

Letterbox Club: 2021-22 evaluation

What is Letterbox?

Letterbox Club, run by BookTrust, gives packs of books and games to children in care settings and other vulnerable children, every month for six months. The programme is designed for children aged 3-13 years. Packs include books carefully selected by an independent panel of experts, age-appropriate maths games, and a range of stationery items that encourage writing and drawing.

Background

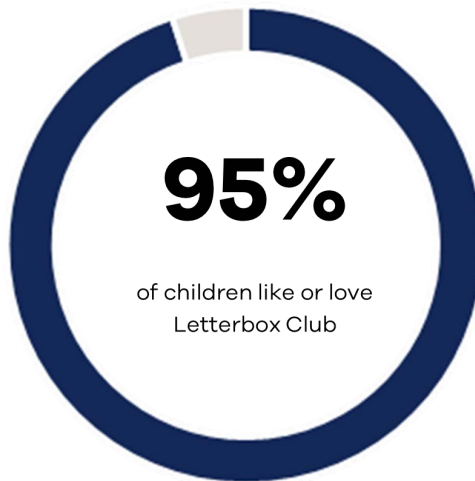
Letterbox Club is a key part of BookTrust's commitment to supporting children from the most vulnerable backgrounds so that they can enjoy the wide benefits of reading in childhood. Last year Letterbox Club reached over 12,000 children aged 3-13 including more than 7,000 children in the care system.

This document sets out findings from:

- A survey of 395 children in care aged 7-11 years who provided feedback on Letterbox Club. Children received the survey questionnaire in their fourth Letterbox Club parcel.
- In-depth interviews and group discussion with foster carers in England and Northern Ireland (27 foster carers in total).

Key findings from the 2021-22 Letterbox Club evaluation

Children tell us they enjoy and value Letterbox Club. The vast majority (95%) of children say they either love or like Letterbox Club. They explain that the arrival of a new parcel creates joy and excitement, making children feel special and valued.

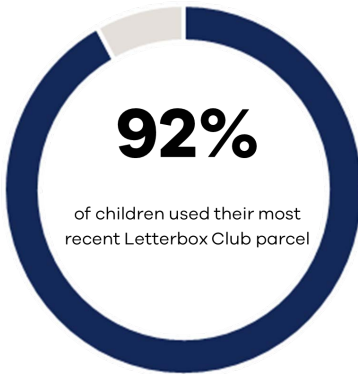


"When I get home from school and the parcel is waiting I am very excited to see what is inside"

Child, age 9

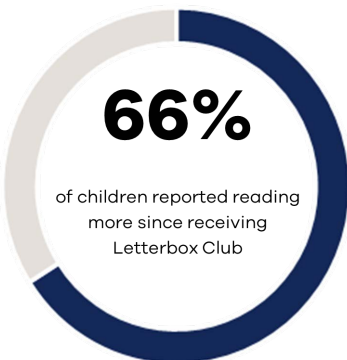
Key findings from the 2021-22 Letterbox Club evaluation

Children report high levels of usage of Letterbox Club parcels, with 92% of children using their parcels and 50% using them 'a lot'. Children also tell us they keep their parcels and continue to use them over time, demonstrating the lasting value of Letterbox Club resources.



Our evaluation indicates that Letterbox Club has a positive impact on children's reading habits. Children report that parcels support their confidence in reading and enjoyment of books. 66% of children say they read more on their own since receiving Letterbox Club parcels.

Foster carers tell us that Letterbox Club provides children with a greater choice of reading materials, which can expand their interests. Carers value having someone outside of the home and school environments to encourage their children to read.



"I read the books! And sometimes read them again"

Child, age 9



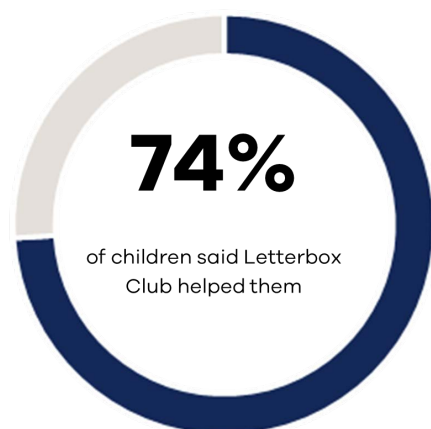
"All the books you give me are very interesting [...] Every time I get a parcel I get so excited and I think these parcels have helped me to love reading. Thank you for the parcels."

Child, age 12

Key findings from the 2021-22 Letterbox Club evaluation

Children also tell us that Letterbox Club supports their wellbeing. We heard that Letterbox Club positively impacts on some children's imagination and creativity and encourages feelings of calm. Importantly, Letterbox Club also makes children feel important and held in mind.

Carers tell us that receiving parcels in the post helps children feel more settled in their homes and can facilitate important one-on-one time between foster carer and child as they explore the contents of the packs together.



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"I really enjoy reading the books [it] makes me feel really important getting the parcel!"

Child, age 11

"It has sparked my imagination to write stories of my own"

Child, age 12

If you are interested in signing up children in your care for Letterbox Club, registrations are open until 22nd July 2022. Registrations for next season will open in November 2022. For more information or to register, please contact Letterbox@booktrust.org.uk

At BookTrust, we are on a journey to strengthen our support for children from vulnerable family backgrounds. If your local authority is interested in supporting our research and development in this area, please also do not hesitate to get in touch.



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