

News release

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Sunderland Childminders Raise Funds with Reading Event

As Sunderland City Council continues its campaign for improved language and literacy skills, a group of Sunderland childminders have hosted a unique reading event at their local library in aid of children's charity, Barnardo's.



Ten childminders from across Washington and the children that they care for set off from Sunderland Children's Centre Washington (Concord) for the 'Big Sponsored Toddle', which saw them walk to Millennium Centre Library - many dressed in their pyjamas with teddy in tow - in time for a special storytelling event.

After arriving at the library, the children settled down for story time with bedtime classic *Ten in a Bed*, which was then followed by colouring activities related to the story. The children then completed their 'Big Sponsored Toddle' by walking back to the Children's Centre. Through the sponsored event over £400 was raised on behalf of Barnardo's.

It is important that childminders help encourage children to enjoy reading as research has shown that by identifying with characters in books, children can help to make sense of their own feelings, and being able to read gives a child improved self-esteem and a sense of achievement. The use of books and stories can also work to encourage concentration, extend a child's knowledge and their imagination.

Anne Bell, Childminding Co-ordinator at Sunderland City Council, explained: "Childminders use a range of activities, including stories, song, rhymes and role play to support communication and language development. As children gain confidence in themselves as story-tellers and develop a love of books, skills in reading and writing follow more easily."

Councillor Pat Smith, Cabinet Member for Children's Services within Sunderland City Council, added: "Childminders are an excellent way to help encourage a child's reading as they are

able to fully support a child as they develop their language and literacy skills at their own pace. Childminders can also easily provide a suitable environment for children to enjoy and share books.”