Bookbug: Aligning with national health and wellbeing priorities

Scottish Book Trust: Catriona Wallace and Helena Barrett-Duncan

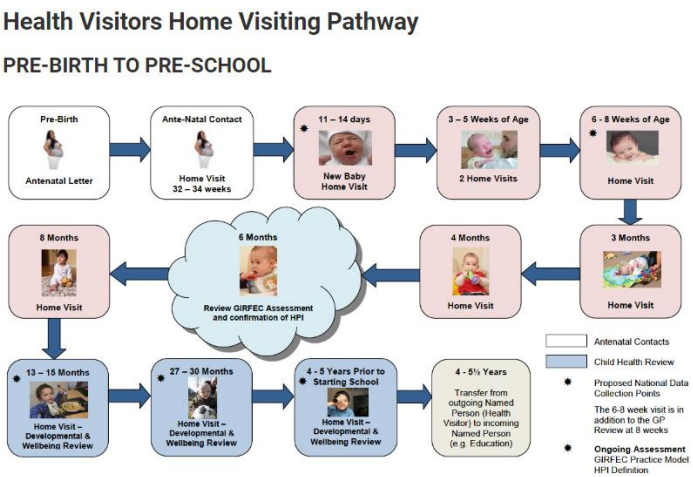
Scottish Book Trust
inspiring readers and writers

The Universal Health Visiting Pathway

Scottish Book Trust
inspiring readers and writers

Universal Health Visiting Pathway in Scotland

- Health visitors service
- The **Universal** Pathway sets out the minimum core home visiting programme to be offered to all families by Health Visitors.
- All children in Scotland gifted
  - Baby Bag at 3-5 weeks, Toddler bag at 13-15 months



In 23/24 we distributed **46,370 Baby bags and 47,300 Toddler bags.** The onward distribution stats for 22/23 were **97% Baby and 95% Toddler**

Gifting the Baby and Toddler Bags

- Gifting the Baby and toddler bag webinar
- Gifting guidance on key messages and tips
- Gaelic bags available upon request
- Bookbug health visitor champions and local authority steering groups

Tips for gifting Bookbug bags

Scottish Book Trust
inspiring readers and writers

Information for health professionals – please read

Thank you for helping us to spread the joy of sharing books from birth. Families trust and value you as a reliable source of information, so your involvement in gifting makes a huge difference.

Gifting the Bookbug Bags

- **Bookbug Baby Bag** (gifted at 3–5 weeks*)
- **Bookbug Toddler Bag** (gifted at 13–15 months*)

*As specified in the Universal Health Visiting Pathway in Scotland

Please look inside the Bookbug Bags and show them to parents. The contents change every year.

Please note: The Baby Bag has long handles as it's for parents to use. Do not leave babies and children alone with the bag.

Talk to families about the books and resources in their Bookbug Bag – they are more likely to use the bags if you do.

Important messages to share

Sharing stories, songs and rhymes:

- Gives you meaningful moments together building your special connection
- Calms and soothes your baby with a cuddle and the sound of your voice
- Boosts your baby's brain development
- Helps speech and language development

It's never too early – start today!

Libraries are great for families with young children, so please encourage them to:

- Join their local library and borrow books for free. Babies and children can have library cards of their own
- Go along to local Bookbug Sessions – free sessions of stories, songs and rhymes for children from birth to 5 years and their families. Find local and online sessions on our website scottishbooktrust.com/localbookbugsessions

- Gifting not giving
- Tell parents the benefits
- Model story, song or rhyme
- Let parents and carers know about local
- Bookbug sessions
- Journey, not one off!

What Health Visitors say

“Gifting the bags is a privilege as we get to see the joy of books when a child receives one. It gives us an opportunity to interact with the children during assessments and use the books to assess their development. Children love the pictures and regardless of what stage of development they are at or their abilities and communication skills ±they all interact with the pictures and colours in their own way. With a smile!! We also get W K H R S S R U W X Q L W \ W R Z D W F K D S D U H Q W L Q W H U D F V a beautiful thing to see. It allows families who have limited finances, access to lovely new books ±something they might not be able to buy themselves. **Books are so essential to a child’s development and allow so much growth in a child’s communication skills and also attachment and bonding with the care giver.”**

Antenatal: Bookbug before Birth

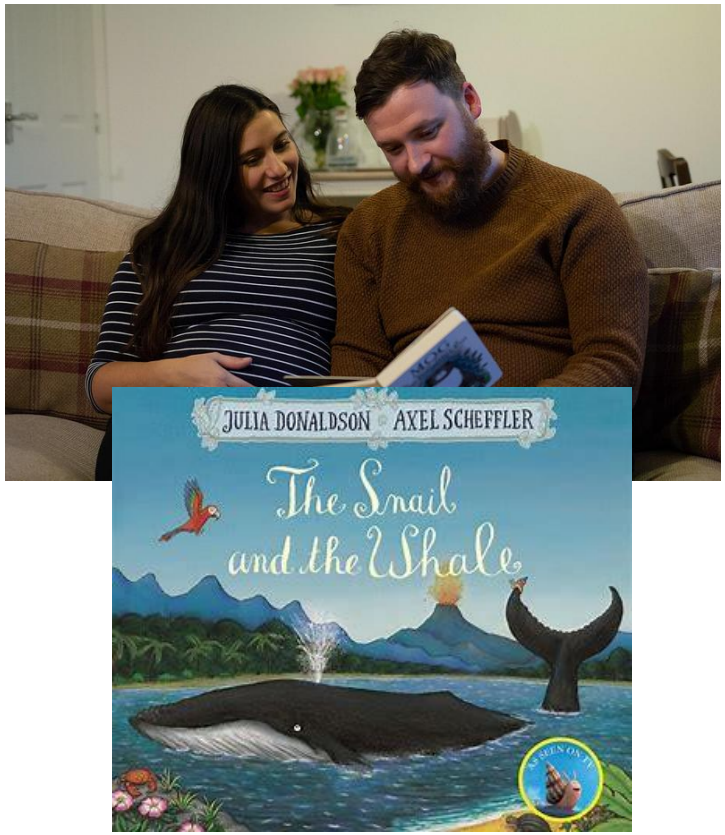
Scottish Book Trust
inspiring readers and writers

Antenatal: Bookbug Before Birth

- 2 books in the Scottish Government Baby box gifted at 36 weeks
- Hello Bump playlist on app/website
- Antenatal leaflet available on request
- Tips for sharing stories, songs and rhymes with bump

Since 2017 **292,720 Baby Boxes** have been delivered

Bookbug Before Birth: Family Nurse Partnerships



Since 2021 gifted **2840** copies of book and leaflet

- Family Nurses support first time parents aged under 19, or 20 to 24 in some areas (care-experienced)
- 184 family nurses, 29 supervisors - Supporting approx. 3834 families
- *LIWLQJ RI -XOLD ' The Snail and the Whale and antenatal leaflet
- Briefing sessions and evaluation

Tips for getting started

Start with a chat

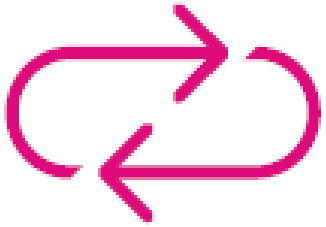
Talk to your baby about your day. Get used to talking aloud to your baby first and then try singing a song or saying a short rhyme.

Find a quiet space

Babies hear lots of sounds in the womb, so keeping other noise to a minimum helps them to hear your voice.

Make it a habit

Try spending a few minutes every day singing, reading or talking to your baby.



Babies love repetition

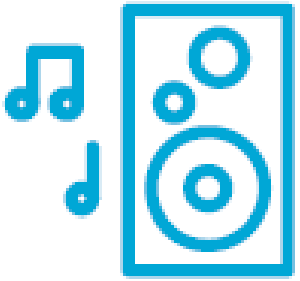
If you are sharing a short story or rhyme, repeat it a few times.

Sing your favourite song

Choose a song, rhyme or a story that you like – it's much easier and more fun if you're enjoying it too.

Watch and feel

You may notice that your baby is more active when they hear your voice.



Hello Bump!

Listen to the *Hello Bump!* playlist on our website or free Bookbug app. Download tracks to play offline too.

scottishbooktrust.com/songandrhyme

Keep it going

After your baby's birth, try a familiar song, rhyme or story. Babies remember what they heard in the womb, and hearing something familiar can be soothing.

Bookbug Before Birth: Key Conclusions

- 91% reported that expectant parents responded positively to the gifting of the book and leaflet
- 82% agreed that the project helped expectant parents to form secure attachments with their baby
- 81%said that the gift encouraged expectant parents to read aloud during pregnancy
- *80%* said the gift helped expectant parents to understand more about early language development

What young first-time parents say

At first it felt strange but I kept doing it and started to like it. I liked it when she kicked back to me when I sang to her. It helped me build my bond and then I

F R X O G Q ¶ W Z D L W

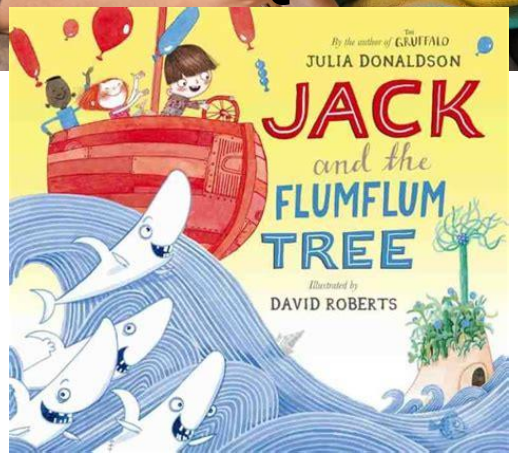
Illustration @ Cate James

Neonatal book gifting and reading

Scottish Book Trust
inspiring readers and writers

Neonatal book gifting

- Funded by David and Gemma Springford
- Gifting Julia ' R Q D O G V R Q ¶ V - D F N D Q G the FlumFlum Tree and neonatal leaflet
- Gifting the Bookbug Baby bag



All **15 Neonatal units** across Scotland
Gifted **17,900** since 2018, on average **3580** per year (exc covid)

How does it help your baby?

- By 24 weeks of pregnancy your baby's hearing has developed enough to hear sounds. They have been listening to the sound of your voice and will recognise it. Hearing you will comfort and reassure them.
- Your voice lets them know that you are there, and can help you feel close to them.
- It can boost their brain and language development. Research shows that reading and talking to babies makes a big difference and can help their future development.
- It can help you too. Reading stories or singing lullabies gives you a distraction from watching the monitors and alarms and may help you feel calmer.
- It's a lovely way to have meaningful moments together.

Nervous? Here are a few tips:

- Don't worry about other people listening – and you will not be disturbing anyone.
- Babies like repetition. They will love hearing the same story over and over again. Use the books in the gift pack from the hospital and your Bookbug Baby Bag, or bring in stories from home.
- Watch for your baby's cues! Little signs like looking away, yawning, putting their hands up and restlessness can mean your baby is getting tired. You'll know best when they need a break – just pause, and save the story for later.
- Get brothers and sisters reading, talking or singing. This gives them an important job to do during a visit and it helps them to bond with baby too.
- Make up stories from picture books or try longer stories – pick something you'll enjoy too. The type of story doesn't matter – it's your voice your baby is interested in.
- Keep it up when you get home. Reading some of the same stories can help settle your baby when you make the move from the unit to home. It's also still a special moment to settle down and enjoy being together.

Neonatal: Working with experts

Dr Nashwa Matta ±The importance of stories and songs for babies in neonatal care - Scottish Book Trust

Neonatal: Key Conclusions

Survey of professionals involved in gifting the books

- 91% Helped parents bond with their baby
- 95% Made parents feel that this was something they could do that had benefits to the wellbeing of their baby
- 95% Helped parents relax and engage with their baby
- 91% Encouraged parent to read other books with their babies in the unit

What parents say

Reading to your baby in the neonatal unit

Having a baby in a neonatal unit is a stressful and emotional time that can make you feel overwhelmed. The time you spend at your baby's cot really does have a big impact on your baby's experience now and in their long-term development.

Talking, reading and singing to your baby may not seem as important as the medical care, but it is, and it is something you will do best.

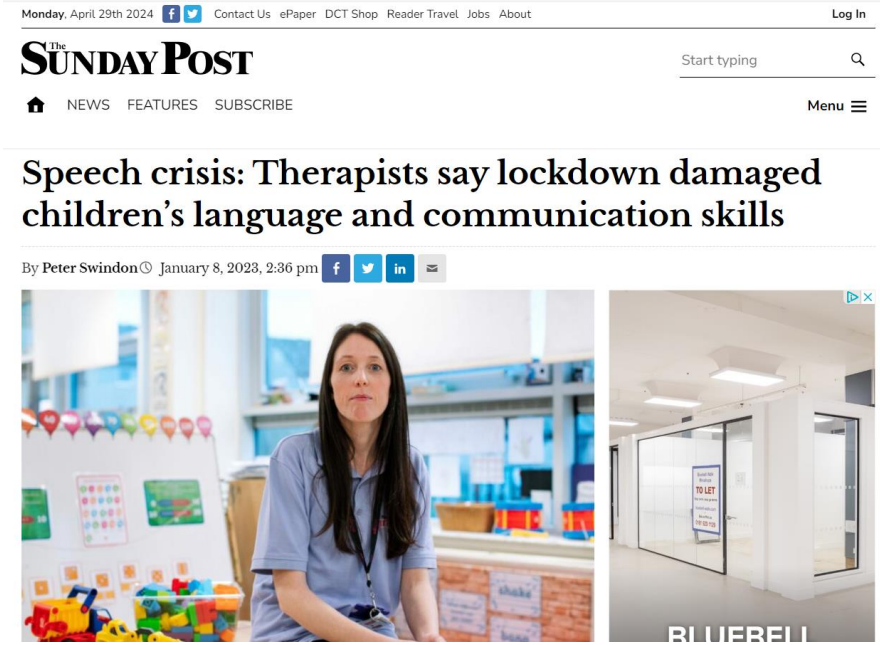
scottishbooktrust.com/bookbug/neonatal

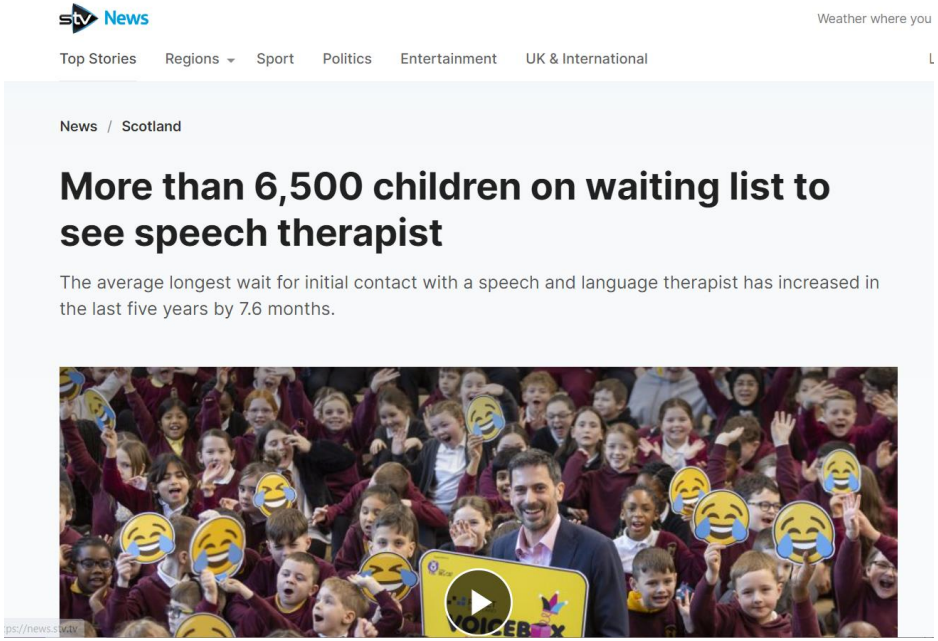
³ : K H Q \ R X D U H
reading everything
fades into the
E D F N J U R X Q G L
you and your little
R Q H « L W J L Y H V
element of
F R Q W U R O « \ R X F
your bit for your
E D E \ ´

Aligning Bookbug with national priorities

Scottish Book Trust
inspiring readers and writers

Health priorities in Scotland: Speech, Language and Communication

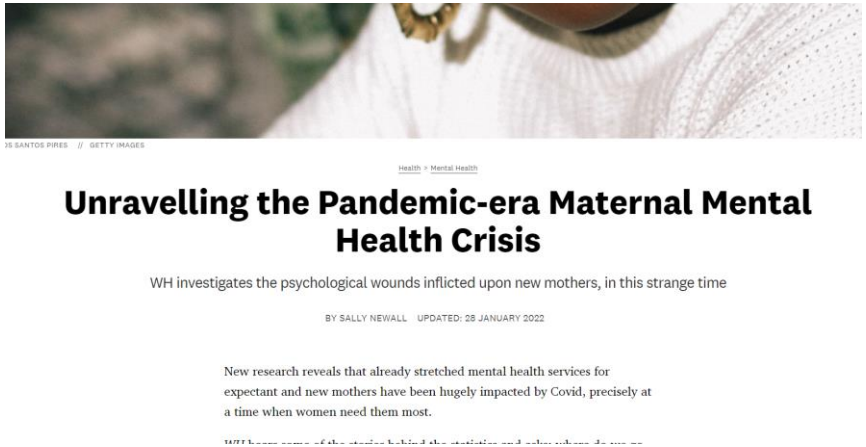




‡ [Speech, language and communication development among children in Scotland during the COVID-19 pandemic - Publications - Public Health Scotland]() ±

‡ [RCSLT Scotland survey: children's communication difficulties increase since COVID | RCSLT]()

Health priorities in Scotland:
Perinatal and infant mental health



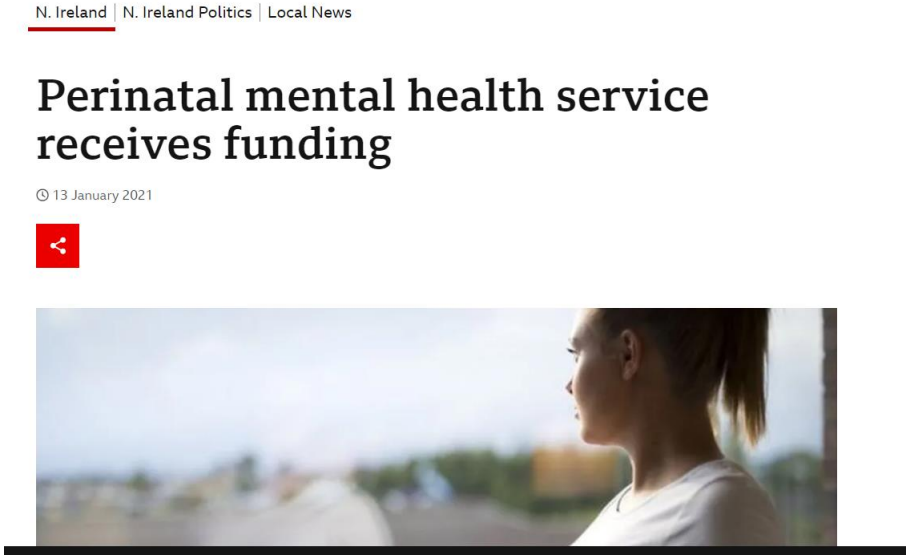
Health > Mental Health

Unravelling the Pandemic-era Maternal Mental Health Crisis

WH investigates the psychological wounds inflicted upon new mothers, in this strange time

BY SALLY NEWALL UPDATED: 28 JANUARY 2022

New research reveals that already stretched mental health services for expectant and new mothers have been hugely impacted by Covid, precisely at a time when women need them most.



N. Ireland | N. Ireland Politics | Local News

Perinatal mental health service receives funding

13 January 2021

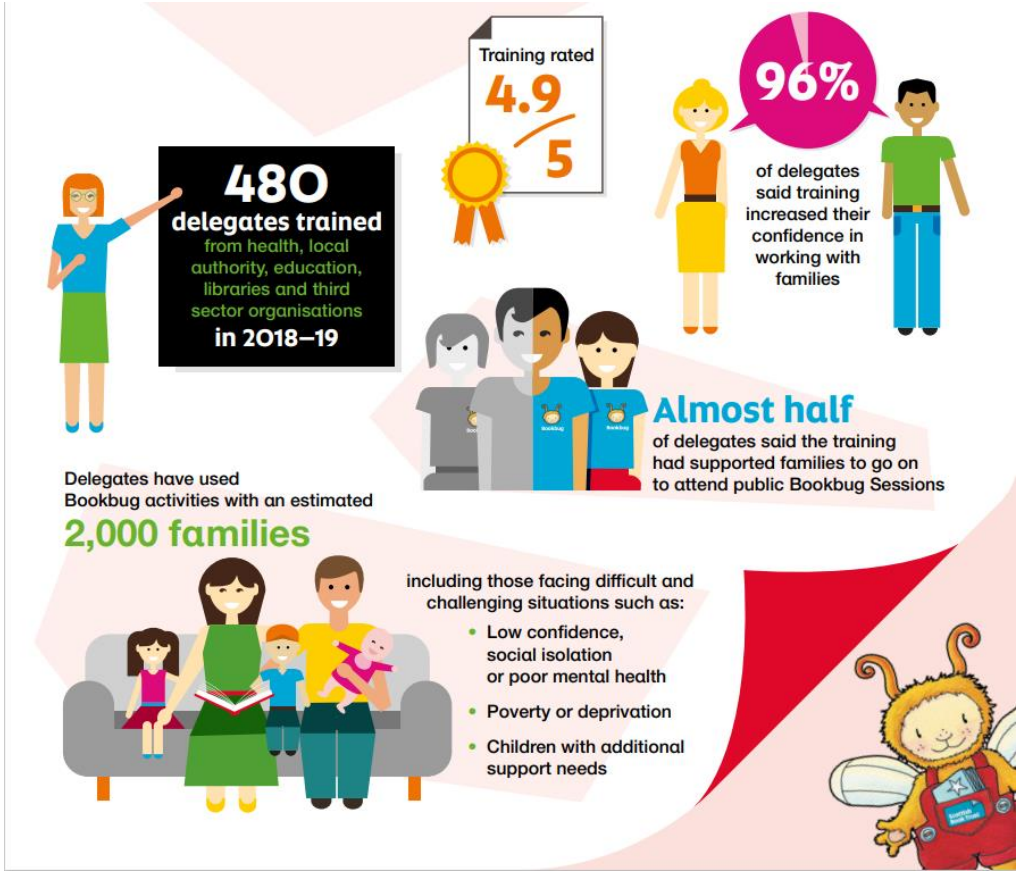
[Perinatal experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic in Scotland - Public Health Scotland]

Partnership and advocacy work

- Speech, language and communication needs
  - RCSLT Scotland
  - Education Scotland *Early Language and Communication Leads*
  - National Speech, Language and Communication Stakeholder Reference Group
- Perinatal and infant mental health
  - Voice of the Infant: best practice guidelines and infant pledge
    Perinatal and Infant mental health services
  - Perinatal Mental Health Network Scotland

Bookbug for the Home

In 2018/19 (example year pre-covid):



‡ For practitioners and volunteers working in the community to support individual families

‡ Encourages families to share books, sing and rhyme together at home

‡ Supports families to build positive relationships and attachment through fun interaction

What is Bookbug for the Home?

‡ Encourages families to make stories, songs and rhymes part of their daily routine.

‡ Tailors activities based on the needs and interests of the family.

‡ *LYHV WKHP D µWR stories, songs and rhymes to support families with

‡ Models to parents what they can do with their child.

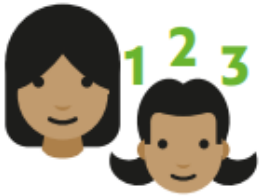
‡ Supports families to transition to attending public Bookbug sessions

Bookbug for the Home: Key Conclusions

Impact – Top 5 outcomes for families (observed by practitioners)

Children's speech and communication improves

Families spend more time engaged in play activities



Parents are more engaged in child's learning and development

Families spend more time reading

Parents develop increased levels of self-confidence

Other key outcomes reported...

Improved daily routines

Improved family relationships

Less phone/screen time

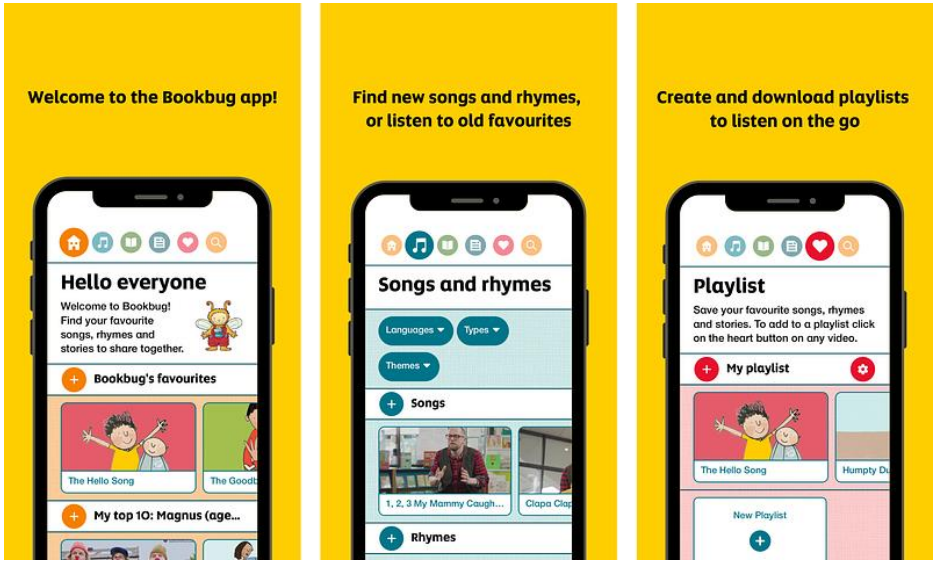
Increased engagement with community services

What practitoners say

"Using the BBfH resources supported one family to develop positive attachments. There was a worry regarding the relationship between Parent and Child, Parent had very poor mental health and addiction issues. Working in partnership with other relevant services, I was able to include Bookbug at Home within my parenting support programme. The result of this, is that Parent and child now have a very close bond, child is developing their language skills and loves exploring puppets and books, and the parent is confident when reading to, and singing songs with their child."

Other stuff

- Bookbug training courses and webinars
- Song and Rhyme Library and Story Library
- Bookbug app
- Tactile books for children with additional support needs



Download on the App Store

GET IT ON Google Play

“Bookbug is one of the key restorative measures to help Scotland's young children with the impacts of the covid pandemic“

Dr Suzanne Zeedyk

Scottish Book Trust
inspiring readers and writers

Discussion topics

‡ How do you support and engage health professionals who are incredibly busy?

‡ What research do you use to evidence health and wellbeing outcomes of book gifting?

‡ Which different health professionals engage with young families in your country and how are you working with them e.g. allied health professionals like occupational health, speech and language therapist, mental health nurses?

‡ How do you engage with the relevant Health policy makers and overarching health associations?

Any questions?

scottishbooktrust.com

bookbug@scottishbooktrust.com

We acknowledge the support of the Scottish Government Improving Health and Wellbeing Division for the continued funding of the Bookbug programme.

Scottish Book Trust is a national charity changing lives through reading and writing.
Registered company SC184248 | Scottish charity SC027669