



Bookstart:

Giving babies and children the best start in life
Kent Annual Report 2015-16

Headline News

(all comparisons are with 2014-15 figures unless otherwise stated)

- 18,775 Bookstart Baby Packs gifted when parents registered the birth of their child
- 24,190 Bookstart Treasure Packs gifted to three year olds
- 1,258 dual language packs gifted to families - up from 918, with Polish the language most in demand - 288 packs gifted



Bookstart

Bookstart is a national programme that provides free packs of books to every child in the UK at appropriate stages before they start school. All the packs are designed to give children the very best start in life with reading, books and literacy and encourage parents and carers to enjoy books with their children from as early an age as possible. www.bookstart.org.uk

Bookstart in Kent

The Bookstart programme in Kent is a partnership project involving Booktrust, Libraries, Registration and Archives, Early Years Settings, Children's Centres, Education and Young People's Services and other partners.

Libraries

Bookstart in Kent is managed by Kent County Council's Libraries, Registration and Archives team. We offer a wide range of services for pre-school children and their families, and carers - and all other ages too. Anyone can use our services, no matter how young they are and most are free. See pages 7-10 for more information. www.kent.gov.uk/libs

Bookstart Baby Pack

0 – 12 months



This pack is universal, therefore given to all babies in Kent. We gift packs to families early on in baby's life, when parents register the birth of their child. Registrations in Kent take place in libraries now, so all parents - even those that may not have come into a library before - now get the chance to see for themselves what services libraries can offer families and the importance of library joining and sharing books with very young children .

Packs are also available via Libraries and Children's Centres for those families who might otherwise miss out (ie those families who move into Kent after their babies have been born and registered elsewhere).

- 18,775 babies received Bookstart packs = 100%

Bookstart Treasure Pack

36 – 48 months

This pack is also universal and very popular with children and their families. We gift Treasure Packs mainly through Early Years settings, as most Kent families take up the offer of free places for 3 year olds. Packs are also available via Libraries and Children's Centres for families who otherwise might miss out.

- 24,190 children received Treasure Packs = 100%



How have you used the pack with your child?

- *Encouraged him to read and learn new words, and to recognise objects in the pictures* **Parent**
- *Interesting books to read together and some useful information on developing reading* **Parent**
- *It has recently helped a lot. My son gets busy trying to identify some pictures from the books and he has learnt to sing some rhymes by himself* **Parent**
- *She remembers the stories and read along with us* **Parent**
- *Helped enthuse him with library. Felt welcoming and exciting* **Parent**
- *Reading and sharing books and playing libraries* **Parent**
- *She loved the B&W pictures as a baby and now follows actions from the other books. It gave us new books to share straight away when we wouldn't have gone into town to get with a newborn baby* **Parent**
- *Read, sing the songs, have the fold out to use during tummy time* **Parent**
- *My daughter loves books and I feel having these books has encouraged her love of books since birth* **Parent**
- *Reading them a lot throughout the day and singing* **Parent**
- *She likes to bring it downstairs and get everyone to read to her* **Parent**
- *Money off vouchers to buy books* **Parent**
- *Introduced to reading and show me age appropriate books* **Parent**
- *I feel these are great for encouraging the children to enjoy books. They love taking them home to keep and share with parents* **Childminder**

Additional Needs Packs

Dual language packs

Some of our families benefit from having a Bookstart pack with materials in English and another language.

- 1256 children received dual language packs throughout Kent in 39 different languages. The vast majority of these packs are handed to three year olds. If we gifted dual language packs at birth, this figure would be much higher! However this isn't possible for logistical reasons.

The top ten requested languages were:

Language	No. of packs handed out this year	Previous year
Polish	228	148
Nepali	103	78
French	54	72
Spanish	53	36
Punjabi	50	21
Turkish	48	38
Russian	46	48
Lithuanian	44	37
Bengali	40	39
Czech	40	29

Booktouch

For blind/partially-sighted babies and toddlers. Free pack of books and guidance materials for parents/carers of registered blind children up to (and including) the age of five. Children are entitled to this pack in addition to the two standard Bookstart packs.

- 36 children received Booktouch packs (down from 49 in 2014-15)



Bookshine

For deaf babies and toddlers. Free pack of books and guidance material for parents/carers of deaf children up to (and including) the age of five. Children are entitled to this pack in addition to the two standard Bookstart packs.

- 26 children received Bookshine packs (down from 38 in 2014-15)



Bookstart Star

For pre-school children who have disabilities that impact on or delay development of their fine motor skills. It is free and includes books and resources to help families enjoy reading together every day. Children are entitled to this pack in addition to the two standard Bookstart packs.

The pack contains 2 books including an exclusive book from Child's Play publishers, which includes an array of tactile features such as a big red squashy ball, a glittering path and even an ice cream scented page, animal finger puppets for playing along with the story, plus resources to help parents and carers enjoy reading with their children.

To ensure they reach the appropriate children in Kent, we distribute them to children through colleagues at **Portage**.

www.portage.org.uk (Portage works 1-1 with children in the family home).

As these packs are available in very limited numbers, packs are only available to children who have a Portage Worker.

- 250 children received Bookstart Star packs



<http://www.bookstart.org.uk/bookstart-packs/Bookstart-for-all/bookstart-star/>

Feedback

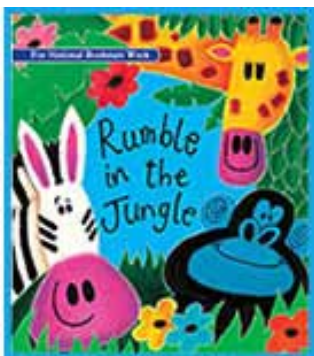
- *Packs are brilliant and encourage literacy. Dual language especially helpful for parents.* **Nursery staff**
- *Bookstart is fantastic, good for me, parents and children.* **Childminder**
- *The packs are lovely, parents love them and children are always surprised to receive them. The books are lovely.* **Playschool staff**
- *Parents love them especially as books are free.* **Nursery staff**

How has your child's Bookstart pack helped?

- *Good chance to communicate - not usually a good talker!* **Parent**
- *It helps my child's physical skills - especially fine motor skills* **Childminder**
- *Don't know yet (child is only 4 weeks old), but it is fun! Hopefully all of the above* **Parent**

- *My child learns to share toys and he does parallel playing with other kids* **Parent**
- *Ability to sit together in a group and wait, and participate without running around* **Parent**
- *He likes to play with the toys at the end of the session and learns to share with the other children* **Parent**
- *She recognises people and says hello* **Parent**
- *The baby is shy and it is a good way of letting him meet other children in a sheltered environment* **Grandparent**
- *Learn to play, sing together, encourages confidence around others, turn-taking, very enriching!* **Parent**
- *He doesn't get to see other children his own age that often* **Parent**
- *Christina has the chance to mix with other children. We sing songs learned here at home. Christina is learning actions* **Carer**
- *Meeting new friends* **Parent**
- *Rebecca loves coming and seeing some children she meets here regularly. She didn't talk much in public before but her confidence has grown lots and now sings aloud very happily* **Parent**
- *I looked after a child who was very shy and under confident. She now joins in all activities. A lot of it is due to her gradual participation at the library* **Childminder**
- *Astrid has become very confident socially (and with her communication skills) since coming* **Parent**
- *She has learnt to point to what she's looking at, ie. floor, ceiling, window, etc. She now likes to sing along to familiar nursery rhymes* **Parent**

National Bookstart Day



This year's National Bookstart Day had a very popular theme: Jungle Adventures. As usual we held events in libraries all over Kent with lots of staff and children in suitable fancy dress, giving away 5000 free copies of Rumble in the Jungle by Giles Andreae. There were jungle rhyme sheets, jungle colouring and a jungle card game too - given away in 84 events across Kent.

- *Great opportunity to promote library services and a passion for reading through the gifting of the free books and activity sheets both in the library and at children's centres* **Library staff**

- *The children enjoyed making masks and dressing up for the morning. They enjoyed listening to the story. It is brilliant to be able to take a copy home to show their parents* **Grandparent**



- *Very fun morning, gifting the children an opportunity to dress up and make masks at home. Lovely to have a copy of the book they shared today* **Parent**
- *Good session. Very well attended. Loved the jungle freebies given out* **Parent**



Children's Centres and Bookstart

Kent Libraries, Registration and Archives actively promote Children's Centres to all parents at birth registration in libraries. Children's Centres engage with Bookstart in several ways. They are well-placed to gift Bookstart packs to families who might otherwise miss out – for instance, families with a new baby who move into Kent from another authority and miss getting their first Bookstart pack.

In addition, Bookstart Corner is the free programme that runs exclusively in Children's Centres. The programme offers a comprehensive support package for centres to use when engaging with up to 50 targeted families with children aged 12 - 30 months. Activities are tailor-made to engage families and build their confidence around stories, books and rhymes, enabling the family to support their child's early learning, language and development. Specially trained staff meet with each family over a series of four visits. Families receive a free Bookstart Corner pack and there are additional resources for the Children's Centre itself. The value of the programme is c. £1400 for each participating Children's Centre (based on 50 families).

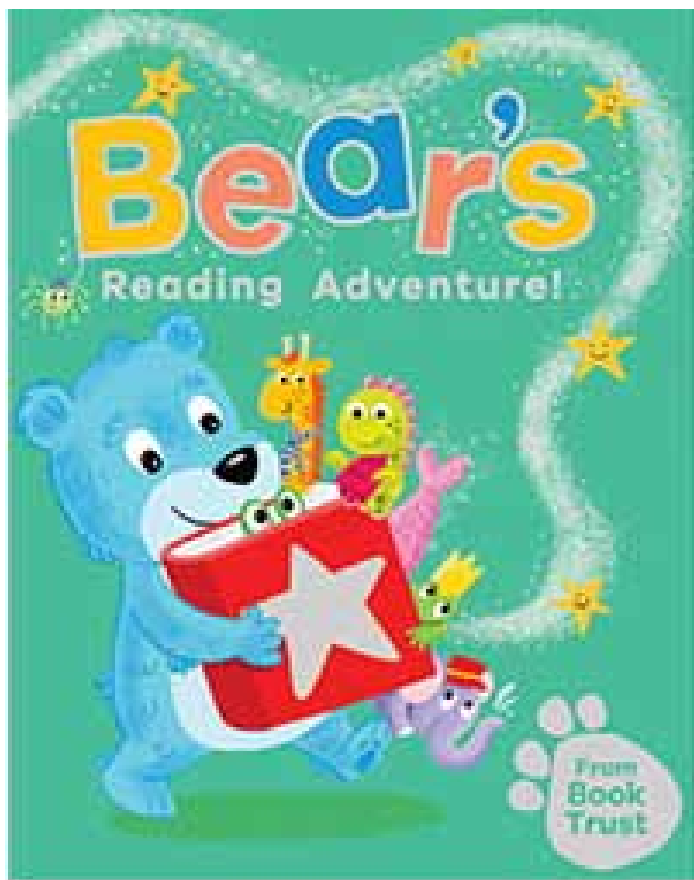


For further information about Bookstart Corner including the evaluation report, see:

<http://www.bookstart.org.uk/research/corner/>

- 56 Kent Children's Centres signed up in 2015-16 to reach up to 2,285 families, a fantastic increase from 23 centres in 2014-15

Bear's Reading Adventure



In January - March 2016 we trialled a new Bookstart resource in Dartford and Gravesham Libraries: Bear's Reading Adventure.

It's a free sticker storybook specially designed to encourage young children to make reading every day fun, and encourage repeat visits to the library. Pre-school children collect stickers to put in the book each time they visit and has proved very popular. We hope to roll this out to other libraries in Kent in a more targeted way in 2016-17.

This new resource was developed following consultation feedback from library services and Bookstart Coordinators to encourage families to visit the library and read together every day. In particular Bookstart sought to develop an offer that helps libraries achieve the aims of ASCEL's Children's Promise, specifically to provide opportunities for families to participate and engage with their local library services and to make library visits inspiring and exciting.

Feedback

- *Excited by the new scheme* **Parent**
- *George really enjoys coming to the library to get stickers for his book!* **Parent**
- *Parents like the colours and impressive cover, children love the stickers*
- *My grandson kept asking when he was going to the library to collect his next sticker*
Grandparent
- *Going like hotcakes - really popular!* **Library staff**
- *Very interesting for the young children as it tells a story and they love stickers* **Parent**
- *Very pleased with the impressive larger book with stickers* **Parent**
- *Something for the grandchildren that's free and encourages them to visit the library*
- *Books have gone down very well as a free incentive. Parents/carers love them* **Library staff**

Other Activities for Pre-School Children and their Families

Our libraries host regular fun activities and events for pre-school children and their families. Our regular Rhyme Times, Storytimes and toddler times are hugely popular. We also hosted a wide range of other events such as Baby Book Club in Deal Library (in conjunction with local Children's Centres), Moovin and Grooving at Coldharbour Library, soft play sessions at Tunbridge Wells Library and Big Talk, Small Play at Cliftonville Library. There's something for everyone! Where appropriate, sessions can sometimes be held at other locations in the community too. All events are designed to introduce library services, make families feel welcome, promote language and literacy, family communication, social interaction, and foster a love of books and reading at all ages. Our staff promote the Bookstart packs and the Bookstart Bear Club at these sessions. These activities and events continue to be popular with children and their families/carers, and our partners too.

In addition to these regular events, we support many other community based projects and events, such as First Time Parent sessions and sessions with Children's Centres.

Outcomes

The figures below relate to the total number of sessions held over the year. Many of the children and adults attending will be counted more than once as they attend events on a regular basis. Work with our partners eg Children's Centres and volunteers continues to develop and increase, with benefits all round.

Rhyme Times

- 62,585 visits by children and adults - up from 58,018

Storytimes and Toddler Times

- 8,367 visits by children and adults - down from 9,996

Other events for pre-school children

eg playgroup visits/Children Centre visits/talks to first time mums etc

- 8,045 visits by children and adults - up from 5,652

Total attendance at early years events

- 78,997 visits were made by children and adults - up from 73,666



Library feedback

- *Great ladies, Jackie and Chris. We love them, so friendly and make us all so welcome and help introduce us to other families. Parent*
- *Granddaughter has developed and grown in confidence week by week as she joins in with words and actions. Favourite is sleeping bunnies. Grandparent*
- *Love this group - have been coming since my son was 4 weeks old and have met lots of friends and everyone is so friendly Parent*
- *Love the group, nice to meet other mums, not too long, and able to play after. Thank you. Parent*
- *This library is an invaluable resource. It encourages children to read and gives them access to a much wider range of books to read. Parent*
- *The library is a brilliant place for the children. Nursery Teacher*
- *Both grandchildren have enjoyed these sessions. The older - now at school loves to come back in the holidays with her younger sister. Thank you Parent*
- *Love Rhyme Time. Great people and very well behaved children and happy people. Parent*
- *Chance to socialise with other children; learning to share musical instruments. Au Pair*
- *This library is an invaluable resource. It encourages children to read and gives them access to a much wider range of books to read Grandparent*
- *My son loves coming to the library for singing as well as borrowing books Parent*
- *Fantastic opportunity to meet people in your area. I have made many good friends through the scheme as have my children Parent*



Something for everyone

Kent's Early Years Settings and childminders have direct involvement with Bookstart and Bookstart Treasure Packs. In addition, we encourage **Early Years settings** staff and **childminders** to use library services and share books with their children – we offer special cards to help with this, with free ordering and no fines.

Finally, our libraries offer many free services to children and their families and we try to make this as easy as possible for people to use:

- Library cards for children and adults are free, and you can use them as often as you want.
- Children can have up to 30 books at any one time on their card, with free ordering and no fines.
- Books can be borrowed from and returned to any library in Kent.
- We don't charge for damage to books borrowed by pre-school children – we understand accidents can happen and want to encourage families to continue using our family-friendly services, sharing stories and rhymes together.
- Explore our board books and picture books, big books, simple information books, storysacks and stories on CD, all for younger children, as well as any items for older children, teenagers and adults too.
- We have many online services, including our entire library catalogue www.kent.gov.uk/libs
- You can order books online, check your own card, renew books and browse our other services 24/7.
- Stuck with a question? We have a free online enquiry service too: http://www.kent.gov.uk/leisure_and_culture/libraries/online_library_services.aspx
- Use our free computers. Did you know children at school can have free printouts to help with homework (up to 5 per day)
- We have eBooks and eAudio books for adults and children – see the website above for more information.
- Libraries offer many volunteering opportunities for both children and adults, including assisting with children's activities such as Rhyme Times – a great way to get involved.



Actions for the Future

Priorities for 2016-17

We will:

- Roll out “Bear’s Reading Adventures” to more locations across Kent Libraries
- Manage any changes to the Bookstart programme.
- Seek to develop and find new ways of working to maximise our services to children and their families and carers
- Continue to work with and value our partners so we can be ambassadors for each other’s services

Many thanks to everyone who has worked hard to ensure Bookstart packs and the Bookstart message reach as many children in Kent as possible.

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