

“Everytime you see  
the bag you think,  
ooh – let’s read a  
book!”

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**Evaluation of the Bookstart programme**

administered by Booktrust

and funded by Sainsbury’s from 1999 - 2001

Report by the National Centre for Research in Children’s Literature

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## **Foreword**

Bookstart is at the heart of Booktrust's work to bring books and people together. To keep readers 'bookhooked' throughout their lives we run National Children's Book Week, creative reading projects and book prizes to promote the best titles to readers of all ages – but most important of all is to get them 'bookstarted' in the first place!

Bookstart is a wonderfully simple idea made a brilliant reality through the hard work and commitment of a complex network of people around the country. We would like to thank everyone involved, and in particular all the parents and babies who participated in this research.

Chris Meade

**Director, Booktrust**

## Summary

The Sainsbury's Bookstart programme took place during, and was part of, a period of unprecedented national activity in the area of literacy. The resulting heightened public awareness of issues relating to literacy and reading with children undoubtedly diluted the measurable impact of the scheme. However, both quantitative and qualitative data collected show that parents and carers who received the Sainsbury's Bookstart pack on behalf of their babies *were* influenced by Bookstart. While most were aware of the value of reading books to babies before receiving the pack; indeed some of this awareness may have been generated by Bookstart itself, through word-of-mouth and good media coverage over the span of the programme, significant numbers felt that Bookstart had converted awareness and good intentions into action and good practice.

The overall findings show:

- Widespread awareness of and receptivity for the Bookstart message;
- Increased reading with babies and young children: *across all case-study groups*, parents and carers reported reading more and reading more often;
- Increased library membership for babies;
- More parents/carers valuing reading with babies and young children;
- Changed attitudes to the role of reading in child development and personal interaction with children;
- Improved confidence in reading to babies and young children;
- Better book-sharing skills and ways of extending reading as an activity;
- Increased awareness of the role reading can play in speech/language development.

100% of case-study parents were pleased to receive the Bookstart pack, and most valued highly the individual items it contained.

Until the Sainsbury's Bookstart babies enter the education system it is impossible to tell whether or not this initiative will lead to improved educational achievement. Long-term evaluation of the scheme is necessary to quantify its efficacy. However, there is a well-established correlation between early and sustained literacy interventions and enhanced academic attainment, so if the momentum is maintained, the likelihood is that Bookstart babies will do better than their predecessors.

## 1. Introduction

In December 1999, the National Centre for Research in Children's Literature (NCRCL) was contracted to assess the initial impact and effectiveness of the nationwide Sainsbury's Bookstart scheme, conceived and administered by Booktrust between January 1999 and April 2001. The programme had previously been piloted, monitored and evaluated over an eight-year period in Birmingham. In line with a now substantial and convincing body of work that points to a correlation between early, long-term, family-centred interventions like Bookstart and accelerated development, babies who participated in the Birmingham pilot demonstrated significant educational gains, both initially and over time. The nation-wide roll-out of Bookstart over the two years of funding from Sainsbury's was predicated on the findings of such research.

It will not be possible to assess the efficacy of the programme in educational terms until the babies involved have entered the education system and commenced formal periodic testing; however, the Bookstart committee recognised the need both to put in place an evaluation process early in the programme - which was always intended to be extended beyond the two-year funding provided by Sainsbury's in their portfolio of millennium projects - and to assess the initial impact of the scheme.

The NCRCL's remit for the initial evaluation covered the second year of the programme, and consisted of a single aim: to establish whether, when the project was extended to cover virtually the whole of the UK (by the end of the period in question, Bookstart had reached 92% of the country), it had succeeded in its aim to encourage parents and families to provide a rich early experience of reading and thus to lay down the necessary

It was agreed that while any increase is likely to be beneficial and so worth reporting, if change is to be regarded as meaningful and likely to be educationally beneficial, it must also be clearly observable and sustained. In the light of earlier studies, which have shown both that the younger a child is when an intervention such as Bookstart commences and the longer the period over which it is reinforced, the greater the benefits they are likely to experience<sup>1</sup>, evidence of a sustained increase in reading and related activities was agreed to be the best measure of the response the programme is intended to stimulate. Related to increased reading is increased use of the library and efforts to acquire books for the Bookstart infant[s].

It is important to point out that improved educational performance is only one indicator of change, and only one possible benefit from a programme such as Bookstart. It would, for instance, be equally valid to look at such things as improved parent-child interactions, or enhanced self-esteem/improved skills of the parent/carer. However, since the Birmingham pilot focused on educational benefits, and current government interest in improving literacy has directed the attention of many official bodies and potential future sponsors of the project to this area, it was agreed that the current evaluation should follow suit.

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<sup>1</sup> See, for instance, the evaluation of the efficacy of such early schemes in U. Bronfenbrenner (1974) *A Report on Longitudinal Evaluations of Pre-School Programmes* vol. 2, *Is Early Intervention Effective?* (Washington, D.C.: D.H.E.W. Publication no. [OHD], pp. 74 – 125; J. Weinberger, 'Longitudinal Study of Literacy', *Journal of Research in Reading*, 19, 1996).

## 1.1 Methodology

By the time the NCRCL became involved in the evaluation process, several factors were in place and decisions had been made which affected the overall design of the evaluation. For instance, in order to compare the findings of the Bookstart project with those from the Birmingham pilot, similar aspects of behaviour and kinds of responses needed to be measured. Perhaps more importantly, a market research company, Market Measures, had already been commissioned by Booktrust to design and analyse responses to two questionnaires: a pre-Bookstart questionnaire, completed by parents/carers at the 7 – 9 month health check, and a post-Bookstart postal questionnaire, sent to those parents who had agreed when completing the first questionnaire to receive and complete the second. Again, in order to make meaningful comparisons, the NCRCL's contribution to the evaluation needed to be designed in the light of the Market Measures questionnaires (appendices 1 – 2). As a quantitative study was already underway, the NCRCL evaluation was asked to provide more in-depth information about behaviour, attitudes, and infant responses. In doing this, a number of additional factors needed to be taken into account. These included:

- the Bookstart committee's concern to assess the effects of the intervention on infants born to families in social groups currently identified as failing educationally;
- the fact that the project was nearing the end of its first year, and many families had had their Bookstart materials for several months;
- the need to complete the evaluation by June 2001;
- the limited funds available to support the research.

Despite the fact that a separate organisation had carried out the quantitative data collection, it was felt that the most satisfactory analysis of all the data generated by the two evaluation processes would be achieved by interrogating the two simultaneously, and in particular, treating the findings from the pre-Bookstart questionnaire as a pseudo control from which to measure change. The NCRCL undertook to bring the findings together, both in the preliminary report, delivered at the national conference in October 2000, and in this final report. Market Measures supplied data in the form of tables and was responsible for verifying and testing that data before passing it on to the NCRCL.

The methodology set out in the NCRCL proposal for Booktrust was designed on the understanding that the Bookstart infrastructure and existing research activities would make it possible for a sample to be constructed by sifting returned pre-Bookstart questionnaires, and that the NCRCL could draw on the expertise of local Bookstart organisations and Regional Officers as necessary when identifying how to locate and successfully approach potential case-study families.

Two observations (including semi-structured interviews) were planned; the first, to measure initial impact, was to take place within three months of receipt of the Bookstart materials, and the second, to measure sustained change (if any), a minimum of three months after the first. Observations were to be conducted by an NCRCL team of 12, travelling singly or in small groups from the Centre to agreed locations in five geographical areas (North, South, East, West, and Midlands) (see figure 1). In the original proposal it was assumed that observations would take place in the family home;



for reasons outlined below, this turned out to be neither feasible nor desirable at this stage in the evaluation process.

Researchers were trained to use an observation schedule which was designed and tested at the beginning of the period of evaluation (appendix 3). When testing the observation schedule, it became clear that the practice of making audio recordings of the observations was regarded as intrusive and required time-consuming transcribing which yielded disproportionately little information. The research team decided it was preferable to augment the schedule with quotes from the case study adults, personal observations about the interactions being observed, and supplementary remarks and information researchers regarded as relevant. These notes and comments proved to be both informative, interactive – many adults volunteered additional information as the notes were being written – and easier to use than transcribed audio recordings of observations.

Once the piloting and training period was complete and researchers commenced the job of identifying and contacting potential case-study families, several practical problems with the proposed methodology rapidly became apparent. The actual design was not problematic, but implementing it with the resources available was not possible. For instance, on the basis of these responses, it became apparent that few parents and carers wanted what they regarded as anonymous ‘officials’ in their homes, monitoring the way they interacted with their babies. Although the team of researchers was composed of women of different ages and backgrounds who were accustomed to working with families (for instance, one was a former midwife), and it was made very clear that all that

was being observed was the way they and their babies shared books, those approached were reluctant to be seen in their homes and on their own. Issues ranging from housekeeping to safety and anxiety about how the data might be used to judge the quality of child care may have been the cause of this reluctance to become involved in a project about which most were otherwise positive, as evidenced from their willingness to return questionnaires;<sup>2</sup> the eventually high rate of case study parents/carers who agreed to be observed twice, and responses to being given the Bookstart materials: *all* those who received the packs recorded that they were pleased to get them. As can be seen in their responses to questions about Bookstart/the placemat/the bag/the books/*Babies Love Books* (see section 3 ), the overwhelming majority of recipients indicated that they valued the project and the materials supplied. The reluctance to be observed at home may be linked to the fact that one of the criteria used for selecting families was that their responses to the pre-Bookstart questionnaire suggested that they were not providing a supportive reading environment, so many of the target families may have been self-conscious about a study which had reading at its centre.

In consultation with the Bookstart office, it was agreed that the way families were approached should be modified to make use of information which was to be provided by Bookstart Regional Officers. The revised plan was to use local contacts such as librarians, health visitors, playgroup leaders, and others with a similar range of contacts, to act as trusted intermediaries when approaches were being made. At all stages

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<sup>2</sup> Pre-Bookstart questionnaires were completed at the 7-9month health check in the presence of the Health Visitor resulting in nearly 100% returns. The post-Bookstart questionnaires were sent to individuals who had said they would be willing to receive them and a satisfactory number (36%) did take the time to complete and post them.

individuals actually involved with Bookstart were to be excluded from making approaches to potential case-study families, but it was assumed that their local knowledge would be helpful in identifying individuals who could midwife the observation process.

While this kind of local knowledge did indeed prove invaluable, and eventually a sample was constructed (see below), the methodology needed further refinement. At this stage the NCRCL recognised the greater than expected need for large amounts of dedicated time in locating contacts, setting up observations, and making the arrangements for the research team's visits to designated areas. To carry out this work, a temporary member of staff had to be appointed. From September 2000 to May 2001, Jilly Paver spent two days a week co-ordinating the observations. In tandem with this appointment and in response to feedback from researchers, it was agreed to replace the system of trying to contact individuals and observe them in their homes and to work instead with established local organisations such as mother and baby groups, play groups, and other bodies including those who specialise in lone parents and other groups needing special support. Observations took place in this neutral environment, where neither the researcher nor the carer needed to feel anxious about personal safety, and the carer could be satisfied that the researchers were genuinely interested in only their baby's response to books/reading rather than assessing domestic circumstances.

By November 2000, a number of first observations had taken place, but still the methodology was proving unsatisfactory in two ways. First, it was time-consuming, costly and inefficient to send teams from London to do the more distant observations, as

despite the regular liaison between the office and the local organisations, it was difficult to guarantee that a good number of the kind of infants needed to make up the sample would be present on a given day. Second, the informal nature of most of the groups meant it was difficult to set up second observations, unless the parent/carer agreed to work directly with the co-ordinator. There was still resistance to the idea of being observed by outsiders. At this point one final, very successful, modification to the methodology was made.

Since the core methodology – the use of the observation schedule – was by this stage well tested and a good briefing routine for researchers was in place, the research team agreed that it would be straightforward to train local researchers to undertake the observations. This had several advantages: reduced travel costs, increased flexibility (not all observations would have to take place on the same one or two days as had been the case when the NCRCL team travelled to distant localities), the researchers had good local knowledge about where to find the kind of families needed to make up the sample, and communication was directly with the researcher rather than through the office, thereby improving participation in the second observation.

By the end of November 2000, the NCRCL research team was supplemented by 9 local researchers. The local researchers were all professional women with good experience of working with the public and specifically with parents and young children. These factors were important not only in the NCRCL's evaluation of their ability to undertake the research, but also to ensure that they would abide by the University's ethical guidelines

and code of practice for undertaking this kind of research. Once potential researchers had been identified and vetted by the NCRCL, they were sent the observation schedules and guidelines, briefed over the telephone, and mentored by one of the original team of researchers.

With the help of the local researchers, it was finally possible to undertake sufficient numbers of first and second observations to provide us with an acceptable sample and, importantly, a good foundation for maintaining the sample for future research was laid. Even the Birmingham pilot, which was conducted by a local research unit working with a single health authority and a library system to which they were well known, had considerable difficulty maintaining their sample, and we do not underestimate the problems that may lie ahead. However, it is clear that those who live in an area and can maintain limited contact with their case-study families between observations are going to have a higher success rate than a remote and centrally managed team. The use of local researchers must be the lynchpin of any future research activity.

## 1.2 Data management

The data collected by NCRCL falls into three broad areas:

- comments made by parents/carers and observations made by researchers recorded for qualitative analysis;
- factual information – such as names, addresses and babies' birthdates – recorded by researchers to enable them to stay in touch with families;
- quantitatively analysable responses to questionnaire/interview questions (e.g. choice of responses such as yes/no, frequently/sometimes/never to specific questions).

The first and second of the above were entered onto an Access database, in order to retain necessary information in an easily retrievable format by laying it down in a database that can be used for such diverse applications as: preparing mailing labels; reporting written responses to questions; and identifying babies' birthdays (to enable researchers to send cards and do everything possible to maintain contact with case-study families for any long term evaluation of the project). The third strand of data was input into the software package SPSS™ (the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). This was then available for quantitative analyses in the form of frequency tables, cross-tabs and graph representations.

Checks were carried out and corrections made to all out-of-range responses. A further, random, 10% sample was error checked, with follow-up checking carried out on any input batches with an unacceptable (1% or above) error rate. A 100% check was carried out on one operator's input as a result of the above, and all errors corrected for that exceptional batch.

### 1.3 Sample

The NCRCL sample was intended to consist of 80 case-study families and a control group of 20, drawn from a demographically similar group not in receipt of Bookstart materials and not involved with Bookstart activities, making a total sample of 100 families. Because of problems locating and working with families, the final sample in fact consisted of 75 families (35 boys; 40 girls) with a control of 30, making a total sample of 105. The size of the control group was increased to make it possible to interrogate it to an acceptable level: 30 group members is regarded as the smallest acceptable size if findings are to be statistically meaningful. Given the likely attrition rate a larger sample would have been desirable over the long term, but the sample nonetheless represents a very high proportion of qualitative to quantitative data (there were eventually 1,806 returns to the post-Bookstart questionnaire).

While the final sample consisted only of babies who met the sample criteria, more babies were observed than were eventually included in the official sample. The majority of the additional babies were those who turned out to be too old and to have had their Bookstart packs for too long to make them acceptable in the sample. Some had to be removed from the sample to make it conform to the committee's desired profile. However, since their parents/carers had completed the pre-Bookstart questionnaire and often offered interesting comments, their voices are occasionally included in the case study section of this report.

Since the object of the exercise was to measure *changed* behaviour and attitudes, and the impact of Bookstart on those groups currently associated with high rates of educational failure and disaffection, in addition to looking at attributes such as sex, class, region, and ethnicity, the NCRCL sample took into account the number of only children and those with older, pre-school siblings in the family. These variables were then used to interrogate responses to questions about Bookstart and the amount and kind of reading and reading related activities taking place. However, it is again important to stress that the findings can reveal little information about possible educational benefits at this stage; it is only once the children enter the school system that differences between the Bookstart generation and those that have gone before will become clear. Moreover, the success of the roll-out, with 92% of the UK participating in Bookstart by the end of the Sainsbury's funding, means that unless a very clear baseline of the skills and attitudes that children who did not experience the Bookstart intervention is laid down well before the Bookstart cohort start school, it will effectively be impossible to identify a Bookstart effect.

The widespread roll-out of the programme, its links with a well-known supermarket chain, and an active media campaign across the period of the programme created problems for the NCRCL team as it tried to measure the impact of Bookstart. By year 2, when the evaluation started, awareness of the programme was widespread, even in areas which had not started their Bookstart activities. Moreover, Bookstart was launched as part of an unprecedented period of literacy activity, much of which was government led and directed at all parts of society. Thus even those areas where Bookstart was not taken up were invariably involved in some kind of literacy initiative which would complement



and possibly refer to Bookstart. For the research team this presented problems in constructing a bona fide control group (the Bookstart committee were committed to the principle of such a control), and though a group which technically conformed to the requirements of the control (at the time of the observations they did not live in Bookstart areas and had received no Bookstart materials), they could not be said to be uninfluenced by a literacy-related initiative. The value of the actual control group is, then, questionable. The pseudo control, in the form of the responses to the pre-Bookstart questionnaire, provides a better point of comparison for the case studies as well as the post-Bookstart questionnaire. In the following tables, therefore, the quantitative, pre-Bookstart responses should be given greater weight than those from the control group.

Despite the problems with the control group, its construction was valuable in a number of ways. For instance, in seeking out babies who had not received Bookstart materials the team occasionally identified areas where the delivery of the pack was not operating smoothly or, by contrast, where the relationship between librarians, health visitors and Bookstart groups was particularly effective. A more subtle way in which the control offered insights into the dynamics of young children's experiences of reading and literacy-related activities came about when the final control group was established. As in the case of the main sample, in order to achieve the right profile for the control group more babies were observed than were needed. To make the control conform, as far as possible, to the profile of the case-study families, some of the babies (7 – chiefly girls) had to be excluded; as it happened, the majority of these were the children of white, *Guardian*-reading adults. Frequency tables run before and after the final control showed

that the result of taking out this group of babies (associated with middle-class, professional households) was to depress the amount of literacy-related activity taking place. This works against the established wisdom that middle-class children are more able to access the kinds of literacy skills assessed in schools than their peers,<sup>3</sup> and suggests the need to be alert to the problems faced by children growing up in households where both parents are skilled professionals in employment and potentially less available to their children than they would have been a generation ago. The problems are compounded by the long working week typical across the UK, which are often exacerbated by lengthy journeys by commuting parents. In view of the small numbers involved, further research needs to be done in this area to see if the finding is genuine and, if so, to ascertain how widespread it may be.

Comparison of the profiles of all three groups (the quantitative sample, the case study families and the control) and published population information for Great Britain are given below. In order to make it possible to interrogate variables such as ethnicity in a meaningful way, increased numbers in some areas were necessary.

**Figure 1**

	Market Measures Bookstart Gp %	NCRCL Bookstart Gp %	Control Gp %
Girls	49	53	53
Boys	51	47	47

<sup>3</sup> See E. Millard, C. Taylor and S. Watson, 'Research in Progress' in *Reading*, vol. 34, no. 3, November 2000, pp. 130 – 133.

Class (based on newspaper readership)	Market Measures Bookstart Gp %	NCRCL Bookstart Gp %	Control Gp %
ABC1	38	40	27
C2DE	32	31	43
Not established	30	29	30

Figures from 1998/99 on newspaper readership (female readers over 15 years of age - the majority of parents/carers interviewed are female) show 29% as ABC1 using the same measure. *Social Trends Dataset ST301308*

	Market Measures Bookstart Gp %	NCRCL Bookstart Gp %	Control Gp %
Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Black-African	1	3	3
Black-Caribbean	1	4	7
Black-other	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Indian	2	3	0
Pakistani	2	0	0
White	87	85	87
Other	2	4	3
No response	6	1	0

The 1997/98 *Regional Trends Dataset (RT34315)* reports that the ethnic minority population of Great Britain, as a percentage of the total population at that date, was 6%

	Market Measures Bookstart Gp %	NCRCL Bookstart Gp %	Control Gp %
'only' children	47	49	47
children with older siblings	53	51	53

The figures for 1998/99 (Great Britain - *Dataset ST30221*) show 22% of dependent children as 'only' children. These figures include stepchildren and adopted children.

Region	Market Measures Bookstart Gp %	NCRCL Bookstart Gp %	Gt Britain (RT34315)
North (including Yorkshire)	41	12	34
South (including London)	31	40	35
East	6	15	9
West (Wales only)	10	16	5
Midlands	10	17	17
no response	1	0	0
NB The Control Group could only be drawn from those parts of the Country where the Bookstart scheme was not running (in practice 63% were from the South, 37% from the West)			

## 2. Findings

### 2.1 Evidence of change

A complete set of tables in response to the questions covered during the observations is set out in section 3. A separate report consisting of tabular information about the quantitative data collected has already been submitted by Market Measures. This section details key findings and issues arising from the research.

To demonstrate changed behaviour and attitudes, we compared what respondents to the questionnaires and case-study adults said about their attitude to/frequency of reading with their babies before and after receiving the Bookstart materials, and set their responses against those of the control group. According to the Market Measures data (Q6), *before* the Bookstart intervention, 78% of respondents said that they were already reading books with their baby, but nearly half (47%) of all those who completed the questionnaire said that they read *more* after receiving the Bookstart pack. In line with this, responses to the post-Bookstart questionnaire show the percentage of those reporting that they read with their babies rose from the initial 78% to 91%. So, receiving the Bookstart pack

stimulated parents who were not reading to their babies to do so, and encouraged those who were already reading to read more. As the mother of Baby 110 says, *“Every time you see the bag you think, ooh – let’s read a book!”*

Increased reading can be accepted as evidence of changed behaviour; especially when underpinned by a change in the perception of the value of reading to infants. The more detailed analysis afforded by the case-studies shows that this underpinning is in place.

The pattern of increased reading mirrors that shown by the quantitative data: 9% of case-study parents/carers said that before receiving the Bookstart materials they did not think sharing books with a baby was valuable. However, within three to six months of receiving the Bookstart pack, 100% of this group said they were sharing books with their babies, and, the observations show that, like the quantitative data, not only were more parents/carers reading to their babies by the end of the programme, but they too were reading more often. Together the quantitative and qualitative findings show:

- nearly 50% of all Bookstart parents surveyed have increased the amount of reading they do with their baby

The statistics tell a story which is given depth and breadth through the voices of the case-study parents/carers. Look, for instance, at the following examples:

*Baby 27: This little boy’s mother reads very little herself, and at the first observation said she was surprised to see how, “very quickly ‘S’ learned the enjoyment of sharing books”. Immediately after receiving the Bookstart pack, she felt that their behaviour was changed because she was making, “more time to read and listen to him”. At the second*

observation the researcher reported that this change was being maintained and that Mother 27 regarded Bookstart as, "a good scheme" that "encouraged her to buy more books" for her son. Although she has an older son of 6, she is more aware of the Bookstart baby's development, and "values the time they spend sharing a book".

Baby 31: The mother of another Bookstart boy said at her first observation that since receiving the pack she, "visited the library more", and had a "greater awareness of the value of reading". Before encountering Bookstart, she, "didn't realise that young babies would enjoy books, and that sharing books with babies could be so valuable". At the second observation she and her son were still using the placemat to "do rhymes"; were reading every day, and she's convinced that babies should be given books at a younger age than she had originally thought. She has bought more books, visits the library monthly, and says, "I can see even more how important they are for language development. He'll see a cat in a book and come running through the room saying miaow, miaow. He asks questions a lot and brings books to me to read when he wants to; I can now see the educational part of it far more, rather than just the bonding element". She also says that books are more adaptable than she first thought. The researcher summarised her response as; "you don't have to stick to the text – improvisation possibilities are endless". Without Bookstart she, "Wouldn't have started so young". Mother31, "Doesn't want to be pushy", but "hopes he'll have good pre-reading skills, learning to count, colours etc. Hopefully by the time he starts school he'll be able to concentrate and be well prepared for learning".

*Baby 40: Before receiving the Bookstart pack, this boy's mother, "wouldn't have thought of sharing books with babies from such an early age". Reading has now become part of the baby's routine. Mum valued the fact that the Health Visitor gave her the pack, and explained the value of reading to babies because, "Health Visitors know about babies' physical and mental development".*

As some of these comments already suggest, Bookstart parents are visiting the library more often, acquiring additional books, and in some cases reporting that more members of the family becoming involved in reading to the Bookstart infant. For instance, one mother said that although *she* would have read to her baby irrespective of Bookstart, she believes the programme, "*has made a big difference to my husband, who has changed his ideas about reading with babies*". Others report shared reading with older siblings. For instance,

*Baby 17: This baby girl has an older sister (6 – 10 group) with reading problems. Bookstart encouraged Mum to read to her baby, and then she found the sister enjoyed reading to the baby too. All have benefited.*

Or, a slightly different case,

*Baby 28: This boy's older sister already liked books, so when the Bookstart pack arrived for her brother, she enjoyed them herself and encouraged baby to read with her.*

And then there are the families who, as well as responding to Bookstart themselves, take it to others. An example is provided by:

*Baby 13 (male): Mum says, "I always intended to read to 'J', but at about two years plus. I am amazed to discover that he often seems very interested even at this young age". After a Bookstart talk, when 'J' was 5 months old, she joined him to library and started borrowing and purchasing books. At the same time she also encouraged a relative to buy books for her baby. Now they share books with 'J's cousins whose parents don't have time to read to them. Dad reads to 'J' too, and is "better at settling him down [to read] at the moment".*

The overall pattern of increased activity is summed up in Market Measures quantitative data such as that which shows that parents/carers who said they read with their babies *every day* rose from 47% (pre-Bookstart) to 60% after the Bookstart intervention.

Similarly, pre-Bookstart only 64% of those questioned reported visiting the library at least once a month, whereas, after Bookstart, the figure rises to 85%.

Increased library visiting was identified as an important indicator of change in the Birmingham Bookstart pilot study, and subsequently whether or not young children visit the library regularly has been more widely linked to academic achievement,<sup>4</sup> so the fact that both waves of quantitative data gathered show increased library membership and visiting by Bookstart families can be considered an important outcome. In response to

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<sup>4</sup> See J. Weinberger, 'Longitudinal Study of Literacy' in *Journal of Research in Reading*, 19, 1996 and the 2001 DfE green paper, 'School Reading Success'.



the Market Measures questionnaire, only 5% of Bookstart parents/carers said that their babies were members of the local library before they received the Bookstart materials, while in the post-Bookstart phase of the research this figure had risen to 31%.

Library visiting is an area where the sex of the baby seems to make a notable difference to behaviour, with 82% of the parents/carers of boys reporting that they had been to the library since the first observation as compared with 65% of girls, and more parents/carers of boys than girls telling researchers that they now visit the library at least once a month (71% boys; 55% girls). The reasons for this difference between library visiting of boys and girls need to be followed up in future research.

The majority of respondents said they were already aware of the benefits of reading with infants before receiving their Bookstart packs. This situation is very different from that which pertained at the time of the Bookstart pilot, and the period during which funding to roll-out the programme across the UK was being sought. However, it shows that since 1992, through very successful local efforts modelled on the Birmingham project (notably in Derbyshire, North Tyneside, Nottingham)<sup>5</sup> and the high-profile Sainsbury's Bookstart programme, the Bookstart message that 'babies need books' has become embedded in the national consciousness. The idea no longer seems radical, but is accepted as commonsense. This recognition affects any long-term evaluation of the programme because the emphasis no longer needs to be on demonstrating the benefits of reading with

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<sup>5</sup> In the introduction to their evaluation of the Boots Books for Babies project in Nottingham, M. Bailey, C. Harrison and G. Brooks point out that by 1999 the National Literacy Trust database listed 42 literacy initiatives which specifically mention babies, almost all of which trace their origins to the Bookstart pilot (p. 6).

babies; rather the programme will be deemed to have succeeded if it converts the knowledge that sharing books with babies is valuable into action in the form of regular, good-quality reading activities. It is, therefore, pleasing and significant that many of the case-study parents/carers report that Bookstart *has* in fact changed their thinking about sharing books with babies,<sup>6</sup> and importantly, as the tables below show, *this change was largely sustained or slightly enhanced* over the period of the two observations.

Moreover, while Bookstart affected both families in which the Bookstart baby is the first or only child and those with older siblings, more one-child case study parents say it has affected their attitudes to sharing books with young children. The answers to the series of questions about changed perceptions of child development and sharing books suggest two things. First, that any subsequent children in the family will be given books from an early age, and second, that the Bookstart babies who do not have older siblings might well have come into contact with books earlier than they otherwise would have done because of Bookstart. This is implied in the fact that a very high proportion of parents with older children were already reading books to their babies when they received the Bookstart pack. For instance, 14% of the case study parents/carers (5) of only children said that before Bookstart they did not think sharing books with a baby was valuable as compared with 5% (2) of those with older children.

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<sup>6</sup>A typographical error resulted in the word 'positively' being left out of the question 'Have your thoughts about sharing books with babies changed [positively] with regard to: the development of your child/your interaction with your child/the purpose of sharing books with your child/issues about reading?'. However, this was remedied in conversation with the researcher.

Have your thoughts about sharing books with babies changed (since receiving the pack) with regard to:

**Figure 2**

the development of your child?	Obs 1 %	Obs 2 %	Obs 1 & 2 'only' children		Obs 1 & 2 older siblings	
Yes	36.8	46.0	47.1	67.9	26.5	28.6
No	63.2	54.0	52.9	32.1	73.5	71.4

your interaction with your child?	Obs 1 %	Obs 2 %	Obs 1 & 2 'only' children		Obs 1 & 2 older siblings	
Yes	40.6	45.6	51.4	62.5	29.4	30.6
No	59.4	54.4	48.6	37.5	70.6	69.4

the purpose of sharing books with a young child?	Obs 1 %	Obs 2 %	Obs 1 & 2 'only' children		Obs 1 & 2 older siblings	
Yes	36.2	38.2	51.4	53.1	20.6	25.0
No	63.8	61.8	48.6	46.9	79.4	75.0

A further demonstrable change can be seen in respondents' answers to the pair of questions (observation 1), [Before receiving the Bookstart pack] 'What did you think was the right age to start sharing books with your baby?' and (observation 2), 'What do you now think is the right age to start sharing books with children?'. 22% of respondents said that before receiving the Bookstart materials they thought the right age to start sharing books with their children was 9 months or older; after the Bookstart intervention, only 11% of respondents chose the options 9 months or older, as compared with the control group, 25% of whom chose the options 9 months or older. This swing in the numbers of those in favour of reading to very young children suggests the Bookstart message that it is never too early to bring books and babies together has been received and accepted. The response of many parents is summed up by the mother of Baby 3 (male).

*Baby 3: At the first observation, Mother 3 thought that the best age to start sharing books with her baby was around 6 months; at the second observation, when asked what she now considers the right age to start sharing books she replied: "It's never too soon". This mother has seen her son develop, and says her understanding of the purpose of sharing books with a young child has changed. Now she regards it as the way, "to help him like books and go on to read himself". She will, "carry on using the library and buying books".*

One of the most significant findings is the fact that Bookstart stimulated reading with babies across all the groups represented in the samples; thus, in response to the questions 'Do you read or look at books with your baby?' (pre-Bookstart) and 'Do you read or look at books with your child?' (post-Bookstart), the Market Measures data show generally similar rises according to age, social class, ethnic group, those with older siblings, those in families where more than one language is spoken, and across all regions. Most rises were in the vicinity of 10 – 15%, with the most significant increases in activity reported by ethnic-minority respondents (28% reported increased reading) and those who speak a language other than English at home (+23%). Since these are two groups identified by the Bookstart committee as being of special interest for their association with educational failure, this change is of particular interest.

Another indicator of sustained impact on families who received the Bookstart materials is provided by responses to the questions about the Bookstart placemat. At the time of the first observation, 65% of parents/carers said they used the placemat; when asked whether

they were still using it during the second observation, 54% said they were. However, several respondents felt that the placemat's edges were too sharp for very young babies (presumably more would have used it earlier if they had not had this concern), and hoped that this problem would be remedied in future.

## 2.2 Evidence of improved skills

While *increased* reading activity is a desired outcome of the Sainsbury's Bookstart programme, Bookstart also seeks to encourage reading *well*: making the reading experience pleasurable for infant and adult. Guidance to parents/carers is given in the form of two booklets contained in the Bookstart pack, and in some areas additional advice was provided through libraries and other Bookstart-related activities. At this stage in the evolution of the programme, relatively few associated activities took place in most areas, and most parents/carers were left to absorb the information in the *Babies Love Books* guides to the best of their ability. Significantly, 19% of case-study parents said they did not find the leaflets useful (for reasons which at this stage are not clear, nearly twice as many parents/carers of boy babies (24%) than those looking after girls (14%) did not find useful information in *Babies Love Books*). Given the likelihood that those who needed the advice most would also be those who were least able to make the most effective use of such guides, further work clearly needs to be done in terms of supporting Bookstart parents/carers. However, there are some indications that the two guides *are* valued by those who need additional support since looking at the responses of parents/carers who answered 'no' or 'it depends' to the question, 'Are you a confident reader?' revealed that only 1 respondent said they were 'not useful', while the remainder

said they were 'very useful'. Such findings need to be taken with some caution, however, since the small number of parents whose responses indicate that they are not entirely confident readers mean that the number of responses involved is very low. Further work could usefully be done in this area now it has been identified.

In order to evaluate how effectively Bookstart adults share books with their babies, NCRCL researchers recorded what kinds of activities and interactions took place as they observed case-study parents/carers reading together. Related to this part of the evaluation was the need to assess how familiar the infant seemed to be with the activity of sharing books, since this information could be used to corroborate data generated by self-assessment. These findings were subsequently compared with those generated by the control group and what they revealed is set out below.

Looking at the group of questions about *how* parents read with their children: whether they provide stimulating encounters with books through a range of interactions and spin-off activities, some clear differences between a) the Bookstart group after 3 – 6 months and the Bookstart group after 9 – 12 months, and b) both Bookstart groups and the control. For instance, in response to the question [to the researcher] 'Does the adult draw the child's attention to the picture?', the percentage of control parents who did this *frequently* was lower than both the first and second observation Bookstart parents (control: 73%; Bookstart 83%). Moreover, at the second observation, this good practice had increased, with 87% of Bookstart parents/carers doing this *frequently*; 14% more of this group showing a higher level of activity by comparison with the control group

parents/carers. By contrast, while 10% of control group parents *never* drew their child's attention to the pictures, only 6% of Bookstart parents failed to do so at the first observation, and this fell to 3% at the second observation.

A similar pattern develops when looking at the responses to the question: 'Does the adult relate things of interest to the child's experience?'. While the control group starts from a slightly higher overall base of 35% compared to 30% (Bookstart) of *frequently* responses, the Bookstart group overtakes this figure as a whole during the second observation (37%). As for those parents/carers who *never* related the book to the child's experiences, a significantly smaller percentage of Bookstart parents failed to do so throughout (control: 39%; Bookstart 24% for second observation).

In response to the question, 'Does the adult let the child handle the book?', there was very little difference between the groups, though the Bookstart parents/carers were marginally more inclined to do so *frequently*: (control: 83%; Bookstart 89% for second observation). However, this was redressed by the 'never' responses (control 0%; Bookstart: 2%).

One way of judging whether children are regularly exposed to books and share them with their carers is to see whether or not they recognise books as objects (do they know how to hold a book?; how to turn pages?; do they point to the pictures?; do they respond verbally? and so on). Here a significant and clear difference between the control and the Bookstart babies was observed. While only 40% of the control group were observed as

*frequently* recognising the book, 54% of the case-study babies *frequently* demonstrated recognition at the first observation, and this rose to 57% at the second session with the researcher. Equally important is that 52% of the control group *never* appeared to recognise the book, while only 19% of Bookstart babies [first observation], falling to 13% [second observation], failed to signal that they recognised the book[s] being read. Implicit in this finding is that Bookstart parents *regularly* share books with babies.

A very important developmental aspect of shared reading is the effect of the relationship fostered between reader [adult] and listener [child]. Pleasingly, this was an aspect of good practice that was equally common in both groups. Control group parents/carers (93%) and Bookstart parents/carers (96% first observation; 80% second observation) were seen to make close physical contact *frequently* with their child. Only 2% of Bookstart parents [2% for both observations], compared with 7% of the control group parents, *never* demonstrated close contact with their babies.

Evidence of beneficial impact can be seen in the responses of parents/carers to the questions, 'Since you were last interviewed, has your confidence in reading to your children changed?' and 'If so, are you more or less confident?'. By the time of the second observation, a significant proportion of parents/carers (31%) said that they were more confident about reading to their children. This is a significant finding in a number of ways. Increased confidence in the parent suggests increased and regular practice and enhanced self-esteem. If the adult reader feels better about reading and undertakes to do it more often, the infant has an improved role model and relationship with reading, and is



more likely to be given opportunities to share books than would previously have been the case. A good example of the way Bookstart can increase the confidence and self-esteem of parents/carers is provided by mothers 64 and 38.

*Baby 64: At the initial observation Mother 64 said that she was not entirely confident about reading herself unless "the books are easy". Since receiving the Bookstart pack, she now reads to both her Bookstart baby and her older son (aged three and a half). She says she not only reads more than she did before, but she "does it more actively" – interacting more with the book and her children. This is a good example of how Bookstart can change the experiences of a whole family. This mother has started reading to her Bookstart baby girl earlier than she did with her first child; she gives more time to reading, and she takes the children to the library more often.*

*Baby 38 (male): At the first observation, Mum said she likes reading but was not entirely confident about reading at her own level. She was, however, confident about reading to her son. Since receiving the pack, she has joined a book club and buys books for her baby (an only child). At the second observation she told the researcher that she was much more confident reading out loud since she had been reading to her baby. She also values the "cuddly" time reading together encourages: "It's the only time he comes for a cuddle. We talk together... When I started I was amazed that books would grab the attention of such a little baby and it's got even better!" NB: The researcher noted that this mother struggled with reading some words but is VERY positive about reading to baby. He makes lots of responses, recognises books, gets books for presents, and Mum*

has growing knowledge. She hopes he'll be a strong reader and understand what's expected [in terms of behaviour] at storytime. She hopes that by the time he gets to school he will, "still be excited by books".

### 2.3 Attitudes to Bookstart

There is an abundance of quantitative and qualitative evidence to show that Bookstart is valued by those parents/carers who encounter it. 100% of the case-study parents/carers who received the Bookstart pack reported that they were 'pleased' to receive it; the vast majority liked the books, used the placemats, and generally indicated that they found the pack valuable. The tables below show the response to the individual components of the pack:

**Figure 3**

Did you find <i>Babies Love Books</i>	%
Very useful?	30.9
Quite useful?	48.5
Not useful?	19.1
didn't receive (1)	1.5

What did you think of the books in the pack:	%
Enjoyable?	85.1
OK?	12.2
Didn't like them?	2.7

Did you think the bag was a good idea?	%
Yes	97.3
No	2.7

Do you use the placemat? (2 <sup>nd</sup> IV Do you still use the placemat?)	1 <sup>st</sup> IV %	2 <sup>nd</sup> IV %
Yes	64.9	54.3*
No	32.4	45.7
Didn't receive (2)	2.7	N/a

\*this may include new users who found the placemat too sharp for younger babies).

Many of the quotations cited above include comments which show that Bookstart *is* valued and *does* make a difference. There were effectively no negative comments about the programme, though a substantial proportion of the respondents said they did not feel Bookstart had changed their behaviour. Many did, however, feel it had reinforced and stimulated their existing belief in the importance of bringing books and babies together. The favourable comments about Bookstart are too many to list (all the case study files are available for inspection), but selected typical, spontaneous remarks that indicate the value attributed by parents and carers to the Sainsbury's Bookstart programme are included in the comments from parents/carers included throughout this report.

It is important to state that researchers were not asked to demonstrate that Bookstart *is* effective, but to collect evidence about *whether or not* it can be regarded as effective. The research team had no connection with Booktrust, were not briefed by, never met (in the context of Bookstart), and were not told about the contribution of Professor Kimberley Reynolds, who is on the Booktrust board and the Bookstart committee, and were not given the impression that it mattered what the results of their observations were.

Perhaps the best measure of the importance of the Bookstart pack to parents/carers is the extent to which they value the guides prepared with them in mind as opposed to the primary texts for babies. It is, therefore, significant that satisfaction was expressed by 79% of parents/carers with the *Babies Love Books* guides, which provide basic information about how to share books with babies and toddlers. While almost one fifth of parents/carers, for whatever reason found the information redundant or even

patronising, and this is something that needs to be taken on board for the future, there may be no way of reaching all groups effectively. The difficulty can be seen in the different reactions from those case-study adults who are professionals in the areas of child development/care. While some did not feel they needed the information, there were others who found it useful. A good example is the professional nursery nurse (child minder for baby 73) who remarked: *"The pack made me think about how valuable the skill of reading is, and that if you cannot read you cannot fully participate in society"*. After the baby in her care received the Bookstart pack, the nursery nurse was motivated to join the local library.

One area where many parents and child development specialists are interested in the possible benefits of Bookstart is in children's language development and speech. At this stage it is too early to measure what impact the Bookstart programme may have, and this was not a designated area of investigation in the NCRCL observation, but it is clear that many parents believe it has a beneficial impact on their babies. For instance:

*Baby 119: "My husband and I both had speech problems and saw speech therapists when we were young and hope that reading together will help 'D' to speak properly"*.

*This mother also said that she found 'Babies Need Books' very useful, and that Bookstart changed her ideas about sharing books with young children.*

*Baby 6's mother, too, stressed the developmental benefits she associates with Bookstart. Although 'S' has an older sibling, the reading she does as a consequence of Bookstart has*

made her more aware of 'S''s development. They now go to the library every week because of the information in the pack, and she sees books in a different context.

Another mother links language acquisition with reading after Bookstart:

*Baby 115's mother remarked: "I can see she's saying words and recognising pictures and saying names in the books. I didn't think books would help like that before.... It has made a difference. If the Health Visitor hadn't given me the books, I probably wouldn't have looked at books with her until she was much older".*

*Baby 38: This baby was premature and his mother is very conscious of his development. Since starting with Bookstart, she's seen him grow "by leaps and bounds".*

*Baby 43: This boy has two older siblings (one in the 3 – 5 group, one in the 6 – 10 group). Bookstart has led to his Mum linking reading with speech development and deciding that "she should spend more individual time reading with her Bookstart baby".*

Significantly, all the adults in the selected case-studies (see section 3) credit Bookstart with helping language development, and at the national conference in October and the ASCEL meeting in Nottingham (4 April, 2001), librarians reported that they felt this was an area which should be developed as Bookstart evolves. Some are already putting together lists of books for babies who are waiting to see speech therapists or whose

parents are seeking advice about how to use books to help with their babies' language development.

## 2.4 Selected studies

Because the purpose of undertaking the case studies was not only to provide more detailed insights into the impact of Bookstart generally, but also to look specifically at its impact on those families who belong to groups associated with educational failure and disaffection, specific attention has been given to representative cases that can be considered as belonging (or potentially belonging) to this category. These were identified by sifting the sample to find those who gave negative responses to a number of the following questions:

- 'Are you a confident reader?'
- 'Did you know the rhymes on the placemat?'
- 'Would you have thought of sharing these rhymes with your child?'
- 'Before receiving the Bookstart pack did you think that sharing books with a baby was [not valuable]?'
- 'Can you remember any books that were read to you as a child?'
- 'Can you remember any books you read as a child?'
- 'Can you remember any books you enjoyed reading as a child?'

In addition, the responses of those whose attitudes to the effects of reading with their baby underwent the most noticeable change were scrutinised, as were those who identified themselves as parents/carers of ethnic-minority or 'working-class' babies<sup>7</sup>, with special attention being given to those who responded in connection with male babies. On the basis of this process, 4 files were selected for discussion. These are the files of babies 37, 91, 113, and 116. Entirely through the results of the sort criteria, all but one of the

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<sup>7</sup> As in the quantitative data, 'class' is deduced on the basis of newspaper readership. The labels assigned on this basis assume readerships of a range of national newspapers to consist

case study babies are female. Although this is not in line with the actual composition of the sample, and, as has already been pointed out, there are a small number of identified differences between the way adults present books to male and female infants, it is what came to light on the basis of pre-agreed sort criteria. For this reason, these 4 case studies are set out in some detail.

### Baby 37

This girl is the first child in her family. Both parents work, and the baby's great aunt (suggests familial continuity) had unexpectedly to bring her to the first observation, which took place in Newcastle, because her mother, a social worker, was required at work. Usually when baby 'F's mother is at work, 'F' is looked after by a child minder. 'F' is read to every day, is a member of the local library, and visits the library every week. Observation of the great aunt reading shows good practice: 'F' frequently has her attention drawn to the pictures, the adult makes animal noises as she reads, and relates what they see in the book to 'F's' experience. 'F' is given time to enjoy the book at her own speed, makes noises, and signals that she remembers the books shared. 'F' belongs to a white, aspirant family (Mum has just done a degree course to top up her first professional qualification). Her carers are still using the placemat for rhymes (but not as a placemat), and at the second observation, her mother reported that they "*read several times a day,*" and that she has become more confident about reading to her baby: "*I am more confident about what she enjoys and know more about what she would like to pick – she's expressing preferences even now at 15 months*". This baby has acquired more

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predominantly of either skilled professionals (ABC1) or unskilled, non-professionals (C2DE) rather than actual soci-economic or class groups.

books (both purchased and in the form of presents), and is taken to the library once a month, where she and her mother *"sometimes don't borrow but just read together"*. Her mother's ideas about sharing books have changed: *"I used to think you should show books because it's important, but now we do it for fun because she enjoys it and she reacts to books."* Mum's ideas about the way the pair interact have also changed: *"It creates a really nice bond – I refer to books all the time – 'that's in your book'. If she's upset, I'll get her favourite book to make her happy again"*. Similarly, why and how they share books seems different to Mum after Bookstart. Now she thinks sharing books is, *"Stimulating and good for her emotionally. Good for concentration. 'F' matches things, identifies things"*. As for broader issues about reading and reading skills, Mum is dyslexic and worries about 'F' inheriting this. She doesn't want *"to put her off books and lose interest because she finds them hard"*. 'F' also reads with Gran, and has her own books there. The researcher notes: 'F' shows her books to her dolly. She likes small books that she can control herself. Brings books to Mum, turns pages, decides when they read. Mum says, *"Bookstart has made me more aware of the importance of books. I've taken more notice of what 'F' gets out of books because I've been part of the project (heightened awareness). I've noticed her copying actions – from games, to how to open and close books, turn pages, etc. I hope she'll be more confident with books and know I and my husband are always approachable to read and help at home because of the project.... It's really nice to be a part of this and know that what we are doing is worth while"*.



### Baby 91

This girl baby is an only child, the daughter of a Black-African mother. Mum was not a member of the library at the time of the first observation, and didn't know where it was, but she was clearly keen to foster reading and reported that she and her daughter "*read all the time*". Because of Bookstart, she said that she intended to locate the local library (but had not done so by the time of the second observation). At home, this family speaks both Kinyaranda and English.

The researcher notes that the mother's interaction with the baby was mixed at the time of the first observation: although she never related the book to her child's own experience, and tended to read in a monotone, her general mode of interaction was to let the baby do what she wanted with the book. And baby 'E' gave very positive signals about reading: she generated lots of verbal responses, including trying to read books in what the researcher calls her 'own' language (whether this included elements of Kinyaranda that the researcher couldn't recognise, is not clear).

Mother 91 found *Babies Need Books* very useful. She says her Health Visitor didn't tell her anything about the pack; but she learned the placemat rhymes from a friend and her daughter. This mother did not grow up with a tradition of reading to children and babies as her culture operates through storytelling: she wasn't read to and didn't read, but was *told* traditional stories as a child. Perhaps as a consequence, she does not regard herself as a 'confident' reader, but she *is* confident about reading to baby 'E'. Although she says she values the Bookstart aims, mother 91 has not acquired more books for her baby, has

not been to the library since receiving the Bookstart materials or after the first observation. However, she told the researcher that she had noticed, "*how much 'E' enjoys books – she smiles a lot and she gets involved*", and says the Bookstart pack helped her realise this. She says she reads more with 'E' now because of Bookstart, and intends to join the local library for both herself and baby 'E'.

At the second observation, there were several signs that reading is taking place and that both are enjoying sharing books. For instance, they still use placemat and say the rhymes, and the mother reported that she feels more confident about reading. The researcher's notes say, 'Mum feels more relaxed and enjoys reading to her daughter because her daughter enjoys books and often brings books to her asking for them to be read.' This mother's ideas about the best age to start sharing books with young children had also changed at the second observation, from 6 months to 6 weeks. Moreover, although the pair have not yet succeeded in joining the library, Mum has bought more books for 'E', and also borrowed them from friends. She has also been thinking about the reading relationship, worrying that it is an exclusive activity, but also linking it to language development.

Mum's reading skills also improved between the two observations. The way she shared books with 'E' at the second observation was more interactive: she asked questions and used the book to start other activities. Mother 91 thinks Bookstart is "*a really good idea which helps babies' language development*". The gift of books encouraged her to read to

her baby, and she says that if she had not been involved in the Sainsbury's Bookstart programme, she would not have started reading to her baby at such a young age.

### Baby 113

This baby girl has Black-African parents, an older brother (3-5 group), and a Czech nanny. At the first observation she was tired and uncooperative. Her nanny, a trained nursery nurse, was supportive, and encouraging. Although not entirely confident about reading herself, nanny was confident about reading to baby 'T'. Before Bookstart, she, *"Didn't pay much attention to reading books....Bookstart made me read with her. Now we could spend two hours just looking at books!"* Before the Bookstart intervention, she thought the best time to start sharing books with a young child was one year or older. Since they received the Bookstart pack, 'T' has had books bought for her, books given as presents, and books handed down from her older brother.

'T's nanny says she, *"Can recommend the pack to anybody."* Reading has, *"helped 'T' to recognise animals. She sees a picture of a dog, then recognises a dog in street"*.

Significantly, this nanny reports that Bookstart changed the way she thought: it, *"made me recognise that I need to give her more attention intellectually"*. She also feels her understanding of the purpose of sharing books with babies has *"definitely"* changed. She says Bookstart is, *"Very helpful. Good ideas given. Reading is more fun- and better than watching TV!"* The observer noted that this nanny's reading skills had improved considerably, with much more interaction being introduced to the activity of sharing books. Nanny instigated games, and both nanny and baby found sharing books more fun.

### Baby 116

This boy baby was one of the few who was observed interacting with both parents. His father brought him to the first observation; his mother to the second. At the first interview, Dad said that his son was read to every day, they visit the library once a week (baby is a member) and while reading, the researcher noted, Dad frequently drew the boy's attention to the pictures in the book. But, he failed to relate what was happening in the book to the baby's experience, didn't let 'J' follow his own interests, didn't allow much exploration time, and tended to read in a monotone. Dad initiated no games, read exactly what was in the text, and didn't remember *Babies Need Books*. 'J' did make some verbal responses, and Dad says his ideas about reading to babies have changed: he now thinks that, *"that pictures and first word books are great for learning – I didn't really before"*. Father 116 was also the only parent to mention the multicultural dimension of some books: *"I like the way he's seeing pictures of black people and children in books because he doesn't see many here"*.

This father, who didn't know the rhymes on the placemat and so wouldn't have thought of using the rhymes with his son, thinks Bookstart has made a difference. He's acquired more books for 'J' and now thinks reading, *"will bring him on in speech and mental development for the future"*.

Mother 116 came to the second observation. Her reading style was different – she related the book to 'J's' experience, for instance. But though 'J' pointed to the book, he made no verbal responses. The family has continued to acquire books since the first

observation, and visits the library once a month, but Mum says, *"It's hard to tell whether it's the books which have had an effect on his development. It's probably helping to develop his speech – he says 'dog' now when he sees one! (has a book with a dog)"*. However, she does think it has helped her interact with her baby: *"It gives us something to do and time together"*. She also thinks it has changed her idea of why she shares books with 'J'; now she does it, *"to improve his language and encourage him to talk. To get him used to reading. To get him into the habit of looking at a book before going to bed"*. 'J' handled a book in front of observer – selecting one, and turning it right way up with front cover showing. Mum says he likes looking at pictures in books with photographic illustrations; especially animals, and makes some of the noises. Mother 116 hopes he will take, *"a lot of interest in books when he reaches school age. I was never one to sit down with books when I was a child, but I know it's good for his language and his learning"*.

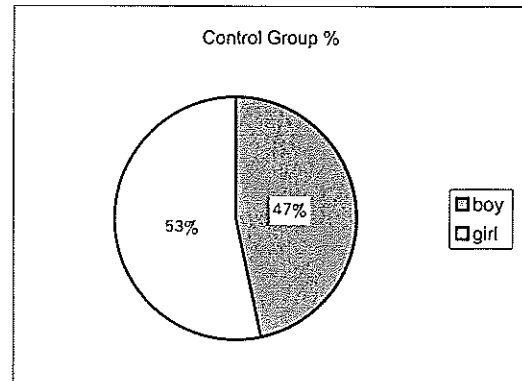
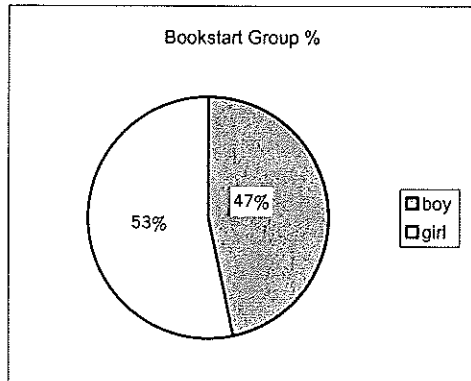
These case studies provide a good overview of the responses to Bookstart by those who were observed during the NCRCL phase of the research. They show the very positive attitude to the programme typical of case-study parents, and demonstrate the way the Sainsbury's Bookstart Programme has affected the behaviour of many families in a sustained and conscious way. Further evidence of attitudes and behaviour is contained in the individual tables that comprise section 3.

### 3. Question by question tables of responses

#### ABOUT THE BABY

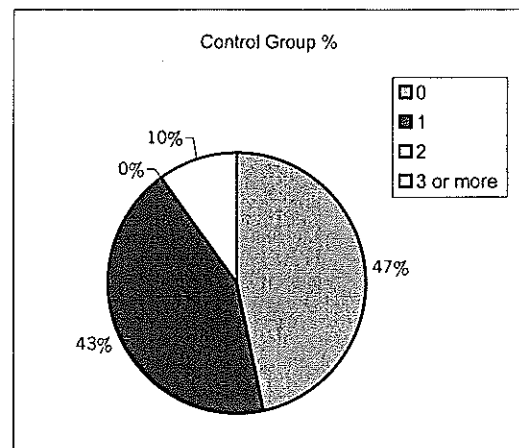
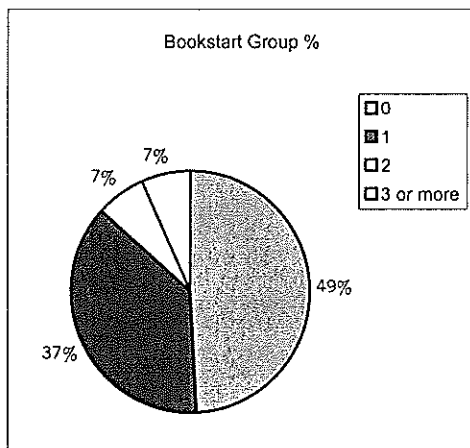
Is your baby a boy or a girl?

	Bookstart Group		Control Group	
	Number	%	Number	%
boy	35	46.7	14	46.7
girl	40	53.3	16	53.3



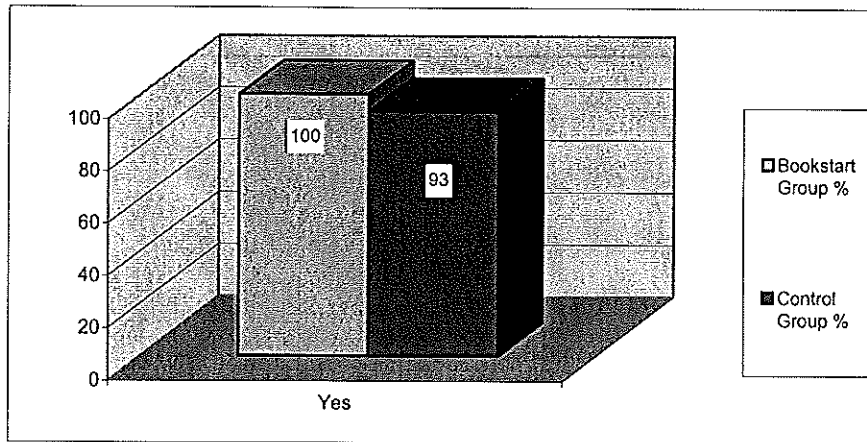
How many other children do you have?

	Bookstart Group %	Control Group %
0	49.3	46.7
1	37.3	43.3
2	6.7	0.0
3 or more	6.7	10.0



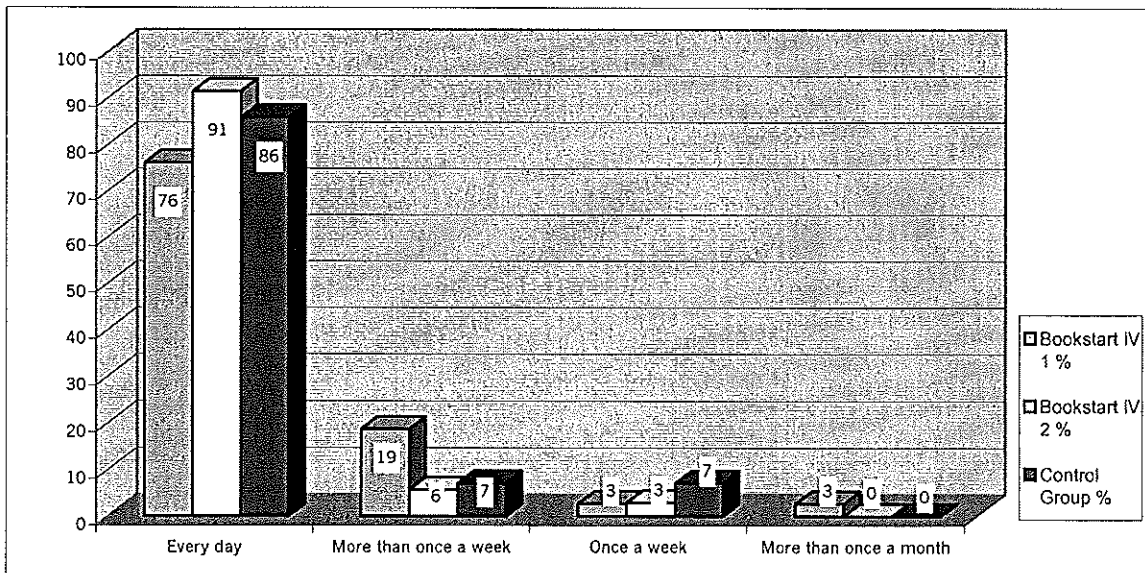
Do you read or look at books with your baby?

	Bookstart Group %	Control Group %
Yes	100.0	93.3
No	0.0	6.7



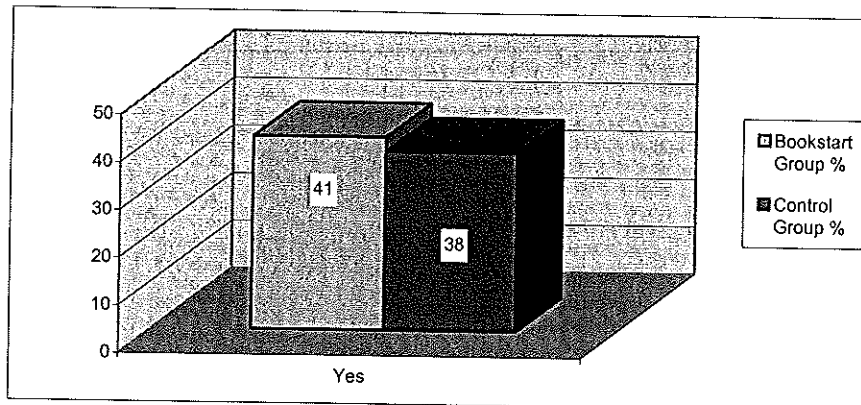
If yes, how often would you say you look at books or read together:

	Bookstart IV 1 %	Bookstart IV 2 %	Control Group %
Every day	76.0	91.4	85.7
More than once a week	18.7	5.7	7.1
Once a week	2.7	2.9	7.1
More than once a month	2.7	0.0	0.0
Once a month	0.0	0.0	0.0



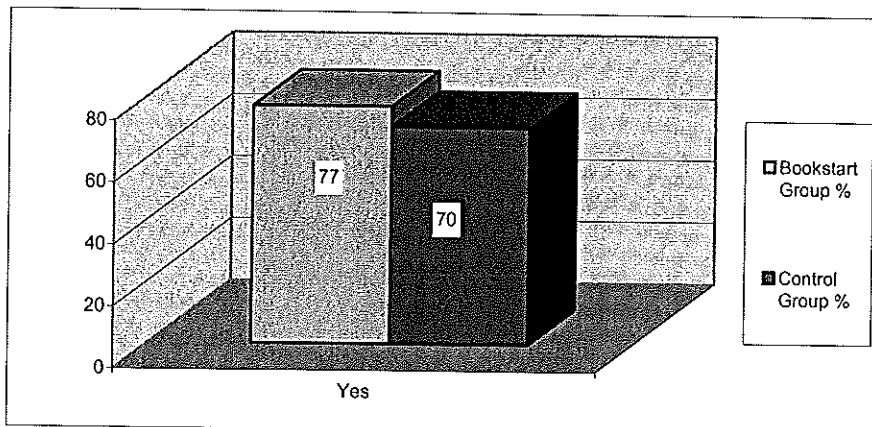
Is your baby a member of the local library?

	Bookstart Group %	Control Group %
Yes	40.5	37.5
No	59.5	62.5



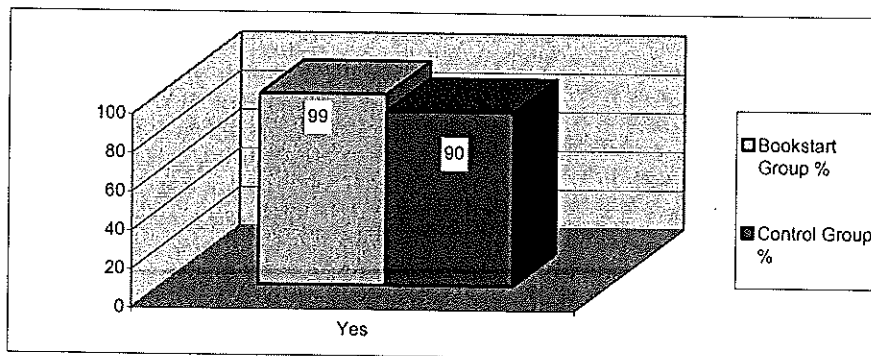
Were you aware that babies and children of any age can join the local library?

	Bookstart Group %	Control Group %
Yes	76.7	70.0
No	23.3	30.0



Does your baby have books of her/his own?

	Bookstart Group %	Control Group %
Yes	98.6	89.7
No	1.4	10.3





ABOUT THE BABY'S PARENT OR CARER

Is your age:

	Bookstart Group %	Control Group %
Under 16	0.0	0.0
16 - 24	12.0	3.3
25 - 34	54.7	36.7
35 - 44	30.7	23.3
45 - 54	2.7	16.7
55+	0.0	20.0

If you feel you belong to one of the following groups and want to tell us which it is, please mark one of the boxes below.

	Bookstart Group %	Control Group %
Bangladeshi	0.0	0.0
Black-African	2.7	3.3
Black-Caribbean	4.0	6.7
Black-other	0.0	0.0
Chinese	0.0	0.0
Indian	2.7	0.0
Pakistani	0.0	0.0
White	86.5	86.7
Other	4.1	3.3

Which newspaper would you say you read most often?

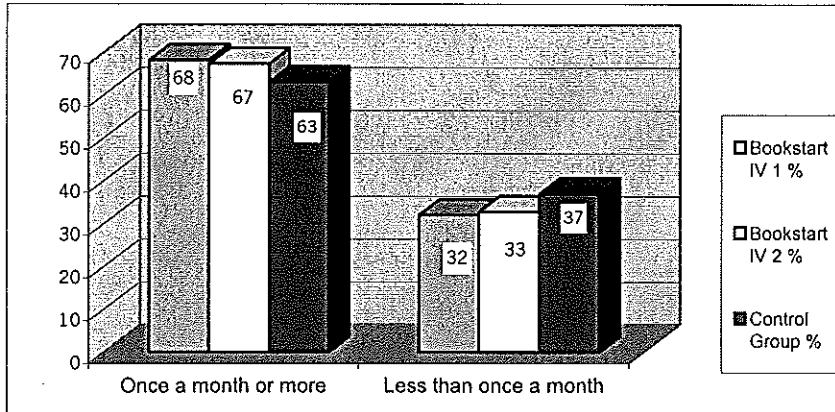
	Bookstart Group %	Control Group %
The Express	10.6	16.0
The Guardian	4.5	4.0
The Independent	0.0	0.0
The Mail	25.8	8.0
The Mirror	16.7	32.0
The Sun	18.2	20.0
The Telegraph	1.5	4.0
The Times	3.0	0.0
Another	19.7	16.0

Are you a member of the local library?

	Bookstart Group %	Control Group %
Yes	73.3	73.3
No	26.7	26.7

How often do you visit the local library? ( and 'how often now' - 2nd interview)

	Bookstart IV 1 %	Bookstart IV 2 %	Control Group %
More than once a week	8.0	7.2	7.4
Once a week	18.7	18.6	11.1
More than once a month	18.7	20.0	22.2
Once a month	22.7	21.4	22.2
Once or twice a year	9.3	12.8	22.2
Never	22.7	20.0	14.8



Can you remember any books that were read to you as a child?

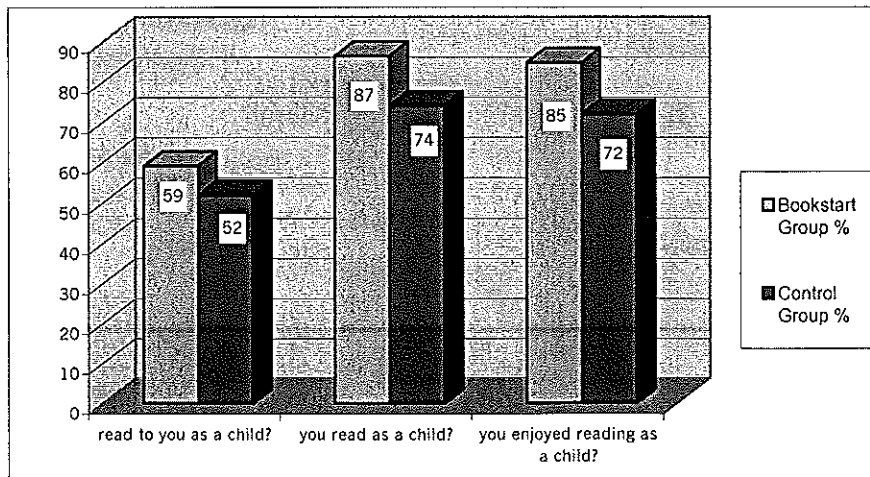
	Bookstart Group %	Control Group %
Yes	59.2	51.9
No	40.8	48.1

Can you remember any books you read as a child?

	Bookstart Group %	Control Group %
Yes	86.5	74.1
No	13.5	25.9

Can you remember any books you enjoyed reading as a child?

	Bookstart Group %	Control Group %
Yes	84.9	72.0
No	15.1	28.0

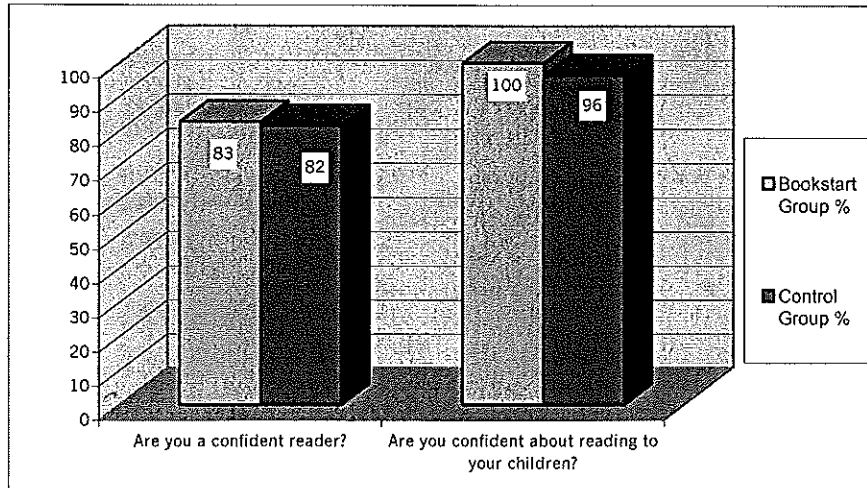


Are you a confident reader?

	Bookstart Group %	Control Group %
Yes	82.7	81.5
No	5.3	11.1
It depends	12.0	7.4

Are you confident about reading to your children?

	Bookstart Group %	Control Group %
Yes	100.0	96.3
No	0.0	3.7



Do you read newspapers, magazines, computer screens, books?

	Bookstart Group %	Control Group %
Frequently	76.1	72.7
Sometimes	23.9	22.7
Never	0.0	4.5

#### OPINIONS, EXPRESSED BY PARENTS/CARERS RELATING TO BABIES AND READING

BG: Before receiving the Bookstart pack, did you think that sharing books with a baby is:

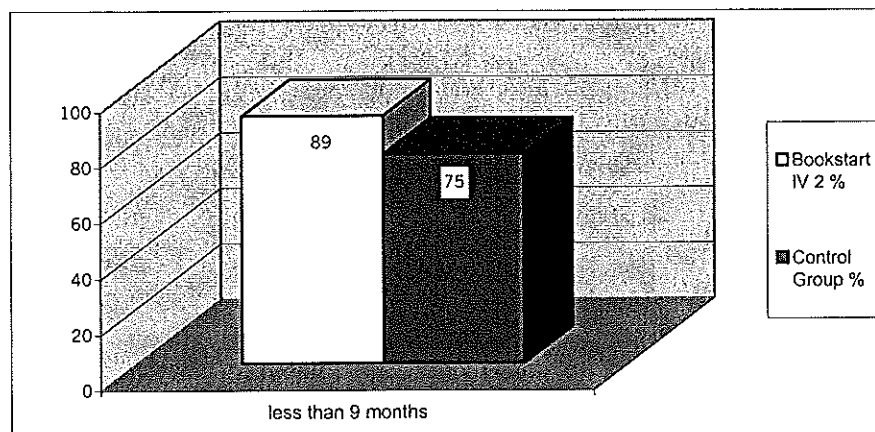
CG: Do you think that sharing books with a baby is:

	Bookstart Group %	Control Group %
valuable	89.3	96.6
not valuable	9.3	3.4

B6: Before receiving the Bookstart pack, what did you think was the right age to start sharing books with children? ('what do you now think' 2nd IV)

CG: What do you think is the right age to start sharing books with children?

	Bookstart IV 1 %	Bookstart IV 2 %	Control Group %
6 weeks	45.1	49.2	35.7
6 months	32.4	39.7	39.3
9 months	7.0	6.3	10.7
older	15.5	4.8	14.3



#### OPINIONS, EXPRESSED BY PARENTS/CARERS, RELATING TO THE BOOKSTART PACK

Did you find *Babies Love Books*

	Bookstart Group %
Very useful?	30.9
Quite useful?	48.5
Not useful?	19.1
didn't receive (1)	1.5

What did you think of the books in the pack

	Bookstart Group %
Enjoyable	85.1
OK	12.2
Didn't like them	2.7

Did the health visitor give you the pack?

	Bookstart Group %
Yes	97.2
No	2.8

Did s/he tell you anything about it?

	Bookstart Group %
Yes	67.6
No	32.4

Do you think the bag was good idea?

	Bookstart Group %
Yes	97.3
No	2.7

Do you use the placemat?	Bookstart IV 1 %	Do you still use the placemat?	Bookstart IV 2 %
Yes	64.9	54.3	
No	32.4	45.7	
didn't receive (2)	2.7		

Did you know the rhymes on the placemat?	Bookstart Group %
Yes	90.5
No	6.8
not applicable	2.7

Would you have thought of sharing these rhymes with your child?	Bookstart Group %
Yes	86.7
No	10.7
not applicable	2.7

Have you taken part in any events linked to Bookstart? (and since last interview)	Bookstart IV 1 %	Bookstart IV 2 %
Yes	6.8	5.7
No	93.2	94.3

How did you feel when you received the books?	Bookstart Group %
Pleased	100.0
Not sure	0.0
Uneasy/Anxious	0.0
Questioning	0.0

#### OTHER QUESTIONS RELATING TO BABIES AND BOOKS

Since receiving the pack have you acquired more books for your child? (2nd IV- 'since last interview')	Bookstart IV 1 %	Bookstart IV 2 %
Yes	97.3	97.1
No	2.7	2.9

If yes, were these bought?	Bookstart IV 1 %	Bookstart IV 2 %
Yes	90.7	82.9
No	9.3	17.1
Given as presents?		
Yes	73.3	81.4
No	26.7	18.6
other?		
Yes	25.3	24.3
No	74.7	75.7

BG: Have you been to the library since receiving the pack? (2nd IV - 'since last interview')

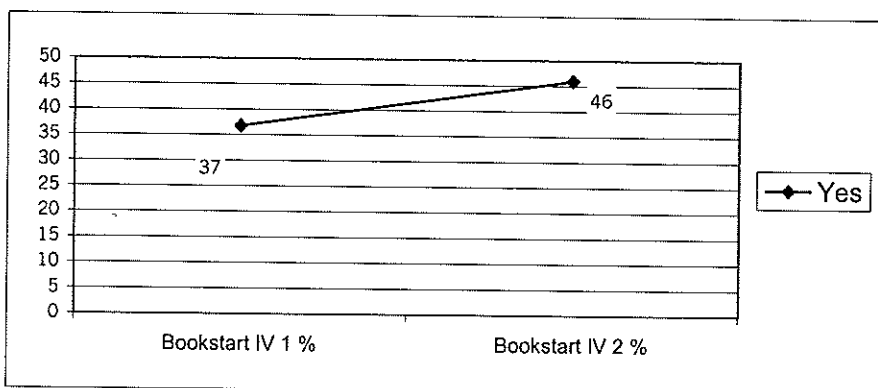
	Bookstart IV 1 %	Bookstart IV 2 %
Yes	74.3	72.9
No	25.7	27.1

CG: Have you been to the library since your baby was born?

	Control Group %
Yes	80.0
No	20.0

BG: Have your thoughts about sharing books with babies changed (since receiving the pack) with regard to the development of your child?

	Bookstart IV 1 %	Bookstart IV 2 %
Yes	36.8	46.0
No	63.2	54.0

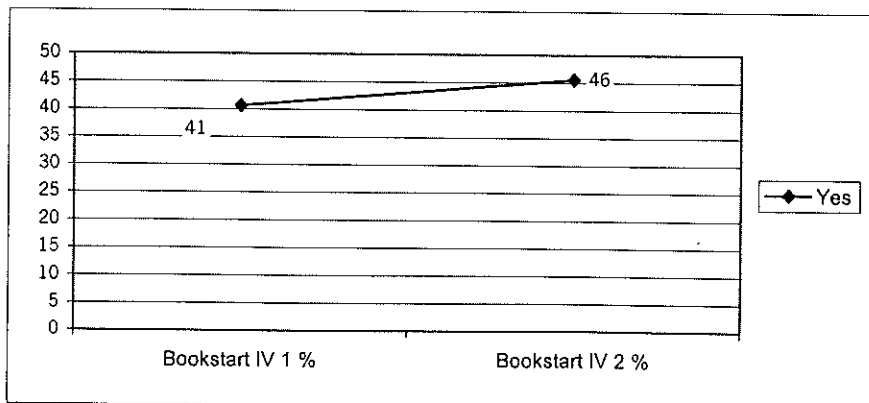


CG: Do you think that sharing books with babies affects the development of your child?

	Control Group %
Yes	82.8
No	17.2

BG: Have your thoughts about sharing books with babies changed (since receiving the pack) with regard to your interaction with your child?

	Bookstart IV 1 %	Bookstart IV 2 %
Yes	40.6	45.6
No	59.4	54.4

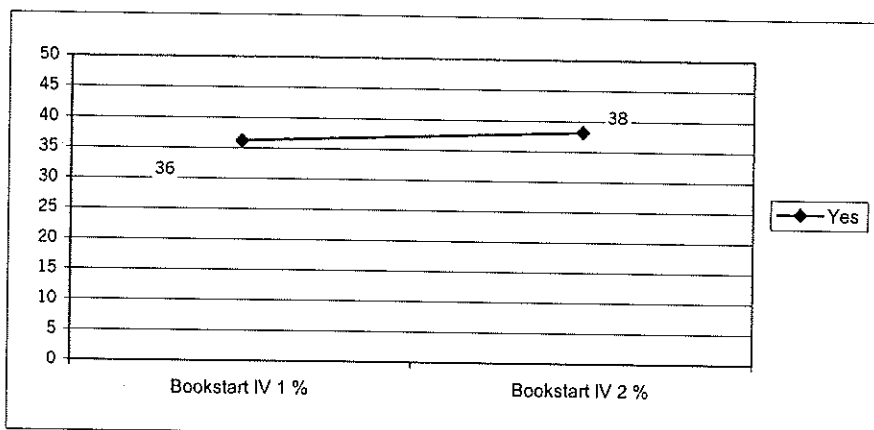


CG: Do you think that sharing books with babies affects your interaction with your child?

	Control Group %
Yes	82.8
No	17.2

BG: Have your thoughts about sharing books with babies changed (since receiving the pack) with regard to the purpose of sharing books with a young child?

	Bookstart IV 1 %	Bookstart IV 2 %
Yes	36.2	38.2
No	63.8	61.8

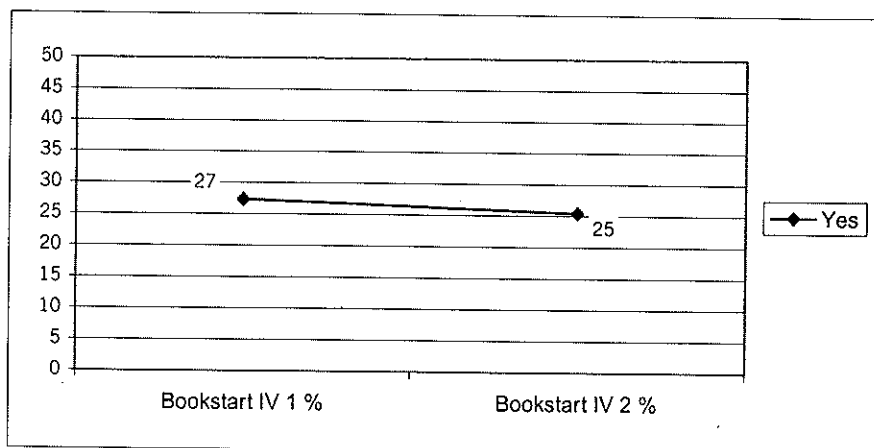


CG: Since your baby was born, have you thought about the purpose of sharing books with a young child?

	Control Group %
Yes	78.6
No	21.4

BG: Have your thoughts about issues to do with reading changed (since receiving the pack)?

	Bookstart IV 1 %	Bookstart IV 2 %
Yes	27.3	25.4
No	72.7	74.6



CG: Since your baby was born, have you thought about issues to do with reading?

	Control Group %
Yes	75.9
No	24.1

## OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

This section is listed for information, however, it should be stressed that the observation data are linked to explanatory comments and contextual information and do not lend themselves to this kind of quantitative presentation.

	Bookstart IV 1 %	Bookstart IV 2 %	Control Group %
Does the adult draw the child's attention to the pictures?			
Frequently	83.3	87.3	73.3
Sometimes	10.6	9.9	16.7
Never	6.1	2.8	10.0
Does the adult draw the child's attention to the print?			
Frequently	9.2	10.0	20.0
Sometimes	20.0	27.1	10.0
Never	70.8	62.9	70.0
Does the adult relate things of interest to the child's own experience?			
Frequently	29.5	37.1	35.7
Sometimes	42.6	38.6	25.0
Never	27.9	24.3	39.3
Does the adult let the child handle the book?			
Frequently	89.4	84.3	82.8
Sometimes	9.1	12.9	17.2
Never	1.5	1.4	0.0
What does the child do with the book?			
Hold it?	62.1	64.8	53.3
Pull it?	36.4	21.1	20.0
Hit it?	33.3	14.1	16.7
Put it in her/his mouth?	25.8	7.0	23.3
Push it away?	16.7	5.6	6.7
Does the adult allow the child time to follow her/his own interests?			
Frequently	68.8	58.6	75.9
Sometimes	23.4	38.6	17.2
Never	7.8	2.9	6.9
Is the child allowed all the time he or she wants to do this?			
Frequently	68.3	69.1	67.9
Sometimes	19.0	27.9	21.4
Never	12.7	2.9	10.7
Does the adult vary intonation in order to bring the text alive?			
Frequently	78.8	72.9	82.8
Sometimes	13.6	24.3	13.8
Never	7.6	2.9	3.4
Does the child make any sounds?			
Frequently	47.6	71.0	50.0
Sometimes	39.7		332.1
Never	12.7	4.3	17.9



#### 4. Recommendations

A number of clear recommendations can be extracted from the data and other forms of information collected as part of this evaluation. First, and most fundamental, is the need to rethink the place of Bookstart as part of a national strategy for literacy. At the beginning of this nation-wide roll-out of the project, it was assumed that Bookstart was an independent programme which had to keep its identity visible and distinct to give maximum exposure to the sponsor and the programme. The need to prove its educational value was also thought to be paramount. In the course of the evaluation it has become clear that a) the educational benefits of such a scheme are widely accepted and b) that the role of Bookstart is no longer to teach parents/carers about the value of sharing books with babies but to convert that knowledge into action. Accordingly, the NCRCL recommendations are:

- That Booktrust should reconceive and represent Bookstart as the first stage in a national strategy for literacy.
- That the Bookstart team should work closely with other literacy initiatives to design and deliver this strategy in a co-ordinated and complementary way.
- That the distinctions between the national and local delivery of Bookstart should be more clear, with the Booktrust offices being responsible for areas such as fund-raising, lobbying, design, training and research, while local organisations concentrate on co-ordination, effective delivery, and working with complementary literacy initiatives to ensure Bookstart adults as well as children receive the support they need.
- That care be taken to ensure that Bookstart packs continue to be of high quality.
- That the Bookstart team builds on the guidance included for parents/carers and develops more ways of disseminating good practice.
- That the links between health visitors and librarians are developed and improved; especially as these relate to the delivery of the packs and subsequent contact with the Bookstart babies and carers.
- That, in tandem with health visitors and other appropriate professionals, the role Bookstart can play in speech/language development is fully understood and exploited.

## 5. Financial summary

<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>£</b>
Pay costs: researchers, project co-ordinator	30,433
Travel & subsistence: researchers	1,725
Post/telephone (local researchers)	105
<b>Total</b>	<b>32,263</b>

<b>PROJECT FUNDING</b>	<b>£</b>
Sainsbury's: received to date	23,850
Sainsbury's: final instalment due	7,950
Overspend funded by NCRCL	463
<b>Total</b>	<b>32,263</b>

**5. Appendices**

**Appendix 1: Marketing Measures questionnaire 1**

**Appendix 2: Marketing Measures questionnaire 2**

**Appendix 3: Observation Schedule & Interview 1**

**Appendix 4: Observation Schedule & Interview 2**

**Appendix 5: Observation Schedule & Interview - Control Group**

## Appendix 1: Marketing Measures questionnaire 1



Sainsbury's  
Bookstart

Clinic/centre name: \_\_\_\_\_

Scheme name: \_\_\_\_\_

Today's date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Questionnaire 1

Book Trust and Sainsbury's have set up the Bookstart scheme which aims to provide free books for babies. We would be most grateful if you would complete this short questionnaire to give us your views. All replies are confidential and will only be used in evaluating the Bookstart project. Please print clearly in blue or black ink.

#### About your baby

1. Your baby's name: First name: \_\_\_\_\_ Family name: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Your baby's date of birth:

3. Boy  Girl

4. How many other children do you have in the following age groups?

2yrs or under  3yrs-5yrs  6yrs-10yrs  11yrs-17yrs

#### About books and reading

5. Have you heard of the Bookstart scheme before today? Yes  No

6. Do you read or look at books with your baby? Yes  No

If yes, how often would you say you look at books or read together:

(Please tick the relevant box)

- Every day
- More than once a week
- Once a week
- More than once a month
- Once a month

7. Are you a member of the local library? Yes  No

8. How often do you visit the local library: (please tick the relevant box)

- More than once a week
- Once a week
- More than once a month
- Once a month
- Once or twice a year
- Never

9. Is your baby a member of the local library? Yes  No

10. Were you already aware that babies and children of any age can join the local library?

Yes  No

11. Does your baby have books of their own?

Yes  No

### About you

12. First name: \_\_\_\_\_ Family Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Your address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_

13. Your age: (please tick the relevant box)

- Under 16
- 16-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55+

14. If you feel you belong to one of the following groups and want to tell us which it is, please mark one of the boxes below. The Commission for Racial Equality has recommended the following categories:

- Bangladeshi
- Black - African
- Black - Caribbean
- Black - Other
- Chinese
- Indian
- Pakistani
- White
- Other Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

15. Which language(s) do you and your family speak at home?

16. Which newspaper would you say you read most often ?

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Express     | <input type="checkbox"/> The Mirror    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Guardian    | <input type="checkbox"/> The Sun       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Independent | <input type="checkbox"/> The Telegraph |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Mail        | <input type="checkbox"/> The Times     |

Another Please Specify : \_\_\_\_\_

Book Trust would like to find out more about how Bookstart is working from people like you who have taken part in the scheme and you may be contacted again in the future. If you do not want to be contacted again regarding Bookstart, please tick this box.

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS FORM

**Appendix 2: Marketing Measures questionnaire 2**



Sainsbury's  
Bookstart

Clinic/centre name: \_\_\_\_\_

Scheme name: \_\_\_\_\_

Today's date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Questionnaire 2

Some time ago you and your child received the Sainsbury's Bookstart pack. We would be grateful if you would complete this follow-up questionnaire to help us find out more about your views. All replies are confidential and will only be used in evaluating the Bookstart project. Please print clearly in blue or black ink.

#### About your child

1. Your child's name: First name: \_\_\_\_\_ Family name: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Your child's date of birth:

3. Boy  Girl

4. How many other children do you have in the following age groups?

2yrs or under  3yrs-5yrs  6yrs-10yrs  11yrs-17yrs

5. Do you read or look at books with your child? Yes  No

If yes, how often would you say you look at books or read together:

(Please tick the relevant box)

- Every day
- More than once a week
- Once a week
- More than once a month
- Once a month

6. Since receiving your Bookstart pack, do you feel that

(Please tick those that apply)

- You look at books more with your child
- You are more aware of the fact that children can enjoy and benefit from books at an early age
- Your child has received books as gifts
- You are aware that your children can join the library at any age

7. Since receiving the Bookstart pack, have you/your child joined your local library? (Please tick yes or no)

You: Yes  No   
Your child: Yes  No



8. How often do you visit the local library?

- More than once a week
- Once a week
- More than once a month
- Once a month
- Once or twice a year
- Never

About you

9. First name: \_\_\_\_\_ Family Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Your address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_

10. Your age: (please tick the relevant box)

- Under 16
- 16-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55+

11. If you feel you belong to one of the following groups and want to tell us which it is, please mark one of the boxes below. The Commission for Racial Equality has recommended the following categories:

- Bangladeshi
- Black - African
- Black - Caribbean
- Black - Other
- Chinese
- Indian
- Pakistani
- White
- Other

Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

12. Which language(s) do you and your family speak at home?

\_\_\_\_\_

13. Which newspaper would you say you read most often?

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Express     | <input type="checkbox"/> The Mirror    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Guardian    | <input type="checkbox"/> The Sun       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Independent | <input type="checkbox"/> The Telegraph |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Mail        | <input type="checkbox"/> The Times     |

Another Please Specify: \_\_\_\_\_

Book Trust would like to find out more about how Bookstart is working from people like you who have taken part in the scheme and you may be contacted again in the future.

If you do not want to be contacted again regarding Bookstart, please tick this box.

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS FORM

**Appendix 3: Observation Schedule & Interview 1**

Name:

Address:

### OBSERVATION SCHEDULE & INTERVIEW SHEET

RESEARCHERS WILL SPEND ABOUT ONE AND A HALF HOURS PER FAMILY, ALTHOUGH THE TIMESCALE WILL VARY ACCORDING TO CIRCUMSTANCES.

RESEARCHERS WILL ASK PARENTS/CARERS TO LOOK AT A BOOK WITH A CHILD WHILE THE RESEARCHER IS PRESENT AND RECORD THE SESSION BY TICKING APPROPRIATE BOXES AND JOTTING DOWN ANY ADDITIONAL COMMENTS/OBSERVATIONS MADE.

SOME QUESTIONS WILL REQUIRE A TICK IN ONE OF THE FREQUENTLY/SOMETIMES/ NEVER BOXES (A BOX FOR RECORDING INSTANCES, AS THEY OCCUR, IS AVAILABLE), OTHERS WILL SIMPLY REQUIRE A TICK IN THE APPROPRIATE RESPONSE BOX.

#### EXAMPLES:

Does the adult draw the child's attention to the pictures?

F

S

N

III IIII

Does the child's response to the book appear to be predominantly:  Positive?  Negative?

Have you taken part in any events linked to Bookstart?

Yes

No

OBSERVATION SCHEDULE:

Frequently - F      Sometimes - S      Never - N

Does the adult draw the child's attention to the pictures?  
\_\_\_\_\_

<input type="radio"/> F	<input type="radio"/> S	<input type="radio"/> N
-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------

Does the adult draw the child's attention to print?  
\_\_\_\_\_

<input type="radio"/> F	<input type="radio"/> S	<input type="radio"/> N
-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------

Does the adult relate things of interest to the child's own experience?  
\_\_\_\_\_

<input type="radio"/> F	<input type="radio"/> S	<input type="radio"/> N
-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------

Does the adult let the child handle the book?  
\_\_\_\_\_

<input type="radio"/> F	<input type="radio"/> S	<input type="radio"/> N
-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------

What does the child do with the book?  
\_\_\_\_\_

- Hold it?
- Pull it?
- Hit it?
- Put it in her/his mouth?
- Push it away?

Does the adult allow the child to follow her/his own interests?  
\_\_\_\_\_

<input type="radio"/> F	<input type="radio"/> S	<input type="radio"/> N
-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------

Is the child allowed all the time he or she wants to do this?  
\_\_\_\_\_

<input type="radio"/> F	<input type="radio"/> S	<input type="radio"/> N
-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------

Does the adult vary intonation in order to bring the text alive?  
\_\_\_\_\_

<input type="radio"/> F	<input type="radio"/> S	<input type="radio"/> N
-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------

Does the child make any sounds?  
\_\_\_\_\_

<input type="radio"/> F	<input type="radio"/> S	<input type="radio"/> N
-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------

Does the child's response to the book appear to be predominantly:  Positive?       Negative?

Does the adult read exactly what is in the text?  
\_\_\_\_\_

<input type="radio"/> F	<input type="radio"/> S	<input type="radio"/> N
-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------

Does the adult use the book as a starting point for a game?  
\_\_\_\_\_

<input type="radio"/> F	<input type="radio"/> S	<input type="radio"/> N
-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------

Does the adult ask the child questions arising from the book?  
\_\_\_\_\_

<input type="radio"/> F	<input type="radio"/> S	<input type="radio"/> N
-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------

Does the child appear to recognise the book?  
\_\_\_\_\_

<input type="radio"/> F	<input type="radio"/> S	<input type="radio"/> N
-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------

Is there a close physical contact between the adult and child?  
\_\_\_\_\_

<input type="radio"/> F	<input type="radio"/> S	<input type="radio"/> N
-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------

Is the book being held so that adult and child can both see it?  
\_\_\_\_\_

<input type="radio"/> F	<input type="radio"/> S	<input type="radio"/> N
-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------

INTERVIEW:

Did you find *Babies Love Books*

Very useful?

Quite useful?

Not useful?

What did you think of the books in the pack?

Enjoyable

OK

Didn't like them

Did the health visitor give you the pack?

Yes

No

Did s/he tell you anything about it?

Yes

No

Do you think the bag was a good idea?

Yes

No

Do you use the placemat?

Yes

No

Did you know the rhymes on the placemat?

Yes

No

Would you have thought of sharing these rhymes with your child?

Yes

No

Have you taken part in any events linked to Bookstart?

Yes

No

Can you remember any books that were read to you as a child?

Yes

No

\_\_\_\_\_

Can you remember any books you read as a child?

Yes

No

\_\_\_\_\_

Can you remember any books you enjoyed reading as a child?

Yes

No

\_\_\_\_\_

Are you a confident reader?

Yes

No

It depends

Are you confident about reading to your children?

Yes

No

Do you read newspapers, magazines, computer screens, books?

Frequently

Sometimes

Never

Before receiving the Bookstart pack:

Did you think that sharing books with a baby was

Valuable

Not valuable

What did you think was the right age to start sharing books with children?

6 weeks

6 months

9 months

Older

How long ago did you receive the Bookstart pack?

Under 3 months

3-6 months

Over 6 months

How did you feel when you received the books?

Pleased

Not sure

Uneasy/anxious

Questioning

Since receiving the pack have you acquired more books for your child?

Yes

No

If yes, were these

bought

given as presents

other

Have you been to the library since receiving the pack?

Yes

No

Since receiving the pack, have your thoughts about sharing books with babies changed with regard to:

the development of your child

Yes

No

If yes, in what way:

Since receiving the pack, have your thoughts about sharing books with babies changed with regard to:

▪ your interaction with your child

Yes

No

If yes, in what way:

▪ the purpose of sharing books with a young child

Yes

No

If yes, in what way:

▪ issues about reading

Yes

No

If yes, in what way:

Notes on free discussion about Bookstart (or can be taped and selectively transcribed)

→ Researchers may wish to follow up particular features of the book sharing session or answers to particular questions in the interview. Evidence of books, story tapes, storytelling, rhymes, story friezes, alphabet toys, posters etc. should also be noted.

→ Answers to the following open questions can also be taped:

→ Do you think the pack or the health visitor made the biggest difference to your involvement in this project?

→ What difference has the Bookstart project made to your life? Do you foresee any changes to your life in the future as a result of your involvement with the Bookstart project?

→ Any additional (or qualifying) comments (please continue overleaf if necessary):



**Appendix 4: Observation Schedule & Interview 2**

Name:

Address:

## OBSERVATION SCHEDULE & INTERVIEW SHEET

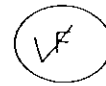
RESEARCHERS WILL ASK PARENTS/CARERS TO LOOK AT A BOOK WITH A CHILD WHILE THE RESEARCHER IS PRESENT AND RECORD THE SESSION BY TICKING APPROPRIATE BOXES AND JOTTING DOWN ANY ADDITIONAL COMMENTS/OBSERVATIONS MADE.

SOME QUESTIONS WILL REQUIRE A TICK IN ONE OF THE FREQUENTLY/SOMETIMES/ NEVER BOXES (A BOX FOR RECORDING INSTANCES, AS THEY OCCUR, IS AVAILABLE), OTHERS WILL SIMPLY REQUIRE A TICK IN THE APPROPRIATE RESPONSE BOX.

### EXAMPLES:

Does the adult draw the child's attention to the pictures?

III IIII



Does the child's response to the book appear to be predominantly:  Positive?  Negative?

OBSERVATION SCHEDULE:

Frequently - F      Sometimes - S      Never - N

Does the adult draw the child's attention to the pictures?  
\_\_\_\_\_

F       S       N

Does the adult draw the child's attention to print?  
\_\_\_\_\_

F       S       N

Does the adult relate things of interest to the child's own experience?  
\_\_\_\_\_

F       S       N

Does the adult let the child handle the book?  
\_\_\_\_\_

F       S       N

What does the child do with the book?

Hold it?

Put it in her/his mouth?

Pull it?

Push it away?

Hit it?

Does the adult allow the child to follow her/his own interests?  
\_\_\_\_\_

F       S       N

Is the child allowed all the time he or she wants to do this?  
\_\_\_\_\_

F       S       N

Does the adult vary intonation in order to bring the text alive?  
\_\_\_\_\_

F       S       N

Does the child make any sounds?  
\_\_\_\_\_

F       S       N

Does the child's response to the book appear to be predominantly:       Positive?       Negative?

Does the adult read exactly what is in the text?  
\_\_\_\_\_

F       S       N

Does the adult use the book as a starting point for a game?  
\_\_\_\_\_

F       S       N

Does the adult ask the child questions arising from the book?  
\_\_\_\_\_

F       S       N

Does the child appear to recognise the book?  
\_\_\_\_\_

F       S       N

Is there a close physical contact between the adult and child?  
\_\_\_\_\_

F       S       N

Is the book being held so that adult and child can both see it?  
\_\_\_\_\_

F       S       N

Have you been to the library since you were last interviewed?

Yes

No

How often do you now visit the local library?

- More than once a week
- Once a week
- More than once a month
- Once a month
- Once or twice a year
- Never

Have your thoughts about sharing books with babies changed with regard to:

The development of your child

Yes

No

If yes, would you like to explain in what way?

Your interaction with your child

Yes

No

If yes, would you like to explain in what way?

The purpose of sharing books with a young child

Yes

No

If yes, would you like to explain in what way?

Issues about reading

Yes

No

If yes, would you like to explain in what way?

INTERVIEW:

Do you still use the placemat?

 Yes No

Have you taken part in any events linked to Bookstart?

 Yes No

How often would you say you now look at books or read with your baby?

every day

more than once a week

once a week

more than once a month

once a month

hardly ever or never

Since you were last interviewed, has your confidence in reading to your children changed?

 Yes No

If so, are you

 Less confident More confident

Any additional comments on the above question:

What do you now think is the right age to start sharing books with children?

 6 weeks 6 months 9 months Older

Since the last interview have you acquired more books for your child?

 Yes No

If yes, were these

 bought given as presents other

Notes on free discussion about Bookstart (or this may be taped and selectively transcribed)

Please follow up the interview questions with an informal discussion on sharing books with babies; and developments in the child's responses and in the parents' attitudes since first receiving the pack.

Answers to the following open questions can also be written down in note form or taped:

- What difference has the Bookstart project made to your life?
- Do you foresee any changes to your life in the future as a result of your involvement with the Bookstart project?

Evidence of books, story tapes, storytelling, rhymes, story friezes, alphabet toys, posters etc. should also be noted.

Space for notes, and any additional (or qualifying) comments (please continue overleaf if necessary):

**Appendix 5: Observation Schedule & Interview - Control Group**

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Today's date: \_\_\_\_\_

### About your baby

1. Your baby's name: First name: \_\_\_\_\_ Family name: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Your baby's date of birth:
3. Boy  Girl
4. How many other children do you have in the following age groups?  
 2yrs or under  3yrs - 5yrs  6yrs-10yrs  11yrs-17yrs
5. Do you read or look at books with your baby? Yes  No
6. If yes, how often would you say you look at books or read together:  
 Every day  More than once a month  
 More than once a week  Once a month  
 Once a week
7. Is your baby a member of the local library? Yes  No
8. Were you aware that babies and children of any age can join the local library? Yes  No
9. Does your baby have books of her/his own? Yes  No
10. Do you think that sharing books with a baby is valuable?  not valuable?



11. What do you think is the right age to start sharing books with children?  
6 weeks  6 months  9 months  older

12. Do you think that sharing books with babies affects:  
the development of your child? Yes  No

If yes, in what way:

your interaction with your child? Yes  No

If yes, in what way:

13. Since your baby was born,  
have you thought about the purpose of sharing books with a young child?  
Yes  No

any comments on the above:

have you thought about issues to do with reading?  
Yes  No

any comments on the above:

About you

14. Are you a member of the local library? Yes  No

15. How often do you visit the local library:

- |   |                                       |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> More than once a week  | <input type="checkbox"/> Once a week  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> More than once a month | <input type="checkbox"/> Once a month |
| <input type="checkbox"/> once or twice a year   | <input type="checkbox"/> never        |

16. Have you been to the library since your baby was born? Yes  No

17. Can you remember any books that were read to you as a child?

Yes  No

Titles?

18. Can you remember any books you read as a child?

Yes  No

Titles?

19. Can you remember any books you enjoyed reading as a child?

Yes  No

Titles?

20. Are you a confident reader?

Yes  No  It depends

21. Are you confident about reading to your children?

Yes  No

22. Do you read newspapers, magazines, computer screens, books?

Frequently  Sometimes  Never

23. Which newspaper would you say you read most often?

- |                 |                          |                      |                          |
|-----------------|--------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| The Express     | <input type="checkbox"/> | The Guardian         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| The Independent | <input type="checkbox"/> | The Mail             | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| The Mirror      | <input type="checkbox"/> | The Sun              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| The Telegraph   | <input type="checkbox"/> | The Times            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Another -       | <input type="checkbox"/> | Please specify _____ |                          |

24. Is your age:

- |                                   |                                |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Under 16 | <input type="checkbox"/> 35-44 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 16-24    | <input type="checkbox"/> 45-54 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 25-34    | <input type="checkbox"/> 55+   |

If you feel you belong to one of the following groups and want to tell us which it is, please mark one of the boxes below. The Commission for Racial Equality has recommended the following categories:

- |  |                                    |
|--|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bangladeshi     | <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black-African   | <input type="checkbox"/> Indian    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black-Caribbean | <input type="checkbox"/> Pakistani |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black-other     | <input type="checkbox"/> White     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other           | Please specify _____               |

Which language(s) do you and your family speak at home?

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