

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **New research from BookTrust reveals the impact of parental reading enjoyment on children's reading habits.**

The UK's largest children's reading charity, BookTrust, unveils insights from its latest research with families from low-income backgrounds across the UK.

**'Reading in the Early Years: supporting generational cycles of readers'** is the third in this series of research.

The findings underscore yet another way in which patterns of advantage and disadvantage perpetuate themselves without external interventions.

Highlighting the important influence of parental reading habits on children's love for reading, the findings show a stark contrast between children whose parents enjoy reading (65%) and those whose parents do not (35%).

- 90% of children aged 4–7 whose parents/carers like to read, are consistently encouraged to read, compared with 70% of children whose parents/carers do not.
- At the start of school, 85% of children with enthusiastic reading parents/carers, enthusiastically read themselves, compared to 55% of those whose parents/carers do not.
- 76% of children aged 0–7 whose parents enjoy reading, also enjoy reading, while only 54% of children whose parents/carers don't enjoy reading, still like to read themselves.

Our research also indicates that children who are read to are more likely to become adults who share books and stories with their own children or the children in their lives, continuing this positive cycle across generations.

Reading has a widely evidenced impact on both short and long-term outcomes, contributing significantly to better mental health, educational outcomes, empathy and creativity, and mitigating socio-economic inequalities. Children from low-income backgrounds stand to benefit even more from the immediate and longer-term benefits of early shared reading.

**Ruthann Hughes, Associate Director of Research & Impact at BookTrust**, said, "BookTrust and our extensive network of partners are working hard to get and keep families reading together from the earliest moments in a child's life – so that this generation of children can enjoy the wide and important benefits that reading brings.

We are committed to getting this right for children and families. Designing ever stronger support, via ever stronger partnerships for ever more children who most need this support is our mission. Where we are successful in this, we know children stand to benefit from better cognitive and social development, wellbeing, school readiness and attainment. And we know that in the longer-term reading can play an important role in helping to break the cycle of poverty for children.

This research draws attention to the role of enjoyment of not just children but also of people who share books and stories with them as a key factor in creating the next generation of readers and storytellers. In sharing it we hope to further increase

support for parents and others to enjoy early shared reading moments with their children today.”

Through evidence-led programmes and interventions alongside collaborative work with experienced delivery partners, BookTrust continues to provide tailored reading support, especially to families facing barriers to shared reading.

## ENDS

Please contact our press office for further information: [press@booktrust.org.uk](mailto:press@booktrust.org.uk)

### NOTES TO EDITORS

- [Previous research briefings](#)
- [Benefits of reading](#)

#### **Research methodology**

Figures in this document draw on BookTrust’s 2022 Family Survey. This online study of 2,148 parents and carers of children aged 0–7 living in low-income households in England, Wales and Northern Ireland was conducted between April and June 2022

To note: we use the term ‘low-income families’ to indicate those living in relative poverty as defined by the Department for Work and Pensions.

#### **About BookTrust**

We are the UK’s largest children’s reading charity. We get millions of children reading, especially those from low-income families or vulnerable backgrounds. We do this because research shows that children who read regularly are happier and healthier. They form stronger bonds and relationships. They do better at school, are more creative and enjoy more success in life. This is why we work with families, supporting them to start sharing stories and books together from the earliest possible age.

Our support is based on robust evidence, designed to deliver reading behaviour change. It is developed in partnership with families and expert practitioners to create inspiring and enjoyable shared reading experiences for children and families.

Some of our key activities include:

- Bookstart programmes for babies, toddlers and pre-schoolers, which provide families with a wide range of carefully curated and designed books, resources and support to help families start sharing stories from the earliest moments and to continue reading throughout childhood.
- BookTrust Storytime, an interactive library experience developed to learn how BookTrust can best support families, especially those with lower incomes, engage with their local public library and develop an ongoing reading habit. The pilot activities were designed in collaboration with librarians, local authorities and families across the UK to test new ways of inspiring families with children aged 0-5 to engage in shared story experiences through their local library and to celebrate the best books to make sharing stories a regular part of family life.

- Our writer-in-residence programme which gives a platform to some of the best children's writers and illustrators in the country to champion the power of books. Past writers in residence include Michael Rosen, Nick Sharratt, Onjali Q. Raúf and Dapo Adeola.
- Supporting the work of the Children's Laureate (currently Joseph Coelho). Former Laureates include Jacqueline Wilson, Malorie Blackman, Anthony Browne and Quentin Blake.

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