

Better Start Imagine

Delivered by BHT Early Education and Training
From October 2016 – September 2024

AN AMAZING
TOTAL OF
275,614



books have
been gifted
to children!



Better Start Imagine was an enhanced book-gifting scheme, providing children with a book every month from birth to their fifth birthday. It was complemented with weekly story and rhyme time sessions and other activities held in local community venues, to promote and model the importance of sharing books with young children.

This project was part of the world-renowned Dolly Parton Imagination Library which is dedicated to inspiring a love of reading by gifting books free of charge to children from birth to age five.

6840

children
were signed up
to receive books -
with 87% of
eligible
children



Why this project was developed

Better Start Imagine aimed to enhance the quality of the home learning environment of children in the Better Start Bradford area by increasing access to books and removing the risk factors associated with parental confidence and understanding.

The story and rhyme time sessions aimed to increase understanding of the importance of books and reading to young children, and the long-term benefits this is known to bring.

The project set out to:

- Increase numbers of books in the home
- Improve parents'/carers' understanding of the importance of reading and book sharing
- Improve their confidence and engagement in sharing books with their children
- Improve levels of communication and language skills
- Improve levels of school-readiness

Impact and findings*

- The book gifting reached a highly representative proportion of the very diverse Better Start Bradford community, and many families have a home language other than English.
- Fantastic feedback from families about the story and rhyme time sessions tells us that they make a positive difference to their children's speech, language and social development.
- Providing story and rhyme time sessions in nurseries, community groups and in collaboration with other projects, amplified the importance of sharing books with babies and young children.
- Around 200 families were transferred to Canterbury Imagine (a small, local book-gifting and literacy charity), and BHT Early Education and Training are seeking further funding to continue the project.
- The project linked up with Bradford Literature Festival to run reading sessions.

*This section includes information from both the evaluation report/s and project



2500

children
received a
full five years
of books



OVER
2000

children
attended
story and
rhyme time
sessions

