



## Storytimes Volunteer role description

### Background:

Let's Talk Reading (LTR) offer free books and Storytimes to young children in Ipswich. By volunteering with us, you would be helping little ones to enjoy reading and improve their life chances.

Our Storytime reading sessions are designed to engage children and develop a love of books and reading. They also model to parents and early years staff how to read aloud to children effectively. Our volunteers work in pairs to visit pre-schools across Ipswich to read aloud to small groups (usually 10 to 15 pupils) using story sacks with props and puppets to keep it fun! We also pack and distribute free books to pre-schools and at community events. Our work is so welcomed and enjoyed that we're looking to recruit more volunteers to meet demand.

Each Storytime is arranged in advance with the pre-school and our volunteers choose which sessions they would like to join. We have four voluntary Area Co-ordinators that take responsibility for communicating with the early years' settings in each area of Ipswich arranging Storytimes and book deliveries and seeking feedback on our sessions.

A Storytime lasts around 45 minutes at the pre-school although we suggest that each session may take a total of around an hour and a half (with travel, set-up and packing away). We work with nearly 40 pre-schools so the role is flexible, allowing you to choose sessions during term-time or community events in the holidays that work for you - this could be once a week or a few times a term.

We support our volunteers to develop within the role - you may start by using props to bring a story to life whilst an experienced volunteer reads and be surprised by how much your confidence grows as your contribution brings smiles of joy to the children, staff and parents who all join in. Our regular volunteer get-togethers mean we can have fun choosing stories that we'd like to read aloud and work together to share storytelling ideas.

LTR is a small, local, volunteer-led charity helping people in Ipswich with reading. We encourage parents and children to enjoy reading and build communication skills together. Volunteering with us helps to make a positive difference to our community by taking action to change the persistent problem of low literacy across Ipswich which seriously reduces life chances for many children and young people in the town. Parents and carers who read with their children are more likely to help them become confident and enthusiastic readers. If a child lacks good reading, writing and communication skills, they are less likely to succeed at school, and as an adult they could lose out in the job market. Poverty doubles the likelihood of children not being able to enjoy and benefit from reading by the age of five.

LTR is funded through grants, with a part time paid Co-ordinator and ten existing volunteers. We are based in the Eastern Angles Centre on Gatacre Road.

### Commitment:

We know that each of our volunteers has different experiences, skills, and available time, and we discuss how that would work from the point when they apply and review it regularly.

Our Storytime sessions are offered across all the early years settings in Ipswich, at least once a term, for a 45-minute session reading with children, staff, and parent. This commitment is for about one and a half hours per session (including preparation and travel) during term time. The days and times will vary.



We have termly volunteer meetings (remotely or in person, depending on current Covid regulations) where volunteers can discuss the sessions they have taken part in, explore books and other resources, and develop their skills.

### **Main Objectives:**

- To support early years settings, parents, and staff in promoting daily reading and the importance of reading and communication in children's development
- To offer opportunities through community events to engage parents and children in enjoying reading and finding books, activities, and resources to interest them
- To distribute books to early years settings and families least likely to have books at home, via schools and other charities/organisations.

### **Main Responsibilities:**

- To visit early years settings with story sacks, LTR leaflets and local library books to encourage parents to share books with their young children each day.
- Read a story aloud to a group of children, model different book sharing skills and encourage children to talk about books/stories/characters.
- Share library books with 1 to 3 children after reading to the group
- Signpost families, setting staff and support workers to community partners such as Let's Read Ipswich (adult literacy coaching) and the local library.
- To encourage families to join the local library if they are not already members.
- Collect feedback on the benefits of our visits from the setting staff to support future funding bids and project evaluation.
- Help pack books and gift them to children at early years settings
- Help at community events to give away books and encourage reading, for example through book quizzes or book themed crafts
- To report to the LTR Coordinator any incidents/accidents that occur and any observations that may require addressing.
- To adhere to the Safeguarding, Lone Working, and Equal Opportunities Policies.

### **Person Specification:**

- This is an opportunity for people who believe reading is important for children and parents and are enthusiastic about encouraging people to read.
- Our volunteers may have early years' experience, have worked in teaching or family support, or may have a background and skills that will enhance and extend Let's Talk Reading's work.



- Our volunteers need to be reliable, attend all booked sessions, notifying the Co-ordinator in good time if unable to attend.
- Able to work as part of a team.
- Organised, friendly, and approachable.
- It helps to have access to a car. (Travel expenses are paid)

**Application:**

We ask our potential volunteers to:

- complete a short application form
- complete a short declaration form
- provide details of 2 referees who know them professionally or personally
- attend an interview with the Co-ordinator and either the Lead Volunteer or Board Chair
- sign up to the principles of Let's Talk Reading
- successfully complete a DBS check (LTR has an employment of ex-offenders policy)

**Personal Development:**

- To work with the paid Co-ordinator and existing volunteers as an induction
- To attend any training as required, including Safeguarding training.
- To contribute ideas and suggestions to the development of the project.

The [Let's Talk Reading](#) website gives more information about Let's Talk Reading.

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