

Korean Bookstart and Book Selection

Book Culture Foundation :
www.bookreader.or.kr

Bookstart Korea www.bookstart.org

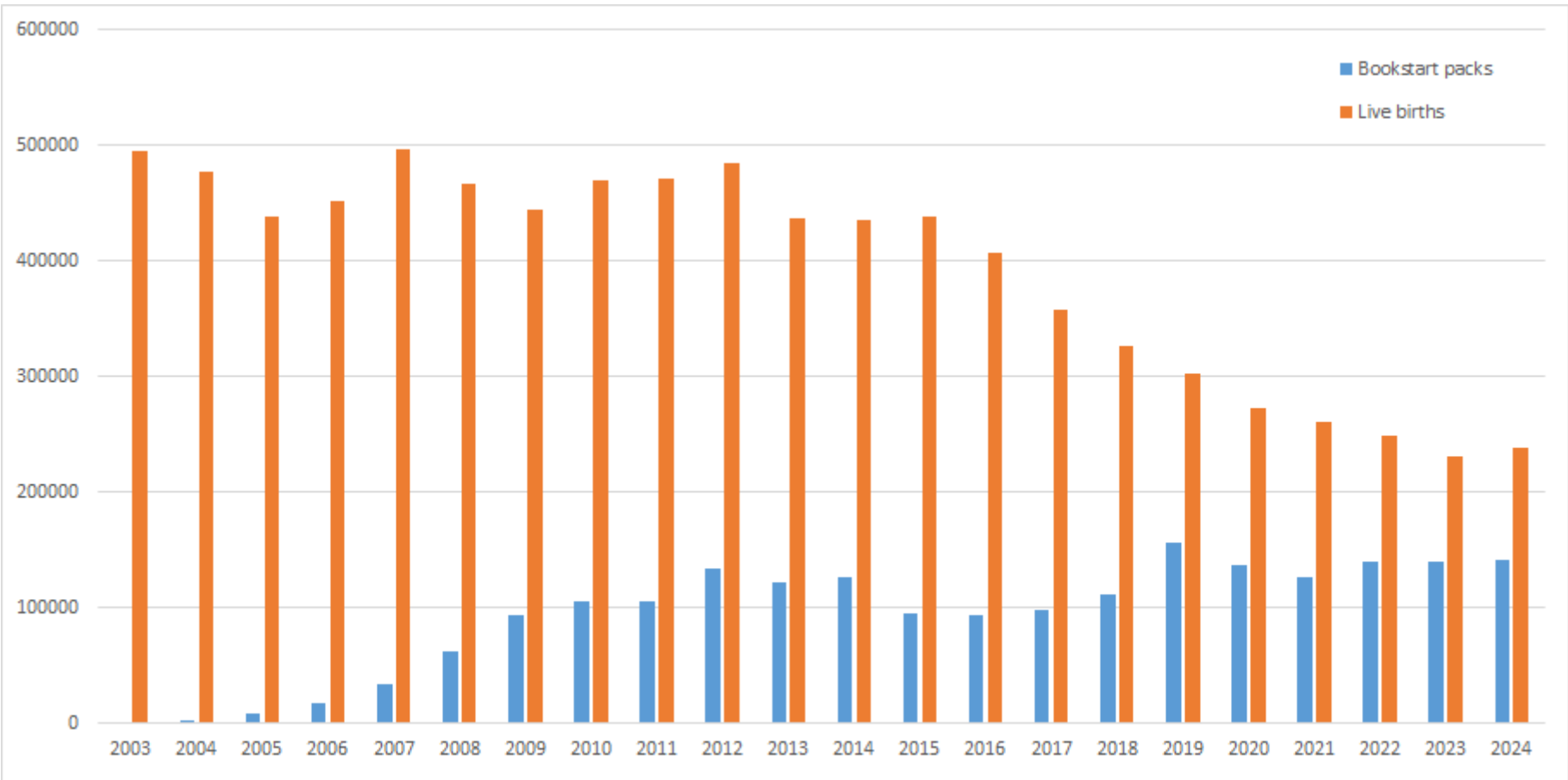
Ahn Chansoo

*Population 51.71 million (2023)

*As of 2020, it maintains a GDP ranking in the top 10 in the world, and is a member of the OECD and G20. Global competitiveness in semiconductors, automobiles, shipbuilding, electronics, and K-content (K-POP, dramas, etc.) Always ranks high in international academic achievement evaluations. As of 2024, the entry rate into higher education institutions is 73.1% for men and 76.9% for women.

<https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/south-korea-population/>

The Bookstart movement in Korea began in 2003 by 'Bookstart Korea' (a social and cultural foundation for reading books) and has steadily expanded. 'Bookstart Korea' (Book Culture Foundation) is an NGO/NPO that is at the center and is cooperating with publishers, libraries, health centers, and local governments.



Bookstart Korea's role is to help babies and parents form rich relationships through picture books and to deepen the precious human abilities that can only be developed through conversation.



Bookstart in Korea is in 6 stages: Korea is expanding Bookstart into 6 stages:

- (1) Bookstart (0~18 months),
- (2) Bookstart Plus (19~35 months),
- (3) Bookstart Treasure Chest (36~pre-school),
- (4) Elementary Bookstart,
- (5) Youth Bookstart (middle and high school students),
- (6) Bookstart Baby Welcome (expectant parents),
- (7) Senior Bookstart (elderly people)



- 1. Bookstart is a social childcare support movement:** It emphasizes the social responsibility of childcare. It aims to expand equal cultural opportunities and share the responsibility and cost of raising children.
- 2. Bookstart is a means of communication that helps babies and parents bond:** We believe that the picture books that Bookstart gives to babies are not just for babies, but are very inexpensive and useful tools that open up bonds and communication between babies and parents, and between babies and caregivers.
- 3. Bookstart helps babies become familiar with books:** It is said that babies who become familiar with books from an early age grow into children who love books, into teenagers, and into adults. It means starting life with books.
- 4. Bookstart is a good way to raise babies:** We expect babies who become familiar with books to grow into children and teenagers with empathy, expressiveness, communication skills, and creative imagination.
- 5. Bookstart fosters cultural welfare in the community:** Bookstart is a public service that the community can achieve great results with minimal cost. There are positive effects in various aspects such as increasing child care welfare, supporting local people's livelihood, preventing juvenile delinquency, and creating opportunities for job creation.
- 6. Bookstart is the starting point of lifelong education:** Bookstart is often handled by the lifelong education team of local governments. It is also a good program to implement at each region's lifelong education information center.

According to data from the <Picture Book Yearbook> (Wonju Picture Book Center), the number of picture books included in the yearbook increased by approximately 129% from 284 books in 2016 to 625 books in 2024, and the number of participating authors increased by 92% from 354 to 678. This shows that the creation of picture books is continuing in Korea.

연도	수록 그림책 수	2016대비 증감율	참여 출판사	2016대비 증감율	참여 작가	2016대비 증감율
2016	284		102		354	
2017	383		112		464	
2018	437		120		562	
2019	437		124		524	
2020	464		106		539	
2021	542		148		607	
2022	577		163		664	
2023	570		163		620	
2024	625	120%	147	44%	678	92%

Bookstart Book Selection: A Picture Book for Every Baby

Format.

1. Regional Committee: Since it is impossible to review all the picture books published each year in each Bookstart implementation region and select books, four or so sites are designated and regional selection committees are operated (mainly centered on librarians and volunteers from public libraries). With the cooperation of publishers, picture books are sent out so that the regional selection committee can sufficiently review them.

2. Regional Committee + Expert Committee: If a review is requested as a Bookstart book according to the stage among the picture books published that year, the regional committee members and expert committee members of the site review and discuss all the books and make recommendations.



Focus of Bookstart book selection:

- Books that babies and caregivers read together –
- Sharing stories while listening to sounds –
- Sharing stories while looking at pictures –
- Following and imitating –
- Sharing emotions while looking into each other's eyes



Bookstart Book Selection Criteria

- Must be a domestic original work that is in line with the purpose of Bookstart -
- Books appropriate for each stage and age
- Excluding books with special interests such as politics, religion, and commerce -
- Excluding educational books (cognitive development, brain development, intelligence development, creativity development, etc.) -
- Excluding books with a narrow view of diversity such as gender, race, or disability



Social Growth and Bookstart Picture Books

When Bookstart first started in Korea in 2003, there were not many picture books for infants and toddlers. Bookstart Korea collaborated with publishers to stimulate the production of new picture books for infants and toddlers, and Bookstart activities have continued to influence picture book writers and publishers since then.

