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# Norwegian Parents' Attitudes Towards Shared Reading with Their Children – Findings from Evaluation of Bookstart in Norway

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Bookstart pilot programmes in Norway and Spain

# Bokstart - prosjektevaluering



Forskere ved Læringsmiljøsentret ved Universitetet i Stavanger og Universitetet i Oslo har utarbeidet en rapport som oppsummerer pilotprosjektet i Bokstart. Målet med prosjektet var å oppmuntre foreldre til å lese for barnet sitt, snakke om bøker og gradvis utvikle et godt og livslangt forhold til lesing og litteratur hos barn, slik at de utvikler gode leseferdigheter.

*Published 19. aug. 2022. Endret 08. feb. 2023*

## Fakta

Tittel: Bokstart - Rapport: Prosjektevaluering av Bokstart-prosjektet

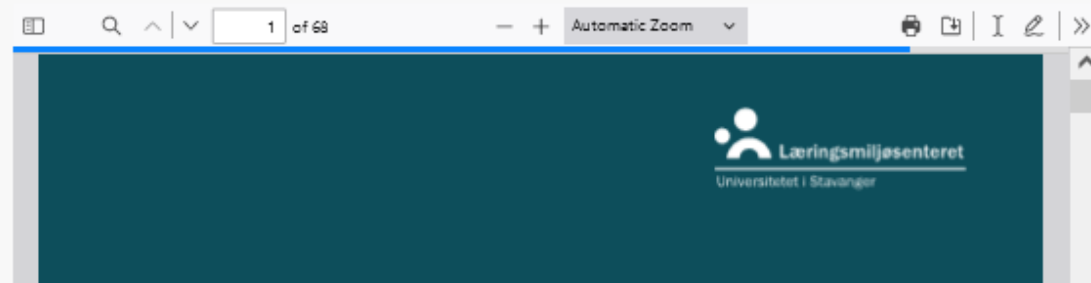
Forfattere: Natalia Kucirkova, Elisabeth Stray Gausel, Ann Kristin Kolstø-Johansen og Vibeke Grøver

Utgitt av: Læringsmiljøsentret ved Universitetet i Stavanger

År: 2022

## Les rapporten

Last ned rapporten:



# Project details

- With financial support from the Danish Egmont Foundation, Foreningen !les started a modified version of the Bookstart program in Norway.
- The aim of the project was to encourage parents to read to their child, talk about books and gradually develop a good and lifelong relationship with reading and literature in children, so that they develop good reading skills.
- This fits with Foreningen !les's overall aim, which is to create readers among children and young people.

# Our evaluation

- The pilot involved collaboration with health centers and libraries to deliver the books and information to the parents. The offer has included children aged 0–3 and their parents.
- **Methods:** a questionnaire for parents, librarians and health nurses who participated in the project, and qualitative interviews with a selection of the parents.
- **The aim** was to identify views from the health center staff, librarians and parents about the Bokstart project/pilot



## Key findings

- Parents believe that reading together gave rise to a quiet time, where the book created a framework for joint attention and connection.
- Parents think Bokstart was a good offer that they hoped was here to stay.
- Health nurses and librarians believe Bokstart should continue.
- Health nurses feel that the project provides an opportunity to talk to parents about the child's language development.
- The librarians express that the project provides an opportunity to reach out to parents who otherwise do not read to their children.

# Recommendations

- Selection of books should reflect the diversity of readers
- Books should be piloted before included in the gifting pack
- A cross-stakeholder quality assurance group with researchers, librarians, health professionals, publishers, parents *and* children selecting the books (additional activities and benefits, community buy-in)
- Digital variations of the books to adjust to languages (multilingual possibilities)



# Diving deeper into parents' views

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- Kucirkova, N., & Grøver, V. (2022). The Importance of Embodiment and Agency in Parents' Positive Attitudes Towards Shared Reading with Their Children. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 1-10.



# Aims

Identify the key socio-material factors in the accounts of Norwegian parents participating in Bokstart

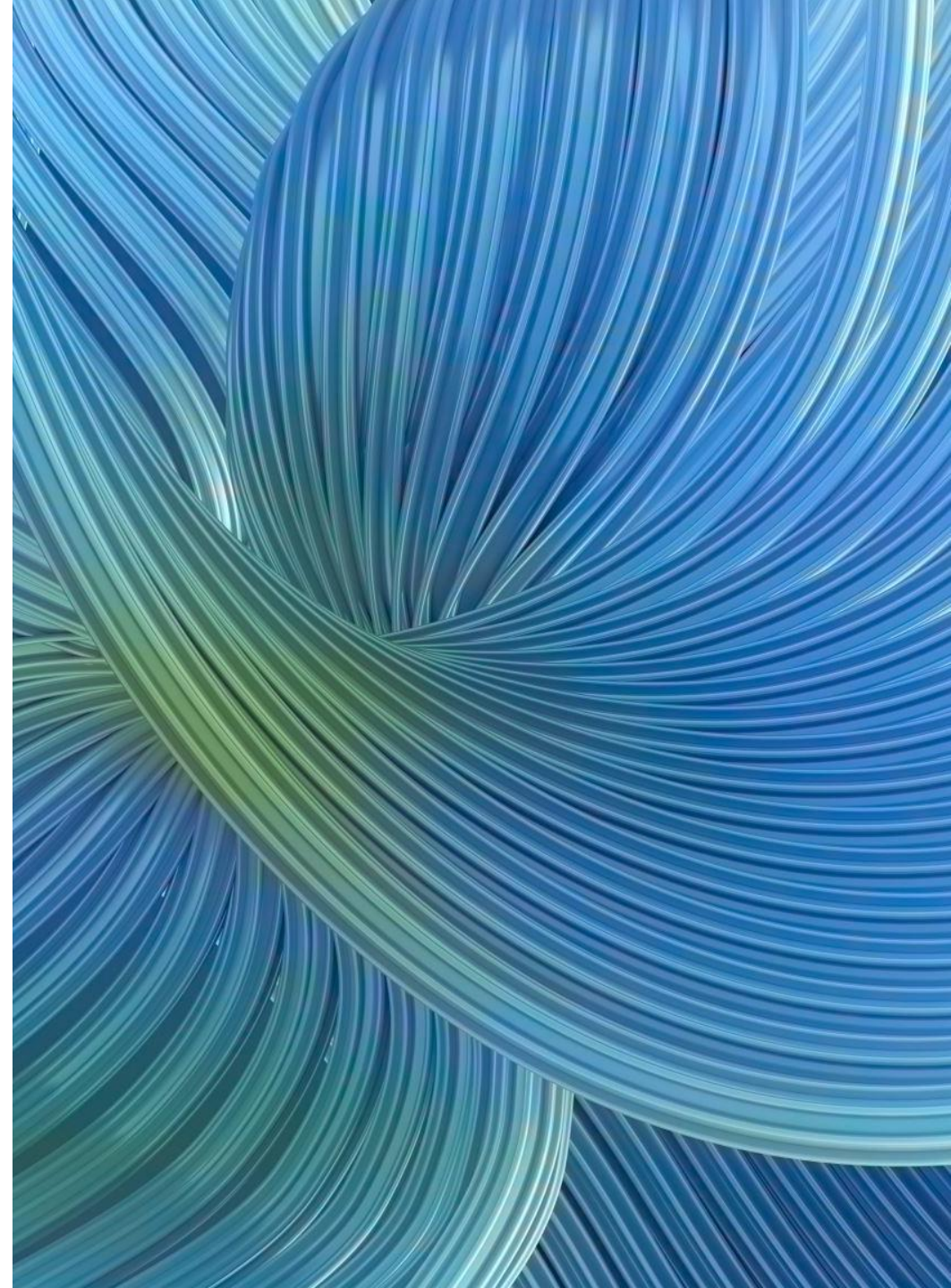
Identify Norwegian parents' attitudes towards shared book reading with children at home



# Methods

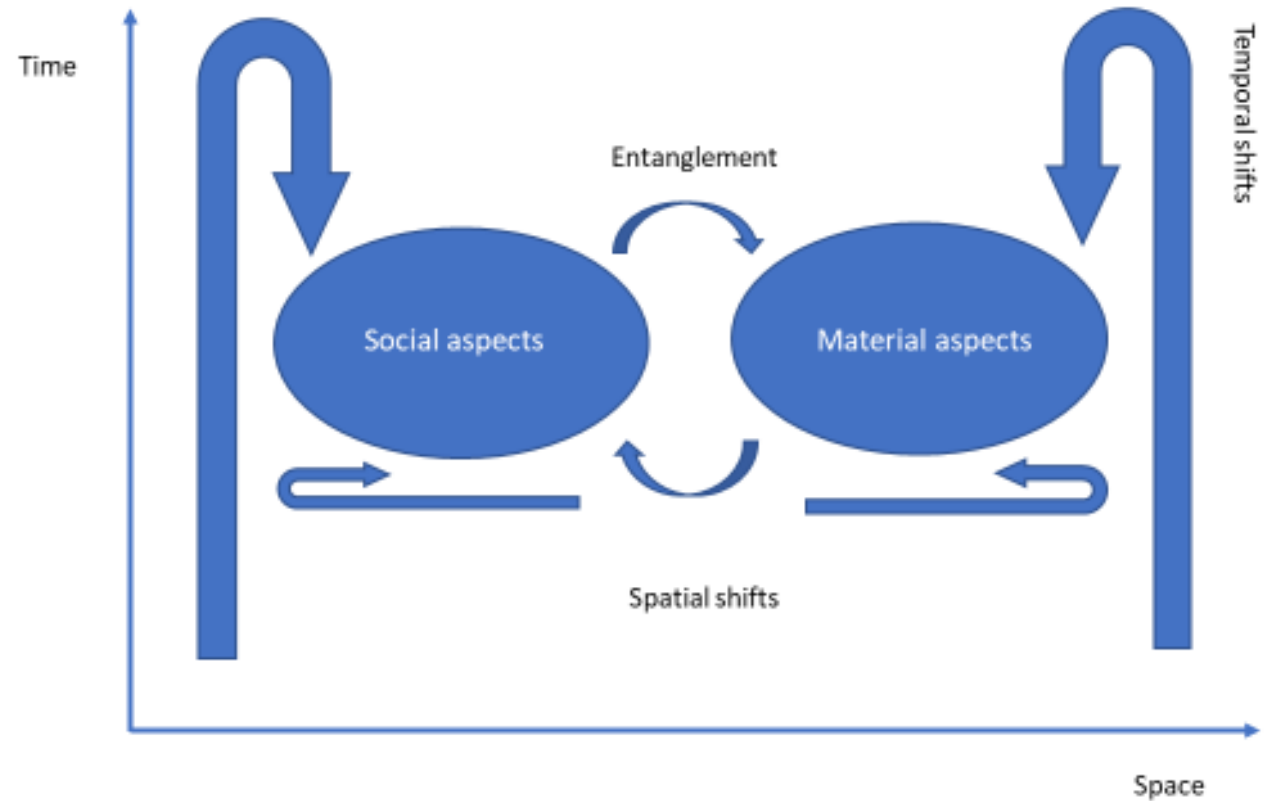
- Information and consent forms distributed by the health stations in the Oslo municipality
- Telephone interviews with the parents by a researcher

**Participants:** 24 parents who participated in the Bokstart pilot with 11 aged under 2 years, 9 under the age of three, and 4 under the age of five. The reading language was Norwegian for all families, but nine families also read in another language than Norwegian.



# Theoretical framework

- socio-materiality as a leading framework in contemporary reading studies
- meta-perspective that pays equal attention to the emotional and cognitive benefits of reading and its social and material mechanisms



# Findings: Agency

- The child's agency, or control, during the activity was considered to be an important criterion for the parents' positive attitude towards SBR

*'Then he sits on my lap and then he brings a book... And he likes to flip in the books too. And he then flips through the book completely incoherently, that is to say... but since there are not much plot-based stories, to a large extent, it has not played that much of a role. But he is active, it is how he is like... how is like when he reads, he is active, yes'. (Participant nr. 12).*

# Findings: Embodiment

- Shared physical presence, SBR routine as an intimate moment of one-to-one conversation around the book when the parent switches off and the child enjoys the parent's undivided attention

*'I think it's very like that, I think that when you kind of sit together and are directed towards the book together, it's very strong, there's a lot of connection in it. More than when we sit and watch, for example, something on TV. That it feels closer and more intimate and more like activating in a way I think.'*

# Implications

Physical interaction around the book affords an opportunity for bonding, sense of shared presence, and a quiet and pleasurable moment.

Children's autonomy during SBR is a key motivator for parents to engage in the activity with them.

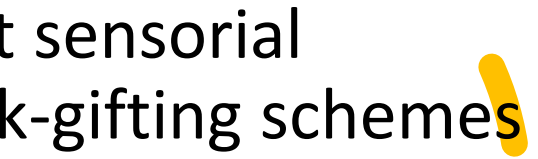
# Synergy with a national survey

- In 2022, we conducted [a survey](#) with a nationally representative sample of 1000 families and asked them about their preferences for the space where they read books, the importance of the lighting in the room and comfortable seating, the sounds and smell in the room or the texture of the book when held in their hands.
- In addition to ranking various statements in the survey, parents responded to open-ended questions and we thematically analysed 926 responses. We found that out of 1000 parents, only 46 (less than 5%) thought that the place where they read for their child did not matter.
- The importance of space and senses of reading
- Senses can be directly stimulated through a book's design – images that catch the eye, scratch-and-sniff surfaces that engage the sense of smell or touch & feel books that stimulate haptics

Kucirkova, N. I., Campbell, J. A., Stangeland, E. B., & Hoel, T. (2023). The importance of sensorial and spatial aspects in family reading at home: Insights from a national survey in Norway. *International Journal of Educational Research Open*, 4, 100227.



# Implications

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- Need to take into account sensorial aspects of reading in book-gifting schemes
  - Not only visual and haptic aspects but also sounds, smells and spatial possibilities during reading are important
  - The quality of the place where reading occurs, is important to invest in (comfortable and quiet seating is essential for reading to occur in families)

# Thank you for your attention!

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Questions/comments/Requests for  
references

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