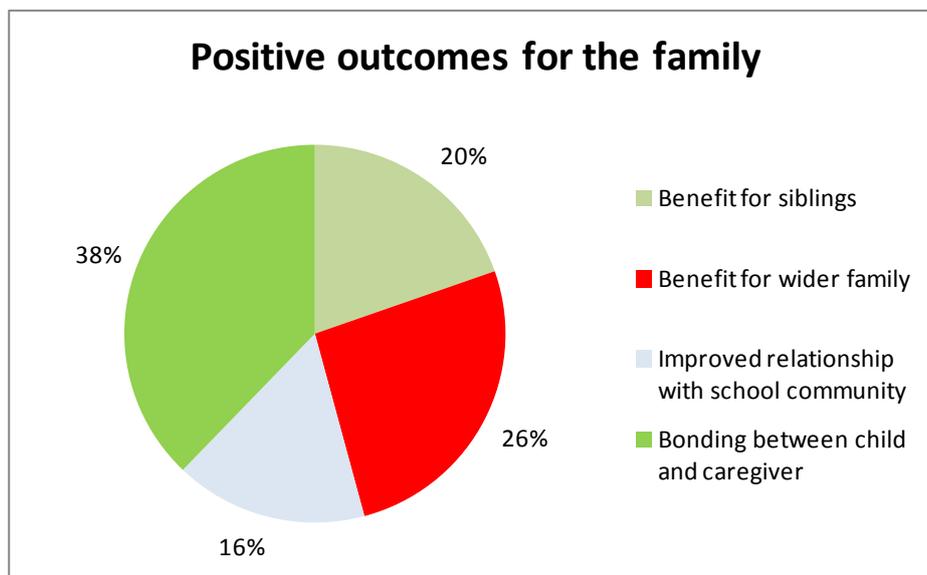
These impressions were ratified by the classroom measures of student achievement discussed in a later section of this report. As one facilitator commented:

*There has been some good feedback from class teachers of students in the programme. In one particular class the students have accelerated and doing so well. They enjoy a variety of books and are very articulate. This has made a big difference in their attitude to learning.*

## D Positive Outcomes for the family/ whānau

12% of the reported responses (25% in 2012, 16% in 2013) focused on how the benefit of the workshop had flowed through to better relationships within the whānau and in improved interaction with the school and wider community.

The following chart shows the major areas of benefit that participants commented upon in 2014.



Again, the outcomes noted by participants are similar to those in 2013.

Positive outcomes for the family	2012	2013	2014
Benefit for siblings	37%	18%	20%
Benefit for wider family	38%	24%	26%
Improved relationship with school community	25%	28%	16%
Bonding between child and caregiver	NA	30%	38%

### (i) Benefit for siblings

47% of the 1113 workshop participants were recorded as having more than one child at the school. In addition, many had preschool children. These other siblings benefitted along with the child whose reading progress had prompted attendance at the workshops.

*It is really helping both of us at home. She now wants to show me the book and discuss it before we read. I am able to also show the kids that I am a learner by coming to this programme at school. All my children are more motivated and engaged within their reading now.*

*It has helped us to find time to concentrate one-one-one with each of our children. It has also confirmed the importance of reading aloud to your children, no matter their age.*

*Yep always like reading with them and them to me, but when they see words on signs and say it back that's always cool. Little brother always wants to get involved, that's cool as well.*

**(ii) Benefit for other adult family/whānau members**

As in 2013, over all the workshops, 82% of the participants were female. Most of these were mothers, although several grandmothers participated.

While male participation was low, those who did participate found the experience valuable.

*I am reading more to my boys and trying to implement it into our daily routines, rather than leaving it up to my wife to read to our boys. I am enjoying our time together. We are currently reading the 13th Storey Tree House. My boys are asking more for me to read to them. It's nice!*

*Yes, helped me to read on my free time. It also encourages my eldest son who doesn't love reading to read more books.*

The women who attended made an effort to share what they had learned with their male partner and noted the resultant increased involvement on the part of the Dads.

*We're more relaxed, getting the same message from Mum and Dad and school, I've passed on what I have learned to my husband – I would love him to do the course if he gets the opportunity; I realise how important reading is; reading is more fun – we all look forward to reading (most times)*

*Yes because when I am away I taught my husband how to help my daughter to read. Give them time and listen while she is reading. So ask question what was the story about and who was the main character and how do you feel about this person.*

*Yes, finally dad supports reading at home and spends time with children.*

The new techniques were also shared within the whānau:

*Big improvement in all kids in whānau with regards to reading at home and routines*

*All my other children have left school now she's our baby and I know what to do, I'm going to tell my sister so someone else can benefit, or I'll wait for my grandchildren*

*When I told my workmates that I attend this course they said, "Don't you know how to read?" I said that it is not about that; it's about helping my kids to read. I tell my workmates about it, how I get my kids to choose what to read.*

*This programme is really cool because it's not only help the child but it also encourages us as parents to support our kids and for us to have time with our kids.*

*It has really helped knowing when a book is too hard or easy for my children and when I need to support more. I used to read to my son most of the time thinking he was unable to read but with all the advice and help given to me through this programme I can teach my family and friends about supporting him and other children with their reading*

**(iii) Relationship with the school and community**

The participants valued the opportunity to meet others in school community. Many had struggled with helping the learner reader and were relieved to find that other parents shared their difficulties.

*Being able to talk to other parents about reading problems. Being approached by teacher to attend workshops.*

*I was so relieved to hear that other people were having issues at home with reading, and it's not just me!!!!*

A facilitator commented: *Teachers have found it easier to communicate with parents who had done the workshops. The workshops have definitely enhanced home/school relationships.*

**(iv) Closer bonding between child and caregiver**

The learners relished the undivided attention of the caregiver. The child and adult were able to bond over a mutually enjoyable activity.

*Bonding between him and myself has become stronger and now he is able to express himself openly. Since his interest in reading has increased, his English is also improving.*

*Reading Together Programme help to be part of my children's learning. Draw myself and my children closely together. Quality time together. Nothing beats a cuddle on the couch with books to share with them.*

*It has brought us together – we read the Bible together too.*

*We talk more and bed time has become something we now look forward to a we have a reading time*

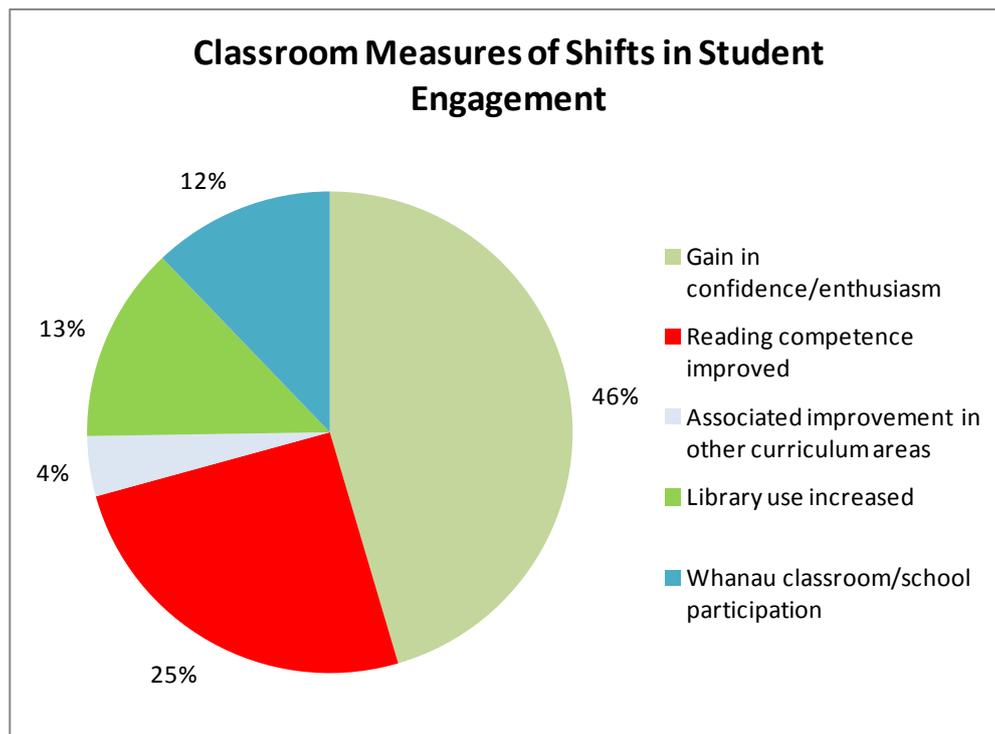
*We now share reading together not only with the chosen books but on so many other occasions.*

## ***E Classroom measures of shifts in student engagement***

This feedback was sourced from comments made by facilitators and teachers on the *Observations/measures of student engagement before and after Reading Together workshops* template that many schools used to report on the workshops.

Five recurring themes were apparent in these responses. In order to give an indication of the relative occurrence of these themes, the number of times each was mentioned was noted and then expressed as a percentage of the total occurrences recorded. The dominant themes were that:

- A student whose caregiver participated in the workshops gained in confidence and/or enthusiasm for reading, 46% (48% in 2013)
- The student's reading competence improved, 25% (21% in 2013)
- There has been an associated improvement in other curriculum areas, 4% (6% in 2013)
- Library use increased, 13% (8% in 2013)
- There has been increased whānau participation in the classroom and with their children's learning, 12% (17% in 2013)



**(i) The student has increased in confidence/enthusiasm for reading**

The reporting schools unanimously noted that the children whose caregivers attended the workshops became more confident and enthusiastic readers.

Some sample comments from classroom teachers are

*“D” came to school telling me that he sat down and read with his father for the first time ever and was so excited about doing it again. It has changed his whole attitude to reading at home – he is positive and eager to do reading homework now.*

*Her confidence with her reading and high frequency words has really improved. She is constantly looking out for words, blends and letter sounds and is reading anything she can. I am really happy with the progress she has made with her reading. It is clear that there is an improvement in the home support she is receiving.*

*O is a lot more confident during reading time. He is now participating in discussions on the current reading book, and thinking about what he is reading and even beginning to find this information in the text. O would need teacher assistance to choose library books, he is now able to independently choose and read by himself. He also now will stop at unknown words and give the beginning sound, once again he has more of an awareness of print.*

*She is much keener to discuss her ideas in group reading circles now and is confident to read aloud using some of the decoding strategies discussed at Reading Together*

Even those students who were already positive about reading showed an improvement in their engagement with reading.

*S already has a positive attitude to reading and since the programme he has begun to challenge himself to read harder books and give them a go. I have noticed that he is keen to participate in reading sessions and attempts the strategies he is learning. He is beginning to read again when it doesn't make sense and his writing is making an improvement. I have not been able to test him yet but his confidence to use strategies has improved.*

*Although he had a positive attitude to his learning and especially in reading when the programme began he was keen to take books home daily. During guided reading sessions D focused on trying to understand the stories he read. He is using a lot more strategies such as letter sounding and checking if words make sense. I have not tested his reading level but he is growing in confidence in reading.*

**(ii) The student's reading achievement has improved**

The engagement with reading engendered by the child's increased confidence was reflected in an improvement in reading achievement

Although some teachers were cautious in ascribing this improvement to the Reading Together programme alone, most were unequivocal in attributing increased reading competence to the family's participation in the workshops.

*One child has become more confident with his reading and has improved this term although I can't say if this is because of the Reading Together programme.*

*Some children who are well below with their reading ability have actually made excellent progress. We can't know if this is just because of the programme but feel it did make a difference.*

*One family went from very little home support to great support, and their kids have shot ahead in confidence and ability.*

*Student 1 has become engaged in reading and has enjoyed the challenges of meeting his goals. He was well below the national standards when he started the year, and because of the parent support/ engagement in his learning his level has accelerated to be only just below the national standards at the time of writing. It is hoped by testing time he will be at the national standards.*

*Child No 1 made a year's reading progress in 6 months. His reading comprehension went from 25% to consistent 65% and above. The confidence and involvement increased. Began to choose to read as a follow up activity in class. Showed interest and enjoyment for home reading. So much more confident in discussions. Self-confidence has really grown.*

*One of my students is finally starting to enjoy reading!! Her 6 year old net was really low, level 6. After Reading Together attitudes at home changed and by the end of the term she was desperate to read every day especially in the holidays so she could get to level 15 and read chapter books!! What a fantastic attitude shift!!*

*There has been some good feedback from class teachers of students in the programme. In one particular class the students have accelerated and doing so well. They enjoy a variety of books and are very articulate. This has made a big difference in their attitude to learning.*

**(iii) There has been an associated improvement in other curriculum areas**

While the focus of the comments was naturally on progress made with reading, a significant number found improvement in other areas of learning worthy of comment.

*Student engagement of those students whose parents came to all the workshops are much more engaged in their learning. We are seeing remarkable improvement not just in reading but in writing as well.*

*A teacher of one of the girls noticed how she had finally got all 5 spelling words correct, the first time all year.*

*“H” is starting to come out of his shell and engage in all learning more, not just reading.*

*Some of the students have had a marked increase in attendance since the start of the programme.*

**(iv) Use of the library has increased**

The workshop facilitators were active in encouraging families to use the school and community libraries.

*One family visited the bookbus for the first time during the reading together programme. They have now enrolled to be library users and both parent and child issued books during the book bus visit.*

*Another family were able to have their overdue fines wiped and can now begin issuing books out again after some time of being unable to do so. This family issued books for the parent and the child during the book bus visit.*

*Students are wanting to share what they are reading and talk about their recent visits to the local library. Both V and his mother shared the number of times they have been to the local library and V speaks more regularly about books he is reading*

*Student 2 has signed up to the town library and whenever the family goes into town they return and issue books. It has become part of what they do as a family now .*

*Couple of mum’s made ‘arrangements’ with our school librarian to become a member of our library to enable them to access a variety of books.*

**(v) There has been increased whānau participation in the classroom and with their children’s learning**

Many of the workshop participants had felt diffident about interacting with the school. Breaking down these barriers was a valuable aspect of the Reading Together<sup>R</sup> Programme.

Avenues of communication were opened up between home and school:

*It took a while to engage the parents and get them to come. The teacher became more confident and is looking forward to doing this next year. One mum in particular rallied up the others and is showing so much more confidence with in herself!!!!*

*Parents who attended the workshop often stop and talk to me about how the reading is going at home, and it is positive.*

*The co-ordinator of Reading Together has noticed that parent's confidence has been increased and that parents are more willing to come and talk to the classroom teacher about their child's reading. For the children who have attended they are aware that their family and teacher are talking about their reading so knowing that this has been happening has been a win, win situation for all.*

*Parents who were on the programme are now coming in to discuss their children's reading in class*

*There is now an improved line of communication between staff and parents who had previously been reluctant to come into school*

Caregivers became more involved both in the classroom and in other areas of school life.

*Her Mum is really keen to help with hearing struggling readers reading in my class now – she comes in 2x a week for half an hour. Before that, I don't think she would have had the skills or the confidence to do that!*

*At the request of the parents who were on the course we held a follow up get together towards the end of term 3 so they could share where they were at with their child and their reading and share ideas. At this session we also shared ideas about how we could encourage more people to attend the workshops and they had some great ideas. One or two of them said they would be willing to come along and a leading role in the presentation of further workshops.*

*Two kids from the same family (Child 6 and older brother) participated in the school Cross Country, the first time ever. Both Mum and Grandpa happily came to school to watch.*

Some schools made special efforts to reach ESOL families, and these efforts were widely appreciated.

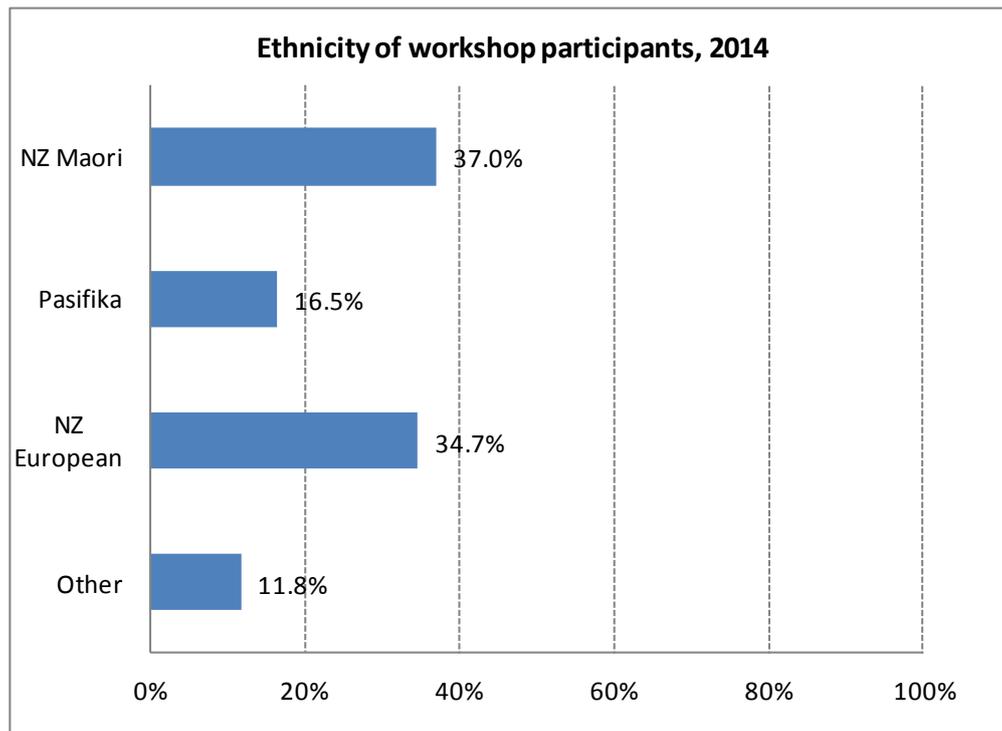
*Like sometimes they read but they really don't understand what it about. So try to show them visuals or pictures in the text and talk to them in your own language which will help them to understand.*

*The most important thing for me was good to be able to share with you (facilitator) how our language (Arabic) works so you maybe understand why my daughter have problems. Now you see my language it's better.*

## ***F Gender and Ethnicity analysis of the workshop participants***

Information about gender, ethnicity, relationship to the learner and workshop attendance was available for 1113 workshop participants (1224 in 1213).

On analysis of the ethnicity of the participants it was found that New Zealand Māori was the dominant ethnicity of the workshop participants. The proportion of both Pasifika and NZ Māori participants was higher than in 2013.



Ethnicity of workshop participants	NZ European	Pasifika	NZ Māori
2014	34.7%	16.5%	37.0%
2013	45.4%	12.9%	33.6%
2012	32.4%	20.6%	39.1%

The above national average NZ Māori and Pasifika participation in the workshops reflects the ethnic makeup of the reporting schools.

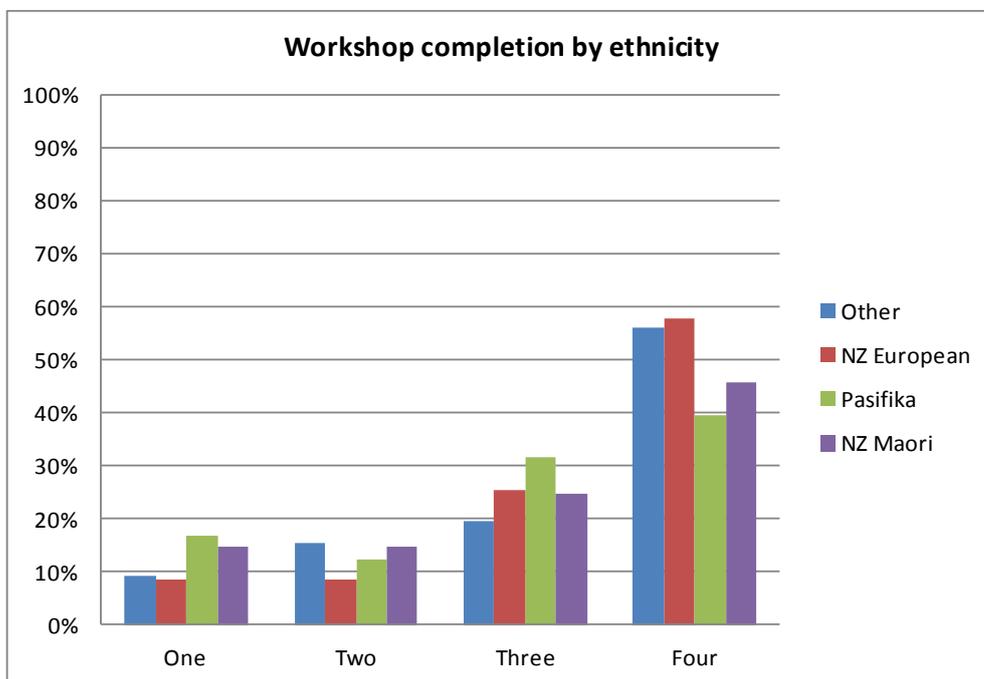
	Other	Pasifika	NZ Māori
Workshop participants (2014)	46.5%	16.5%	37.0%
Reporting schools roll	39.9%	22.9%	37.2%
National Roll (2012)	65.7%	10.2%	24.1%

Workshop completion varied across ethnicities as can be seen from the following table:

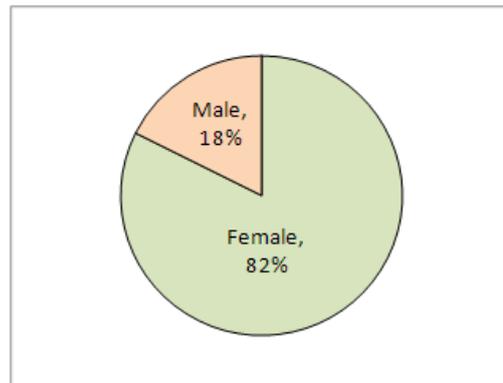
Workshops Completed	One	Two	Three	Four
NZ Māori	14.8%	14.8%	24.8%	45.6%
Pasifika	16.7%	12.4%	31.4%	39.5%
NZ European	8.6%	8.4%	25.3%	57.7%
Other	9.3%	15.3%	19.3%	56.0%
Total participants	12.3%	12.2%	25.4%	50.0%

50% of the participants completed all four workshops (down from 56% in 2013), while 75% completed three or more.

New Zealand Europeans had the highest completion rate for the four workshops, while Pasifika had the lowest rate. Acknowledging this, some schools noted that they made particular efforts to target and engage Pasifika families.



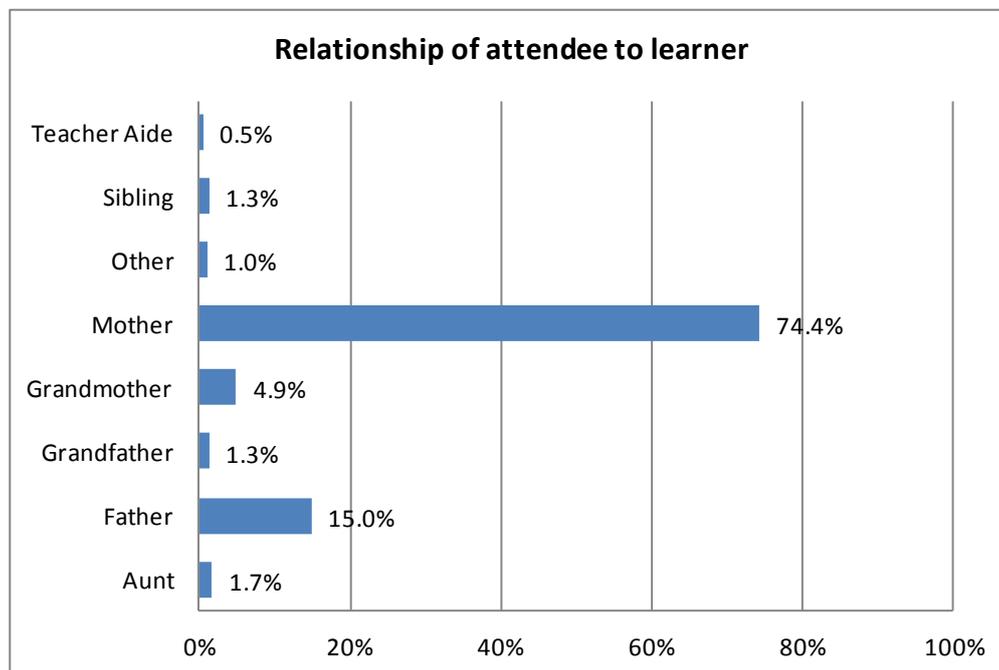
The gender distribution of workshop participants was the same as in 2013 and continued to be predominantly female at 82%.



One heartfelt comment reflected on the lack of male participation :

*I think there should be one [workshop] for the men too. They are the ones that get really cross when the reading is slow. They have no patience and they want to hurry it so that they can watch the rugby.*

As would be expected, when the workshop participant's relationship with the learner was analysed, mothers made up the major proportion at 74.4%, similar to 74.5% in 2013 and 73.6% in 2012.



47% of the participants were recorded as having other children at school, so that workshop participation benefited more than one child. In addition, a number of participants remarked that their preschooler had also benefitted.

## 4 Summary

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- 37% of the workshop participants were New Zealand Māori and 16.5% were Pasifika.
- 82% of the participants were female, mainly mothers.
- 50% of the participants completed all four workshops and a further 25% completed three workshops.
- Caregivers learned new strategies to facilitate learning.

The strategies included setting aside a regular time for reading that is suitable for both adult and child, using the pictures as cues and talking about the book, allowing “wait time” for the child to correct their own mistakes, and increased use of the library.

*I have learned not to make my child correct all words, to wait, prompt and let them work it out. I have learnt not to force the issue. This has meant less pressure with my son having more times to correct himself before I jump in. This had made homework reading more pleasurable for us both.*

- Caregivers gained in empathy for the learner  
Prior to the workshops caregivers often had unrealistic expectations of the learner and were impatient with the learner’s mistakes. The workshops made them aware of the value of reading for fluency and comprehension rather than pulling up each mistake. The calmer, more relaxed atmosphere made reading more enjoyable for both adult and child.

*Reading Together has helped me to see that it’s the teacher’s job to teach my child to read. It’s my job to help them build a love for reading. That takes the pressure off me.*

- The learners demonstrated increased engagement with reading.  
Both parents and teachers commented that the learner readers showed an, often dramatic, increase in enthusiasm for reading.

*Be patient. Give more encouragement. Hard when children are tired. Children now want to carry on reading. Child no longer cringes when it is time to read and is more confident towards reading.*

Schools reported some dramatic improvements in reading achievement and the gains in reading achievement flowed on into other areas, particularly in writing.

*All children from the 6 families showed progress over this time with 3 children moving 1 and a half years in 6 months (these children were also on reading recovery). Younger siblings entering the school during and after the programme showed increased levels of literacy compared to their older siblings.*

- Relationships within the community and with the school were fostered.

Many of the caregivers were initially shy and unsure of themselves in the school environment. The non-judgmental, welcoming atmosphere of the workshops helped break down these barriers allowing community ties to be established between families and with the school.

Caregivers were relieved to find that they were not alone in their difficulties.

*I think it has been a great programme just knowing that there are others out there with the same problems and it's been great to bounce other ideas off each other*

- There were positive outcomes for the family/whānau

*Surprising what we didn't know even after other children in the family, patience has flowed into other areas of family life. Learned to slow down a bit.*

Older whānau members and siblings also became more engaged with reading.

*Teachers teach reading, parents just enjoy it! The kids didn't change I did, we have fun now it's enjoyable not stressful. Now we have to keep enough books ahead of older reader - a great problem!*

- While male participation was low, the participants recognized the value of male involvement and passed the skills that they learned on to their partners.

*It has helped me explain things to dad so they can read together and it's now more fun for both of them*

- Workshop participants were enthusiastic about the programme and the strategies they had learned.

*I think it a great programme and a lot of other mums and dads will learn so much from it as I did. And that it's enjoyable Programme to do*

- The workshops built participants' confidence and allowed them to see change was not impossible.

*I know I need to work harder to make sure I read to and with my child more. This workshop helped me to see that I can do it. I can make small changes at a time.*

- The most inspirational benefit of the Reading Together project is that it provides a basis for a lasting generational change in attitudes to reading .

*Workshops have been very fruitful and has koha for my kete for the future when reading with my tamariki.*

*That modelling your love of reading is important – either by reading to your children or reading yourself. Especially important if someone in your family can't read (eg grandmother, father etc) so you can pass this on and then hopefully you children will pass this on to their children.*