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'Preschool Storytime in Auckland's public libraries: A qualitative study of book selection practices'

by

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'Preschool Storytime in Auckland's public libraries:
A qualitative study of book selection practices'

(hereafter referred to as 'The MIS Research Project')

being undertaken by

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Abstract

Research problem: Anecdotal evidence suggested a lack of uniformity across Auckland Libraries, in that Preschool Storytime sessions were being delivered by a range of different people with varying levels of training and experience. The purpose of the research was to gain an understanding of their book selection practices and the nature of the books selected for reading aloud.

Methodology: The researcher took a qualitative approach, using a purposive sampling technique to select 10 participants from nine different libraries across the Auckland region. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect the required data.

Results: Seven main factors were found to influence the book selection process: length; illustrations; subjects, concepts and themes; use of language; the potential for audience participation; the potential for emotional engagement and personal preference. Participants employed various strategies to assist them in finding suitable books. These included physical browsing, online browsing, searching the library catalogue and seeking recommendations. Toy and movable books and picture storybooks were popular with participants.

Implications: The findings from this study may be of interest to librarians working with children in public libraries elsewhere in New Zealand. The results could potentially be used as a tool to guide and inform their storytime practices, and as a basis for training and development. A subsequent study involving content analysis could be undertaken at a later date, with a view to describing in detail the books shared with children during Preschool Storytime sessions.

Descriptors: Preschool storytime, book selection, early literacy, public library programmes, children's literature, young children.

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Contents

1.   Introduction

1.1 Rationale

The importance of reading books to young children has been well established (Irwin, Moore, Tornatore & Fowler, 2012; Isbell, Sobol, Lindauer & Lowrance, 2004, p. 158; Raban & Scull, 2013, p. 100). McKeown and Beck (2006, p. 281) noted, for example, that "listening to read-alouds offers children exposure to new vocabulary and new language forms, as well as opportunities to learn information and acquire cultural literacy". Accordingly, public libraries have been providing storytelling sessions aimed at preschool-aged children for many years (Albright, Delecki & Hinkle, 2009, p. 13). Programmes such as these have been associated with the development of early literacy (Cahill, 2004, p. 61; Fehrenbach, Hurford & Fehrenbach, 1998; Hughes-Hassell, Agosto & Sun, 2007, p. 43). Early literacy has been defined as "what children know about communication, language (verbal and nonverbal), reading, and writing before they can actually read and write" (Kupcha-Szrom, 2011, as cited in Ghoting & Martin-Díaz, 2013, p. xiii).

A range of recommendations about choosing books for young children have been discussed in the relevant literature. Jalongo (2004, p. 2) argued that "children's experiences with literature need to begin with enjoyment" and maintained that enjoyment and engagement are essential for learning. Furthermore; in order to maximise engagement, adults should select books that suit the age and developmental level of the child (Jalongo, 2004, p. 35). Given that public libraries often play a role in providing early literacy experiences for children, it may be argued that librarians have a professional responsibility to examine the contextual variables that underlie best practice in this area.

It appears that researchers have not yet addressed the way in which public librarians generally go about choosing books for inclusion in their preschool programmes and the kinds of material to which attendees are exposed, despite the fact that "a child's interest in and enjoyment of books" has long been recognised by the American Library Association (ALA) as a key component of early literacy (Albright et al., 2009, p. 15). The study described in the following report addressed this gap. It focused on Auckland Libraries' Preschool Storytime programme and the books selected for reading aloud in that context.

1.2 Problem statement

Since November 2010, public libraries in the Auckland region have come under the umbrella of a single local authority (Auckland Council, 2014c, para. 3). Auckland Libraries is now the largest library group in Australasia, comprising 55 public library branches and four mobile libraries (Auckland Council, 2014a). Preschool Storytime is presented in the majority of Auckland library branches on a regular (usually weekly) basis[1]. The sessions, consisting of stories read by librarians, are aimed at children between three and five years of age (Auckland Council, 2014d). They are designed to "help encourage a love of stories and language" (Auckland Council, 2014b, para. 2).

Anecdotal evidence suggested a lack of uniformity across Auckland Libraries, in that Preschool Storytime sessions are being planned and delivered by a range of different people with varying levels of professional training and practical experience. If this is the case, it seemed reasonable to assume that there may be a corresponding variation in their book selection practices and to suggest that these activities may not in all cases reflect best practice. In questioning the extent to which book selection processes differ across the organisation, it may be possible to determine how children's exposure to various types of material relates to their apparent enjoyment and engagement and thus, to their early literacy development. Many resources exist to support librarians in the planning and development of storytimes. (See, for example, Ghoting & Martin-Díaz, 2013). This research investigated the extent to which Auckland Libraries' staff members considered these and other factors in the process of selecting books to read aloud to children during Preschool Storytime sessions.

1.3 Potential significance

The findings from the study may be of interest to librarians working with children in public libraries elsewhere in New Zealand. The results could potentially be used as a tool to guide and inform their storytime practices, and as a basis for training and development.

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[1] Auckland Libraries offers two other programmes for preschool-aged children. 'Wriggle and Rhyme' specifically caters for babies and toddlers (birth to two years) and 'Rhymetime' targets children between 18 months and three years of age (Auckland Council, 2014b).

2.   Literature review

The related literature falls into two broad categories. The first is early literacy development and its relationship to public library programmes. The second encompasses research into the specific book-sharing practices and preferences of preschool teachers. Comparable studies focusing on the behaviour of librarians working with preschool-aged children in public libraries are currently lacking.

2.1 Early literacy and public library programmes

Most of the publications reviewed here examined the ways in which library programmes supported the development of early literacy skills in children between three and five years of age. Research conducted in the United States and Canada, in particular, has tended to emphasise this approach.

In 2004, the ALA identified six early literacy skills as part of its Every Child Ready to Read (ECRR) initiative[2] (Ghoting & Martin-Díaz, 2013; McEwing, 2011, p. 29; Peterson, 2012, p. 2). These included phonological awareness[3] and print awareness (Peterson, 2012, p. 1). Decades earlier, the concept of "reading readiness" had emerged, denoting a theory that children needed to be exposed to books from an early age, before they were taught to read (Teale, 1995, as cited in Albright et al., 2009, p. 13).

Peterson's (2012) study of early literacy programmes in 10 Canadian public libraries was based on this theoretical framework. The purpose of Peterson's research was to gain an understanding of the ways in which these programmes facilitated the development of early literacy skills and "school readiness" in children aged between three and five (Peterson, 2012, p. 2-3). School readiness was associated with a child's ability to take turns, focus on library staff and follow instructions (Peterson, 2012, p. 10).

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[2] The second edition of ECRR was released in 2011 (Stewart, Bailey-White, Shaw, Compton & Ghoting, 2014, p. 9). It emphasised five practices (singing, talking, reading, writing and playing) instead of focusing exclusively on the six early literacy skills (Ghoting & Martin-Díaz, 2013, p. xiii; Stewart et al., 2014, p. 9). For a detailed analysis of the differences between the two editions, see Ghoting and Martin-Díaz (2013).

[3] Phonological awareness is "the ability to hear and play with the smaller sounds in words" (Albright et al., 2009, p. 15). Print awareness means "noticing print, knowing how to handle a book, and understanding how to follow the written words on a page" (Albright et al., 2009, p. 15).

The researchers created categories to describe the actions of both the children and the librarians they observed, coding them with reference to the skills and behaviours they had defined (Peterson, 2012, p. 5). Such an approach assumed that early literacy and school readiness could be encapsulated in a set number of observable behaviours which could be clearly identified. Furthermore, it presupposed that children who possessed the requisite skills would demonstrate them (and be given an opportunity to do so) during at least one of the observed sessions. For example; children who repeated sounds, supplied rhyming words, or joined in with the songs and rhymes were recognised as having phonological awareness (Peterson, 2012, p. 10). It is possible that more reserved children may not have participated, though they possessed the ability to do so.

Peterson (2012, p. 8) concluded that the programmes did appear to have had an impact on children's literacy behaviour. It should be noted, however, that such a correlation does not indicate causality. The researchers also found that library staff supported children's school readiness through the storytime routines they established (Peterson, 2012, p. 8).

In a subsequent and related study, Stewart, Bailey-White, Shaw, Compton and Ghoting (2014) attempted to measure the impact on parents and caregivers when librarians incorporated specific early literacy messages into their preschool storytime sessions. Librarians were given specialised training on the six early literacy skills mentioned earlier (Stewart et al., 2014, p. 10). The results were inconclusive, though some parents reported feeling more motivated to apply and reinforce the skills at home after participating in the storytimes with their children (Stewart et al., 2014, p. 13).

An earlier study by Martinez (2007) endeavoured to assess the effects of an early literacy training session – similar in nature to that described by Stewart et al. (2014) – on the preschool storytime practices of 26 public librarians working in the US state of Maryland. The theory of "reading readiness" was, again, central to the investigation (Martinez, 2007, p. 32). The researchers subsequently observed the storytimes and noted that the librarians had included ideas and activities from the training session (Martinez, 2007, p. 37). No prior observations were conducted, however, so the researchers were unable to account for the librarians' practices before undergoing training (Martinez, 2007, p. 38).

The implication here is that library storytimes can be readily adapted, perhaps in line with an organisation's objectives. For this reason, it should be noted that the precise nature of the preschool storytime programmes being run in New Zealand's public libraries has not been comprehensively examined in recent years[4]. Further research into the specific purposes associated with such programmes is needed.

Prospective researchers should also be aware that the early literacy approach has not been universally endorsed. McKenzie and Stooke (2007) for instance, have criticised this type of investigative framework as limited. In an article analysing the work involved in producing preschool storytimes in two Canadian public library branches, they contended that the professional literature had, for the most part, neglected to address the range of purposes associated with storytime programmes for young children[5] (McKenzie & Stooke, 2007, p. 4). More recently, they argued against the use of "evaluation models that seek to demonstrate specific developmental outcomes for individual children" on the basis that these models are flawed and ignore other significant factors associated with children's wellbeing (McKenzie & Stooke, 2012, p. 51). Ultimately, McKenzie and Stooke (2012, p. 51) suggested that the "quasi-experimental" conditions under which community-based early literacy studies are necessarily conducted make it impossible to measure developmental outcomes accurately.

2.2 Book-sharing practices and preferences

All this begs the question; for what purposes are preschool storytimes conducted in New Zealand's public libraries? Storytime programmes are, by definition, likely to include books as a fundamental component. The kinds of books they actually include, the factors that might influence the book selection process, and the ways in which these support the purposes of storytimes, are topics which have received relatively little attention in the research literature.

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[4] A cross-disciplinary team from the Victoria University of Wellington has recently undertaken research into the ways in which public libraries in New Zealand support children's early literacy development (Goulding, Dickie, Shuker & Bennett, 2014). Preliminary results were presented at the LIANZA conference on 15 October 2014 (LIANZA, 2014, Day 4, para. 4).

[5] Various outreach programmes have been discussed in the literature. These usually involve public libraries and preschools working together to provide reading experiences for young children. See – for example – Cahill (2004), Irving (2002) and Smith (2008).

No such research appears to have been published recently in New Zealand and research in other countries has tended to focus on the behaviour of teachers, rather than librarians. For example; Gönen, Ertürk and Altinkaynak (2011) surveyed 111 teachers working in Turkish preschools and attempted to describe the teachers' reasons for reading books to their students[6] (Gönen et al., 2011, p. 4099). It is unclear how the survey was administered. Participants were, it appears, invited to choose from a number of predefined options when specifying their purposes for reading to children. These included "supporting the curriculum", which was the most common response highlighted, and "entertaining and relaxing children", which was the answer least frequently selected by those surveyed (Gönen et al., 2011, p. 4099).

Given the context of the study, one could argue that teachers might have been more inclined to select responses on the basis of what they believed they should say, rather than what they actually did. Perhaps they should have been asked about the benefits of reading to children, as opposed to their reasons for doing so. Similarly, if respondents had been allowed to nominate more than one response to a question, or rank their responses in some way, the resulting data might have been more meaningful.

In addition, the researchers provided participants with a list of publication themes and asked them to indicate which ones they favoured when selecting books for preschool-aged children. Most teachers chose "concepts education" while "philosophy" was the least preferred theme (Gönen et al., 2011, p. 4101). This finding was not, however, supplemented by any kind of content analysis or observation on the part of the researchers, so may not be said to reflect teachers' actual book choices.

Stone and Twardosz's (2001) study was more robust. They compared preschool teachers' use of children's books in 21 child care centres in the south-eastern United States. Their purpose was to identify the books teachers read most often to their four-year-old pupils during group storytime, to describe the teachers' reasons for choosing these books and to determine the extent to which the books presented in this context were "recommended" by experts in the field of children's literature (Stone & Twardosz, 2001, p. 56).

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[6] The children's ages were not mentioned, though UNESCO (2006, p. 2) has defined preschool education in Turkey as catering to children between the ages of three and five.

The books that teachers reported reading most often included those by the renowned author known as Dr. Seuss (Stone & Twardosz, 2001, p. 61). Teachers' reasons for selecting these and other popular titles to read aloud related to the perceived preferences of the children, the teaching function of the books and the literary qualities they possessed (Stone & Twardosz, 2001, p. 63). Furthermore, the researchers found that the books most often named by the teachers were all classed as recommended by experts in the field of children's literature (Stone & Twardosz, 2001, p. 62).

Factors such as the relative popularity and availability of certain children's books at the time the study was conducted emphasise the time-bound and context-specific nature of its results. Furthermore, the reliance on self-reported data could be seen as a weakness of the investigation. Leedy and Ormrod (2013, p. 190) argue that "people's memories ... are often distortions of reality". For instance, teachers were asked to recall the books they had read most often to children over the past year (Stone & Twardosz, 2001, p. 57). The researchers themselves noted that observing the books teachers actually read during group storytimes might have yielded more reliable data (Stone & Twardosz, 2001, p. 66).

Similarly, it was acknowledged that the notion of quality was difficult to define with regard to children's literature (Stone & Twardosz, 2001, p. 66). Books were classed as "recommended" if they appeared in at least one of three bibliographic sources identified by the researchers (Stone & Twardosz, 2001, p. 59). Thus, books that were relatively new or otherwise outside the scope of the sources used for the study would have been excluded.

More recently; Price, Bradley and Smith (2012) examined the book-sharing practices of 20 preschool teachers working in public schools or private preschools in the Midwestern United States[7]. As was the case with Stone and Twardosz's (2001) study, aspects of the investigation were heavily influenced by self-reported data.

Price et al. (2012, p. 433) conducted a survey and found that teachers expressed a preference for reading storybooks, rather than information books, to their pupils[8]. That is,

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[7] Children in these classrooms were three, four and five years of age (Price et al., 2012, p. 430).
[8] The researchers drew on established definitions when using these terms, defining storybooks as "books that contain a fictional narrative and rely on conventional narrative structure including a goal, attempts to achieve the goal, and a final outcome or resolution" (Stein & Glenn, 1979, as cited in Price et al., 2012, p. 427).

90% of the teachers indicated that they read storybooks several times per week, whereas information books were reportedly read as often by only 40% of the teachers (Price et al., 2012, p. 433). This finding is consistent with previous research into the read-aloud habits of teachers (Duke, 2003, p. 1; Pentimonti, Zucker & Justice, 2011, p. 213; Price et al., 2012, p. 426). It has been argued, however, that despite the prevalence of storybooks in early childhood classrooms and a widespread belief regarding the perceived unsuitability of information books, the latter are also developmentally appropriate for young children (Carlson, 1991, p. 94; Duke, 2003, p. 1; Jalongo, 2004, p. 13). Accordingly, Ghoting and Martin-Díaz (2013, p. 49) have advised librarians to use informational texts in storytimes, because young children "are naturally interested in exploring and making sense of their world".

Notably, the teachers in Price et al.'s (2012) study reported feeling more confident during storybook read-aloud sessions than during information book presentations. They also indicated that they enjoyed reading the stories more (Price et al., 2012, p. 435). While it cannot reasonably be concluded that this was the main reason for their choosing one type of book over the other, it nonetheless signifies the potential scope for an enquiry into the book selection practices of public librarians working with preschool-aged children.

2.2.1 Types of books used with young children

Different categories of texts have been identified in the research and professional literature. Pentimonti, Zucker and Justice (2011) reviewed the books selected for reading aloud by 13 preschool teachers and used four genre categories to describe them. The researchers analysed more than 400 titles that were read to groups of children aged between three and five over the course of an academic year in the United States (Pentimonti et al., 2011, p. 200). They classed these texts as either narrative, informational, mixed, or other[9] (Pentimonti et al., 2011, p. 201). Narrative texts were defined as those "designed to entertain or convey an experience" and this category therefore included both fairy tales and true stories (Pentimonti et al., 2011, p. 209). Books containing information "about the

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Information books were defined broadly as "books designed to convey information about a nonfiction topic" (Price et al., 2012, p. 427).

[9] Pentimonti et al. (2011, p. 208) described these categories as being mutually exclusive and exhaustive. For detailed definitions, see Pentimonti et al. (2011, p. 209).

natural or social world" were classified as informational texts and the mixed genre category encompassed publications in which both narrative and informational elements were identifiable (Pentimonti et al., 2011, p. 209). Only one book in the study fell into the "other" category, which included poetry and biographies. Pentimonti et al. (2011, p. 213) found that narrative texts were read most frequently, followed by mixed and then informational texts.

Researchers have taken various approaches to describing books by genre. As outlined in the preceding section, Price et al. (2012) asked preschool teachers about their preferences with regard to the books they read aloud. Their methodology differed significantly from that of Pentimonti et al. (2011). Rather than analysing a selection of books, Price et al. (2012) identified four genres – fiction, nonfiction, nursery rhymes and alphabet – and asked teachers to indicate how often they read books from each category (Price et al., 2012, p. 433). In this case, it appears that the researchers were not attempting to create an exhaustive list of mutually exclusive categories. In the library context, for example, books of nursery rhymes are generally classified as nonfiction[10]. In the professional literature, alphabet books tend to be cited under the more general heading of "concept books" (Bailey, 2009, p. 18; Jalongo, 2004, p. 52). This lack of uniformity across Price et al.'s (2012) categories arguably limits their usefulness as a framework for further analysis.

Jalongo (2004) circumvented this obstacle by dividing picture books[11] into two genres, namely prose and poetry. Concept books, information books and biographies[12] were thus included in the first group as "nonfiction prose" whereas nursery rhymes, picture books based on songs, and stories told in verse were classed as poetry (Jalongo, 2004, p. 52). Jalongo (2004, p. 50) discussed two additional ways of categorising books; by format and by "the five basic elements of literature". Physical characteristics such as size and shape were used to describe various formats[13] and the basic elements of plot, characters, setting, style and theme comprised the latter category (Jalongo, 2004, p. 52). Overall, Jalongo (2004, p. 54) remarked on the overlapping nature of the three categories and acknowledged that many books would be difficult to categorise. Nonetheless, the different groups of

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[10] The term nonfiction can include poetry and fairy tales (Ghoting & Martin-Díaz, 2013, p. 49).

[11] Picture books were defined as "publications in which the pictures stand alone, the pictures dominate the text, or the words and illustrations are equally important" (Shulevitz, 1989, as cited in Jalongo, 2004, p. 11).

[12] Jalongo (2004, p. 52) suggested that biographical texts were generally more appropriate for older children.

[13] Board books and pop-up books were cited as examples (Jalongo, 2004, p. 50). Audio-visual materials also fell into this category (Jalongo, 2004, p. 51).

characteristics identified in the literature form a useful conceptual framework through which future researchers could attempt to define the types of books that are commonly shared with preschool-aged children. A table summarising the various genres and formats is presented in *Appendix 1*.

2.2.2 Choosing books to use with young children

Arguably, preschool teachers and librarians consider a variety of factors when selecting books to read aloud to children. According to Perkins (2008, p. 29) one of the things they should think about is the relationship between the text and the illustrations. Stone and Twardosz (2001, p. 64) found that most of the teachers who participated in their study considered the illustrations to be an important element in the selection process. Other characteristics, such as the theme of a book and its moral, were also highlighted (Stone & Twardosz, 2001, p. 63). Fewer teachers indicated that the length of a book and the number of words on each page were deciding factors (Stone & Twardosz, 2001, p. 63).

In this case, the teachers were presented with a set list of characteristics – which also included "colours" and "rhyming words" – and asked to mark the three that they most frequently took into account when selecting books to use with young children (Stone & Twardosz, 2001, p. 58). Notably, none of the teachers chose "rhyming words" as one of the characteristics (Stone & Twardosz, 2001, p. 64). Nevertheless, rhyming books featured heavily in the read-aloud collections analysed by Pentimonti et al. (2011, p. 214). Indeed, "language play" was identified as a key aspect of many of the books that the teachers in this study reported reading aloud. Pentimonti et al. (2011) did not, however, claim that teachers consciously took such features into consideration when choosing books.

On the other hand; Albright et al. (2009, p. 14) argued that rhythm, rhyme and repetition had played a part in library-based storytimes for many years, and suggested that librarians had been selecting books on this basis since the 1950s. These and a number of other factors relating to book selection have been highlighted in the professional literature. They are presented alongside a list of recommendations, in *Appendix 2*.

2.2.3 How books are used with young children

Of course, it matters not only which books are shared with children but also how they are shared (Ghoting & Martin-Díaz, 2013, p. 35; Jalongo, 2004, p. 54; McGee & Schickedanz, 2007, p. 742). A number of researchers have noted that the quality of the interaction is just as important as the act of reading (Cunningham & Zibulsky, 2011, p. 397; Morrow & Gambrell, 2001, p. 351). For example, "researchers who observed teacher-student read-aloud interactions identified talk surrounding reading as the most valuable aspect of the activity for enhancing children's language development" (McKeown & Beck, 2006, p. 282).

In a separate but related study, Isbell, Sobol, Lindauer and Lowrance (2004) examined the effects of storytelling and storybook reading on the language development and comprehension skills of three- and four-year-old children attending a preschool in Tennessee. Isbell et al. (2004, p. 162) found that both the oral and visual approaches had merit, and suggested that both story reading and storytelling elements be included in early childhood programmes. Future researchers might consider whether librarians are following this advice.

2.3 Contextual variables

In summary, the reviewed literature was drawn from two different fields, namely education and library studies. By referring to both disciplines, the researcher did not intend to imply that the storytime practices of teachers and librarians are identical, or that geographic, social and political variables are irrelevant. On the contrary, any subsequent studies must take these factors into account. Moreover, the literature review did not address the notion of book-seeking strategies, because the researcher was unable to find any relevant research pertaining to the specific approaches taken by preschool teachers or children's librarians.

3.   Research questions

The purpose of the research outlined in this report (hereafter referred to as "the study") was to gain an understanding of how some librarians working in Auckland Libraries selected books to read aloud to children during Preschool Storytime sessions and to analyse the nature[14] of the chosen books.

The questions that underpinned this objective were:

- What perceived factors influence the book selection process?
- What strategies do the librarians use to assist them in finding suitable books and which of these strategies do they think are most effective?
- What does an analysis of data gathered through semi-structured interviews with the librarians reveal about the perceived characteristics, features or qualities of the books selected?

4.   Research design

The researcher took a qualitative approach, using semi-structured interviews to collect the required data. Qualitative research studies "can reveal the multifaceted nature of certain situations, settings, processes, relationships, systems, or people" and may enable investigators to "gain new insights about a particular phenomenon" (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013, p. 140). The study focused on a purposefully selected group of staff members either solely or jointly responsible for delivering Preschool Storytime sessions in their respective library branches.

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[14] Nature can be defined as "the basic or inherent features, character, or qualities of something" ("Nature", n.d.).

5.   Methodology

5.1 Population and sample

The researcher used a purposive sampling technique to select 10 participants from nine different libraries across the Auckland region. The ability to choose individuals who "will yield the most information about the topic under investigation" is an inherent advantage of this approach (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013, p. 152). As an employee of Auckland Council, the researcher had access to an email database which was used to contact staff in all 55 libraries. The intention was to cover a range of locations and include librarians and library assistants with varying degrees of involvement in children's programmes.

Twenty people responded. Six respondents were excluded from the study because they did not currently deliver storytimes on a regular basis, two others worked in libraries that were inconveniently located and another two were personally well-known to the researcher. Of those who were selected, five had completed or were currently enrolled in a postgraduate information studies course and four had either qualified or were seeking qualification at the undergraduate level. The other participant held a degree in teaching. Six of the individuals selected were Senior Librarians, one was a Librarian, one was a Senior Library Assistant and two were Library Assistants. All of them presented Preschool Storytime sessions independently, but the senior librarians were primarily responsible for providing children's programmes in their respective branches. (For simplicity, all participants will hereafter be referred to as librarians). Overall, two participants hosted twice-weekly sessions, four usually presented them on a weekly basis, one did so fortnightly and the other three participants were involved less frequently. Their length of involvement with library programmes of this nature ranged from less than one year to approximately 18 years.

5.2 Data collection

The objectives of the study were grounded in the perceptions and behaviour of its participants. The researcher therefore chose to collect data through semi-structured interviews. In interviews, researchers can ask open-ended questions about people's motives, beliefs and actions (Silverman, 1993, as cited in Leedy & Ormrod, 2013, p. 153).

This technique suited the exploratory nature of the research. Accordingly, two pilot interviews were conducted before the interview guide was finalised.

Interview questions[15] were designed to elicit information about participants' book selection practices, the types of books they typically selected, and the strategies they used to assist them in finding suitable material. In addition, several quantitative measures were used to encourage further reflection and discussion. In the latter part of the interview, participants were shown two tables describing various formats[16] and genres[17]. These are detailed in section 5.2.2 and were based on the information summarised in *Appendix 1* of this report. After they had reviewed the format and genre tables, participants were given an additional list of potential factors[18]. The researcher asked them which (if any) of these factors they considered when selecting material. Unstructured follow-up questions were then asked.

Firstly, participants were presented with the list of formats which included toy and movable books, oversized books, electronic books (e-books) and digital applications (apps). They were asked to indicate, with regard to Preschool Storytime, how often they included material from each category. Secondly, participants looked at the list of genres which included picture storybooks, anthologies of children's poetry, picture books based on songs or nursery rhymes, wordless picture books, concept books, informational picture books and mixed genre picture books. The researcher asked them to indicate which types of books they read most often during Preschool Storytime sessions. The resulting quantitative data was intended to be used as a basis for conceptual and thematic interpretation, rather than statistical analysis.

During the relevant segment of the interview, participants had access to copies of the 28 books[19] listed in the genre table. Most of them chose to look through these. There were four examples of each genre. Some participants examined and commented on each book in turn, while others flicked through them and talked about the genre in general terms. Copies of the books were obtained through Auckland Libraries. In all cases, their catalogue records indicated that they were suitable for preschool-aged children. In most cases, there was a

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[15] See the interview guide in *Appendix 7*.
[16] See *Appendix 7*, section 3A.
[17] See *Appendix 7*, section 3B.
[18] See *Appendix 7*, section 4.
[19] See *Appendix 7* for a list of titles and authors.

target audience note in the relevant MARC field (521). One participant brought several picture books with her to the interview and talked about her reasons for choosing them.

The duration of each interview varied. The shortest was approximately 45 minutes and the longest interview lasted for more than an hour. The researcher recorded the interviews using a handheld device and took handwritten notes during each session.

5.2.1 Limitations

The chosen method of data collection relied, to a large extent, on the ability of each participant to articulate his or her preferences with accuracy and honesty. As outlined in the preceding literature review, a reliance on self-reported data can be problematic; therefore it was necessary for the researcher to acknowledge the subjective nature of the interview process. Leedy and Ormrod (2013, p. 153) explained that problems often arise because:

> "People are apt to recall what *might* or *should* have happened (based on their attitudes or beliefs) rather than what actually *did* happen ... And even when people are talking about present circumstances, they aren't always terribly insightful – and sometimes they're intentionally dishonest – about their attitudes, feelings and motives".

The researcher took this into account when framing questions and always endeavoured to treat participants' responses "as perceptions rather than as facts" (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013, p. 157). For example; according to Auckland Libraries' website, Preschool Storytimes are aimed at children between three and five years of age. Participants were asked to estimate the extent to which their respective audiences reflected this target age group. In this situation, they relied on their powers of observation and deduction. Nonetheless, their perceptions were found to influence their book selection behaviour and were therefore deemed relevant to the study.

5.2.2 Delimitations

Collecting data from multiple sources can help to mitigate the problem of subjectivity described above (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013, p. 154). However, the researcher decided not to observe participants' sessions or gather any related documentation from them, although in

either case the resulting data could potentially have been used to verify or substantiate their accounts of the types of books they typically chose to include. Both exercises would likely have necessitated some form of content analysis, in order to ascertain the nature of the books in question, and it was arguably not feasible for the researcher to undertake this work as part of a small-scale study. Fundamentally, the research was designed to explore participants' beliefs and opinions about the kinds of books they read aloud. Interviews were arguably the best means of acquiring this type of data. The study therefore focused on self-reported data in an attempt to identify the underlying and perceived factors involved in the book selection process. A subsequent study analysing the books themselves might be undertaken at a later date.

In addition, the researcher chose to focus on a limited number of relevant genres and formats, rather than attempting to compile an exhaustive list for participants to review. Sophisticated picture books and board books, for example, were excluded for reasons relating to the age of the target audience in each case. Equally, different types of stories – such as folk and fairy tales – were not specifically addressed in terms of the research methodology. Instead, seven different types of books were listed in the genre table that was presented to participants during the interview process. Most fell under the broader heading of children's picture books. The table incorporated elements of the genre categories described variously by Pentimonti et al. (2011), Price et al. (2012) and Jalongo (2004) while also introducing additional criteria. Consequently, the distinctions were not absolute. For example, Jalongo (2004, p. 52) described poetry for young children as including picture book versions of nursery rhymes, picture books based on songs, and stories told in verse. The researcher chose to separate these and subsequently placed picture books based on songs and nursery rhymes into a category of their own. Stories told in verse were generally considered to be picture storybooks. Similarly, a picture book about Picasso's life and work[20] was included in the mixed genre category, though it could arguably have been described as an informational picture book or simply as a picture storybook. The list of formats was more straightforward and closely resembled Jalongo's (2004, p. 50) arrangement with the exception of e-books and apps. Other audio-visual formats (such as book-and-CD sets) were excluded.

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[20] *Picasso's trousers* by Nicholas Allan.

The additional list of potential factors was based on general recommendations found in the relevant literature about using books with young children[21]. In the main, the recommendations were not specific to public library programmes. Furthermore, they often described pre-schoolers in general terms, rather than referring to precise ages. Although the researcher made every effort to cover as many criteria as possible and to include elements relating to children aged between three and five, the list was not fully comprehensive and it is possible that some of the recommendations were intended to apply to younger pre-schoolers. In compiling the list, the researcher may have overlooked a range of factors that could not easily be encapsulated in a word or short phrase. Ultimately, the list shown to participants included the following elements:

- Rhythm, rhyme and repetition
- Vocabulary and use of language
- Illustrations
- Theme
- Length
- Diversity
- Potential for engagement
- Potential for audience participation
- Predictability
- Popular culture

Once again, the distinctions were not absolute and the categories were not exclusive. For example; rhythm, rhyme and repetition could have been encapsulated under the heading 'use of language'. Similarly, stories chosen for their theme might also reflect popular culture, which was listed separately, and the illustrations might help children to predict what will happen next in a story. Furthermore, Jalongo (2004, p. 35) advised adults to select "developmentally appropriate" picture books. This recommendation could be said to encompass a variety of elements including theme, use of language, overall length, and so on.

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[21] See *Appendix 2* for recommendations.

5.3 Ethical considerations

Victoria University granted approval to conduct the research via the School of Information Management's Human Ethics Committee. Since the study involved human participants, the researcher took steps to address a number of ethical issues associated with their voluntary and informed participation and their right to privacy[22]. After obtaining written permission from Auckland Libraries to approach its staff[23], the researcher contacted potential participants via email[24], outlining the nature of the intended study and inviting individuals to take part in a one hour interview. Potential participants were guaranteed confidentiality and informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time before a specified date. Those who opted to take part were provided with an additional information sheet[25] describing the purpose of the project and the expected nature of their involvement in it. Each participant then signed a consent form[26] before being interviewed. All of them agreed to these sessions being audio recorded and they each received and subsequently verified a copy of the relevant transcript.

5.4 Data analysis

The researcher reviewed the aforementioned transcripts multiple times, looking for prominent and recurring themes, conflicting ideas and significant concepts. Specifically, participants' responses were analysed with a view to answering the previously stated research questions about Auckland Libraries' Preschool Storytime programme. To a large extent, the different genres, formats and potential factors summarised in *Appendix 7* of this report underpinned the arrangement and categorisation of data, which was coded manually. The information contained in the associated tables was used as a framework for data analysis, and a thematic approach was used to compare the researcher's findings with those from previous studies.

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[22] This approach complied with the standards described by Leedy and Ormrod (2013, p. 105-106).
[23] See *Appendix 3*. Permission was granted by Allison Dobbie – General Manager, Libraries and Information.
[24] See *Appendix 4* for a copy of the email.
[25] See *Appendix 5* for a copy of the information sheet.
[26] See *Appendix 6* for a copy of the consent form.

5.4.1 Biases

Leedy and Ormrod (2013, p. 159) noted that, "in a qualitative study, the interpretation of the data will inevitably be influenced by the researcher's biases and values to some extent, reflecting the notion of *researcher as instrument*". As a former children's librarian, the researcher had herself been responsible for planning and presenting Preschool Storytimes on a regular basis and therefore had prior expectations about the factors that might influence the book selection process. As a presenter, she favoured picture storybooks that were relatively short and repetitive. In addition, she often looked for ways in which she could encourage audience members to participate in the story they were being told. In the process of interviewing participants and analysing the resultant data, the researcher made a conscious effort to look for ideas that contrasted and conflicted with her own, in accordance with the guidelines outlined by Leedy and Ormrod (2013, p. 159). She also avoided making her personal preferences known to participants during the interviews.

5.4.2 Limitations

In semi-structured interviews, "the researcher gets different information from different people and thus may not be able to compare the responses of various interviewees" (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013, p. 154). To some extent, this was a weakness of the study. Although participants were generally asked a series of similar questions, these were open-ended and their exact wording often varied. Furthermore, different follow-up questions were asked, depending on participants' responses. As a result, it was sometimes difficult to equate or compare their answers in a meaningful way. For instance, some participants may simply have forgotten to mention certain factors that they took into account when choosing books. (The list of potential factors was created to address this issue). Similarly, the strategies participants used to assist them in finding books possibly varied according to their position and its associated duties. For example, those who were not usually required to process recently returned items may not have had the same opportunities to browse for books as their colleagues who regularly engaged in such tasks. In analysing the data, the researcher attempted to avoid making assumptions that would have led to a quantitative style of reporting. Given the relatively small size of the sample and the lack of mutually exclusive

criteria; the lists of genres, formats, and potential factors were more appropriately used as starting point for discussion, rather than as a measuring tool.

6.   Publication venues

Possible avenues for publication of the findings include Auckland Libraries' annual Youth Hui (an in-house event primarily for staff working with children and teenagers) and the yearly South Island Children's and Young Adults' Librarians Conference[27]. It may also be appropriate to seek publication in the New Zealand Library and Information Management Journal[28] (NZLIMJ).

7.   Results

7.1 Selection factors

Overall, seven perceived factors were found to influence the book selection process. It was not possible to determine the relative weights of each factor as the relationships between them were not explored in detail and participants' opinions often varied. Furthermore, it should be noted that participants were not asked to rank the factors they identified in order of significance. The results of the study are therefore described in terms of the commonalities participants shared and the differences between individuals. Participants generally read between three and five books during each Preschool Storytime session.

7.1.1 Length and complexity

The length and relative complexity of books was a consideration common to all participants. This was primarily associated with the age of the children perceived to be attending Preschool Storytime sessions. As outlined in section 1.2, the programme targets children aged between three and five, however all participants remarked that children younger than three years of age were regularly attending Preschool Storytimes. In some cases, these audience members were understood to be the younger siblings of older attendees and did not comprise the majority of the Preschool Storytime audience. In other cases, more than half of the usual audience was estimated to be under the age of three.

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[27] See http://www.cluthadc.govt.nz/LibraryConference.htm for information about the 2014 conference.
[28] See http://www.lianza.org.nz/node/29.

For some participants, this variation had a significant impact on their book selection practices. Six of the ten participants stated that they deliberately chose shorter or simpler books to suit the younger audience. Conversely, two participants said that while they did not consciously choose shorter books, they would sometimes adapt their style of delivery if there were younger children present at a Preschool Storytime session. One noted that, "If there are smaller children I might try and simplify [the book] if there are heaps of words on a page, because I'll have already brought out the books".

Although a number of participants reported choosing shorter books, this did not necessarily mean that all of the books they selected were of a length perceived to be more suitable for children under three years of age. Several participants said they usually took an assortment of books with them to each session and chose which of these to read on the day, basing their decision on the characteristics and behaviour of the audience. For example, one participant noted, "If … there are younger children there, then you might leave the more complex book aside, because you know they're not going to concentrate on it".

Other participants intentionally read a mixture of books to provide for a range of ages and attention spans. One participant specifically talked about using the length and complexity of the books to attract an older audience, explaining that, "I think to try and get across what we'd like to do, I'll be picking ... more sophisticated picture books, but they'll be offset by having ... two or three quite simple ones as well".

Overall, the length of a book was still a significant factor in the selection process, regardless of the perceived age variation. All of the participants said that they considered this when selecting books, but it held greater weight for some than it did for others, relative to other factors. For example, one participant indicated that alongside a book's illustrations, length was the most important consideration.

7.1.2 Illustrations

Every person who participated in the study said that they considered the illustrations when evaluating books for inclusion in their Preschool Storytime sessions. Colourful and bright pictures were commonly described as the most suitable type. The size and relative clarity of illustrations was usually regarded as equally important, especially because the books were chosen to be read in a group setting rather than a one-on-one situation. To be seen from a distance, the pictures needed to be sufficiently large, clear and bold. Two participants commented that if the illustrations fell short of these criteria and a story was particularly worthy of inclusion, they would make a visual resource to accompany it and present this alongside the text during a session.

Several other visual elements were taken into account. For example, two participants said they were more likely to pick up a book if it had an attractive cover. Another participant favoured books with movable parts, such as pop-ups. A fourth participant felt that in addition to the illustrations, the book itself should be large. Similarly, three participants remarked on the size of the text, expressing a preference for relatively big print that could be seen from a certain distance. Moreover, the number of words on a page was twice mentioned as a consideration, though it was not clear whether these comments applied to the overall length of the text, the visual appeal of the book, or to some other element.

7.1.3 Subjects, concepts and themes

The subjects about which books were written, the concepts they conveyed and the themes they represented also emerged as contributors to the selection process. These factors were primarily associated with children's perceived life experiences, background knowledge and understanding of the world around them. Typically, participants reported choosing books that dealt with:

a. Subjects they assumed the children would *identify with or relate to*;

b. Topics they thought would *interest* the children;

c. Concepts they believed the children could *understand*; or

d. Themes they judged to be *appropriate* for preschool-aged children.

For instance, one participant had chosen to read a story about farm animals rather than cats or dogs as part of a pet-themed storytime session, because a large number of regular attendees were known to reside in a rural area close to livestock. Another participant avoided selecting books that were set or written in the past, opting instead for contemporary material that she felt young children could connect with. Likewise, a book about snow was rejected on the basis that it did not reflect the local environment. In general, animals were thought to be of particular interest to the children who attended Preschool Storytimes. Furthermore, participants often connected books about animals to the potential for audience participation, which they also expected attendees to enjoy.

Gender was twice mentioned as a possible modifying factor in the book selection process. "You might decide to read the truck and plane book if there are more boys," explained one participant, while the other suggested that girls generally preferred books about fairies or animals. Similarly, the presence of children from non-English-speaking backgrounds was a point raised by four participants, although none of them felt that this specifically influenced their book choices. While the children's ethnicity did not appear to have a direct impact on participants' book selection practices; cultural festivals such as Chinese New Year, Diwali and Matariki evidently formed the basis for a number of themed Preschool Storytimes. The majority of participants indicated that they planned special sessions to celebrate one or more of these annual events. In such cases, books were chosen to fit the occasion.

Participants frequently referred to individual books when describing concepts they believed preschool-aged children were unlikely to understand, although they did not always agree on what those concepts were. For example, a picture storybook about shadows[29] was judged by one participant to be too difficult for younger pre-schoolers to comprehend. Conversely, another participant felt definite about including the same story in a Preschool Storytime session, partly because she saw the underlying concept as both challenging and fun.

Without exception, basic concepts such as counting and colours were thought to be well-matched to the Preschool Storytime context. Books emphasising these concepts were often selected on the basis that they empowered children: "They're concepts that they already know and they like the feeling that they know", explained one participant.

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[29] *The black rabbit* by Philippa Leathers. Participants were given a copy of the book and asked to comment on its suitability for Preschool Storytime.

All of the study's participants expressed a desire to entertain, educate or engage with the children who attended their storytime sessions. While some topics and concepts were deemed to be especially appropriate for this purpose, certain themes were regarded as unsuitable for inclusion. In cases where such concerns were articulated, children's emotional wellbeing was paramount. For example, one participant felt that the illustrations in a particular book[30] might be "a bit scary" for the children. Others suggested it was sometimes appropriate to reassure children with a story that either developed in a predictable way or ended happily. In contemplating the impact that an unpredictable and largely unhappy story might have on a young child, one participant said:

> "I think we have a responsibility not to create chaos in a child's world. Children can get very concerned about things ... Their world experience is so small that we have to be very protective of it and so you have to look at the content of the books to [ensure] that it won't damage them" (Participant 8).

Books portraying certain types of emotions were considered suitable. The picture storybook *Guess how much I love you* was cited by one participant, who remarked on the positive ways in which the dialogue between the two characters emphasised how they were feeling. Two of the study's participants sought to encourage moral behaviour by reading stories that encompassed social themes such as bullying, sharing and taking care of others. Equally, for one participant, the desire to entertain outweighed such concerns:

> "I don't want any picture books that are preaching to children like, for example, 'you must say please' or 'you must say thank you' because I feel that's not the role [of a librarian] reading to children in storytime" (Participant 4).

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[30] Again, it was *The black rabbit*.

7.1.4 Use of language

The different ways in which language could be used to convey meaning were frequently articulated. Specifically, participants talked about rhyme, rhythm and repetition in relation to the Preschool Storytime audience. The apparent complexity of the text was also a factor. Usually, those who made specific comments on the subject of vocabulary maintained that the words used in storytime books should be simple enough for preschool-aged children to understand; however this was not the only consideration. One participant argued that as well as being comprehensible, the writing should be dramatic and expressive. Two others said they looked for opportunities to introduce new words to the children who attended their sessions. In addition, both of these participants were of the opinion that the books they read aloud should contain a mixture of simple and more complex sentences. Another participant suggested that the sentences should not be too long. Although they voiced their concerns in different ways, most participants made reference to aspects of vocabulary or sentence construction in their descriptions of the book selection process.

Rhyme as a structural element of children's books was described in positive terms by the majority of participants; however two of them stated that their decisions regarding individual books depended, in each instance, on the quality of the rhyme. Both pointed out that poor rhymes were particularly noticeable when the words were read aloud: "Rhyming books are very hard to write and there are many rhyming books out there that don't work, so you always need to check a book before you read it out loud [to a group]", one said. A different participant reported that the people who regularly attended her Preschool Storytime sessions did not seem to enjoy listening to rhyming poetry or verse, though she was unsure why this was the case. Two participants mentioned other poetic features in addition to rhyme; namely alliteration[31] and onomatopoeia[32].

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[31] "The occurrence of the same letter or sound at the beginning of adjacent or closely connected words" ("Alliteration", n.d.).

[32] "The formation of a word from a sound associated with what is named, e.g. cuckoo, sizzle" ("Onomatopoeia", n.d.).

Rhythm and rhyme were frequently described in conjunction with repetition. One participant reflected on their successful combination in a picture book[33] she had chosen to include in a recent Preschool Storytime session:

> "It's quite good if they're repetitive and some text rhymes, like this one: 'I like to float in a little boat. I like trips in big ships' ... That rhythm in the text is good, capturing their attention" (Participant 4).

Another specifically associated rhyming text with predictability: "Rhyming books often work really well and then that's good because the kids can try and guess how the sentence is going to end". Children were generally understood to respond favourably to repetition and predictability. "Repetition is important because it reinforces the words and children like to know what's coming", said one participant. Books that followed a set pattern in terms of their linguistic elements or narrative structure were highlighted numerous times. Some books were recognised as having a distinctive rhythm that contributed to this. For example, one participant quoted a recurring line from the picture storybook *We're going on a bear hunt* and alluded to its rhythmic language. Another remarked on children's eagerness to repeat the words "Hairy Maclary from Donaldson's Dairy" each time they appeared in the well-known story of the same name. Participants who made reference to repetitive aspects of the text usually implied that children were more likely to become engaged with certain books if they knew what to expect. Equally, the element of surprise was recognised as a defining characteristic of some stories.

7.1.5 Potential for audience participation

Evidently, participants considered the potential for audience participation in relation to the books they chose to use in their Preschool Storytime sessions. In many instances, they referred to structural features of the text, such as a repeated word or phrase with which storytime attendees were asked to join in. On other occasions, it was apparent that participants sometimes posed various questions about a book in order to involve the children. In all cases, interactivity was regarded as a useful tool for engaging the Preschool Storytime audience.

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[33] *The bus is for us* by Michael Rosen.

One participant described an interactive book[34] that directly addressed its readers. Explicit instructions were embedded in the text, which was structured in such a way that the central character appeared to respond to external stimuli:

> "It's telling us to tickle his belly and then something's going to happen ... so you turn the page and he's just laughing ... Those interactive ones are really awesome, because it makes [the children] pay attention and get in the story" (Participant 9).

In general, it appeared that participants looked for ways in which they could use books to facilitate interaction with the youngsters who attended their storytime sessions. Simple concept books and books about animals were frequently associated with this goal. By all accounts, children exposed to this type of material were often invited to identify various colours, letters, shapes or animals, count the number of visible items on a page, make animal noises or imitate their movements. Similarly, Preschool Storytime attendees were sometimes asked to mimic different sound effects or perform physical actions, such as clapping, when they heard certain pre-appointed words read aloud. One participant described animal-themed activities as a mechanism for engaging the children's attention: "It's a great way, instantly, to get them involved in the story. [Let's say] you've got a crocodile. 'What noise does a crocodile make? Snap, snap, snap.' Instantly you can draw them in".

7.1.6 Potential for emotional engagement

Predictability was seen as a reassuring aspect of some stories; however participants occasionally sought to capture children's attention with a book that surprised them. In such circumstances, building anticipation was often a key consideration: "You want to make it a slightly 'cliff-hanger' type of story sometimes", said one participant. "Keep them on tenterhooks", said another. Children were expected to respond enthusiastically to a surprising twist, an unusual ending or a sudden change in the pace of a narrative. For example, one participant spoke of "unexpected things where you suddenly shout 'Boo!' and give them a real fright". Engaging children with a humorous story was also a consideration for several of these participants.

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[34] *Don't push the button* by Bill Cotter.

7.1.7 Personal preference

Of the ten people who took part in the study, six acknowledged their own likes and dislikes as having a direct influence on their book selection behaviour. Participants generally chose to include books that they enjoyed themselves: "I need to enjoy the story myself or I'm not going to be convincing when I read it", explained one participant. Others expressed preferences for certain authors and said they were more likely to consider a book for inclusion if it was written by someone whose work they already knew and liked. Moreover, three participants said they deliberately tried to include books by New Zealand authors in their Preschool Storytime sessions. In their descriptions of the book selection process, several participants referred not only to their own favourite picture books, but to recognised classics in the field of children's literature, such as *The very hungry caterpillar* and *Hairy Maclary from Donaldson's Dairy*.

Personal preference was not necessarily a deciding factor. For example, one participant referred to a picture storybook[35] that she personally loved, but felt the children wouldn't enjoy because the illustrations were "very old-fashioned". Another participant said she rarely used poetry books in her sessions, even though she loved poetry, because her group had reacted badly to its inclusion in the past.

7.2 Strategies

Participants employed various strategies to assist them in finding suitable books. These included physical browsing, online browsing, searching the library catalogue and seeking recommendations. The majority of participants nominated physical browsing strategies as the most effective of these, while two others preferred to search the catalogue. Another participant regarded physical browsing and talking to colleagues as equally successful approaches.

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[35] *Harry the dirty dog* by Gene Zion.

7.2.1 Physical browsing

Physical browsing within the library emerged as the most common strategy, identified by nine of the study's ten participants. It encompassed the following locations and collections:

- Public shelves;
- Recently returned books;
- Newly received and brand new books; and
- Purpose-built storytime collections.

The majority of participants said they regularly browsed the shelves in the children's section of the library in order to find suitable books. It was generally felt that this was both a convenient and an effective strategy. One participant explained why she preferred it to other methods of searching for books: "Just looking online at the catalogue, it doesn't give you the feel, really, for the book, so it's much easier to go and see what I've got [on the shelves]".

A related and equally common practice involved books that library customers had recently brought back. "I tend to first of all go through the returned books, because they are the most popular. They're the ones that are being read", said one participant. While some participants browsed designated trolleys or shelves containing these items, others actively looked for potential storytime reads at the point of return. For one participant, this was an important time-saving strategy: "If I know that I'm going to be doing storytime, I'm keeping my eyes open ... as I'm checking in books".

In a similar way, other staff members frequently put aside new children's books for participants to look at, usually when these items arrived at their respective libraries and before they were made available to the general public. Four participants specifically mentioned browsing collections of newly received items as a means of locating fresh material for Preschool Storytime. In these circumstances, their colleagues were integral to the book selection process.

Half the people who took part in the study referred to dedicated collections of storytime resources as part of their browsing strategy. Items that had been specially selected and reserved for this purpose included toy and movable books, puppets and other related props.

It was clear that at least five participants had access to specialised collections of this nature and that some of these arrangements pre-dated the amalgamation of the former local councils of Auckland.

One particular reference[36] collection apparently circulated around several libraries in the same region and was continually augmented with new items. It was deemed fit for purpose by those participants who had access to it: "It's been chosen for storytime so [the books] are often bright, colourful, funny – suitable for reading aloud", explained one participant, who also described this collection as her "first port of call" in the book selection process. Other storytime collections had been developed on an ad hoc basis within individual libraries. In all cases, access was restricted to library staff, either temporarily or permanently.

7.2.2 Online browsing

Alongside physical browsing, online browsing was highlighted as a relatively popular but less commonly used strategy. Seven participants had employed similar tactics to assist them in finding suitable books. Their online browsing activities involved websites such as Goodreads and Amazon[37], blogs produced by other librarians, and electronic newsletters (one of which was published by Auckland Libraries).

Often, this was a starting point in the book selection process. Specifically, participants used these online tools in order to identify titles of interest and subsequently requested copies of the books they thought they might like to include in their Preschool Storytime sessions. One participant visited websites and blogs to find out about the latest (newly published) children's books. Another remarked that the short descriptions of picture books provided on a particular blog[38] were exceptionally helpful. Only two participants made no mention of online browsing and a third commented that she rarely utilised this strategy.

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[36] In this context, the term reference refers to non-lendable items held by Auckland Libraries.

[37] See http://www.goodreads.com/ and http://www.amazon.com/ or http://www.amazon.co.uk/.

[38] *My friend Lucy* (see https://myfriendlucy.wordpress.com/) was produced by a former colleague. Another participant referred to the same blog.

7.2.3 Searching the library catalogue

Auckland Libraries' online public access catalogue (OPAC) was effectively used in two different ways. As noted above, participants often came across bibliographic information in other sources and simply used the catalogue as a means of obtaining copies of the books in question. It was evident, however, that the catalogue was itself used as an online browsing tool in certain circumstances, usually when participants were looking to find books relating to a particular theme, such as Chinese New Year or Diwali.

Annual cultural festivals such as these were reportedly celebrated by the organisation as a whole and participants were expected to plan Preschool Storytimes accordingly. At other times, participants chose their own topics, however only two participants said they always based their programmes on a pre-defined theme. In such cases, they would generally use the catalogue to browse for relevant material by generating a list of titles and narrowing the options down to a manageable number of books. Moreover, several participants said they tended to order in more books than they needed and keep only those that were suitable for Preschool Storytime.

It should be noted that Auckland Libraries offers two different versions of its online catalogue; a discovery layer known as AquaBrowser[39] and a more traditional retrieval system known as the Classic Catalogue[40]. Participants evidently used both and applied various limits to their searches in order to reduce the number of results they produced. For example, one participant had searched for books on a particular subject via the Classic Catalogue and used two of its limiting features to include only picture books that were currently available on the shelves[41]. Another explained how AquaBrowser enabled her to locate books that had been classified according to their target audience. She demonstrated this by running a keyword search and subsequently selecting 'children' and then '0-5' from the category headings which appeared on the screen[42]. In this way, AquaBrowser generated

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[39] AquaBrowser (see http://search.aucklandlibraries.govt.nz/) is a resource discovery tool provided by a company called Serials Solutions. Further information about the product is available on their website: http://www.serialssolutions.com/en/services/aquabrowser/

[40] See http://www.elgar.govt.nz/search~S1

[41] See *Appendix 10*.

[42] See *Appendix 10*.

a list of books whose catalogue records indicated that they were suitable for a preschool-aged audience. It was not possible to refine searches in this way on the Classic Catalogue[43].

7.2.4 Recommendations

Most participants talked about book recommendations in general terms, as something they encountered while engaging in a variety of professional activities. Strictly speaking, this was not a strategy, given that recommendations from colleagues and customers were generally received on an ad hoc basis. Talking to other storytime presenters was, however, a deliberate strategy employed by one participant, who actively sought out her colleagues to ask what they had read: "They'll say what's really good ... and then we'll show it to the rest of the team, so they're probably my biggest identifier of [storytime books]." Other participants had come across recommendations by reading or listening to book reviews in the media and by consulting other specialised bibliographic resources.

7.3 Book types – Format

7.3.1 Toy and movable books

Of the formats specified, toy and movable books were undoubtedly the most popular. All ten participants said they had previously used these kinds of books and some reportedly shared them with their respective audiences on a regular basis. For instance, three participants indicated that they aimed to read at least one per session and two others said they often included them. One participant explained the reasoning behind her decision to include pop-up books in Preschool Storytime: "Children love pop-up books because they love the anticipation; they want to see what's under the flap, so I do tend to use those quite a lot".

The general condition of lendable pop-up and lift-the-flap books was highlighted on several occasions. One participant, who estimated that her sessions featured toy and movable books about fifty percent of the time, commented specifically on the fragility of pop-up books: "The only reason I don't use them more often is because I don't have many and the ones that are in public usage just get ruined".

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[43] AquaBrowser seemingly recognises books that have a target audience note in the relevant MARC field (521).

7.3.2 Oversized books

Oversized books were found to be less commonly used, with most participants indicating that they rarely or never included them in their Preschool Storytime sessions. Generally, participants found them cumbersome. One described them as "whopping great books" which were "really difficult to juggle" and "awfully hard to hold". A perceived lack of availability within Auckland Libraries was an issue for several participants, who said there were not many oversized books to choose from.

7.3.3 E-books and apps

On the whole, e-books and apps were a relatively new addition to Preschool Storytime. Seven participants had evidently taken part in a digital storytelling workshop held approximately five months previously[44]. Of those who attended, four had since used e-books or interactive apps at a Preschool Storytime session and three said they were planning to use them in the near future. In most cases, participants had used iPads and tested out the storytelling apps[45] that had been demonstrated and recommended by the trainer. The remaining three participants had not attended the aforementioned training session; nonetheless, one of them had recently read an e-book during a storytime.

Although a number of participants had experimented with digital storytelling in this way, not all of them were in favour of using it again. Their comments ranged from crowd control issues to the need for additional equipment, such as a projector and screen. For example, one participant said: "It can be difficult if you're just using an iPad, because all the children want to touch it". Another participant voiced similar concerns and questioned the place of digital technology in Preschool Storytime:

> "I think e-books and apps are something that kids get a lot of in their everyday [lives] ... I think that we need to offer a point of difference, and certainly in big groups I can't see how I can make a little screen work without additional equipment" (Participant 2).

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[44] In late 2014. It was run by Susan Dodd from Christchurch City Libraries.

[45] These included *Red in bed* (see https://itunes.apple.com/nz/app/red-in-bed/id595592498?mt=8) and *Lazy Larry Lizard* (see https://itunes.apple.com/nz/app/lazy-larry-lizard-bedtime/id370137977?mt=8).

Other participants spoke enthusiastically about the possibility of incorporating these elements into future storytimes, albeit under certain conditions: "I think it's definitely dependent on the content and the type of book and the app that's available, because I don't really want to be using them just because it's different", explained one participant.

7.4 Book types – Genre

7.4.1 Picture storybooks

Of the genres specified, picture storybooks were found to be the most popular with participants, all of whom indicated that they consistently selected books of this type. Moreover, picture storybooks were generally reported to be the most prominently featured genre. "Most of the picture books I use are picture storybooks", said one participant. Another commented: "They're in all of my storytimes". These were typical responses and unsurprising, given the nature of the programme. Participants talked about various attributes of picture storybooks including their length, storyline, subject matter, characters, illustrations, vocabulary and degree of complexity.

7.4.2 Poetry books (anthologies)

When asked whether or not they included poetry books in their storytimes, the majority of participants replied in the negative; however most of them talked about incorporating action rhymes, finger plays or nursery rhymes. More often than not, they would simply recite the rhymes from memory but occasionally, some participants would bring a copy of the relevant anthology with them to a storytime and show it to the audience. Very few participants indicated that they used other forms of poetry in this context. They were excluded for various reasons. For instance, several participants alluded to the use of highly sophisticated language and a general lack of many accompanying illustrations. "Sometimes the poems themselves – poetry as opposed to rhymes – are too hard for that age group", explained one participant.

7.4.3 Picture books based on songs or nursery rhymes

Picture books based on individual songs or nursery rhymes were comparatively popular with participants. These were either sung or read aloud during Preschool Storytimes. Only two

participants said they had not used books of this kind. Most of the remaining participants drew a distinction between traditional versions and adaptations. For example, one participant said she normally excluded picture books that presented well-known songs or rhymes in their original form, because the children tended to be too familiar with them. Picture books that introduced adapted versions of songs were generally preferred. For instance, two participants had used a New Zealand picture book based on the traditional children's song 'If you're happy and you know it' (called *If you're a kiwi and you know it*[46]) at a storytime and four others expressed a desire to do so.

7.4.4 Wordless picture books

Only two participants had previously included wordless picture books in their Preschool Storytime sessions. Both emphasised the importance of the illustrations being clear and easy to understand. Another two participants had selected books with either very few words or one word repeated throughout. For them, interactivity was a key element which arose from the text. Referring to an almost wordless book called *Bang* one participant said:

> "We get the kids to tell us what's happening in the story ... and then we'll get them all to say 'bang!' ... Also, we've done ones that just have noises and get them to [make the sounds]" (Participant 9).

7.4.5 Concept books

As previously noted in sections 7.1.3 and 7.1.5, basic concepts such as counting and colours were often associated with audience participation and empowerment. Accordingly, concept books were described in positive terms by nearly all of the study's participants, several of whom were strongly in favour of using concept books in an interactive way. One participant regarded them as a starting point for discussion: "I really like this sort of thing because kids like to ... tell you things. They like to show you that they know things", she explained. Another participant said she tended not to choose concept books because she preferred to "mix in that kind of learning within a story", by stopping to count the number of animals on a page, for example.

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[46] The song features New Zealand animals. For example, "If you're a kiwi and you know it, dig for worms". Visit the website to view a list of actions: http://www.elgar.govt.nz:80/record=b2697186~S1

7.4.6 Informational picture books

A few participants had previously included informational picture books in their storytimes. It was clear that those who had utilised them tended to do so in a discernibly different way. Rather than reading the books aloud from beginning to end, as was frequently the case with other genres, they either read snippets of information from them or talked about the pictures. Moreover, they often did so to emphasise a theme which ran through all of the books they had chosen to use during a particular session. For example, one participant was currently preparing a themed storytime and had selected an informational book[47] featuring photographs of different animals and their tails. She also planned to include a similar picture book[48] which invited children to guess, based on the clues and illustrations provided, which animal each tail belonged to. In the case of the first-mentioned book, there were two distinct sections of text on each page. Indicating the boxed text[49] rather than the longer paragraphs, she explained, "I'm certainly not reading it all, but I [will] read these little bits here".

7.4.7 Mixed genre picture books

A number of participants found it difficult to judge how often they read picture books that contained both narrative and informational elements. It was generally acknowledged that this characteristic was not a key factor in the book selection process. Participants frequently described books of this type when they talked about presenting a storytime on a particular theme, especially one with a strong factual element, such as transportation or "things that go". Cultural festivals, community workers, and everyday experiences such as going to the dentist were all listed as examples of suitable themes. One participant noted that for her, the likelihood of selection often depended on where a book was shelved in the library. If it was catalogued as a picture book and shelved in that area, rather than in the non-fiction section, she was more likely to come across it when browsing for storytime books.

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[47] *Look what tails can do* by D.M. Souza. Visit Google Books to view a sample:
https://books.google.co.nz/books/about/Look_What_Tails_Can_Do.html?id=NArxetSiN7wC&redir_esc=y.
[48] *Whose tail is this? A look at tails – swishing, wiggling, and rattling* by Peg Hall.
[49] The boxes contained individual sentences, each comprised of 12-15 words.

8.   Discussion

8.1 Stated purposes

As discussed in the foregoing literature review, previous research has highlighted a range of different objectives associated with reading to young children. For instance, Gönen et al. (2011, p. 4099) concluded that most of the teachers they surveyed were concerned with "supporting the curriculum", whereas "entertaining and relaxing children" was less of a consideration. It was noted in section 7.1.3 of this report that all of the librarians interviewed for the present study had expressed a desire to entertain, educate or engage with the children who attend their Preschool Storytime sessions. However, when participants were specifically asked about the purpose of the programme, most of them said they wanted to foster a love of libraries and reading. While developing literacy or school readiness was a factor in many cases, the vast majority of comments emphasised a desire for children to enjoy visiting the library and participating in storytimes. A small number of participants explicitly connected educational outcomes with their book selection practices. In doing so, they talked about extending children's vocabulary and exposing them to different language forms. For the most part however, entertainment and enjoyment appear to be the driving factors. All of these elements have previously been linked to the development of early literacy.

8.2 Contributing factors and types of books

Most of the teachers who took part in Gönen et al.'s (2011, p. 4101) study favoured "concepts education" when selecting books for preschool-aged children. Likewise, concept books are popular with many of the librarians who participated in the current study. However, their focus is generally on audience participation and engagement, rather than education. Participants apparently feel that educating children about various concepts is not part of their role. Rather, concept books are seen as tools for entertaining and empowering the Preschool Storytime audience.

In their research, Stone and Twardosz (2001, p. 63) came to the conclusion that teachers frequently selected books on the basis of children's perceived preferences. A number of titles and authors were named in this context. Many were found to have been

recommended in other bibliographic sources, though the researchers did not claim that this was the reason for their selection (Stone & Twardosz, 2001, p. 62). Several parallels can be drawn between Stone and Twardosz's (2001) findings and the results reported in the preceding section of this report. For example, the researcher noted in section 7.1.3 that participants often draw children's attention to topics they believe will interest them. It appears they also accept recommendations from their colleagues and frequently choose well-known 'classics' for inclusion in their Preschool Storytime sessions. Moreover, participants generally prefer to include stories they enjoy themselves and books written by their favourite authors. It was not always possible for the researcher to ascertain what the key determinant factor was in each situation. However, it is possible to suggest that participants may be favourably inclined towards authors whose work is known to have been well received on previous occasions.

Moreover, Stone and Twardosz (2001, p. 63) acknowledged the supposed "teaching function" of books in relation to various concepts (such as the alphabet) and themes (such as truth and honesty). The present study found that participants are generally more concerned with subjects they assume their storytime attendees will identify with or relate to, and concepts they believe the children can understand. This result is perhaps not surprising, given that a teacher's primary role is arguably to educate, whereas the librarians who took part in the study are often more focused on entertaining children. However, these two objectives are not mutually exclusive and participants did occasionally seek to encourage moral behaviour by reading stories that encompassed social themes.

In general, the preschool teachers who participated in the aforementioned research considered illustrations to be an important element in the book selection process (Stone & Twardosz, 2001, p. 64). This finding is reflected in the results of the present study. However, only two participants stated that the relationship between the text and the illustrations[50] was something they took into consideration when evaluating books, whereas Perkins (2008, p. 29) argued that this should be a key concern. On the other hand, participants were not specifically asked whether or not they thought about this relationship in terms of book selection. Perhaps they subconsciously took this into account, or assumed it was implied, or simply neglected to mention it. Further research would be needed to explain this result.

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[50] Both remarked that the pictures needed to match the text.

Evidently, all of the librarians who took part in the study consider the length of books when assessing their suitability for Preschool Storytime. However, this finding is inconsistent with Stone and Twardosz's (2001) research, in which fewer preschool teachers indicated that the overall length and the number of words on a page were deciding factors (Stone & Twardosz, 2001, p. 63). While only two of the participating librarians commented on the number of words on a page, all of them talked about the length. Earlier (in section 1.3) it was suggested that the storytime practices of teachers and librarians were unlikely to be identical and that subsequent studies must this into account. Given that the two studies in question were conducted in different settings (a preschool and a public library system) it is not surprising that there should be some variation in the results. Perhaps the preschool teachers were selecting books from a range of items that had already been classified as suitable for the target audience. If so, the length of each book may have been less of a consideration. In comparison, the librarians are possibly taking a greater number of resources into account when searching for books. The library's collection apparently includes sophisticated picture books aimed at older readers, as well as simpler books for preschool-aged children. Furthermore, anecdotal evidence suggests that these materials are sometimes shelved together, according to their material type rather than their age suitability. As a result, participants may need to consider the length of each book in relation to others of its kind. This situation arguably requires clarification.

Some additional differences and similarities were apparent. Specifically, none of the teachers in Stone and Twardosz's (2001, p. 64) sample chose "rhyming words" as one of the top three characteristics they took into account when selecting books to use with pre-schoolers. On the other hand, while Pentimonti et al. (2011, p. 214) did not claim that teachers were consciously guided by such factors, they did find that rhyming books featured heavily in the collections of read-alouds they analysed. Similarly, Albright et al. (2009, p. 14) suggested that librarians have historically used rhythm, rhyme and repetition to assist them in selecting books. Accordingly, the librarians who participated in the present study generally talked about language play in positive terms. However, the researcher was not able to determine the extent to which rhyming books featured in their storytime programmes, due to the nature of the genre categories described, which did not specifically allow for this type of analysis. Finally, it was noted that picture storybooks are especially

popular with participants, in comparison to other genres. This finding is consistent with the vast majority of previous research outlined in section 2.

9. Conclusions

The purpose of the research was to gain an understanding of participants' book selection practices and the nature of the books chosen for reading aloud. Specifically, the study was designed to address the following questions:

1. What perceived factors influence the book selection process?
2. What strategies do participants use to assist them in finding suitable books and which of these strategies do they think are most effective?
3. What does an analysis of data reveal about the perceived characteristics, features or qualities of the books selected?

Firstly, seven main factors were found to influence the book selection process. Participants generally take into account the overall length, the style of illustration and the author's use of language. They also consider subjects, themes and concepts in relation to children's perceived life experiences, background knowledge and understanding of the world around them. Other contextual variables also play a part; specifically, the potential for audience participation, the potential for emotional engagement and participants' own personal preferences. Secondly, it was evident that participants employ various strategies to assist them in finding suitable books. These include physical browsing, online browsing, searching the library catalogue and seeking recommendations. On the whole, physical browsing is regarded as the most effective of these approaches.

The third and final research question was answered with reference to four different formats and seven different genres. Of the formats specified, toy and movable books are currently the most popular, whereas oversized books are less commonly used. E-books and apps are being gradually introduced into storytimes and it was not possible to determine what impact they might have. At present, picture storybooks appear to be the most prominently featured genre, while anthologies and wordless picture books are used by fewer participants. Informational and mixed genre picture books are used on occasion, usually

when participants have a particular theme in mind. In general, participants also choose to include concept books and picture books based on songs or rhymes.

9.1 Implications of the findings

These conclusions cannot be generalized to other contexts, owing to the relatively small size of the sample and its lack of representativeness. Furthermore, given the voluntary nature of their involvement, it is possible that the librarians who took part in the study already placed a high value on Preschool Storytime in comparison to some of their colleagues and this may have impacted on the results, which reflected a number of commonly accepted book selection practices. For the most part, participants had undergone no formal Preschool Storytime training. Most of them had observed other sessions and received advice from colleagues about planning and presentation. Nonetheless, the findings from the study may be of interest to librarians working with children in public libraries elsewhere in New Zealand, as stated in section 1.3. The results could potentially be used as a tool to guide and inform their storytime practices, and as a basis for training and development.

In questioning the extent to which book selection practices differed across the organisation, the researcher had hoped to determine how children's exposure to various types of material related to their apparent enjoyment and engagement and thus, to their early literacy development. While participants generally appear to take these factors into account, more research is needed to determine the precise nature of this relationship.

9.2 Suggestions for future research

In section 5.2.2, it was suggested that a subsequent study involving content analysis could be undertaken at a later date, with a view to describing in detail the books shared with children during Preschool Storytime sessions. The present study relied on participants' reports of the types of books they chose to include. Future researchers could take a more quantitative approach, based on the factors identified in section 7, in order to ascertain the nature of the books in question. Similarly, by conducting observations, they could also seek to explain how these books are shared, the importance of which was noted in section 2.2.3. To a certain extent, previous studies have answered this question. For example, Goulding et al. (2014) recently examined the ways in which public libraries in New Zealand support

young children's literacy development through storytime sessions and other book-related activities. However, a number of participants in the present study alluded to the potential for audience participation and this may be a useful avenue to explore, given that "engagement is essential in the learning process" (Jalongo, 2004, p. 2).

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Appendix 1

Types of books used with young children

Seven different types of books are listed in *Table 1*, below. Most fall under the broader heading of children's picture books. The table incorporates elements of the genre categories described variously by Pentimonti et al. (2011), Price et al. (2012) and Jalongo (2004) while also introducing additional criteria. As a result, the categories are not entirely distinct from one another. The list of formats in *Table 2* closely resembles Jalongo's (2004, p. 50) arrangement with the exception of e-books.

Table 1: Book types grouped by genre

Genre	Reference	Description
Picture storybooks	(Jalongo, 2004, p. 47).	Picture storybooks are "books that have simple plots and contain, on average, about 200 words". They are usually 32 pages long (Jalongo, 2004, p. 11).
Picture books based on songs	(Jalongo, 2004, p. 47; Perkins, 2008, p. 31; Strasser & Seplocha, 2007, p. 222).	Picture books based on traditional or well-known children's songs can be either sung or read aloud (Strasser & Seplocha, 2007, p. 222).
Poetry books	(Carlson, 1991, p. 95; DeSalvo, 1993, p. 86; Fiore, 1996, p. 13; Jalongo, 2004, p. 47; Pentimonti et al., 2011, p. 210; Perkins, 2008, p. 30; Yopp & Yopp, 2006, p. 40).	Poetry books are defined by Pentimonti et al. (2011, p. 203) as "texts that contain a collection of nursery rhymes or poetry". In other words, they are anthologies. Jalongo (2004, p. 52) describes poetry for young children as including picture book versions of individual nursery rhymes, picture books based on songs, and stories told in verse.
Wordless picture books	(Bailey, 2009, p. 18; Jalongo, 2004, p. 47; Perkins, 2008, p. 22; Strasser & Seplocha, 2007, p. 221).	Wordless picture books "tell a story or teach a concept through detailed illustrations without using words" (Bailey, 2009, p. 18).
Informational picture books	(Carlson, 1991, p. 94; Fiore, 1996, p. 13; Ghoting & Martin-Díaz, 2013, p. 51; Jalongo, 2004, p. 47; Perkins, 2008, p. 31).	Informational books typically "provide factual information about people, mathematics, science topics, historical events, and how things are made or done" (Jalongo, 2004, p. 13).

Concept books	(Bailey, 2009, p. 18; Fiore, 1996, p. 13; Jalongo, 2004, p. 47; Perkins, 2008, p. 27).	Concept books are generally seen as a subcategory of informational books (Bailey, 2009, p. 18; Jalongo, 2004, p. 13). Specifically, they can be described as "easy-to-read informational picture books that teach a basic concept" such as the alphabet, colours, counting, seasons, or opposites (Bailey, 2009, p. 18). Perkins (2008, p. 27) characterises concept books somewhat differently by using the term to describe a more complex picture book (*Alfie's Weather* by Shirley Hughes) in which the concept of weather is explored as part of the story.
Mixed genre picture books	(Pentimonti et al., 2011, p. 209; Yopp & Yopp, 2006, p. 40).	Mixed genre picture books contain "both narrative elements of telling a story and informational elements of conveying accurate information about the physical or social world" (Pentimonti et al., 2011, p. 209). Biographies could arguably be included in this category, however Pentimonti et al. (2011, p. 209) and Yopp and Yopp (2006, p. 40) isolate them altogether and Jalongo (2004, p. 13) classes them as informational books.

Table 2: Book types grouped by format

Format	Reference	Description
Toy and movable books	(Bailey, 2009, p. 18; Jalongo, 2004, p. 50; Perkins, 2008, p. 31).	Toy books are "visual, tactile, and three-dimensional works allowing children to peek through holes, lift flaps, touch, feel, pull, and manipulate the objects they discover as each page is turned" (Bailey, 2009, p. 18). Bailey (2009, p. 18) and Jalongo (2004, p. 50) call these "participation books". Auckland Libraries uses the subject heading "toy and movable books" to describe books of this type. Narrower subject terms include "textured books", "pop-up books", "lift-the-flap books" and "sound effects books".
Oversized books	(Albright et al., 2009, p. 15; Jalongo, 2004, p. 50)	Often referred to as "Big Books" (Jalongo, 2004, p. 50) oversized books have been associated with the development of print awareness (Albright et al., 2009, p. 15).
E-books / apps	(Chiong, Ree, Takeuchi & Erickson, 2012; Ghoting & Martin-Díaz, 2013, p. 47; Hoffman & Paciga, 2014).	An e-book is "an electronic version of a printed book which can be read on a computer or a specifically designed handheld device" ("E-book", n.d.). Hoffman and Paciga (2014, p. 379) use the term to refer to "any digitally constructed literature" and this includes downloaded applications, or apps. An application is "a program or piece of software designed to fulfil a particular purpose" ("Application", n.d.).

Appendix 2

Choosing books to use with young children

The book features, contextual factors, and recommendations listed in the tables below represent the most typical examples outlined in the literature about selecting books to use with preschool-aged children. While every attempt has been made to cover as many criteria as possible, the list is not fully comprehensive.

Furthermore, the distinctions are not absolute. For example, rhyme and repetition could be encapsulated under the heading 'use of language'. Similarly, stories chosen for their theme might also reflect popular culture (which has been listed separately) and the illustrations might help children to predict what will happen next in the story. (See 'predictability' in *Table 4*).

Jalongo (2004, p. 35) advises adults to select "developmentally appropriate" picture books. This recommendation could be said to encompass a variety of elements including theme, use of language, overall length, and so on. Finally, it should be noted that the guidelines presented below do not cover different types of stories, such as folk and fairy tales.

Table 3: Book features and associated recommendations

Features	Reference	Examples of recommendations
Rhythm and rhyme	(Albright et al., 2009, p. 14; Fiore, 1996, p. 13; Jalongo, 2004, p. 24; Palmer & Bayley, 2013, p. 53; Perkins, 2008, p. 26; Strasser & Seplocha, 2007, p. 222).	• Choose books "rich in sounds and sound patterns such as rhyming, alliteration, and coined words that play with sound" (Jalongo, 2004, p. 56).
Repetition	(Albright et al., 2009, p. 14; Carlson, 1991, p. 94; DeSalvo, 1993, p. 86; Fiore, 1996, p. 13; Jalongo, 2004, p. 24; Palmer & Bayley, 2013, p. 53; Perkins, 2008, p. 23).	• Choose stories with lots of repetition (Carlson, 1991, p. 94; Palmer & Bayley, 2013, p. 53; Perkins, 2008, p. 30).

Vocabulary and use of language	(Carlson, 1991, p. 94; Cobb, 1996, p. v; Jalongo, 2004, p. 57; McNeil, 2014, p. 14; Perkins, 2008, p. 25).	• Choose stories that have "excellent vocabulary" (McNeil, 2014, p. 14). • Consider which words children are likely to know and choose books that contain a mixture of familiar and unfamiliar words (Carlson, 1991, p. 95; Jalongo, 2004, p. 57). • Choose books that use "literary language" (Perkins, 2008, p. 25). • Choose books that contain "poetic language" (Cobb, 1996, p. v). • Choose "stories and activities which span a variety of language patterns among them" (Carlson, 1991, p. 94).
Illustrations	(Carlson, 1991, p. 94; Cobb, 1996, p. v; Jalongo, 2004, p. 34; Perkins, 2008, p. 29; Stone & Twardosz, 2001, p. 63).	• Consider the relationship between the text and the illustrations (Cobb, 1996, p. v; Jalongo, 2004, p. 34; Perkins, 2008, p. 29). • Choose books with "large, clear illustrations" (Carlson, 1991, p. 94). • Choose books with "captivating illustrations" that are large enough for an audience to see (Cobb, 1996, p. v).
Theme / Subject	(Carlson, 1991, p. 94; Jalongo, 2004, p. 35; McNeil, 2014, p. 14; Stone & Twardosz, 2001, p. 63).	• Choose stories about everyday experiences (Carlson, 1991, p. 94). • Choose stories about topics that interest young children (Carlson, 1991, p. 96). • Choose "simple, factually correct informational books that answer common questions" (Carlson, 1991, p. 94). • Choose stories that "introduce math and science concepts" (McNeil, 2014, p. 14).
Length	(Cobb, 1996, p. v; DeSalvo, 1993, p. 86; Palmer & Bayley, 2013, p. 53; Stone & Twardosz, p. 63).	• Choose short picture books for reading aloud (Palmer & Bayley, 2013, p. 53). • Choose stories that are "the right length to hold the attention of a preschool audience, which is about five minutes" (Cobb, 1996, p. v). • Choose "very short" books for three-year-olds and longer books for four-year-olds (DeSalvo, 1993, p. 86).

Table 4: Contextual factors and associated recommendations

Contextual factors	Reference	Examples of recommendations
Diversity	(Carlson, 1991, p. 111; Jalongo, 2004, p. 34; McNeil, 2014, p. 14; Pentimonti et al., 2011, p. 210).	• Choose stories "that show diversity and variety" (McNeil, 2014, p. 14). • Choose books "that treat women, minorities, and other cultures fairly" (Jalongo, 2004, p. 34). • Choose stories "that depict a variety of ages, cultures, and kinds of families in a positive way" (Carlson, 1991, p. 111).
Potential for engagement	(Jalongo, 2004, p. 56; McNeil, 2014, p. 14; Perkins, 2008, p. 29).	• Choose books that children will enjoy (Jalongo, 2004, p. 56). • Choose books "with which children can identify and emotionally engage" (Perkins, 2008, p. 29).
Potential for audience participation (verbal or physical)	(Fiore, 1996, p. 13; Jalongo, 2004, p. 24; McEwing, 2011, p. 31; McNeil, 2014, p. 14; Perkins, 2008, p. 29).	• Choose stories that "invite audience participation" (McNeil, 2014, p. 14). • Choose movement-based picture books (McEwing, 2011, p. 14).
Predictability	(Bailey, 2009, p. 19; Carlson, 1991, p. 95; Jalongo, 2004, p. 24).	• Choose "simple stories with predictable plots" (Jalongo, 2004, p. 24). • Choose predictable books with a "patterned structure" (Bailey, 2009, p. 19). *Note:* Bailey (2009, p. 19) observed that repeated phrases or strong language patterns assist this process, and that children's predictions can be based on clues in the text or in the illustrations.
Popular culture	(Pentimonti et al., 2011, p. 219; Perkins, 2008, p. 31).	• Choose books that "tie in with popular television programmes and films" (Perkins, 2008, p. 31). *Note:* Pentimonti et al. (2011, p. 219) acknowledged that there might be "motivational benefits" to reading books featuring pop culture characters, but maintained there was insufficient evidence to support such recommendations.

Appendix 3

Approval from Auckland Libraries

A permission form identical to the one shown below was signed by Allison Dobbie – General Manager, Libraries and Information (Auckland Council). Her signature has been inserted at the bottom of the third page.

Research Project Title: *Preschool Storytime in Auckland's public libraries: A qualitative study of book selection practices.*

Researcher: *Valerie Carroll, School of Information Management, Victoria University of Wellington*

Dear Alison

I am seeking your permission for the participation of Auckland Libraries' staff in the above-named study.

I would like to interview 10-12 people who are responsible for delivering Preschool Storytime sessions about their storytime practices and the factors they consider when choosing books for a preschool audience. Ideally, participants would come from a range of libraries across the region, and fulfil a variety of roles.

With your permission, I will invite library staff to take part in a one hour interview. In addition; their time will be required to set up and confirm interview dates, clarify points following the interview, read and verify transcripts, etc. Permission will be asked to record the interview, and a transcript of the interview will be sent to interviewees for checking. My intention is to conduct the interviews during the month of March.

Participation is voluntary, and staff members will not be identified personally in any written report produced as a result of this research, including possible publication in academic conferences and journals. All material collected will be kept confidential, and will be viewed only by myself and my supervisor, Professor Anne Goulding. The research report will be submitted for marking to the School of Information Management, and subsequently deposited in the University Library. Should any participant wish to withdraw from the

project, they may do so until 2 April 2015, and the data collected up to that point will be destroyed. All data collected from participants will be destroyed within two years after the completion of the project.

Potential participants will be invited to take part via email, informed about the nature of the intended study, and given the option of either participating or not participating. They will also be informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time and asked to sign a consent form describing the purpose of the project and the expected nature of their involvement in it. My intention to publish any findings will be made known to them.

I would be grateful if you would sign and return the form below, indicating your willingness for Auckland Libraries to be involved in this research.

- ☐ *I understand the nature of the research and why this organisation has been selected.*

- ☐ *I have had the opportunity to ask any questions and have them answered to my satisfaction.*

- ☐ *I understand that participation by this organisation is voluntary.*

- ☐ *I agree for members of Auckland Libraries to be invited to participate in interviews.*

- ☐ *I understand that participation by individual members is voluntary and interview responses are confidential.*

- ☐ *I understand that the interviews will take about one hour.*

- ☐ *I understand that the data will be securely kept for two years and then destroyed.*

- ☐ *I would/would not like a copy of the summary results.*

Name _____ *Allison Dobbie* _____

Position _____ *General Manager - Libraries & Information* _____

Signature _____ *AM Dobbie* _____

Date _____ *19. 2. 2015* _____

If you have any questions or would like to receive further information about the project, please contact me at carrolvale@myvuw.ac.nz or telephone 021 127 5961, or you may contact my supervisor, Professor Anne Goulding, at anne.goulding@vuw.ac.nz or telephone 04 463-5887.

Valerie Carroll

Appendix 4

Recruitment email

Good [morning/afternoon]

Do you have experience in presenting Preschool Storytime? Are you interested in contributing to an academic study focusing on this programme? If so, your opinions and ideas are being sought.

As part of the completion of my Master of Information Studies, I'm conducting a research project which is designed to investigate how some Auckland Libraries' staff members go about selecting books to read aloud to children during Preschool Storytime sessions. I will be undertaking interviews with people responsible for delivering these sessions to collect information about book selection practices and the types of books selected for reading aloud.

I am inviting you to participate in this research and to take part in a one hour interview. Permission will be asked to record the interview, and a transcript of the interview will be sent to you for checking. My intention is to conduct the interviews over a three-week period, between Monday 16 March and Thursday 2 April (The long Easter weekend commences on Friday 3 April).

You do not have to be a Children's Librarian to participate in this research. In fact, participation by a range of staff members with varying levels of experience would be appreciated. Allison Dobbie – General Manager, Libraries & Information – has granted permission for this study to go ahead and for members of Auckland Libraries to take part in interviews. (Please check with your manager before you commit to participating).

Participation is voluntary, and you will not be identified personally in any written report produced as a result of this research, including possible publication in academic conferences and journals. All material collected will be kept confidential, and will be viewed only by myself and my supervisor, Professor Anne Goulding. The research report will be submitted for marking to the School of Information Management, and subsequently deposited in the University Library. Should any participant wish to withdraw from the project, they may do so

until 2 April 2015, and the data collected up to that point will be destroyed. All data collected from participants will be destroyed within two years after the completion of the project.

If you are interested in participating in this research, please contact me via return email or telephone 021 127 5961, or you may contact my supervisor, Professor Anne Goulding, at anne.goulding@vuw.ac.nz or telephone 04 463-5887.

Thank you in advance for your kind assistance. And please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns, or would like to receive further information about the project.

Respectfully yours,

Valerie Carroll

(MIS student, Victoria University of Wellington)

Appendix 5

Participant Information Sheet

An information sheet identical to the one shown below was emailed to each participant. The researcher also provided a hard copy on the day of the interview.

Research Project Title: *Preschool Storytime in Auckland's public libraries: A qualitative study of book selection practices.*

Researcher: *Valerie Carroll, School of Information Management, Victoria University of Wellington*

As part of the completion of my Master of Information Studies, this study is designed to investigate how some Auckland Libraries' staff members go about selecting books to read aloud to children during Preschool Storytime sessions and to explore the nature of the selected books.

I will be undertaking interviews with people responsible for delivering Preschool Storytime sessions to collect information about book selection practices and the types of books selected for reading aloud. Victoria University requires, and has granted, approval from the School's Human Ethics Committee.

I am inviting you to participate in this research and to take part in a one hour interview. Permission will be asked to record the interview, and a transcript of the interview will be sent to you for checking.

Participation is voluntary, and you will not be identified personally in any written report produced as a result of this research, including possible publication in academic conferences and journals. All material collected will be kept confidential, and will be viewed only by myself and my supervisor, Professor Anne Goulding. The research report will be submitted for marking to the School of Information Management, and subsequently deposited in the University Library. Should any participant wish to withdraw from the project, they may do so until 2 April 2015, and the data collected up to that point will be destroyed. All data collected from participants will be destroyed within two years after the completion of the project.

If you have any questions or would like to receive further information about the project, please contact me at carrolvale@myvuw.ac.nz or telephone 021 127 5961, or you may contact my supervisor, Professor Anne Goulding, at anne.goulding@vuw.ac.nz or telephone 04 463-5887.

Valerie Carroll

Appendix 6

Participant Consent Form

Research Project Title: *Preschool Storytime in Auckland's public libraries: A qualitative study of book selection practices.*

Researcher: *Valerie Carroll, School of Information Management, Victoria University of Wellington*

- I have been given and have understood an explanation of this research project. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction.

- I understand that I may withdraw myself (or any information I have provided) from this project, without having to give reasons, by e-mailing carrolvale@myvuw.ac.nz by the 2nd of April 2015.

- I understand that any information I provide will be kept confidential to the researcher and their supervisor, the published results will not use my name, and that no opinions will be attributed to me in any way that will identify me or my position within Auckland Libraries.

- I understand that the data I provide will not be used for any other purpose or released to others.

- I understand that, if this interview is audio recorded, the recording and transcripts of the interviews will be erased within 2 years after the conclusion of the project. Furthermore, I will have an opportunity to check the transcripts of the interview.

Please indicate (by ticking the boxes below) which of the following apply:

☐   I would like to receive a summary of the results of this research when it is completed.

☐   I agree to this interview being audio recorded.

Signed:

Name of participant:

Appendix 7

Interview Guide

SECTION 1: Professional background and experience

1. What position do you currently hold within Auckland Libraries? (E.g. Senior Librarian – Children and Youth, Librarian, Senior Library Assistant, Library Assistant).

2. For how long have you held your current position?

3. In which library (or libraries) do you currently deliver Preschool Storytime sessions?

4. How often do you usually deliver Preschool Storytime sessions? (E.g. weekly, fortnightly, monthly).

5. Can you tell me a little bit about your experience of delivering Preschool Storytime sessions? For example, how long have you been involved in it and where?

6. What is your educational background?

    a. Do you hold a library qualification? (If so, can you give me details?)

    b. Do you hold a teaching qualification? (If so, can you give me details?)

7. Have you had any training to help you plan and deliver Preschool Storytime sessions? (If so, can you tell me a bit about the training you've received?)

8. Have you participated in any professional development activities that have helped you to plan and deliver Preschool Storytime sessions? For example, attendance at conferences, email discussion lists, mentoring, involvement in professional associations, etc.? (If so, can you tell me a bit about the activities you've participated in?)

9. Do you have other relevant experience which has helped you to plan and deliver Preschool Storytime sessions? (If so, can you tell me a bit about it?)

SECTION 2: General book types and selection criteria

1. How many books do you usually read during each Preschool Storytime session?

2. Do you tell stories (without a book) as well as reading them?

    a. Do you use props? (If so, can you give me details?)

    b. Do you base your storytelling on a particular book? (If so, can you give me details?)

    c. Do you invent stories? (If so, can you give me details?)

3. According to Auckland Libraries' website, Preschool Storytimes are aimed at children between three and five years of age.

    a. To what extent does the Preschool Storytime audience at your library reflect this age group?

    b. What – if any – impact does this have on the types of books you select?

    c. Can you think of any other characteristics relating to your Preschool Storytime audience that have an impact on the types of books you select?

4. In your opinion, what is Auckland Libraries' purpose in offering Preschool Storytimes?

    a. What are YOUR goals for the children who attend your Preschool Storytime sessions?

5. In your opinion, what makes a book suitable for reading aloud to children during a Preschool Storytime session?

6. How do you usually identify new books for your Preschool Storytime sessions? For example, do you start with a particular theme?

7. How do you go about searching for books to read aloud to children during Preschool Storytime sessions?

8. What other tools or strategies do you use to assist you in finding suitable material?

   a. Do you use the library catalogue? How so? How does the way books are catalogued help or hinder your search?

   b. Do you browse for books? How so? (E.g. shelves, online).

   c. Thinking about the strategies/methods/tools you've mentioned, which of these do you think are most effective in helping you to find suitable books for Preschool Storytime?

9. What – if any – barriers do you encounter when searching for or selecting books to read aloud to children during Preschool Storytime sessions? (E.g. lack of time, technical problems).

10. Do you use any particular resources to support your planning? What materials or resources have you found helpful in planning and delivering your Preschool Storytime programme?

11. When you come across a new or unfamiliar book, how do you evaluate its suitability for inclusion in your Preschool Storytime sessions?

(Continued on next page)

SECTION 3A: Specific book types (format)

- Show Table 1 to participants. Explain that it groups books by format. Explain that the categories are not entirely distinct from one another, and there is some overlap.

- Ask them to look at Table 1 and take as much time as they need to read through the information. Encourage them to ask any questions they may have before proceeding.

- Ask them which types of books they include in their Preschool Storytime sessions and how often (always, usually, about half the time, seldom or never). Circle option.

- Ask follow-up questions based on their responses. (E.g. "What are your reasons for choosing books of this type?" or "What kinds of apps?" or "How do you use them?").

Table 1: Book types grouped by format

Format	Description
Toy and movable books	Toy books are "visual, tactile, and three-dimensional works allowing children to peek through holes, lift flaps, touch, feel, pull, and manipulate the objects they discover as each page is turned" (Bailey, 2009, p. 18). Auckland Libraries uses the subject heading "toy and movable books" to describe books of this type. Narrower subject terms include "textured books", "pop-up books", "lift-the-flap books" and "sound effects books". **Always Usually About half the time Seldom Never**
Oversized books	Oversized books are often referred to as "Big Books". **Always Usually About half the time Seldom Never**
E-books	An e-book is "an electronic version of a printed book which can be read on a computer or a specifically designed handheld device" (Oxford dictionaries). **Always Usually About half the time Seldom Never**
Apps	An application is "a program or piece of software designed to fulfil a particular purpose" (Oxford dictionaries). **Always Usually About half the time Seldom Never**

SECTION 3B: Specific book types (genre)

- Show Table 2 to participants. Explain that it groups books by genre. Explain that the categories are not entirely distinct from one another, and there is some overlap.

- Ask them to look at Table 2 and take as much time as they need to read through the information. Encourage them to ask any questions they may have before proceeding.

- Explain that there are four examples of each type of book. Ask them to look at the books and take as much time as they need to go through them. Explain that they don't need to read each book from cover to cover, unless they want to.

- Ask them which types of books they include in their Preschool Storytime sessions, and how often (e.g. most often, never, least often).

- Ask follow-up questions based on their responses. (E.g. "How do you use these types of books?").

- Ask about poetry books. (I.e. "Do you use action rhymes or recite poetry in your sessions?").

- Ask about informational picture books. (I.e. "Which topics?").

- Ask them if there are any types of books they consider which aren't listed in either of the tables.

(Continued on next page)

Table 2: Book types grouped by genre

Genre	Description
Picture storybooks	Picture storybooks have simple plots and contain, on average, about 200 words. They are usually 32 pages long. Examples: • *Snore!* By Michael Rosen • *Solomon Crocodile* by Catherine Rayner • *Gobble gobble moooooo tractor book* by Jez Alborough • *The black rabbit* by Philippa Leathers
Picture books based on songs or nursery rhymes	Picture book versions of individual children's songs or nursery rhymes can be either sung or read aloud. Lyrics may be adapted. Examples: • *Incey Wincey Spider* by Penny Dann • *Pete the cat: Twinkle, twinkle, little star* by James Dean • *If you're a kiwi and you know it* by Stevie Mahardhika, sung by Pio Terei, Māori lyrics by Kotuku Tibble • *The wheels on the bus* by Donovan Bixley
Poetry books (anthologies)	Poetry books are defined in this study as texts containing a collection of nursery rhymes or poems (anthologies). Note that picture books based on individual songs or nursery rhymes have been categorised separately, above. Examples: • *Out and about: a first book of poems* by Shirley Hughes • *Green Tiger's book of children's poetry* selected by Harold Darling • *Beatrix Potter's nursery rhyme book* • *Five little monkeys: over 50 action and counting rhymes* by Zita Newcome
Wordless picture books	Wordless picture books tell a story or teach a concept through illustrations without using words. Examples: • *A ball for Daisy* by Chris Raschka • *Early Birdy gets the worm* by Bruce Lansky • *Red sledge* by Lita Judge (almost wordless) • *Bang* by Leo Timmers (almost wordless)
Informational picture books	Informational picture books typically provide factual information about people, mathematics, science topics, historical events, and how things are made or done. Examples: • *Gerry the giraffe* by Jan Latta • *Seasons* by Claire Llewellyn • *I am a dolphin* by Barbara Todd • *Minibeasts* by Karen Wallace

Concept books	Concept books are generally seen as a subcategory of informational books. They can therefore be described as easy-to-read informational picture books that teach a basic concept such as the alphabet, colours, counting, seasons, or opposites. Alternatively, a concept can be explored as part of a story. Examples: • *10 hungry rabbits: counting and color concepts* by Anita Lobel • *ABC Zoo* by Rod Campbell • *1 2 3 Little Donkey* by Rindert Kromhout • *Lemons are not red* by Laura Vaccaro Seeger
Mixed genre picture books	Mixed genre picture books contain both narrative elements of telling a story and informational elements of conveying accurate information about the physical or social world. Examples: • *Let's meet a veterinarian* by Gina Bellisario • *Bears in the forest* by Karen Wallace • *Picasso's trousers* by Nicholas Allan • *Let's look at dinosaurs* by Frances Barry

SECTION 4: Specific selection criteria

- Show Tables 3 and 4 to participants. Explain that the categories are not entirely distinct from one another, and there is some overlap (e.g. use of language). Encourage them to ask any questions they may have before proceeding.

- Acknowledge previous responses. E.g. "You talked about the importance of the language and the illustrations when choosing books to read at Preschool Storytime, but I wonder if there's anything else on this list here that you consider when selecting material". Ask follow-up questions based on their responses.

- Ask them to talk about the things they feel are most important for them when selecting material.

Table 3: Book features

Rhythm and rhyme
Repetition
Vocabulary and use of language
Illustrations
Theme / Subject
Length

Table 4: Contextual factors

Diversity (e.g. cultural)
Potential for engagement
Potential for audience participation (verbal or physical)
Predictability
Popular culture

Appendix 8

Books used in interviews

Picture storybooks

Alborough, J. (2010). *Gobble gobble moooooo tractor book*. London, England: HarperCollins.

Leathers, P. (2013). *The black rabbit*. London, England: Walker Books.

Rayner, C. (2011). *Solomon Crocodile*. London, England: Macmillan.

Rosen, M., & Langley, J. (1998). *Snore*. London, England: Collins.

Picture books based on songs or nursery rhymes

Bixley, D. (2010). *The wheels on the bus*. Auckland, New Zealand: Hodder Moa.

Dann, P. (2003). *Incey Wincey Spider*. London, England: Orchard Books.

Dean, J. (2014). *Pete the cat: Twinkle, twinkle, little star*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.

Mahardhika, S., Crumble, P., & Tibble, K. (2012). *If you're a kiwi and you know it*. Auckland, New Zealand: Scholastic.

Poetry books (anthologies)

Darling, H. (2007). *Green Tiger's book of children's poetry*. Seattle, WA: Green Tiger Press.

Hughes, S. (2014). *Out and about: A first book of poems*. London, England: Walker Books.

Newcome, Z. (2003). *Five little monkeys: Over 50 action and counting rhymes*. London, England: Walker Books.

Potter, B. (2006). *Beatrix Potter's nursery rhyme book*. London, England: Frederick Warne.

Wordless picture books

Lansky, B., & Bolton, B. (2014). *Early Birdy gets the worm: A PictureReading* [sic] *book for young children*. Minnetonka, MN: Meadowbrook Press.

Judge, L. (2013). *Red sledge*. London, England: Andersen Press.

Raschka, C. (2011). *A ball for Daisy*. New York, NY: Schwartz & Wade Books.

Timmers, L. (2013). *Bang*. Wellington, New Zealand: Gecko Press.

Informational picture books

Latta, J. (2009). *Gerry the giraffe: Come on an adventure with me and learn about my family*. Sydney, Australia: True to Life Books.

Todd, B., & Taylor, H. (2009). *I am a dolphin*. Auckland, New Zealand: New Holland.

Llewellyn, C. (2005). *Seasons*. London, England: Franklin Watts.

Wallace, K., & Humphries, T. (2008). *Minibeasts*. London, England: Kingfisher.

Concept books

Campbell, R. (2014). *ABC zoo*. London, England: Macmillan.

Kromhout, R., & van Haeringen, A. (2013). *1 2 3 Little Donkey*. Wellington, New Zealand: Gecko Press.

Lobel, A. (2012). *10 hungry rabbits: Counting & color concepts*. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf.

Seeger, L.V. (2004). *Lemons are not red*. Brookfield, CT: Roaring Brook.

Mixed genre picture books

Allan, N. (2011). *Picasso's trousers*. London, England: Hutchinson.

Barry, F. (2011). *Let's look at dinosaurs*. London, England: Walker Books.

Bellisario, G., & Atkinson, C. (2013). *Let's meet a veterinarian*. Minneapolis, MN: Millbrook Press.

Wallace, K., & Firth, B. (2009). *Bears in the forest.* London, England: Walker Books.

Appendix 9

Books cited by participants

Carle, E. (1969). *The very hungry caterpillar*. London, England: Hamish Hamilton.

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Appendix 10

Classic Catalogue

One participant had searched for books on a particular subject via the Classic Catalogue and used two of its limiting features to include only picture books that were currently available on the shelves.
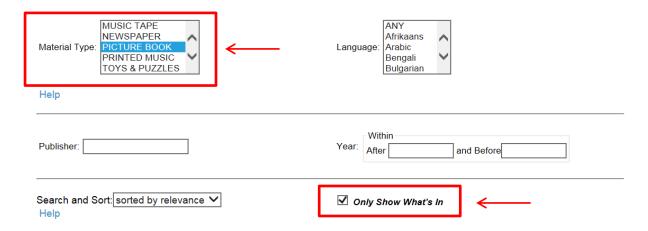

Figure 1: **A portion of the Advanced Search webpage accessible via the Classic Catalogue (see http://www.elgar.govt.nz/search~s1/X). The material type and availability limits are selected.**

AquaBrowser

In order to locate books that had been classified according to their target audience, one participant ran a keyword search on AquaBrowser and subsequently selected 'children' and then '0-5' from the category headings which appeared on the screen. A similar search, which used the keyword 'dogs', is shown below in *Figure 2* and *Figure 3.*
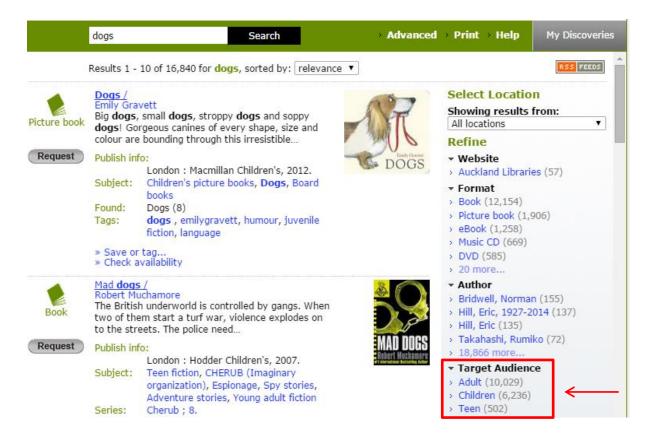

Figure 2: **A portion of the AquaBrowser search screen (see http://search.aucklandlibraries.govt.nz/). The target audience limit is highlighted. 'Children' was selected from the list of options, resulting in *Figure 3*.**
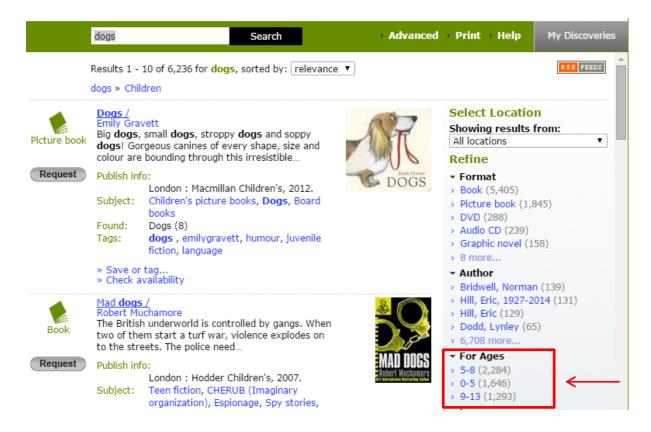
(Continued on next page)

Figure 3: **A subsequent portion of the AquaBrowser search screen. The age-related limit is highlighted. This time '0-5' was selected from the list of options.**

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