

# Story Links: working with parents of pupils at risk of exclusion

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This paper presents the results of the evaluation of the 20-month Story Links project delivered by the University of Chichester in collaboration with the Centre for Therapeutic Storywriting and funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA). Story Links is a ten-week intervention that involves pupils at risk of exclusion and with poor literacy, along with teachers and parents, in co-creating stories that address the pupils' emotional and behavioural issues. These stories are then used to develop the pupils' reading skills. The theoretical background draws on Bowlby's concept of attachment and research that highlights the relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement. Analysis of the co-created stories showed a high correlation between the story metaphor and the child's presenting of emotional issues as identified by the parents and professionals. The findings also showed a significant increase in parental involvement in their child's learning and improvement in both pupils' behaviour and pupils' attitudes to learning.

**Key words:** Story Links; parent partnership; therapeutic storywriting; behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESDs); Special Educational Needs (SEN).