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Every nursery and early years setting receives Bookstart Treasure packs for every pre-school child in their care. The packs are FREE, but you can make them priceless.

This guidance material will tell you how to:

- Gift the packs to families in the most effective way – in your setting or in the home
- Ensure that every family gets the most from the pack and is encouraged to read every day with their child.
- Further engage mums, dads and carers with regards to sharing books, stories and rhymes.

Bookstart wants every child and their family to enjoy their Bookstart packs and spend enjoyable quality time together reading as a shared activity.

For parents and carers, knowing that they are giving their child a better future can be a powerful motivator. Teaching their child to love books can be one of the greatest gifts they can give to them – however many mums and dads don’t realise the role they can play. Sharing information with your families about how reading every day can have enormous benefits for them and their child is all part of the Bookstart gift.

Your role in handing out the packs will make all the difference.

If you need further help to gift the packs to families and advice on how to further engage parents and carers with regards to reading, please refer to the Bookstart website, www.Bookstart.org.uk.
Planning ahead

When the nursery and early years setting receives their Bookstart packs, they will be in a position to give them to the children and families they work with. So what happens next?

- **Deciding when is the best possible time to gift the bags to children and families.** We use the word ‘gift’ as the process should be as important as the pack. We want each pack to make a difference to each family.
- **Communicate with parents and carers.** Ensuring that every parent and carer understands what the pack is about and what they can do with their child to get the most from it.
- **Becoming familiar with the contents.** To allow families to get the most from the pack.

Communicating with parents and carers

In the appendices, you will find a letter to send home, which will invite parents and carers to join you when you give out the children’s book packs. This is the best opportunity to pass on to parents and carers really important messages about sharing books every day, which can be reinforced at the gifting session.

There is also a page of key messages which can be photocopied and given to parents and carers at your gifting session.

Bookstart know that you are incredibly busy in your Early Years role, however, dedicating time to get vital messages across will make sure that your children and families will get the full benefits of the Bookstart packs.

‘We sent a letter to parents to explain what the book packs were and invited parents to see their children receive the pack. We had a half hour session before home time one day and we read one of the books out and sang some rhymes before each child came up to receive the pack. It was lovely seeing the excitement on the children’s faces.’

*Kate, early years practitioner*

‘I was really pleased to go to nursery and see Freddie get his Treasure Bag. We heard a story being read and joined in some rhymes. We had a drink of squash and biscuits and I met some of the other mothers.’

*Jaycee, mother of Freddie*
What is Bookstart?

The national Bookstart programme

‘Bookstart is a key initiative getting books into homes and encouraging parents and carers to share books, stories and rhymes from birth which can make a significant difference to outcomes later in life for a child.’

Professor Yvonne Kelly of the Institute for Social & Economic Research (ISER), University of Essex.

The concept

Bookstart is based on a simple premise that children who have an early introduction to books and are read to every day benefit educationally, culturally, socially and emotionally.

The pleasure of reading and enjoying a variety of books with children draws them towards literacy through the love of stories, songs and rhymes. This also encourages parents/carers to see themselves as their child’s first and most enduring teacher with the potential to increase their child’s life chances.

Book sharing encourages a curiosity about life and an eagerness to learn. It helps to develop a child’s innate ability as a lifelong learner. This is our Bookstart partnership commitment:

‘We will encourage parents to adopt the Bookstart philosophy of reading books with their children every day and we believe that every home can be a place where learning is valued and books are fun.’

Development aid:

To see more information about the health benefits of Bookstart download the Bookstart Theoretical Framework from the Bookstart website:

www.bookstart.org.uk/framework

And visit the Bookstart website for further research and reports.

www.bookstart.org.uk

What can Bookstart do for our children, families and setting?

Supporting the EYFS

The EYFS places a strong emphasis on the three prime areas which are deemed most essential for a child’s healthy development:

• Communication and language
• Physical development
• Personal, social and emotional development

Alongside the EYFS early learning goals is a focus on strengthening partnerships between professionals and parents and carers and the use of clear language between the setting and a child’s home. Gifting Bookstart packs will directly complement EYFS practice, support every child’s early learning and development and encourage mums, dads and carers to take an active role. Gifting Bookstart packs also demonstrates to OFSTED that you work in partnership with parents and carers.
Bookstart added value activities

Many people recognise the pleasure that sharing stories, books and rhymes brings for children and families. However for others this is something that they have not experienced in their own childhood and would find it difficult to start with their own child. Here are just a few examples of how engaging with Bookstart clearly will directly complement your EYFS practice and contribute towards positive outcomes for children in your setting:

Sharing stories, books and rhymes promotes strong and loving relationships and secure attachment

One of the key outcomes of the Bookstart programme is that it increases the quality time that children and parents/carers spend together. This was established in a Social Return On Investment study (Just Economics, 2010) carried out for the programme.

Encouraging parents and carers to share stories, books, and rhymes can radically improve a child’s language and communication skills.

A poll in 2004 by I CAN, which helps children with speech and language difficulties, showed that 96 per cent of nursery staff had at least one child with communication difficulties in their care. Of those, 92 per cent blamed the lack of conversation between adults and children. Sharing books and rhymes encourages families to incorporate speech and language into their daily life. (I CAN (2004) Nursery workers poll says ‘Turn off the TV’)

Helps to lay foundations of good literacy skills and prepares the way for school

To be ready for school, children need to have a good vocabulary, understand how books work and have the curiosity, imagination and eagerness to learn about the world around them. Sharing rhymes, books and stories every day helps develop these skills, making the transition to school more successful.

Encouraging parents and carers to start sharing books, stories and rhymes with their child is the first step towards breaking intergenerational cycles of low achievement and poverty.

One of the guiding principles of the Bookstart programme and associated activities is to increase the confidence of every parent and carer and get them actively involved in their child’s learning. All guidance material produced recognises the role of parents and carers as a child’s first and most enduring educator.

Supports family access to other services

Participating in Bookstart related activities provides an opportunity to talk to mums, dads or carers about appropriate services available within a local children’s centre or library. This will encourage them to borrow books and take part in early year’s activities. As a result of this families will be more engaged in their community and at less risk of social isolation.

How will Bookstart packs benefit our children?

- Promotes strong familial relationships
- Supports development of confidence and self esteem
- Aids cognitive development
- Supports the development of communication and language skills
- Aids socio-emotional development, good mental health and wellbeing
- Helps to lay foundations of good literacy skills and prepares the way for school
- Supports the development of fine motor, listening and concentration skills
Bookstart Programme –
Universal Packs and Resources

Bookstart Baby Pack, 0-12 months
- Purple Baby bag
- Two board books
- Rhyme frieze
- Parental guidance – Babies Love Books

Bookstart Treasure Pack, 3-4 years
- Red Treasure satchel
- Two picture books
- Parental guidance – Share the Fun

Bookstart Programme –
Targeted Packs and Resources

Bookstart Corner, 12-24 months
- Green Corner bag
- One board book
- One picture book
- Parental guidance – What Babies Love
- Dialogic tips

2-Year-Old Pack, 2 years
- Red Corner bag
- Two picture books
- Parental guidance/ reading tips
- Rhyme CD
- Rhyme placemat
- Matching Faces card game
Bookshine Baby (0-2 years) and Bookshine Toddler (3-5 years) - for deaf children
Both packs contain:
• Two board books
• A Bookshine booklet of advice about sharing books with deaf children
• A Bookshine book guide listing lots more great books, as well as useful organisations and resources
• A nursery rhyme place mat featuring two rhymes and photographs of babies signing

Booktouch Baby (0-2 years) and Booktouch Toddler (3-5 years) - for blind or partially sighted children
Both packs contain:
• Two touch and feel books
• A Booktouch booklet of advice about sharing books with blind and partially sighted children
• A Booktouch book guide listing lots more great books
• A leaflet listing useful services related to reading
• A Bookstart Rhymetime CD and booklet.
Handbook for Early Years Practitioners

Bookstart Star (3-5 years) - for children who have delay with fine motor skills
- Two books with tactile elements
- Guidance for parents and carers
- Two finger puppets and puppet play guidance
- Recommended book list

Disclaimer: contents and book titles may vary.

Bookstart Programme - Added Value Activities

Bookstart Bear Club Online
The Bookstart Bear Club online has personalised book recommendations, exclusive games and interactive books to enjoy.

Animal Boogie:

Colour and draw activities:

The Rhyme Challenge
The Rhyme Challenge pack contains everything you need to support children and their families to develop a love of rhymes. It includes:
- 10 Rhymesheets to photocopy and to hand out to children to take home
- 35 certificates
- Posters to promote the Challenge plus guidance, tips, letters to invite parents to take part and a CD.
- Total cost of resources is £20 which is less than 60p per child.
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<th>Programme</th>
<th>Type of pack, materials or incentive</th>
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<td><strong>Bookstart support materials</strong> e.g. posters; leaflets etc. 0-4 years</td>
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<td>Some are supplied free of charge. Some resources are purchasable from Booktrust. Please contact Booktrust for an order form: <a href="mailto:orders@booktrust.org.uk">orders@booktrust.org.uk</a></td>
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**Bookstart Added Value Activities**

**Bookstart Bear Club**
Reader development and Library joining incentive
Between ages of 0-5 years
Used in some library authorities and also available as an online club for families.
www.bookstart.org.uk/bookstartbearclub

**National Bookstart Week**
Annual week of sharing rhymes, stories and songs around the country
0-5 years
Libraries, Children’s Centres, Bookshops
A wide range of partners including neonatal units, foodbanks and hospital schools.

**The Rhyme Challenge**
0-5 years
Available to purchase for settings. Fantastic resource to support children and their families learning rhymes together at your children’s centre, nursery, playgroup or library.
Bookstart resources for children with additional needs – Booktouch, Bookshine, Bookstart Star

Booktrust provides resources for children with additional needs.
In addition to the two universal packs, we also offer a wide range of additional resources that health visitors can utilise to meet the needs of their communities.
This ‘layered approach’ ensures that special support materials and resources are available for the most vulnerable families and groups, whilst the programmes benefit every child and family in the country.
To obtain these resources contact your local Bookstart Coordinator.

Bookshine
Bookshine packs are provided free to parents and carers of deaf children up to (and including) the age of five. Children are entitled to this pack in addition to the two universal Bookstart packs.

Who gifts the packs?
The professional gifting the pack decides which pack is the most suitable for the child.
Bookstart Coordinators usually work with partners in sensory impairment and health visiting teams to identify children who would benefit from the gift of these packs.

What’s in the packs?
There are two Bookshine packs available:
Bookshine Baby (0-2 years old)

Bookshine (3-5 years old)
Both packs contain:
• Two board books
• Bookshine booklet of advice about sharing books with deaf children
• Bookshine book guide listing lots more great books, as well as useful Organisations and resources
• Nursery rhyme placemat featuring two rhymes and photographs of babies signing.

The Bookshine pack (for children aged 3-5 years) also includes a book suitable for older children, which has included books such as *Shark in the Park* by Nick Sharratt. There is also a special British Sign Language bookmark to sign key words from the story.

Booktouch
Booktouch packs are provided free to parents or carers of blind or partially sighted children up to (and including) the age of five. Children are entitled to this pack in addition to the two universal Bookstart packs.

Who gifts the packs?
The professional gifting the pack decides which pack is the most suitable for the child.
Bookstart Coordinators usually work with partners in sensory impairment and health visiting teams to identify children who would benefit from the gift of these packs.

What’s in the packs?
Booktouch Baby (0-2 years old)

Booktouch (3-5 years old)
Both packs contain:
• Two touch-and-feel books
• Booktouch booklet of advice about sharing books with blind and partially sighted children
• Booktouch book guide listing lots more great books
Leaflet listing useful services related to reading

• Bookstart Rhymetimes CD and booklet.

The Booktouch pack (for children aged 3-5 years) also includes a book suitable for older children, which has included books such as *This Is My Monster* – a noisy touch-and-feel book with a fun, interactive story.

**Bookstart Star**

We have a limited number of Bookstart Star packs which are available for free to parents and carers of children with additional needs other than those who are blind or deaf up to (and including) the age of five. They are particularly aimed at children with additional needs associated with fine motor control. Children are entitled to this pack *in addition* to the two standard Bookstart packs.

**Who gifts the packs?**

The professional who is gifting the pack decides which pack is the most suitable for the child.

Bookstart Coordinators usually work with partners in portage and health visiting teams to identify children who would benefit from the gift of these packs.

**What’s in the pack?**

• Two books with tactile and sensory elements
• Guidance for parents and carers
• Two finger puppets and puppet play guidance
• Recommended book list.

The Bookstart Star pack (for children aged 3-5 years) also includes *Off to the Park!*, a book which includes an array of tactile features such as a big red squishy ball, a glittering path and even an ice cream scented page.
Bookstart Corner is a free targeted programme for children's centres and is designed to enhance existing outreach work and/or offer new outreach opportunities in local communities. The programme places a particular focus on families that need the most support to develop a reading habit and offers a comprehensive support package for centres to utilise when engaging with families that have children between the ages of 12-24 months.

"I think it’s a brilliant programme. I go into children’s homes and some of these children are in real poverty and parents don’t read to them so we’re showing parents how to look at and share a book with their child."

Practitioner, Blackpool

Bookstart Corner was announced as the winner of the Working with Parents category at the 2013 Nursery World Awards. Nursery World Judges said of Bookstart Corner:

‘Bookstart Corner enhances practitioners’ knowledge of how stories, books and rhymes support a child’s early learning and development. Practitioner training is regarded as an essential element, demonstrating that if you invest in practitioners’ skills, provide them with high-quality resources and work together in partnership to reach families that need it the most then positive outcomes will be achieved. The frequency of parents reading with their child has increased by a substantial amount after taking part in Bookstart Corner. Child book ownership has also increased and parents are more likely to participate in local services.’

The aims of the Bookstart Corner programme are:

- To promote communication and positive interaction between parent and child to support development of early language
- To highlight to the parent/carer the importance of sharing stories, books and rhymes and the fun this brings
- To promote a daily story, book and rhyme sharing habit
- To promote the importance of the home environment in shaping a child’s future
- To demonstrate and value the parent/carer role, building on what they already do to support communication skills
- Support parenting aspirations, self-esteem, parenting skills and child and family health and life chances
- To up skill and instil confidence in practitioners around parental engagement with regards to books, stories and rhymes.
The programme is:
- **Free** to all children’s centres in England
- A four point home intervention model
- A family engagement resource package that supports community outreach work
- An opportunity for practitioners to enhance their knowledge and skill set via the Bookstart Corner training package (completed by practitioners prior to delivery of the programme)
- Supported by exclusive resources to engage practitioners and families.

Participating children’s centres receive:
- Vibrant rhyme sheets and guidance for the families involved
- 25 or 50 Bookstart Corner packs for the children they work with, including two carefully selected books
- Finger puppets and guidance for families
- Mark making pads and crayons
- Resources for the setting, including books and display panels.

Criteria to consider when referring families for participation
The programme is aimed at families with children aged 12-24 months and children’s centres will be considering the following criteria during selection of families to take part:

- Children that have never attended a **health check**
- Children entitled to the free **two year old early education grant**
- Expectant parents participating in the **Family Nurse Partnership programme**
- Where there are concerns around **domestic violence, drug or alcohol misuse or maternal mental health**
- Families on **low income or living in poor quality or over crowded housing**
- Where a child or at least one parent has a **longstanding illness or disability**
- Via **referrals from health**, social services, GP or other local professionals
- **Lone parent** families
- Families where a **parent is serving a custodial sentence**

This list is not definitive, and Booktrust recognises that centres and their partners will have the expertise in identifying the local families with the greatest need. There has been an increase in families who are ‘time poor’ coming forward for support around reading with their child. It is important never to make assumptions about what level of support a family may or may not need.

‘It has taught me a lot. Before I didn’t know how to introduce my child to any books or know any rhymes’

**Parent, Warrington**
Programme delivery and the benefits of home visiting

The programme is designed for direct delivery into the home with the fourth visit offering flexibility to be delivered in a community venue.

Bookstart Corner can help parents create a positive home learning environment to support early literacy and numeracy for preschool children by:

- Singing songs and nursery rhymes
- Reading books together
- Encouraging mark making
- Playing with letters and numbers
- Visiting the library.

Bookstart Corner gives centre practitioners four opportunities, with each home visit, to promote activities that enhance the home learning environment. The resources – such as the rhyme sheets, story books, mark making materials and puppets – can have a real impact on what the family do together.

As a trusted practitioner they will be able to suggest to parents how to build the programme resources into everyday activities, such as meal or bedtimes. With their help, families will recognise these moments as opportunities to learn and have fun together, and parents can become their child’s first and most enduring teacher.

The Home Learning Environment

The benefits of early home learning are well documented. Below is a brief summary of the benefits that the home visiting aspect of the programme may offer to families and how it can contribute towards positive outcomes for children.

- The home visitor can give sole attention to one family with no other demands on his or her time
- The home visitor can develop ideas with the parent/carer that suit their own concerns and fit with their own literacy and skills level
- There may be increased opportunity to discuss the parent/carer learning needs and provide further information and support for adult learning if the parent/carer wish it
- There is potential for high take up and high participation as visits can be re-scheduled. It is harder to ‘catch up’ on a group meeting that is missed. (Cathy Nutbrown and Peter Hannon, 2011)

‘The balance gradually shifts and parents begin to take the lead in playing with their child, with support. Parents are also gradually introduced to attend group-based sessions within Children’s Centres and the local community.’

Reaching families who are not using early years services, Wheeler and Connor, 2009
**Bookstart Corner in Families’ Homes**

Children’s Centres will make up to four home visits to each family. During these visits they will:

- **Explain** key messages about the benefits of parents and family members sharing books and rhymes with their children
- **Model** ways parents/carers can support their children’s learning and development – through everyday routines and opportunities
- **Help** parents to identify ways they can embed and sustain these activities into their daily lives
- **Strengthen** the partnership and relationships between home and the children’s centre

Please see the Bookstart Corner resource for more details on the four home visits: [www.bookstart.org.uk/handbook](http://www.bookstart.org.uk/handbook)

To find out more about Bookstart Corner or to take the programme tutorial, contact bookstartcorner@booktrust.org.uk.

**Independent evaluation**

Sheffield Hallam University carried out an evaluation of Bookstart Corner involving parents and practitioners at 60 children’s centres. This independent research found that the programme significantly improved the parental engagement of families that are not accessing services, across a number of outcomes related to reading behaviours in the home: [www.bookstart.org.uk/handbook](http://www.bookstart.org.uk/handbook)
**Bookstart 2-Year-Old Pack**

**Shortlisted for Nursery World Awards 2014**

The Bookstart 2-Year-Old pack is a new targeted resource available to families with children aged two who are eligible for funded early education, even if they don’t take it up.

They will be gifted via children’s centres working in partnership with local health and Early Years colleagues.

For more information about eligibility for this government funding, see the Department for Education’s early learning for two-year-olds webpage: [https://www.gov.uk/free-early-education](https://www.gov.uk/free-early-education)

**How will the pack be gifted?**

All centres that have signed up to receive Bookstart Corner will also receive the Bookstart 2-Year-Old packs. There are also a number of packs available to children’s centres who are not able to work with families on the full Bookstart Corner offer.

The pack can be given to children as a standalone gift in the family’s home or in a children’s centre.

For families who have received the full Bookstart Corner programme via four home visits, this could potentially be their fifth intervention and can be also gifted at home or in the centre.

**What’s in the pack?**

These packs have a similar format to other Bookstart packs and contain:

- Two picture books
- Dialogic reading tips
- Parental guidance leaflet
- Matching Faces card game
- Rhyme CD
- Rhyme placemat
As with the full Bookstart Corner programme, children’s centres will be working in partnership with local health and Early Years colleagues to identify families that have children eligible to receive the Bookstart 2-Year-Old pack.

Health Visitors and Early Years partners can play a crucial role in signposting centre colleagues to families that meet this criteria. If centres have limited capacity to reach these families, health practitioners or other local partners might consider delivering this pack – working with the children’s centre.

Whilst children will benefit from the free early education at Early Years settings, Bookstart Corner and the Bookstart 2-Year-Old pack will enable children’s centres to support the whole family and improve the home learning environment.

**Support for children that are not eligible for the NEG (Nursery Education Grant)**

Booktrust recognise that some two-year-old children may not be eligible for free early education but may benefit from additional support. For example, these may be children with speech and language delay.

To support practitioners working with these children, additional packs are sometimes available to purchase from Booktrust. Please contact bookstart@booktrust.org.uk for further information.

To find out more about Bookstart Corner in your area contact your Bookstart Coordinator or your local children’s centre managers and visit the Bookstart website: www.bookstart.org.uk.
Realising the potential of Bookstart

Bookstart Rhymetimes

Bookstart Rhymetimes are group activities for babies, toddlers and their mothers, fathers or carers designed to encourage them to share rhymes and songs with babies from birth. They are fun and interactive sessions organised locally, generally free and usually take place in locations such as libraries, health centres and early years centres around the country.

Bookstart Rhymetime sessions usually last between 20 – 30 minutes and bring families together in a safe and supportive environment. The sessions are informal learning opportunities which model and encourage the singing of songs and rhymes and the sharing of stories with young children.

Bookstart Rhymetimes support:

- Neurological development
- Early attachment and bonding
- Language development
- Listening skills
- Development of concentration skills and attention spans
- Exploration of different sounds
- Importance of sharing books and rhymes from as early an age as possible.

In addition to all of this, Bookstart Rhymetimes provide an opportunity for the mothers, fathers and carers of young babies and children to meet each other and socialise in a supportive community environment.

The Rhyme Challenge

The Bookstart Rhyme Challenge is a self-contained resource that can be run by Early Years, libraries and health practitioners to encourage families to learn rhymes together in a fun way.

Six ways rhymes benefit children and families:

- **Help children learn and develop** – rhymes are often repetitive, making the words easier to learn.
- **Support social skills** – children learn naturally about taking turns and joining in.
- **Get children ready for school** – rhyme, rhythm, repetition are key ways to develop reading skills in emergent readers.
- **Emotional wellbeing** – rhymes can help parents and practitioners stimulate a child's imagination.
- **They're fun for all** – everyone can join in and have fun with rhymes, no special skills required!
- **Get families involved** – The Rhyme Challenge is designed to make the transition into the home, so that parents and carers can join in and support their child's learning. The Challenge is a great way to encourage communication and interaction between parents, their children and the wider family unit.
Buy The Rhyme Challenge (finalist in Nursery World Awards)

The Rhyme Challenge is a purchasable resource that many Early Years settings have bought. All children’s centres signed up to Bookstart Corner receive this resource free of charge.

Health visiting teams may wish to consider running The Rhyme Challenge with post natal groups to support their work around communication and language development.

The resource can be purchased directly from the Bookstart website: http://www.bookstart.org.uk/professionals/get-involved/the-rhyme-challenge/buy/

The Rhyme Challenge and Local Speech and Language Strategies

Many children who have speech and language delay due to environmental factors could be supported by taking part in The Rhyme Challenge. Health, Speech and Language colleagues may wish to consider incorporating The Rhyme Challenge into a local strategy in which families with children identified with such a delay are referred to children’s centres to take part in this activity. The case study in the appendix highlights how effective this can be.

‘Our local nursery came into the library and completed The Rhyme Challenge over several weeks. The children really benefited as some have speech and language problems.’ Practitioner

Development Aid:

Downloadable resources

There is a large range of resources that are free to download from the Bookstart website including:

- Tip sheets for parents
- Recommended booklists
- Rhyme sheets
- Parental guidance resources in a number of community languages
- Posters
- Bedtime reading posters and tip sheets for parents.

There are also a number of case studies and research reports for anyone seeking further evidence to support their work around Bookstart. http://www.bookstart.org.uk/professionals/resources/

Dual Language Resources

A limited number of dual language books are offered free of charge for families for whom English is a second language.

Why give dual language books?

The gift of a dual language book raises awareness of these books and helps parents to seek out more titles via their library or local bookseller. Research recommends that families should talk and read books in their home language and dual language books are a good way to introduce parents to books with text in their home language and also in English.
The dual language offer from Bookstart encourages adults to share books in their own language and to try out new words in English.

Bookstart has provided dual language books for children’s centres and encouraged libraries and children’s centres to work together to promote these books and to provide guidance to parents on the benefits of sharing books in their home language.

**Ordering dual language resources**


These resources are available free to schemes on request from professionals, to gift to families with the Bookstart packs, or for those working with community groups. Orders can be placed via your Bookstart Coordinator.

> ‘Young children need to have their languages valued and their home experiences affirmed in order to feel secure enough to venture into the language and culture of their Early Years setting.’

_The Early Years: Laying the Foundations for Racial Equality, Siraj-Blatchford, 1994_

**The Bookstart Bear Club**

The Bookstart Bear Club is a free reader development, membership reward scheme for babies, toddlers and pre-school children who become members receive a membership pack and a ‘passport’ where they collect stamps each time they visit a participating library to take part in an activity or borrow books. Collecting stamps leads to the award of beautiful certificates of which there are ten to collect, and often results in a celebration!

The scheme is designed to encourage regular library visits and is often run in partnership with local children’s centres where families can collect stamps for attending rhyme sessions there.

**What are the benefits of the Bookstart Bear Club?**

- Families can understand everything that Bookstart offers, including the packs, and beyond
- It’s an excellent outreach tool for library staff
- It’s a great way to encourage repeat visits to the library.
- The club makes it easier for library staff to promote the amazing work they do with families.

Many local authorities run the Bookstart Bear Club in their libraries but if they don’t families can join the online club (see below).
The Online Bookstart Bear Club

The online club is open to all children from birth until they start school. All families need to join is a computer with an internet connection, so they can be part of the club no matter where they live – perfect if their nearest library branch is too far away or they are in a rural setting.

Anyone can become an online club member, regardless of whether their local authority has chosen to run the Bookstart Bear Club or not.

Health visitors could encourage parents to sign up to the club where they will find lots of fun games and activities to share with their child, all designed to encourage families to have fun and develop a love of books.

[www.bookstart.org.uk/bookstart-bear-club/](http://www.bookstart.org.uk/bookstart-bear-club/)

The Bookstart Website

Opening the Bookstart website using QR codes:

- Pack books are now printed with QR codes to easily open Bookstart webpages on smartphones.
- Parents or carers would need to open or install a free QR code reader app on their smartphone – once the app is open, simply hold the phone up to the QR code so it fits within the screen.
- The app should automatically scan the code, confirm whether it should proceed and then launch the webpage in the phone’s browser.
- Parents and carers will then be taken through to the ‘Have some fun’ area of the website which they can enjoy with their children. They will also find further support and guidance on the website to support their read every day journey.

‘Bookstart has...given me endless tips on how to read and communicate the story more effectively, and steered us in the direction of some great reads, thank you for all you do it is incredible.’

Parent

The Bookstart website speaks directly to parents and carers as first educators within the home and equips them with resources and activities to enjoy with their children from birth. The website is accessible and informs parents and carers about the importance of books, stories and rhymes with regards to their child’s early learning and development. Booktrust has been actively making the website mobile friendly due to the large numbers of parents and carers that access the site via smartphones or tablets. Plus it allows them to enjoy Bookstart anytime, anyplace, anywhere!

The website also contains a practitioner area, where Booktrust conveys key programme information, updates local authorities around developments and shares best practice across the country.

[www.bookstart.org.uk](http://www.bookstart.org.uk)
‘The Bookstart website is a magical way to engage tiny people. It's a brilliant supplement to reading at home. I have been spending a lot of time with my daughter, singing along with the rhymes and playing the various games.’

Parent

National Bookstart Week

Bookstart Week is a national celebration of the Bookstart programme, held every June, reinforcing to all families the importance of reading every day. It celebrates families reading together and provides opportunities for them to go along and have fun at organised events in their local library or community centre.

Booktrust work with Bookstart schemes, children’s centres, health partners, prisons and other partners to support active participation in the wide range of activities associated with the week. Every year, in partnership with a publisher, Booktrust provides free copies of a booklet for children and families to enjoy together, which reinforces the read every day message and makes families aware of their entitlement with regards to the Bookstart packs.

To organise or get involved in an event near you, speak to your local partners and consider running a joint event for all children and families in your area.
How Bookstart works in a local authority

The Bookstart Coordinator

The Bookstart Coordinator is the lynchpin in managing an effective Bookstart scheme. They administrate the scheme and establish and nurture the essential partnerships that enable the delivery of the programme. The Coordinator actively seeks opportunities for joint working between the various partners and ensures that the Bookstart ‘message’ and philosophy is received as effectively as the Bookstart packs.

Bookstart aims to reach 100% of eligible children for each of the two universal Bookstart packs. Coordinators ensure that reliable systems are in place to reach this target.

The Bookstart Coordinator:

- Ensures that the Partnership Agreement is followed and that the scheme is administrated efficiently and effectively.
- Develops strategic and operational partnerships with Health, Early Years and other partners, aiming to deliver the programme to every eligible child.
- Develops a simple monitoring and auditing system to track numbers of packs to each gifting venue and agree this with partners.
- Provides training and help raise awareness of the programme.
- Communicates the Bookstart concept to as many public audiences as possible.
- Establishes partnerships with secondary stakeholders, for example adult education.
- Keeps up to date with programme development and disseminates the information to local partners.

If you are not aware of whom your local Bookstart Coordinator is please contact bookstart@booktrust.org.uk

Bookstart Partnership Agreement 2013-15

Bookstart is an integrated service for children with impact across every local authority. A partnership agreement is signed by a senior director or manager who commits to administering Bookstart on behalf of the local authority.

The Bookstart Partnership Agreement aims are:

- To ensure that every eligible child receives a Bookstart Baby pack by 12 months and a Bookstart Treasure pack by 4 years
- To ensure that parents/carers receive a warm, friendly and effective message which conveys the benefits and joys of sharing books, stories and rhymes daily.
- To encourage families to use local facilities and join the library and the Bookstart Bear Club where it is available to access further books.
- To encourage families to access, utilise and engage with local services.
- To signpost and support parents around their own literacy/numeracy/IT needs.
National funding for the current offer is available until March 2015, by which time we will know what funding is available to continue our work. In addition, the local delivery of the programme via library, education and health services will continue to entail some costs which will need to be met by local schemes.

By accepting the Partnership Agreement the local authority ensures that every baby and 3-4 year old child continues to receive a free Bookstart pack. There will also be free resources for families who need additional support through Bookstart Corner; 2-Year-Old packs; Booktouch; Bookshine, Bookstart Star and dual language resources.

**Bookstart partners**

The Bookstart programme is delivered through a multi-agency partnership:

**Central funding**

Bookstart is supported by funds from the Department for Education in England and via the devolved administrations in Northern Ireland and Wales.

**Booktrust**

Booktrust is a charity that changes lives through reading and administrates the Bookstart programme. The charity has built sound relationships with all materials and service suppliers, often purchasing components at low cost or at cost price. This is especially the case with our children’s publishers who supply books at cost or below.

**Local authority**

A local partnership between library, health, children’s centres and Early Years is vital for the successful delivery of the programme, to ensure that every eligible child receives their free Bookstart resources and that families are supported to develop a daily book reading routine.

**Local authority delivery of the programme**

Bookstart is usually coordinated and administrated by Library Services working in partnership with health professionals and Early Years practitioners in settings including children’s centres. Other professionals who work with families who need the most support are also involved in targeted delivery of the programme. Some local authorities administer the Bookstart programme through their Early Years or Education departments.

The enthusiastic endorsement by local professionals ensures that the Bookstart ‘message’ is delivered as thoroughly as the packs. This is essential if Bookstart is to release its potential and have a positive impact upon parental practice and encouraging a daily reading habit.

Bookstart provides an integrated service for Early Years children. Our shared core objective is to give children a lifelong love of books. In addition, the aims and objectives of Bookstart help to serve a number of Early Years and Health targets and related agendas.
Bookstart Team and Helpful Contacts

Find the relevant members of the Booktrust team here for any queries you may have:
www.bookstart.org.uk/handbook
Appendix 1:

The health and wellbeing benefits of reading with children: Research evidence

The evidence suggests that reading with children has the following impacts:

- ✔ Promotes secure attachment
  
  Parent-child attachment is related to the frequency of reading at home: Bus et al found that three-year-old children who were read to frequently were more likely to be securely attached than children who were read to infrequently (Bus et al (1995) Mothers Reading to Their 3-Year-Olds: The Role of Mother-Child Attachment Security in Becoming Literate, Reading Research Quarterly).

- ✔ Reduces socio-emotional difficulties
  
  Professor Yvonne Kelly (Professor of Lifecourse Epidemiology, UCL) states that if children were read to on a daily basis there would be a substantial reduction in the proportion of five-year-olds with socio-emotional difficulties (Kelly et al (2011) - What role for the home learning environment and parenting in reducing the socioeconomic gradient in child development? Arch Dis Child).

- ✔ Assists with speech and language development
  
  DfE research shows that the communication environment in the child’s first two years impacts on early language development and attainment at school. Book ownership and library usage are positively related to language development: the number of books available to the child at six months has a significant impact on the child’s expressive vocabulary at 24 months (Roulstone et al (2011) Investigating the role of language in children’s early educational outcomes, DfE).

- ✔ Improves the Home Learning Environment
  
  The EPPE Project highlights the key importance of the home learning environment for a child’s intellectual and social development. Reading books with children is one of the activities that helps create a positive home learning environment (Sylva et al (2004) - The Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) Project: Findings from Pre-School to end of Key Stage 1, DfE).

- ✔ Improves educational outcomes
  
  Reading to a 4-5 year-old child more frequently leads to higher reading, maths and cognitive skills at age 8-9. Reading to children every day, or almost every day instead of twice a week or less had the same effect on the child’s reading skills as being almost 12 months older (Kalb & van Ours (2013) Reading to Young Children: A Head-Start in Life? Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research).

- ✔ Reduces health inequalities
  
  Sir Michael Marmot has stated that ‘giving every child the best start in life is crucial to reducing health inequalities across the life course’, and he has highlighted the importance of reading on a daily basis as one way to give children the best start in life (Marmot et al (2010) Fair Society, Healthy Lives, The Marmot Review).

Booktrust has produced a theoretical framework outlining the wider health benefits of reading with children, available here:

www.bookstart.org.uk/framework

www.booktrust.org.uk
The Bookstart Corner programme has been a fundamental tool in reaching the most hard to reach families in our area. The programme has not only enabled workers to explore the habits of book sharing, songs and rhymes but it has also enabled workers to extend and discuss issues around routine, speech and language etc. This has subsequently led to families exploring other programmes in the home or at the centre. A very simple but effective tool.

Bookstart Corner Practitioner

www.booktrust.org.uk

About Booktrust

Booktrust is a national reading charity that changes lives through books. We give millions of books to children, run prizes and offer advice to readers and writers.

Bookstart Corner

Bookstart Corner is one of Booktrust's targeted reading programmes, aimed at families with children aged 12-30 months. It supports children's centres across England to work with families with the greatest need, encouraging them to develop a love of stories, books and rhymes. It is delivered through a series of four home visits enhanced with carefully selected resources including books, rhymes and finger puppets.

An independent evaluation of Bookstart Corner was recently carried out by Sheffield Hallam University. It involved parents and practitioners at 60 children’s centres completing surveys at the start and end of the programme about their reading behaviours and attitudes to reading. The research found that the programme significantly improves the parental engagement of families that are not accessing services, across a number of outcomes related to reading behaviours in the home.

Key research findings

Increased reading frequency

Before the Bookstart Corner sessions, 54% of mothers/female carers reported reading with their child every day, increasing to 67% after the programme. For fathers/male carers the increase was even sharper: rising from 5% to 22%.

Improved home learning environment

Responses from practitioners showed a marked change in views about the home learning environment following Bookstart Corner. The number of practitioners reporting that the family was playing and engaging as a normal part of daily life, more than doubled from 23% before the programme, to 62% after the programme.

Reaching families that are not accessing services

Practitioner feedback suggests that the programme is a great way to work with families with the greatest need, and offers an opportunity to encourage use of services. The research indicates that parents/carers were more likely to visit the library or the children’s centre following the programme.

The Bookstart Corner programme has been a fundamental tool in reaching the most hard to reach families in our area. The programme has not only enabled workers to explore the habits of book sharing, songs and rhymes but it has also enabled workers to extend and discuss issues around routine, speech and language etc. This has subsequently led to families exploring other programmes in the home or at the centre. A very simple but effective tool.

Bookstart Corner Practitioner

www.booktrust.org.uk/cornerevaluation
Appendix 2:

The Rhyme Challenge Case Study

Children’s Centres and Speech and Language Teams (S&LT) in Cheshire East share how The Rhyme Challenge is helping families on the S&LT waiting list

Sandra Evans, Cheshire Booktrust Coordinator, working with Carol Sharples, Elizabeth Newsham and Pauline Austin from the Early Years and Childcare team began a project to develop the local partnership between Children’s Centres, Libraries and Health Services using The Rhyme Challenge resource. Targeted for support by the Children’s Centres, families are invited to participate in The Rhyme Challenge over a six week period at the Children’s Centre.

Each week the child and his/her family have a copy of

- Top Tip for Talking key ring (a locally produced resource)
- Copy of the Rhyme of the Month and related home learning activities to ‘have a go at home’ on a key ring tag
- An attendance card, stamped each week on the Bookstart Bear trail
- Certificate issued at the celebration day for learning all 10 rhymes

Each Children’s Centre provides additional support by developing a communication notice board and Library area where families can look at and borrow books. This area also displays Top Tips for Talking information, reading to your child tips, and is a Communication Friendly Space to encourage children to talk. In some cases the Bookstart Bear (owned by Cheshire bookstart) comes to visit.

SaLTs and Health Visitors are welcome to attend some of the sessions to support families and to identify language and communication concerns.

The intention for the final session of the programme is a Walk and Talk event to the local Library, with a talking picnic on the way. Families, alongside practitioners, Librarians and other professionals celebrate learning and singing all 10 rhymes together, where they receive a certificate and join the library.

In practice, the project has developed in many different ways, and has had to adapt within the guidelines to the requirements of individual Children’s Centres. However, this project has been incredibly successful and has encouraged many of these families to engage with songs and rhymes, develop interactions and language and also use their library regularly.
**The Rhyme Challenge: Supporting Families with Speech and Language Concerns**

Realising the potential of the Rhyme Challenge to engage parents with their children’s learning, some Children’s Centre staff began thinking about which other families would benefit from taking part. They identified that the Speech and Language Team (S&LT) were overwhelmed with children on their waiting list and that in some cases families were waiting several months before a consultation was possible.

At one Children’s Centre, these families were targeted and invited to a six week version of the project with amazing results. One little girl, aged 3 who had little if no speech and communicated with a high pitched voice is now picking up new words every day.

‘The first session A (child) would not join in with any singing and sat reading books in the book corner, Mum tried to re-focus her but was not successful. We continued to encourage her and by week two she did show some interest particularly the action songs. By week three A was sat in the circle trying to copy the actions, Mum recognised this and looked so pleased with her. By week six A she was growing in confidence with the signs and was starting to show some signs of singing the rhymes by saying the first words of some songs’

The family, who had not previously engaged with the Centre, has received further support from a Family Service Worker through the Bookstart Corner programme and S&LT.

Following success with this pilot, the Rhyme Challenge is now being rolled out to more Centres in Cheshire East, as the potential for using it to support some of their most disadvantaged families is now being recognized.

Carol Sharples, Early Years and Childcare Manager, Cheshire East says:

‘To give a child a love of books, is really a gift for life. Engaging in the Rhyme Challenge is the start of this journey’
Appendix 3:

Bookstart Treasure Pack

Activity booklet for Early Years Practitioners

www.bookstart.org.uk
Communicating with parents and carers

In this activity booklet, you will find a letter to send home which will invite parents and carers to join you when you when you give out the children’s book packs. This is the best opportunity to pass onto parents and carers really important messages about sharing books every day, which can be reinforced at the gifting session.

There is also a page of key messages which can be photocopied and given to parents and carers at the gifting session.

Bookstart know that you are incredibly busy in your early years role, however, dedicating time to get vital messages across will make sure that your children and families will get the full benefits of the Bookstart packs.
Dear Mums, Dads and Carers

**A free Bookstart Treasure pack for your child from Booktrust.**

Exciting news from nursery! Your child’s free Treasure pack from Bookstart has arrived. The Bookstart Treasure pack contains two great picture books to share and will give your child and you the opportunity to read together every day.

There is no need to pay for or return this Bookstart Treasure pack to nursery. It is yours to keep and enjoy and will help your child begin a lifelong love of books and stories.

**Special Bookstart event in nursery**
So that you can make the most of your Bookstart Treasure pack, we will be holding an event in nursery. It will be lots of fun and you will see your child receive their pack. You will also have the chance to ask us any questions you may have about books and reading with your child.

Date:
Time:
Place:

**Bookstart Treasure pack activities**
We will also be sending some fun activities home about the books in your Bookstart Treasure pack. This will help your child enjoy the books in the bag even more and help them learn and grow in so many ways.

If you or a family member cannot make the event, please contact nursery to find out how to receive your Bookstart Treasure pack.

Remember to make time every day to share books, stories and rhymes.
Dear Mums, Dads and Carers

Bookstart knows that you are incredibly busy. However, spending a few minutes every day with your child sharing books, stories and rhymes can make such a difference to how they learn and grow.

Your Bookstart Treasure pack is a fun gift for you and your child. We hope that you enjoy the books in the bag together.

Have fun sharing stories, books and rhymes every day and give your child the confidence to become a reader.

You are your child’s first and most important teacher. Children need stories, books and rhymes as an essential part of their development so it’s important to include them in your daily routine.

Everyone in the family can join in: dads, mums, brothers, sisters, aunties, uncles and grandparents.

Sharing books, talking about the pictures and cuddling up close together will help you to build a strong and loving relationship with your child.

Your child will love to hear the books in their Treasure pack over and over again. That is how they learn new words and make sense of the story. It is also a good idea to join the library so they can choose books for themselves, and libraries are free to join from birth.

Having a child can be tiring and demanding. Your Bookstart Treasure Pack gives you the chance to escape from the everyday and make time for smiles, laughter and love. Books, stories and rhymes are magical and will help you get to know your child, and have fun together.

‘The gift of reading and storytelling is priceless, and the Bookstart projects helps parents pass it on to their children.’

Author, Jenn Ashworth
Dear Mums, Dads and Carers

**Reading with your child**

Your child and you recently received your free Bookstart Treasure pack. We hope you have enjoyed reading the two books with your child at home.

**What next?**

After reading both books, your child will probably know the stories quite well. You can ask them to tell you again what happened in their books. When your child tells stories back to you, it is helping them to learn how stories work. It develops their memory, and it is fun for them to be the storyteller sometime.

You can also encourage your child to do things that they enjoy based on their Bookstart books. Making a link between the book and a fun activity helps your child to have fun with books and reading.

Don’t forget that the library has lots of books which you can read there or take home. They also hold lots of events so why not find out more.

Remember to take ten minutes every day to share books, stories and rhymes.

Together with you Bookstart you can help your child become a confident reader and writer for life.
You can be your child’s first and most important teacher. Stories, books and rhymes are an essential part of your child’s development, so it’s important to include them in your everyday routine. This will help your child develop many important skills that will help them become happy and confident learners.

It is good to enjoy stories, books and rhymes with your child from as early an age as possible. Babies don’t need to understand all the words; they will just love to listen to your voice.

Sharing books, talking about the pictures and cuddling up close together will help you to build a strong and loving relationship with your child. Everyone in the family can join in: dads, mums, grandparents, brothers, sisters, aunties and uncles.

Your child will love lots of different kinds of books and will enjoy choosing ones for themselves, so it is good to join the library. Libraries welcome all ages and it is free to join.

Below are key messages to give to mums, dads and carers when gifting a Bookstart pack:

- You can be your child’s first and most important teacher. Stories, books and rhymes are an essential part of your child’s development, so it’s important to include them in your everyday routine. This will help your child develop many important skills that will help them become happy and confident learners.

- It is good to enjoy stories, books and rhymes with your child from as early an age as possible. Babies don’t need to understand all the words; they will just love to listen to your voice.

- Sharing books, talking about the pictures and cuddling up close together will help you to build a strong and loving relationship with your child. Everyone in the family can join in: dads, mums, grandparents, brothers, sisters, aunties and uncles.

- Your child will love lots of different kinds of books and will enjoy choosing ones for themselves, so it is good to join the library. Libraries welcome all ages and it is free to join.

Other things to think about:

- Make time to read with your child every day, even 10 minutes will make a huge difference to how they learn and grow. Plus it is great fun for you both!

- Babies love books with bright, bold pictures and photographs.

- Having a baby can be incredibly tiring and demanding. Your Bookstart pack gives you the chance to escape from the everyday and make time together for smiles, laughter and love.

- Your local library may run regular Rhyme and Storytime sessions for families. Here you can learn new rhymes, have fun with books and stories and meet other parents and babies.

- Wriggly babies love action songs and rhymes and enjoy hearing the same ones again and again.

Find out more at:
www.bookstart.org.uk
Things to keep in mind when gifting the Bookstart packs

PLEASE open the pack and take out the contents with the parent or care giver.

Think in advance whether a Bookshine or Booktouch pack may be more suitable if the child has additional needs.

Think in advance whether the family would find community language resources useful – we provide information in 26 different languages.

✔ Remember this is a gift for the child and every child is entitled to a pack.

✔ It is ideal to show at least one of the books to the child – for parents who have not thought about sharing stories seeing a child’s eyes light up is a very powerful message.

✔ Refer back to the key messages keeping them with you to refer to if necessary until you are familiar with it.

✔ For parents who may have low levels of literacy or lack confidence, explain how they can use the book to look at the pictures and chat about what they can see together.

✔ Recognise that you can use the Bookstart pack as a tool to explore a child’s fine motor skill development, speech and language, comprehension and visual ability.

✔ Find out where your local library is and when Rhyme or Storytime events are held to tell your parents – an ideal social occasion for both them and their baby. To find a library close to the family visit: www.findalibrary.org.uk

✔ Why not encourage parents to visit the Bookstart website for lots of fun and games online as well as hints and tips around books and rhymes? www.bookstart.org.uk

We know you are busy but spending a few more minutes to get these vital messages across will make sure that the families in your care will get the full benefits of the Bookstart packs and begin their lifelong journey as a reader.

Thanks very much from all at Bookstart. We couldn’t do it without you.
More books for you and your child to enjoy at home

If you and your child enjoyed reading your Bookstart books together, here are some more stories you might enjoy. You can ask about these books at the library, or you can go to the Bookstart website to read stories for free online.

**Super Duck**  
by Jez Alborough  
Goat is keen to try out his new kite with the help of friends, Sheep and Frog. But, just as they are about to see if it will fly, Super Duck arrives in his super truck and Frog is sent soaring into the sky! Join Duck and his pals on an adventure with kites and capes!

**Granpa**  
by John Burningham  
Granpa nurses his granddaughter’s dolls, mistakes her pretend strawberry ice-cream for chocolate, and joins in with her imaginary plans to captain a ship to Africa. A wonderful tale of friendship and make-believe.

**Benjamin & the Super Spectacles**  
by Rachel Bright  
Benjamin loves to bounce. The only problem is... he keeps bouncing into things! It turns out Benjamin needs glasses, but he doesn’t want to be the only one in Woollybottom to have specs. His friends have a fantastic idea though and soon hatch a superfiction plan!

**Little Drivers to the Rescue**  
by Dan Crisp  
Everyone wants to be a little driver! In this fantastic vehicle novelty book about different rescue vehicles, anyone can! The double-sided card puppet has a girl on one side and a boy on the other, so YOU choose who gets to drive!
You’re a Hero, Daley B!
by Jon Blake and Axel Scheffler
Daley B’s life is full of questions: Where should he live? What should he eat? Why are his feet so big? One day the wicked weasel Jazzy D appears in the woodland and Daley B finds out he’s not just a rabbit, but a hero too!

I love my Mummy
by Giles Andreae and Emma Dodd
A heart-warming rhyming picture book about the beautiful relationship between mother and child, from the bestselling author of Giraffes Can’t Dance. It was also winner of the Booktrust Early Years Award 2010.

Daddy Is My Hero
by Dawn Richards and Jane Massey
Dad can be a cowboy and a knight, fight pirates and fly a spaceship. He’s every kind of hero rolled into one! This is a tender, touching tribute to all heroic dads out there, full of fantasy, fun and fancy dress.

Fun online
You can visit the Bookstart website www.bookstart.org.uk to read stories or have fun with rhymes and activities for free online.
There is an interactive version of ‘Share the Fun’ on our website too where you can play games and read rhymes together as well as our top 10 recommended books.
Activity 1

Buy, borrow from the library, or use one of the books from your Bookstart Treasure packs. Read one of the books to the children and talk about the characters in the book.

You could ask the children: do you have a favourite character?

Draw your favourite character.
Activity 2

Mums, Dads and Carers: Think about a story, poem or book that you remember from when you were little. It could be a fairytale, nursery rhyme or a whole book.

Write the name here:

A story I like is

Ask your child to think about a story they like. What can they tell you about it? Write the name of their story here:

A story my child likes is

When your child has told you about the story they like, ask them to draw a picture or write about something that happens in it. Encourage your child’s efforts and give them lots of time to draw or write something from their story that is important to them. Remember that they are still learning to draw and to write, be patient with them.