



Changing life stories

# Help families start reading

## Reading and talking activities for nurseries and practitioners

### Ideas for group activities that encourage talking through book-sharing

#### **Baby's favourite book**

Get parents and carers involved by asking them to vote for the book or story that their child enjoys listening to the most. Ask them to say why they have chosen the story – because their baby always smiles when they hear it, or makes lots of happy noises. This will get them thinking about their babies' reactions and the communication process surrounding reading. When all the votes are in, you could make a display of the top five books and why they were chosen, and hold a reading together session for parents and children.

#### **Book-making**

Hold a book-making event. Invite parents and carers to bring in photographs and create a book that they think their baby will enjoy. It might be about the parent growing up, about their favourite food, other family members or a holiday. The objective is to get them thinking about the words, sounds and images that they love to talk about and their baby will enjoy. This will create a book that will get the most response when read out loud.

#### **Book parties**

Organise a book party for parents and carers to attend with their babies and young children. It could be a themed event, such as a pyjama party where children come dressed for a nap and you read bedtime stories, or a nursery rhyme session where you read out traditional nursery rhymes and everyone joins in. Or an event based on a character from a children's book or about animals or the sea using books that have stories about those themes.

Read out loud and use the event to help carers see how their children react and communicate during the session. You could think about teaming up with your local library, which may run regular rhymetime or storytime sessions. Encourage parents to join the library and attend future sessions.

#### **Puppet shows**

Invite parents and carers to bring their babies and young children to a puppet show. Base the show around a popular children's book and act out the story. Have a display of the book and similar stories for parents to look at afterwards, to create a point of discussion about reading aloud and communicating.

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## Resources and information

### Resources for practitioners and professionals

#### Bookstart

Bookstart is a national scheme in England that delivers free books to young children. Bookstart is for babies aged 0-12 months, Bookstart + is for toddlers aged 18-30 months, and My Bookstart Treasure Chest is for children aged 34-48 months.

**[www.bookstart.org.uk](http://www.bookstart.org.uk)**

#### Booktrust

Booktrust has a website dedicated to children's books, including recommended book lists and information and resources for National Children's Book Week, which takes place in October.

**[www.booktrust.org.uk](http://www.booktrust.org.uk)**

#### Scottish Book Trust

Scottish Book Trust encourages parents to share the benefits of reading, singing and playing with your baby, toddler or child through **Bookbug** through gifting books and running sessions in libraries and schools. .

**<http://www.scottishbooktrust.com/bookbug>**

#### Local library

Many libraries run rhymetime and storytime sessions and all have a children's section. Your local council will have details of your nearest library.

#### National Literacy Trust

The National Literacy Trust website has an early years section that includes a wide range of information on early reading and literacy development.

**[www.literacytrust.org.uk](http://www.literacytrust.org.uk)**

#### Words for Life

The Words for Life website has lots of parental advice, tips and games for use to support early reading.

**<http://www.wordsforlife.org.uk/>**

This guide was originally created by the National Literacy Trust's Talk to Your Baby campaign with Bookstart.