

# Better Start Imagine

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

AN AMAZING  
TOTAL OF  
**268,994**

books have  
been gifted  
to children!



**Better Start Imagine is an enhanced book-gifting scheme, providing children with a book every month from birth to their fifth birthday. It is 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 is 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.**

**7282**

children  
were signed up  
to receive books -  
over 80%  
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 has 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, has amplified the importance of sharing books with babies and young children.
- Around 200 families have been 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 the 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



ALMOST  
**1000**

children  
attended  
story and  
rhyme time  
sessions

