



bookstart

# Bookstart Baby Evaluation 2014-15: Survey of gifting partners

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## Introduction

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Book Trust is an independent reading charity which delivers both universal and targeted bookgifting programmes to children and their parents<sup>1</sup> at key stages in their development. Through these programmes, Book Trust encourages parents to share stories, books and rhymes with their children at the youngest possible age, and aims to help families adopt reading habits that will last throughout their child's lifetime.

Through the flagship universal programme Bookstart, every baby and pre-school age child receives free book packs, guidance and support via health visitors, library services and early years settings. Additional packs are also available for dual language and additional needs which include books, guidance and other support.

Bookstart Baby is the provision for babies aged 0-12 months. Online surveys with Health Visitors and other operational level staff who currently gift the Baby pack were conducted to gather key insights into:

- The gifting process
- Perceived impacts of the programme on children, parents and the practitioners themselves
- Feedback on the new guidance and training materials.

The surveys were administered through key health contacts and Bookstart Coordinators across England and sent to 4598 staff. The surveys ran for 4 weeks from 28 January 2015 to 27 February 2015.

## Response rates

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The surveys returned 597 responses. There was representation in all regions of England with a slightly higher response in the South East, and lower response in the North East, Yorkshire and the Humber and the South West. The table below shows the full breakdown of responses by region.

East of England	9%
East Midlands	12%
London	13%
North East	3%
North West	13%
South East	26%
South West	7%
West Midlands	10%
Yorkshire and the Humber	7%

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<sup>1</sup> The term 'parents' is used throughout this report to refer to parents, carers and legal guardians



## The Bookstart Gifters

The survey was predominantly aimed at health visitors, and this group made up the largest number of respondents (42%). A further 12% were children's centre workers, 10% were community nurses or health assistants, 9% were librarians or working in library services, 8% were registrars and 5% were Bookstart Coordinators. Smaller minorities identified as family support workers, outreach workers, and other roles related to early years, nursing, and reading development. This can give an indication of the proportions of different job roles that are gifting the Baby pack, although more work would be needed to establish a more representative picture of Book Trust's gifting partners.

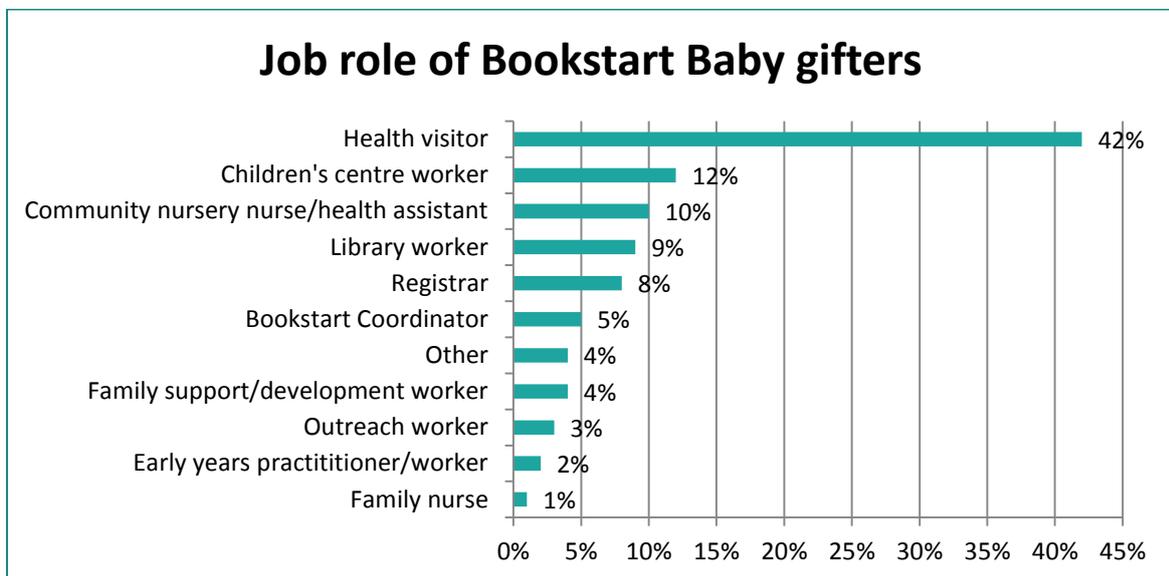


Figure 1: 'What is your role?' N=597. A single response question. Due to rounding percentages may not sum to 100

The majority of respondents are experienced in their roles, with over half (57%) reporting being in the role for over 5 years. A third are moderately experienced with 15% who reported being in the role for three to four years and 18% for one to two years. Only 11% reported being in the role for less than a year.



## Gifting the packs

### When are packs gifted?

The vast majority of respondents (95%) report gifting the packs between 0-12 months, in line with guidance from Book Trust. This is divided fairly evenly across the age ranges (see figure 2), with slightly more respondents reporting that they gift the packs at ages 0-3 months (55%) and slightly less at 4-6 months (30%). The same gifting patterns are seen for health visitors although they are significantly less likely to report gifting the pack at 4-6 months than non-health visitors, 11% compared with 44% respectively. This is a time when health visitors are less likely to come into contact with families as there is no development check between 4-6 months.

A very small number of respondents (5%) report gifting the packs outside of 0-12 months – 2.5% report gifting up to the age of 2, 0.5% report gifting up the age of 3 and 1% report up to the age of 5. A further 1% report that they gift at any age that they feel is appropriate in the case of developmental delays, or if the family have recently moved to the area and they haven't received a pack.

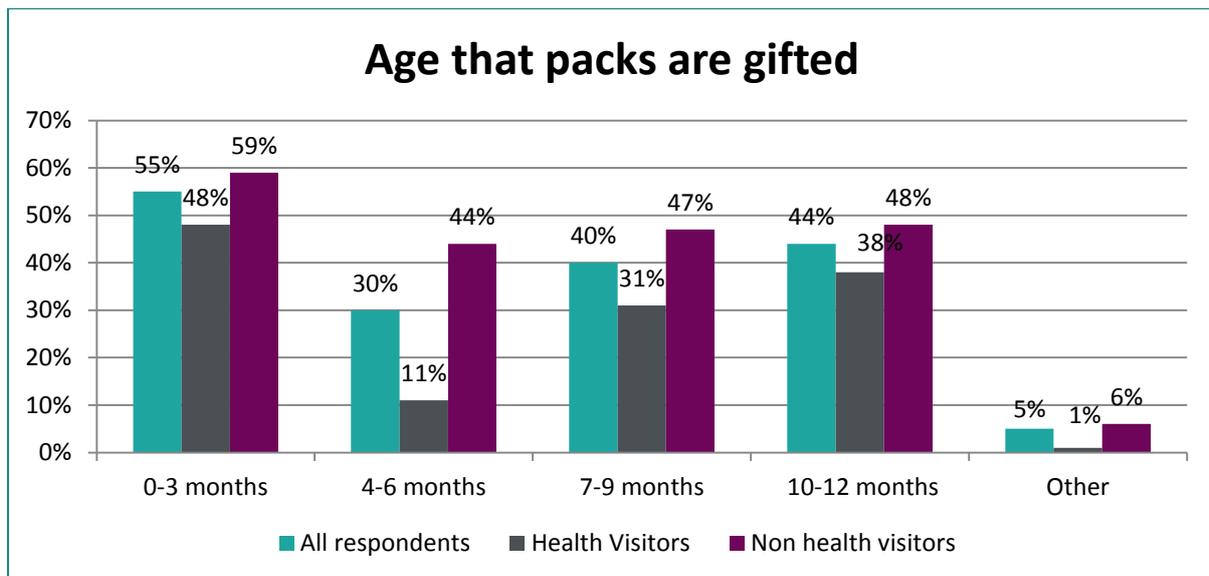


Figure 2: At what age of child do you give families the Bookstart Baby pack? N=597. More than one answer could be given so percentages do not sum to 100

Just over half of respondents (54%) report gifting the packs at a specific time, whereas 10% gift as the opportunity arises and 36% do both. Around three quarters (76%) of those in a health visitor role give out the packs at a specific time, compared with 40% of non-health visitors.



## Where are packs gifted?

Two thirds of respondents report gifting in the parents' home (67%), with a further 42% reporting they gift at the children's centre, 38% in the clinic and 16% in the library. Smaller numbers reported gifting at the registrar's office (9%) and an early years setting (8%). Health visitors are much more likely to gift in the parents' home with 92% reporting this compared with 51% of non-health visitors.

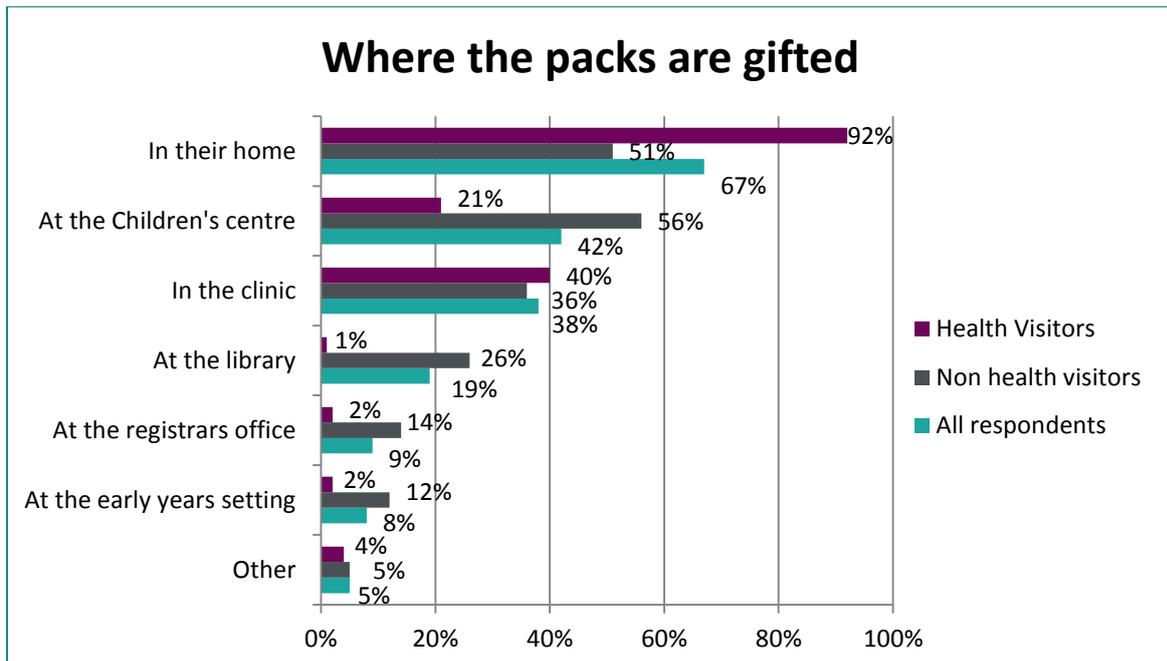


Figure 3: Where is the Baby pack given to the family? N=597. More than one answer could be given so percentages do not sum to 100



## How are packs gifted?

The majority of respondents report gifting the packs on a one-to-one basis (82%), with only 3% gifting as a group and 15% using a mixture of both one-to-one and group. Nearly all health visitors (97%) report gifting the pack on a one-to-one basis, compared with 72% of non-health visitors.

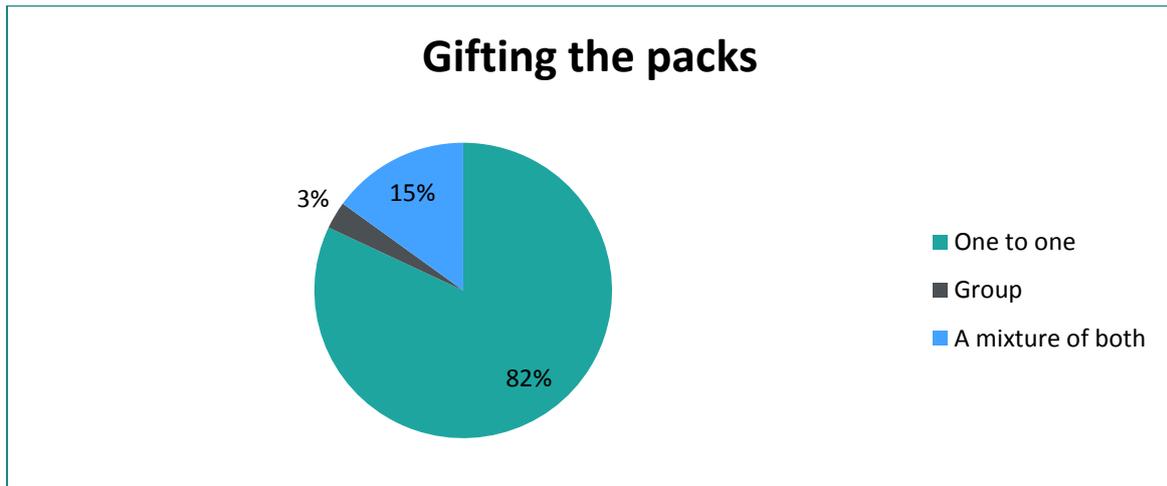


Figure 4: Is the Baby pack given out as the opportunity arises or at a specific time? N=597. A single response question. Due to rounding percentages may not sum to 100.

## Summary

- The vast majority of respondents (95%) report gifting the packs between 0-12 months, in line with guidance from Book Trust. This is divided fairly evenly across the age ranges, with slightly more respondents reporting that they gift the packs at ages 0-3 months (55%) and slightly less at 4-6 months (30%)
- Just over half of respondents report gifting packs at a specific time (54%), although health visitors are doing this more (76%) than other respondents
- Two thirds of respondents report gifting in the parents' home (67%), with a further 42% reporting they gift at the children's centre, 38% in the clinic and 19% in the library. Nearly all health visitors (92%) report gifting in the home
- The majority of respondents report gifting the packs on a one-to-one basis (82%), with 97% of health visitors reporting gifting the pack in this way.



## Gifting processes

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The respondents were asked to report on the frequency that they carried out the Book Trust best practice processes that accompany gifting the packs.

Some processes are carried out more consistently than others. The statements with the highest percentage of respondents reporting they 'always' carry them out, reported by two thirds of respondents for each were;

- Talk about the benefits of sharing books (63%)
- Talk to the parents or carers about how the pack might be used (63%).

Slightly fewer respondents reported always taking the books and other materials out of the pack to show the parents (58%), giving information about joining the library (53%), talking about the benefits of sharing rhymes (52%) and giving information about activities at the children's centre (49%). Respondents were less likely to state that they always gave tips about when and how to share books (40%) or modelled how to use the pack contents (29%). Much smaller numbers (11%) report always signposting to the website, with 24% stating they never do this.

A very small percentage gift the packs without any specific information or guidance, with 4% reporting they always did this, and 3% stating they often did this.



## Best practice gifting processes

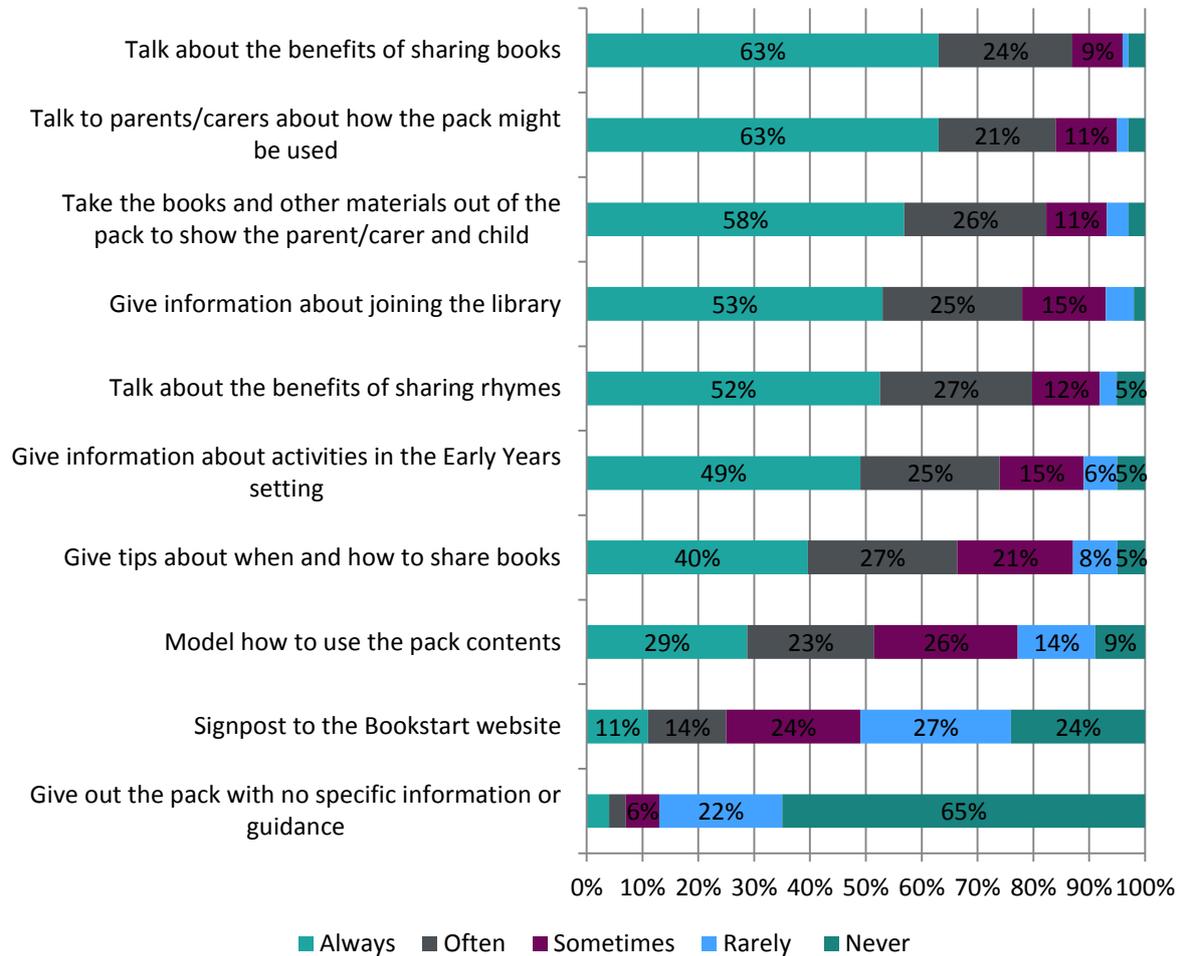


Figure 5: 'When gifting the Bookstart Baby pack, how often, if at all, do you do the following?' N=597. A series of single response questions. Due to rounding percentages may not sum to 100

Overall, health visitors were slightly more likely to report carrying out best practice gifting processes (see appendix for breakdown of all statements). On average across all the statements, 50% of health visitor respondents report 'always' doing these processes, compared with 45% of non-health visitors. Health visitors are more likely to carry out some aspects of the best practice gifting processes, in particular:

- 76% of health visitors report always talking to parents about how the pack might be used, compared with 54% of non-health visitors
- 72% of health visitors report always talking about the benefits of sharing books, compared with 57% of non-health visitors.



However, health visitors are less likely to carry out particular aspects of the best practice gifting processes:

- 5% of health visitors report signposting to the Bookstart website, compared with 16% of non-health visitors
- 26% of health visitors report modelling how to use the pack, compared with 30% of non-health visitors.

### **Barriers to gifting the packs**

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Respondents were asked to rank potential barriers to gifting the pack with information and guidance from one to six. The graph below (figure 6) shows the potential barriers broken down by the percentage of respondents who ranked the statements as either the biggest barrier, or second or third biggest barrier.

Lack of time was reported as being the biggest barrier to gifting the pack with information and guidance, by the largest number of respondents - nearly a third (28%).

Four key statements on barriers were considered by around half of respondents to be in the top three biggest barriers to gifting the pack with information and guidance, indicating that they are seen by many as important barriers. These barriers were:

- Lack of time (50%)
- There is other information to communicate (52%)
- Concerns about information overload (47%)
- Concerns about fitting everything into one session (46%).

Lack of knowledge around messaging and lack of confidence in communicating messaging were not seen as important barriers by the majority, with only 2% and 1% respectively reporting them as the biggest barrier.

There was little variation in the barriers reported based on job role or length of time in the job.



## Biggest barriers to gifting the pack with information and guidance

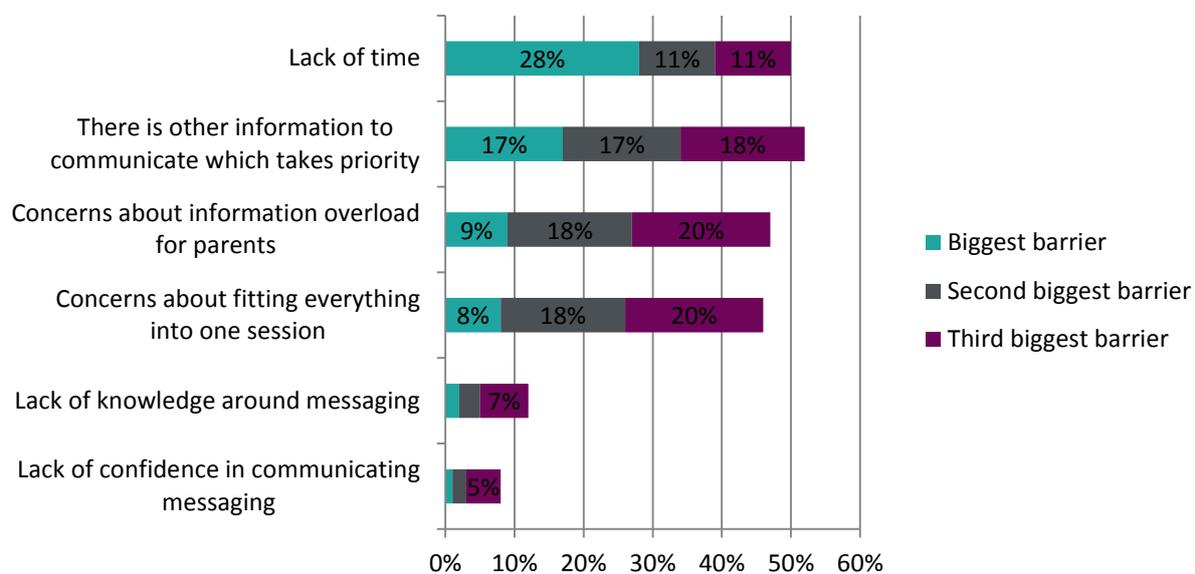


Figure 6: What are the barriers to gifting the pack with information and guidance for the parent/carer? Please rank all that apply in order of importance (with 1 being the biggest barrier) Note: 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> barriers and 'not applicable' are not shown in these results. N=597. A series of single response questions. Due to rounding percentages may not sum to 100

An open comments section invited respondents to identify any further barriers. Small minorities considered these to be:

- Language barriers – difficulties communicating with non- English speaking or low level English speaking families or in accessing packs and resources (including guidance and information) in dual language format (10%)
- Distribution issues – lack of supply of the packs (limited or out of stock) (4%)
- Engagement and access issues – missed appointments for developmental check, lack of interest in the messaging, difficulties accessing hard to reach families and lack of referrals (2%).

### Support from Book Trust

An open comments section invited respondents to identify ways that Book Trust could offer more support in gifting the packs. Most of the requested support is already available from Book Trust, suggesting low levels of awareness amongst a small minority of respondents, and a need to communicate this availability more widely to ensure all practitioners are able to access this support. The key suggestions were:





- Additional languages information sheets with a brief explanation of the packs and key messaging to support EAL families (4%). This is already available –a translated version of the guidance leaflet ‘more things to do with books’ is available in 27 community languages. Translated book sharing tips for practitioners to use are also available to download from the website, currently in 10 languages.
- Ensure a constant supply of packs or enough staff/the right staff to gift them (4%). This is the responsibility of the Bookstart Coordinators and strategic staff in the setting who may need more support to fulfil this role.
- Guidance on the key messages to communicate to parents (3%). This information has recently become available on the website in the form of the health visitors handbook but awareness and usage is currently low. This is anticipated to be more widely used going forwards and is discussed in more detail in the section on website and training. Some respondents suggested a one page crib sheet with a checklist of key points to cover, for quick reference when gifting the pack.
- Reintroduce the 2 year old pack or universal black and white booklet (2%).

## Summary

- Some best practice gifting processes are more likely to be always done than others. The statements with the highest percentage of respondents reporting they ‘always’ carry them out are as follows; ‘talk about the benefits of sharing books’ (63%), ‘talk to the parents or carers about how the pack might be used’ (63%) and ‘taking the books and other materials out of the pack to show the parents’ (58%)
- Health visitors are slightly more likely to report carrying out the best practice gifting processes, in particular 76% of health visitors report always talking to parents about how the pack might be used compared with 63% of all respondents.
- Lack of time was reported as being the biggest barrier to gifting the pack with information and guidance, by the largest number of respondents (28%).
- Most of the requested support to help with gifting is already available from Book Trust, suggesting low levels of awareness amongst a small minority of respondents, and a need to communicate this availability more widely to ensure all practitioners are able to access the support.



## Bookstart's role

78% of respondents agreed that Bookstart is an important part of their role. Just over half of respondents (58%) agreed that Bookstart is an add-on to their role, a third (34%) agreed that Bookstart is a minor part of their role, and just 14% agreed that Bookstart is the core focus of their role – unsurprisingly considering that the job roles include many other responsibilities.

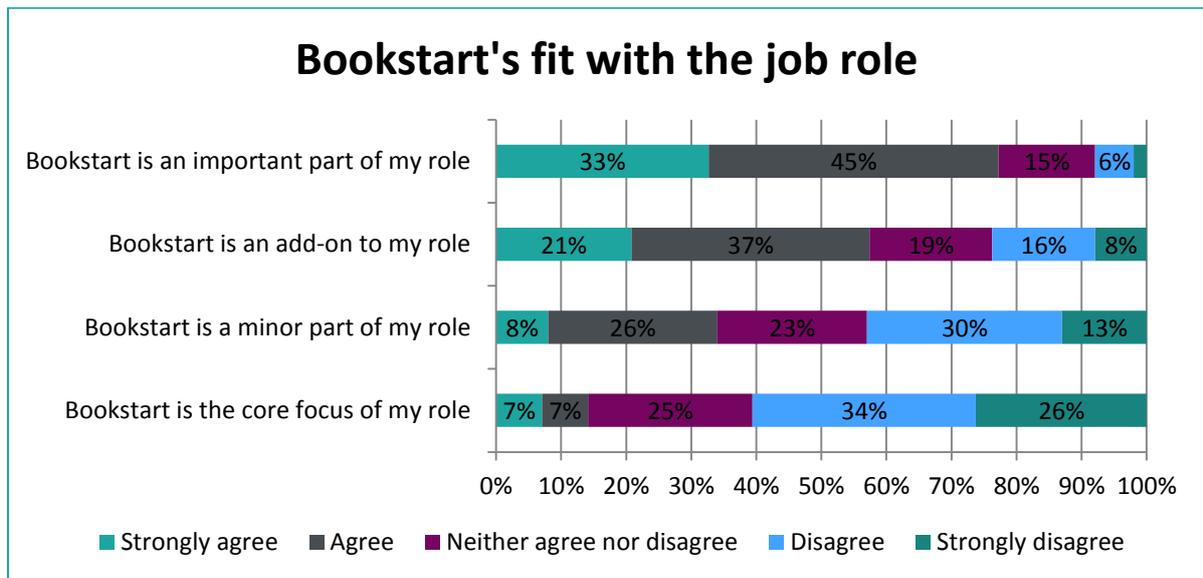
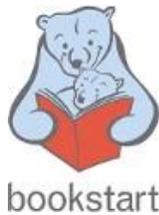


Figure 7: 'To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about Bookstart and your role?' N=597. A series of single response questions. Due to rounding percentages may not sum to 100

There was little variation across job roles, with the exception that health visitors were significantly less likely to see Bookstart as a core focus of their role; 6% of health visitors strongly agreed or agreed with this compared with 21% of non-health visitors.



## Impacts

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The respondents were given a set of statements about the potential impacts of the Baby packs on children and on parents - they were asked to state whether there had been an impact for 'all' 'most' 'some' or 'no' children and parents.

### Impacts on children

In terms of benefitting **'all' children**, the highest percentage of respondents agreed that they had exposed the child to books in a creative and fun way (44%), promoted the development of speech and language skills (41%) and increased the child's interest and enjoyment in books (39%).

In terms of benefitting **'all' or 'most' children**, over two thirds of respondents reported impact for every statement, with the exception of supporting good mental health and well-being (reported by 58%), and introducing books for the first time to the child (46%). The highest reported impacts were that same for those benefitting 'all' children;

- 76% agreed that the packs had exposed all or most children to books in a creative and fun way
- 74% agreed that the packs had promoted the development of speech and language for all or most children
- 74% agreed that the packs had increased all or most children's interest in and enjoyment of books.

In terms of benefitting **'some' children**, higher percentages of respondents agreed that the packs had introduced books for the first time (49%) and supported good mental health and well-being (27%).

Across all of the statements, extremely small numbers (less than 1%) reported the Baby pack had not benefitted any children at all.



## Impact of Bookstart Baby resources on children

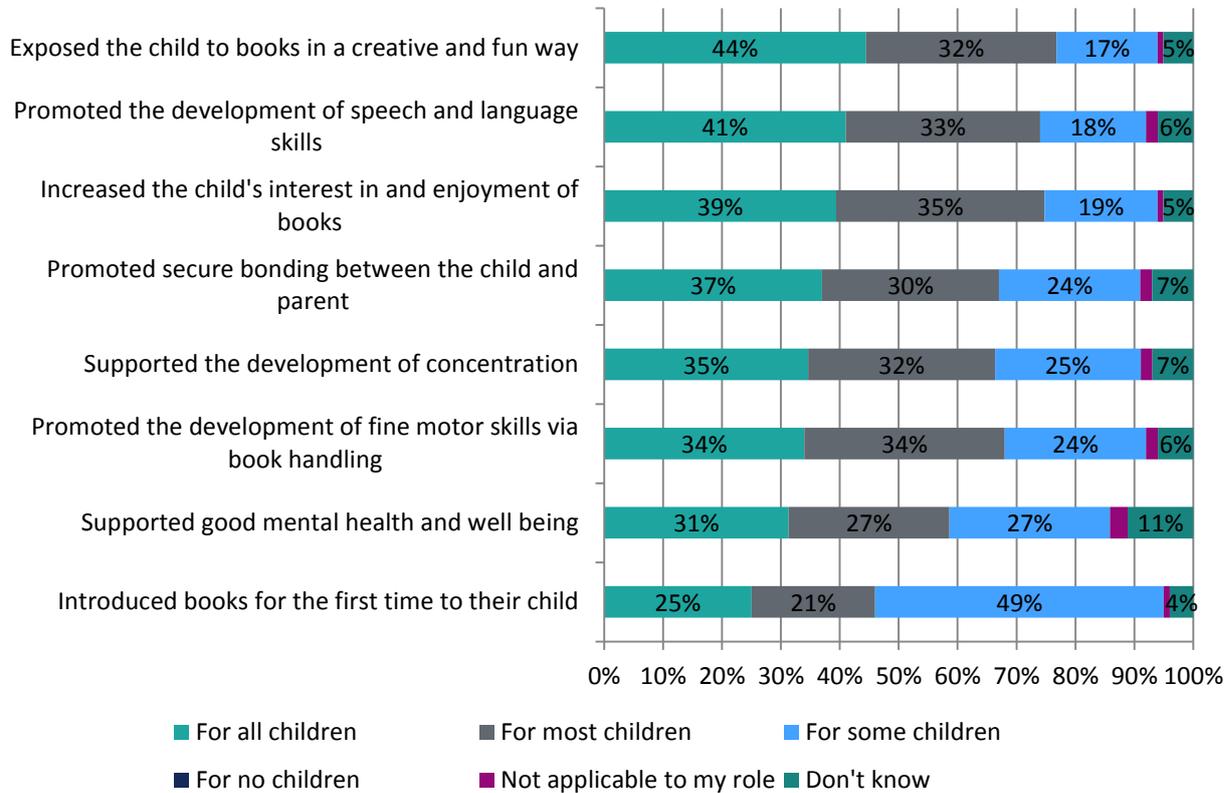


Figure 8: 'To what extent do you agree with the following statements about the impact of Bookstart Baby packs on children, based on your own experience? N=597. A series of single response questions. Due to rounding percentages may not sum to 100

An open comments section invited respondents to identify any further impacts on children. The key additional impacts reported by a minority of respondents were:

- Improved relationship between baby and siblings who are encouraged to share and read to the new baby (4%)

*Has helped to include siblings to interact with their new family member.* Health Visitor, Cambridgeshire

*Improvement in sibling sharing as they all want to be part of the process. Older children often enjoy telling their younger brothers or sisters stories even if it is just using the pictures for reference.* Family support worker, Nottingham

*Brings whole families together to share.* Children's centre worker, Cambridgeshire

- Immediate positive reaction of baby indicating responsiveness and pleasure of looking at the new book (2%)



*It is lovely when I show the mum and baby the book with the babies in it. The babies will often smile at the baby pictures, showing mother how responsive their babies are, and how clever their babies are. Doing this reinforces the importance of early interaction and face to face contact.* Health Visitor, Cambridgeshire

*Seeing babies eyes light up and touch the pictures for the first time [and] the one to one bonding between parent and child* Children's centre coordinator, London

- Helps support school readiness (1%)

*I have observed children from birth through to pre-school and the children who have been read to had better listening skills, attention span and a greater vocabulary.* SEN & disability link worker, Liverpool

*I have seen communication skills improve and social wellbeing improve when children learn and interact with familiar rhymes and stories. This is also a good way to encourage a healthy bond with child and carer.* Community nursery nurse, Sandwell

## Impacts on parents

In terms of benefitting **'all' parents**, the numbers reported are slightly lower than for benefitting 'all' children, with the highest percentage of respondents agreeing that they had provided an opportunity for the parent/carer to bond with the child (26%), increased access to books (25%) and encouraged the parent/carer to share books with child at an earlier age (23%).

In terms of benefitting **'all' or 'most' parents**, the main impacts, reported by over half of respondents were encouraging the parent/carer to share books with child at an earlier age (63%), providing an opportunity for the parent/carer to bond with their child (61%), promoted shared reading as part of a daily routine (55%), increased access to books (54%) and establishing the role of the parent/carer as the first educator of their child (51%).

Around half of respondents reported that there had been an impact on **'some' parents** for the following statements; positively changed the parent/carer's attitude to books (51%), led the parent/carer seeking help for their own literacy needs (50%), and supported family access to services (48%)

For all statements, extremely small numbers (less than 1%) reported the Baby pack had not benefitted any parents at all. This was with the exception of 'leading parents to seek help for their own literacy needs', where 7% reported that this had not been the case for any parents.



## Impact of Bookstart Baby resources on parents

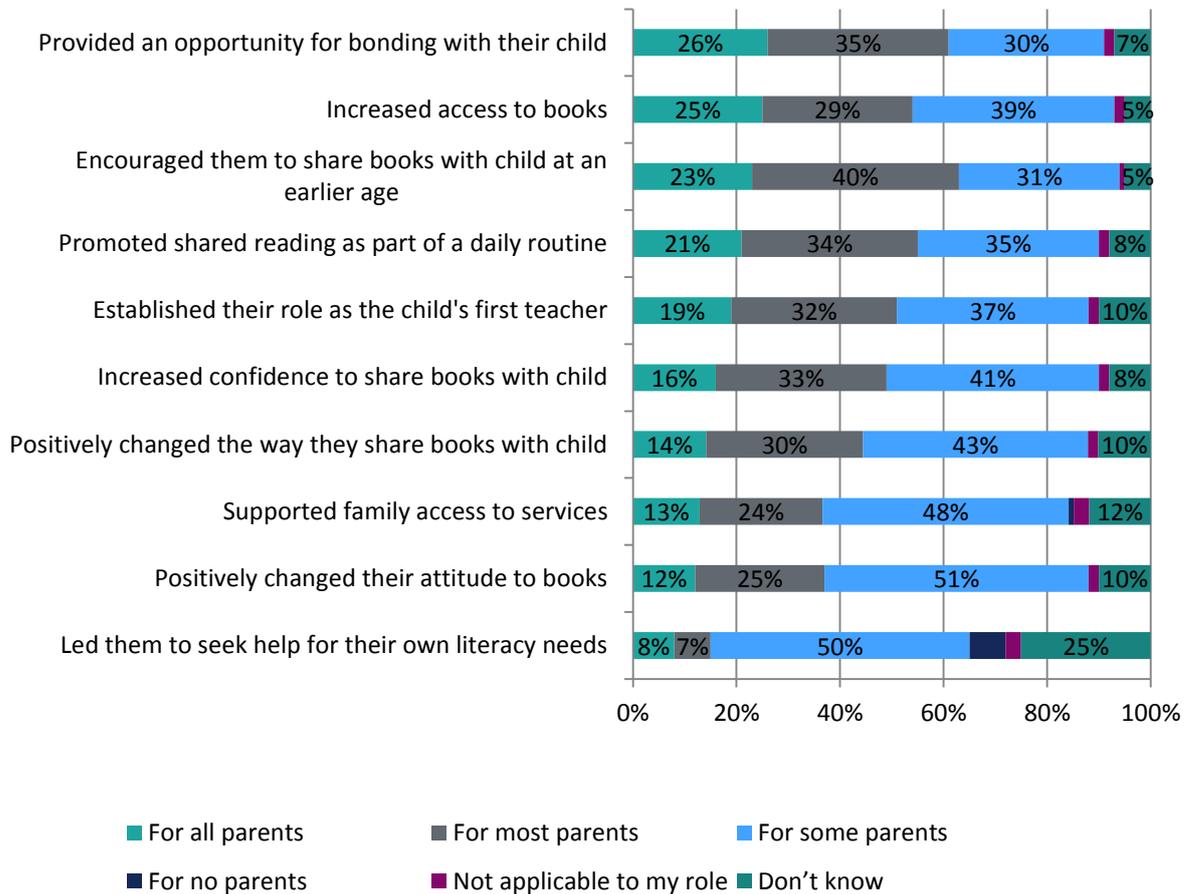


Figure 9: 'To what extent do you agree with the following statements about the impact of Bookstart Baby packs on parents, based on your own experience? N=597. A series of single response questions. Due to rounding percentages may not sum to 100

Many of these statements were supported and expanded on in the open comments section, in particular:

- Raised awareness of the value and benefits of books from birth (5%)

*For some parents they were not aware that reading and singing at an early age had benefits to brain development. The Bookstart baby pack leads this conversation.*  
Health Visitor, Cambridgeshire

*Some parents thought that their baby is far too young to be read to and are amazed when you show the baby a page of a book and they look at it intently, some reaching out to explore the page even wanting to hold the book.* SEN and disability worker, Liverpool



*We have many families who have never shared books with their babies [who] have told us "but babies can't read!" Explaining why, how, when, and showing them the book packs has helped this and parents have come back and said "he really likes that book". Children's centre coordinator, London*

- Supporting families to access library services, which can reduce social isolation (3%)

*Bookstart Baby packs encourage parents to visit the library with their baby, as their baby grows they look for more books to share and enjoy. Development Manager, Plymouth*

*Attending the Rhyme Time sessions has helped lots of new parents to make friendships with others and share concerns and interests and also knowledge of other groups to visit. Bookstart Coordinator, Rutland East Midlands*

*Encouraged mums to use community libraries thereby increasing opportunities to socialise and expose children to more benefits of books. Health Visitor, Lancashire*

*Social interaction is increased as families engage with library services such as bounce and rhyme, lending library. Community Liaison officer, Medway*

- Increased access to books (1%)

*For children who do not have many belongings the books are extremely well received and the parents are then really encouraged to read with them. Health visitor, Lancashire*

Of note, are the following impacts identified by three respondents, which focus on people facing challenging life circumstances now or in the past:

*All parents want the best for their child and Bookstart helps support that. I have seen parents living in hostel accommodation and therefore facing a daily struggle to parent their child, accessing the library as a result of Bookstart Health Visitor, North Yorkshire*

*One dad I worked with absolutely came to life following redundancy when he realised how much his tiny daughter loved him reading and singing to her, you could see the bond that had developed and he was so thrilled as it helped him reframe the situation as he now had this opportunity to get to know her. Health visitor, Kent*

*It has made some parents reflect on their own childhood and either lack of books in their household or how their parents parented them as children. Bookstart is very important as it encourages parents to think about their child's learning. Health visitor, Hampshire*

### **Impact on practitioners**

The respondents were given a set of statements about the potential impacts of the Treasure packs on themselves as practitioners, and asked to rate their level of agreement. The



majority of respondents agreed with all of the statements, with the exception of incentivised parents to come for checks (38%) and helped me meet a target in my role (47%). The top three impacts identified by the respondents were:

- 71% strongly agreed or agreed that the pack had enabled conversations with parents about their child’s development
- 71% strongly agreed or agreed that the pack had helped them to signpost parents/carers to other services
- 67% strongly agreed or agreed that the pack had helped them to understand the importance of shared reading for a child’s development.

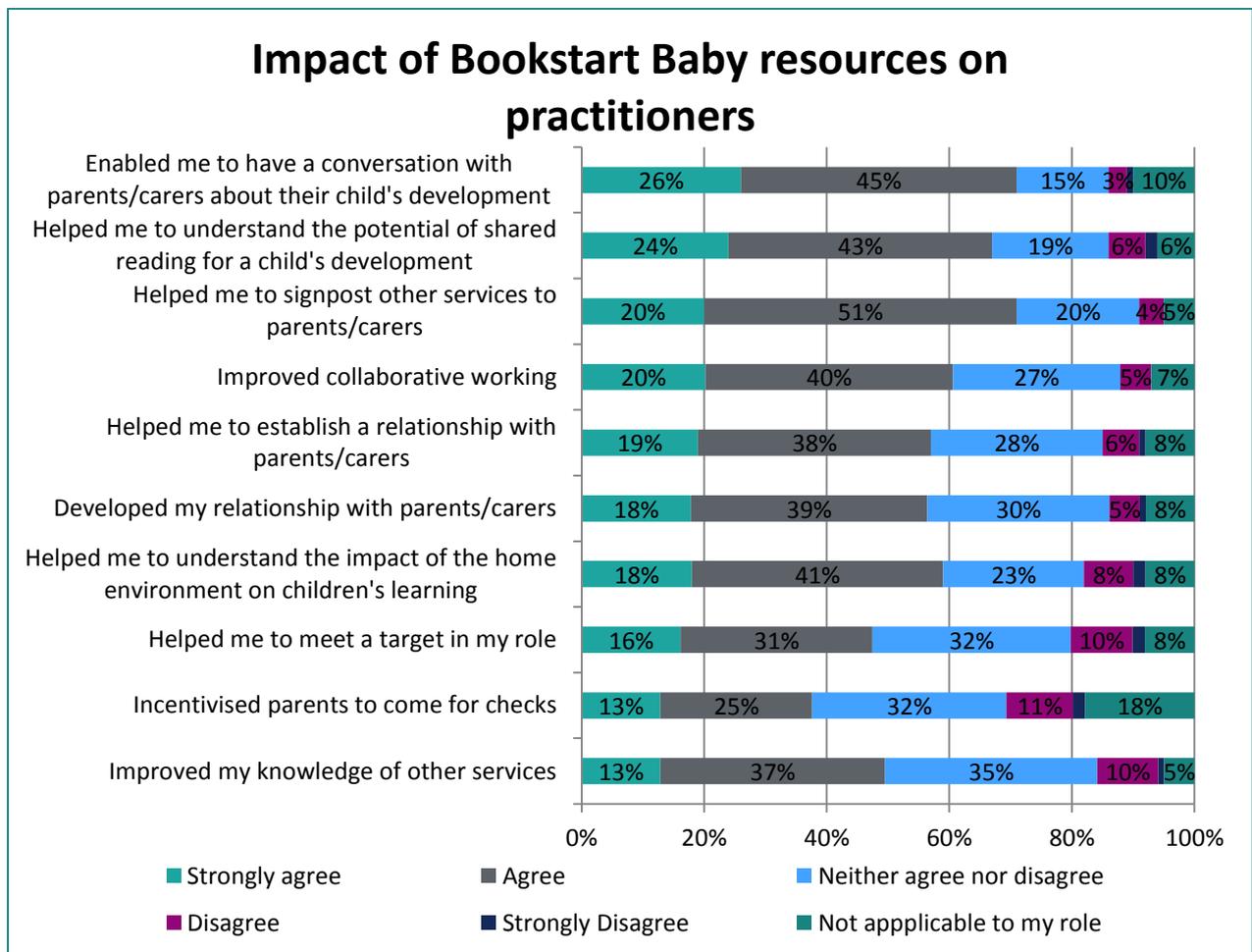


Figure 10: 'To what extent do you agree with the following statements about the impact of Bookstart Baby packs on you as a practitioner, based on your own experience? N=597. A series of single response questions. Due to rounding percentages may not sum to 100

In addition to this, practitioners were asked about whether they had been up-skilled in terms of knowledge and practice around the role of books in promoting healthy outcomes:





- 62% agree that they know more about the role that books and reading play in promoting healthy outcomes for parents and their babies as a result of the Bookstart Baby programme
- 75% agree that they can better communicate the role that books and reading play in promoting healthy outcomes for parents and their babies as a result of the Bookstart Baby programme.

The comments received in the open response section gave examples of ways in which the packs act as a tool to enable discussions around reading and literacy, child development and engagement. A number of respondents also felt that the packs act as a door opener to reach families, and using the packs develop or reinforce their knowledge and skills.

- Pack acts as a tool which opens up a positive dialogue around the importance of reading, speech and language and literacy (4%)

*It makes me feel as though I can back up what I am saying about the importance of books in a baby's life by giving the parent some books to practice with.* Family nurse partnership, Birmingham

*They enable me to introduce the subject of stimulation/ books/ story time/ bedtime routine in a natural, non-judgemental, more approachable manner.* Health visitor, Somerset

*Through gifting the packs, I am able to initiate a conversation about Speech /language and levels of understanding, in a subtle but meaningful way. It's a good starting point to engage parents, they are thrilled to be talking about their child, this can open many avenues to support the child, parent and family as a whole. It's a spring board for more difficult conversations around the parents' literacy needs and it supports my role to make a positive connection with families.* Play and learning coordinator, Stoke on Trent

*It has opened doors to talk about early stages of learning with parents who often feel a baby cannot communicate with them. It's great to then see them coming into groups, pick up a book and start to share it with their baby.* Children's centre coordinator, London

- Pack acts as a tool to support developmental conversations or assessment of the child (1%)

*It starts the process of a conversation about the development needs of their child in a non-threatening way* Health Visitor, Enfield

*Parents are fascinated to learn how quickly their baby's' brain is developing and the positive impact talking and sharing books can have, gifting the pack is a really enjoyable part of my role and gives focus to the infant mental health information I wish to give. Most parents had not considered reading or using books with their baby at the 6-8 week stage.* Health visitor, Northamptonshire



*It is a good focus for observing and interacting with children and their caregivers, and opening up discussions on other aspects of child health and development.* Health Visitor, East Sussex

*It is nice to have something practical to give a parent which shows them how clever their babies are.* Health Visitor, Cambridgeshire

*They are a useful tool and help you to assess a child better than if you didn't have the pack. Some homes have few or no books so the packs are essential to model how to use a book with a child and the type of interactions a parent might try to promote. By offering the child something, it gives you an insight into their development depending on how they respond.* Health visitor, Bristol

- Pack acts as a door opener to reach and engage with families (2%)

*They help to break down barriers with hard to reach families and the Health Visitor is perceived as less threatening, it is one of the most pleasurable aspects of my work* Health Visitor, East Sussex

*It is a good way of engaging in conversations with parents/carers, breaking down barriers and giving them the confidence to maybe share any problems or concerns that may be worrying them* Bookstart Coordinator, Leicester

*Having a high quality learning resource to give to parents is a powerful way to make a connection, particularly it seems with ESOL families who are sometimes wary of approaches from strangers* Bookstart Coordinator, Torbay

- Improved or reinforced knowledge and skills (2%)

*I have been more willing to spend time in discussion with parents/families having used them in practice.* Health Visitor, London

*[I am] much more aware of adult literacy problems and programmes run by Children's Centres to support these parents.* Bookstart Support Officer/co-ordinator, Surrey

*Reinforced my belief that stories and rhymes play a major part in babies/children's development and that parent/carers should be encouraged and supported to enjoy and cherish sharing books and rhymes with their babies and children (even before the baby is born)* Outreach Worker, Children's Centre, Surrey

Smaller minorities of respondents also mentioned how enjoyable they found gifting the packs and the positive impact it has had on partnership working. A few felt that although Bookstart provides the material, it is their own experience in the job that provides the knowledge of key messaging.



## Summary

Respondents were more likely to agree that there had been an impact on all or most children, than on all or most parents.

- In terms of benefitting 'all' or 'most' children, over two thirds of respondents reported impact for every statement, with the exception of supporting good mental health and well-being (reported by 58%), and introducing books for the first time to the child (46%). The highest proportion of respondents reported that the packs had exposed all or most children to books in a creative and fun way (76%), the packs had promoted the development of speech and language for all or most children (74%) and the packs had increased all or most children's interest in and enjoyment of books (74%)
- Highest levels of agreement of impact for all or most parents were that the packs encouraged the parent/carer to share books with child at an earlier age (63%), providing an opportunity for the parent/carer to bond with their child (61%) and promoted shared reading as part of a daily routine (55%)
- The top three impacts identified by the practitioners on their own practice were the packs had enabled conversations with parents about their child's development (71%), helped them to signpost parents/carers to other services (71%) and helped them to understand the importance of shared reading for a child's development (67%).

## Website and training

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The Health Visitors handbook had been made available on the website for just 4 months (uploaded October 2014) prior to the survey and as expected, only a small percentage of practitioners (17%) were aware of it at this time. Of these, 19% had used the handbook (19 respondents). Although a very small number of responses, 90% reported finding it useful (17 respondents). Similarly, 12% were aware of the health visitors guidance video. Of these, 16% had used it (11 respondents) and 80% reported finding it useful (8%) although the small number of responses mean these figures should be regarded with caution.

A fifth (20%) of respondents reported receiving training from someone in their organisation. The graph below indicates the focus of this training, with the majority of responses reporting the importance of messaging when gifting Bookstart (82%), as well as how to engage families in the packs (72%), how Bookstart fits in with the Healthy Child programme (60%) and other related services that I could signpost families to (46%).



### Focus of training

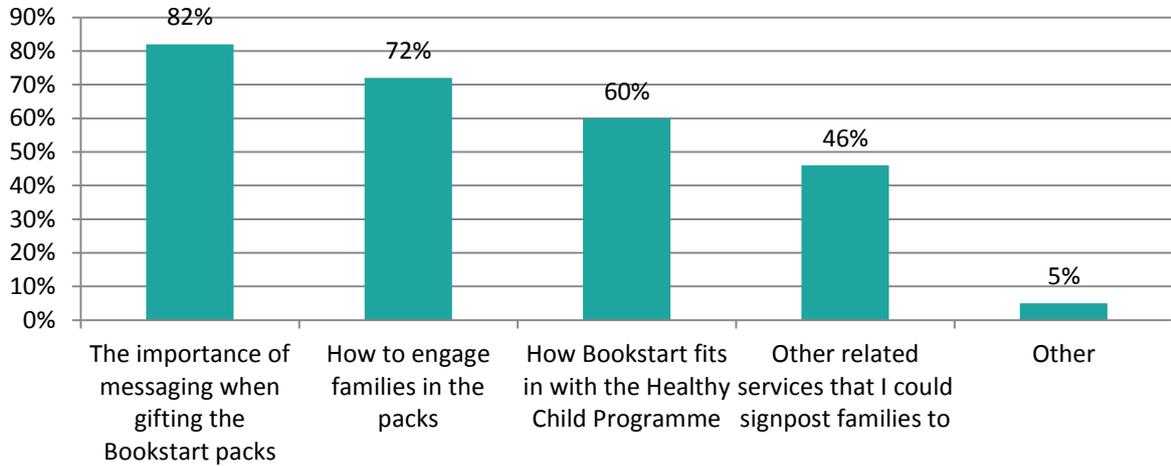


Figure 11: What did the training focus on? N=130. More than one answer could be given so percentages do not sum to 100

84% of respondents reported the training to be useful, with 41% reporting it was very useful.

### Usefulness of the training

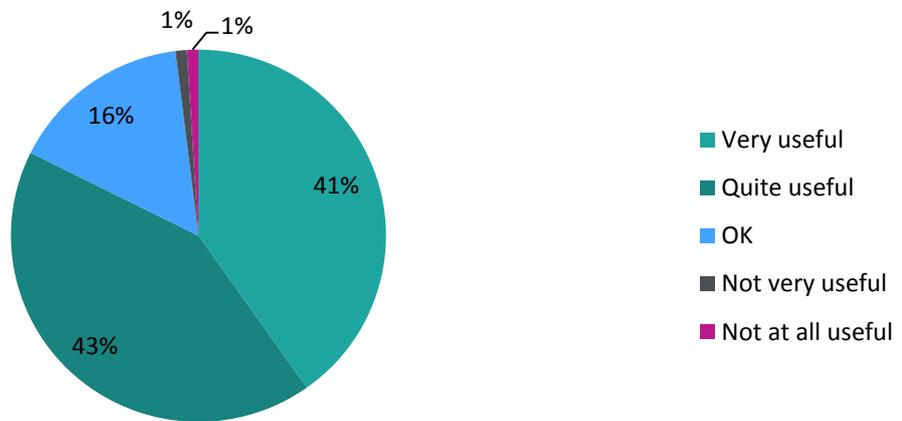


Figure 12: 'How useful was the training?' N=172. A single response question. Due to rounding percentages may not sum to 100



## How can the programme be better utilised

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Two thirds (67%) of respondents do not think that the programme could be better utilised within their organisation. Of the 33% who think it could be, the key suggestions were:

- Some form of variation on their current gifting procedure; including gifting earlier, gifting at an alternative setting, gifting as part of a specific Bookstart gifting session or event, gifting incorporated into an existing session or workshop e.g. on attachment and bonding, baby massage, baby yoga, or breast feeding (17%)
- More training or engagement with the guidance materials (16%).

Smaller numbers of respondents also mentioned:

- Increase collaborative and partnership working between organisations (7%)
- Increase pack availability and increase packs gifted (1%).

Some respondents also mentioned the constraints they are working under such as lack of capacity and time to deliver, as well as the loss of the two year old pack and the universal black and white booklet. Others requested more resources such as a book gifting intervention at every developmental stage.

## Summary

- As the Health visitors handbook and guidance video have only been on the website for a short amount of time preceding the survey, it is not surprising that only small numbers are currently aware of them, 17% and 12% respectively. The majority found this useful
- A fifth (20%) of respondents reported receiving training from someone in their organisation which is most likely to focus on the importance of messaging when gifting Bookstart (82%), and how to engage families in the packs (72%).
- 84% of respondents reported the training to be useful, with 41% reporting it was very useful
- Two thirds (67%) of respondents do not think that the programme could be better utilised within their organisation. Of the 33% who think it could be, the key suggestions were some form of variation on their current gifting procedure, and more training and engagement with the guidance.



## Conclusion

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Online surveys with Health Visitors and other operational level staff who currently gift the Baby pack were conducted to gather key insights into:

- The gifting process
- Perceived impacts of the programme on children, parents and the practitioners themselves
- Feedback on the new guidance and training materials.

The research found in relation to the three key outcomes that:

### The gifting process

- The vast majority of respondents (95%) report gifting the packs between 0-12 months, in line with guidance from Book Trust. This is divided fairly evenly across the age ranges, with slightly more respondents reporting that they gift the packs at ages 0-3 months (55%) and slightly less at 4-6 months (30%)
- Just over half of respondents report gifting packs at a specific time (54%), although health visitors are doing this more (76%) than other respondents
- Two thirds of respondents report gifting in the parents' home (67%), with a further 42% reporting they gift at the children's centre, 38% in the clinic and 19% in the library. Nearly all health visitors (92%) report gifting in the home
- The majority of respondents report gifting the packs on a one-to-one basis (82%), with 97% of health visitors reporting gifting the pack in this way.
- Some best practice gifting processes are more likely to be always done than others. The statements with the highest percentage of respondents reporting they 'always' carry them out are as follows; 'talk about the benefits of sharing books' (63%), 'talk to the parents or carers about how the pack might be used' (63%) and 'taking the books and other materials out of the pack to show the parents' (58%)
- Health visitors are slightly more likely to report carrying out the best practice gifting processes, in particular 76% of health visitors report always talking to parents about how the pack might be used compared with 63% of all respondents.
- Lack of time was reported as being the biggest barrier to gifting the pack with information and guidance, by the largest number of respondents (28%).
- Most of the requested support to help with gifting is already available from Book Trust, suggesting low levels of awareness amongst a small minority of respondents, and a need to communicate this availability more widely to ensure all practitioners are able to access the support.



## Perceived impacts of the programme

- Respondents were more likely to agree that there had been an impact as a result of the Baby packs on all or most children, than on all or most parents
- In terms of benefitting 'all' or 'most' children, over two thirds of respondents reported impact for every statement, with the exception of supporting good mental health and well-being (reported by 58%), and introducing books for the first time to the child (46%). The highest proportion of respondents reported that the packs had exposed all or most children to books in a creative and fun way (76%), the packs had promoted the development of speech and language for all or most children (74%) and the packs had increased all or most children's interest in and enjoyment of books (74%)
- Highest levels of agreement of impact for all or most parents were that the packs encouraged the parent/carer to share books with child at an earlier age (63%), providing an opportunity for the parent/carer to bond with their child (61%) and promoted shared reading as part of a daily routine (55%).
- The top three impacts identified by the practitioners on their own practice were the packs had enabled conversations with parents about their child's development (71%), helped them to signpost parents/carers to other services (71%) and helped them to understand the importance of shared reading for a child's development (67%).

## Initial feedback on the new guidance and training materials

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- A fifth (20%) of respondents reported receiving training from someone in their organisation which is most likely to focus on the importance of messaging when gifting Bookstart (82%), and how to engage families in the packs (72%).
- 84% of respondents reported the training to be useful, with 41% reporting it was very useful
- Two thirds (67%) of respondents do not think that the programme could be better utilised within their organisation. Of the 33% who think it could be, the key suggestions were some form of variation on their current gifting procedure, and more training and engagement with the guidance.



## Appendix

Respondents who report 'always' carrying out a series of best practice gifting processes

	All respondents (596)	Health Visitors (237)	Non health visitors (359)
Talk to parents/carers about how the pack might be used	63% (368)	76% (179)	54% (189)
Talk about the benefits of sharing books	63% (366)	72% (170)	57% (196)
Take the books and other materials out of the pack to show the parent/carer and child	58% (335)	62% (144)	55% (191)
Give information about joining the library	53% (310)	52% (123)	54% (187)
Talk about the benefits of sharing rhymes	52% (304)	58% (137)	57% (196)
Give information about activities in the Early Years setting	49% (284)	57% (133)	44% (151)
Give tips about when and how to share books	40% (228)	38% (87)	41% (141)
Model how to use the pack contents	29% (163)	26% (60)	30% (103)
Signpost to the Bookstart website	11% (64)	5% (11)	16% (53)
Give out the pack with no specific information or guidance	4% (23)	1% (2)	6% (21)
Average across all* statements	46% (269)	50% (116)	45% (156)

Figure 13: 'When gifting the Bookstart Baby pack, how often, if at all, do you do the following?' N=597. A series of single response questions. Due to rounding percentages may not sum to 100.

\*average excludes 'give out the pack with no specific information or guidance'