



children's
books
ireland
every child a reader

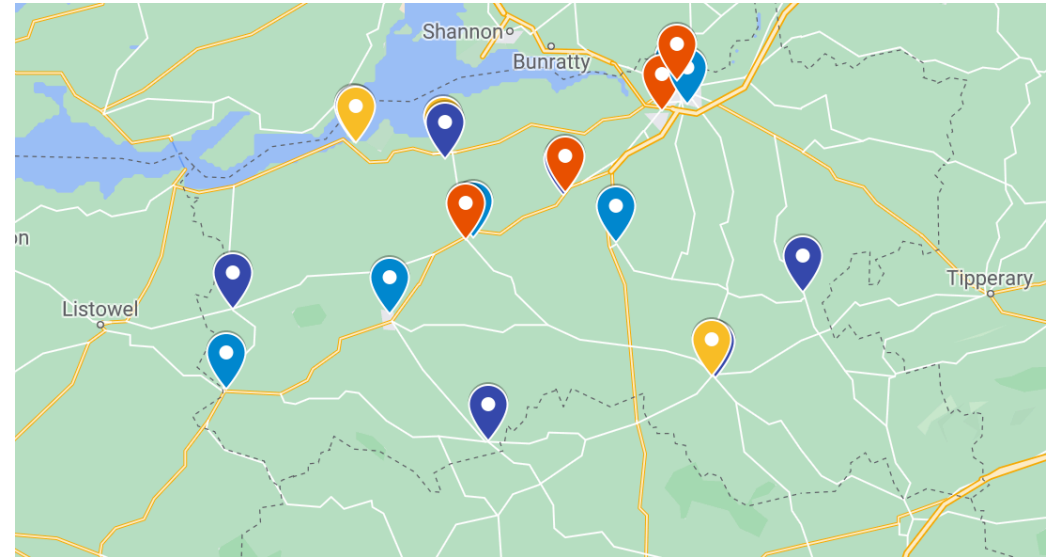


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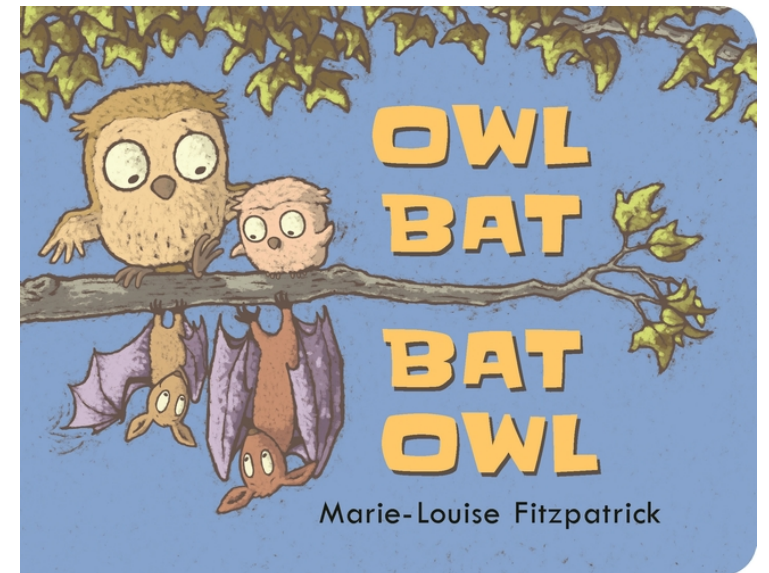
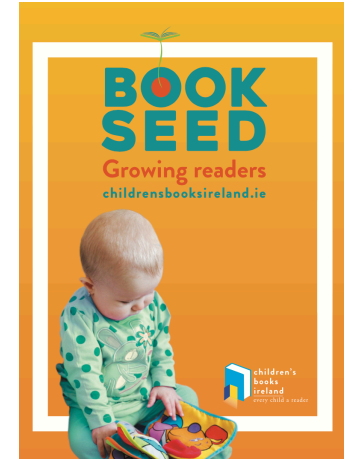
How Bookseed started

- Based in health centres in Limerick City and County
- Areas chosen based on levels of deprivation and advice from Health Service Executive (HSE) and other stakeholders
- 6 centres chosen initially, seeing 650 babies per year, with project running for two years
- Pilot funded by the JP McManus Benevolent Fund and later Rethink Ireland
- Project evaluated by researchers at Mary Immaculate College, Limerick



How Bookseed works

- At 3-month health check with public health nurse (PHN), parent/guardian/caregiver receives a bag with a book, a booklet on reading to your baby and other book suggestions and a leaflet about joining the library
 - PHNs asked to take the book out of the bag and model reading
 - PHNs complete a short 3-item survey with the parent/caregiver
 - PHNs also complete 3-item survey themselves



How Bookseed works

- At the 7-9 month check, parents receive another book, with a leaflet inviting them to collect a third free book at their local library when the baby is one year old.
- Data was collected at this point in a number of ways
 - Researcher in waiting room
 - Paper surveys with stamped addressed envelope
 - Online survey with flyer in book directing parents there



How Bookseed works

- Parents can collect a third book at one of six library branches around the time the child turns one
 - Librarians are not gatekeepers



- When first wave of babies turned one (Feb 2020) events were held with illustrator Mary Murphy at Limerick Libraries and press coverage was generated to raise the project profile and encourage people to come and collect the third book
- Researchers attended these events and surveyed adults attending. Not all attendees were part of the pilot



Key Findings

- **All parents were enthusiastic** about receiving books for their babies and responded positively to the Bookseed scheme.

'She loves it. And then the boys love it so it was time that the four of us could sit around together, reading, it was lovely, it is lovely'.

'great idea', 'unexpected surprise', 'lovely', 'very good' 'encouraging', 'happier coming away from the check-up'

'baby likes them so much'.

Key Findings

- Parents reported that **3 months is a good time** to introduce books to their infant and that the information provided as part of Bookseed was useful.
- **More parents were reading** to their infant at **7-9 months** than at 3 months.
 - 48% said they were using the book once or twice a week



Key Findings

- All participating parents of 7-9-month infants had children's **books in their home** at that point. By comparison, 19% of parents of parents of 3-month-old infants indicated they did not have any children's books in their home.



Key Findings

- The majority of parents of 7-9 month infants indicated that Bookseed had **somewhat or definitely encouraged them or their partner to read with their infant**, had somewhat or definitely increased their awareness of reading with their infant and, they had benefitted from participating in Bookseed
- *'I probably started a bit earlier because of the book scheme'*
- *'I hadn't thought about (reading) with her till the book scheme'*
- *'I wouldn't have started with her at all at this stage'*

Key Findings

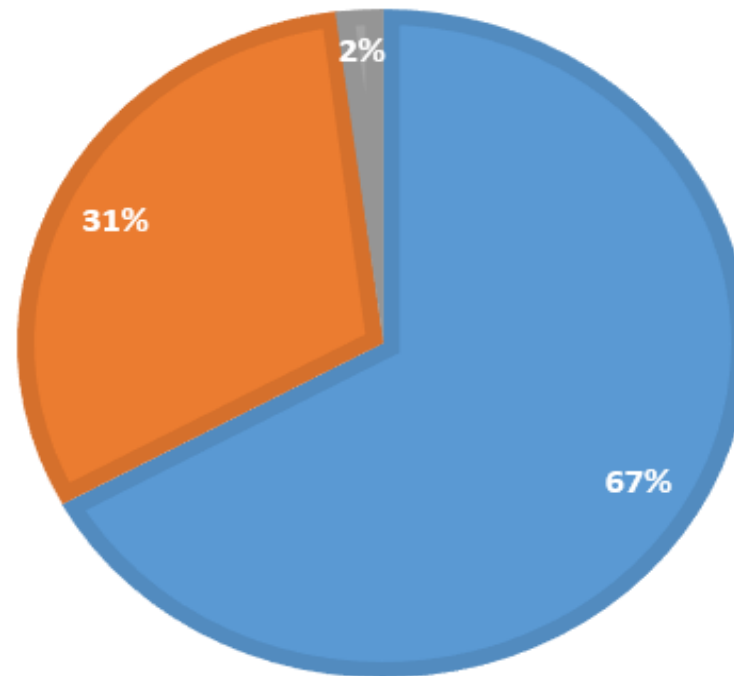
- Bookseed encouraged parents to **buy books** for their infant.
- Bookseed encouraged some parents to **join the library**.
- Bookseed ensured that babies in Limerick had **increased access to excellent high quality books from Irish authors and illustrators**.



Key Findings

- Most Public Health Nurses found it easy to incorporate the gifting of the Bookseed Pack into the 3-month infant health check, and that they had time to do so.

■ Reasonable amount of time ■ Only very briefly ■ No time



Public Health Nurse testimonials

- *'It was very good, it was lovely to be able to give parents something.'*
- *'It is a lovely gift to be able to get from the public health nurse, you know initially when they don't even know us, a lot of the parents, it's their first time (attending the clinic).'*
- *'It was nice to focus on something that is creative.'*
- *'It brings the whole experience back down to time with your baby to just be with your baby doing something that might be good for their mental development.'*
- *'Very beneficial for families.'*

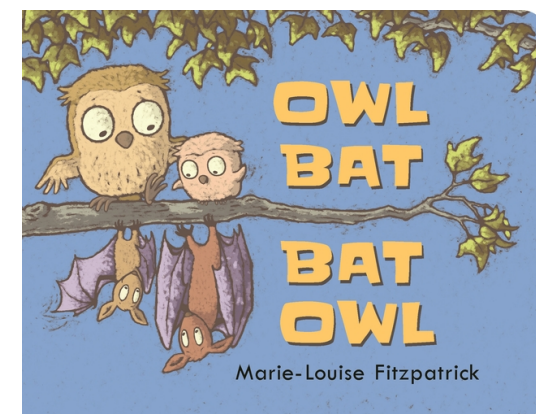
Key Findings

- Librarians and authors also welcomed and were supportive of the scheme.
- Librarian: *I think bookgifting schemes are very important for parents because it kind of introduces them to giving books to their babies from such a young age and it encourages a love of reading and an interest in books from the get go*
- Author: *One of the things I do love about programmes like this is that books are placed in the home. So it's lovely to think of that, to know that they are getting into homes that maybe would not have books or many books otherwise*



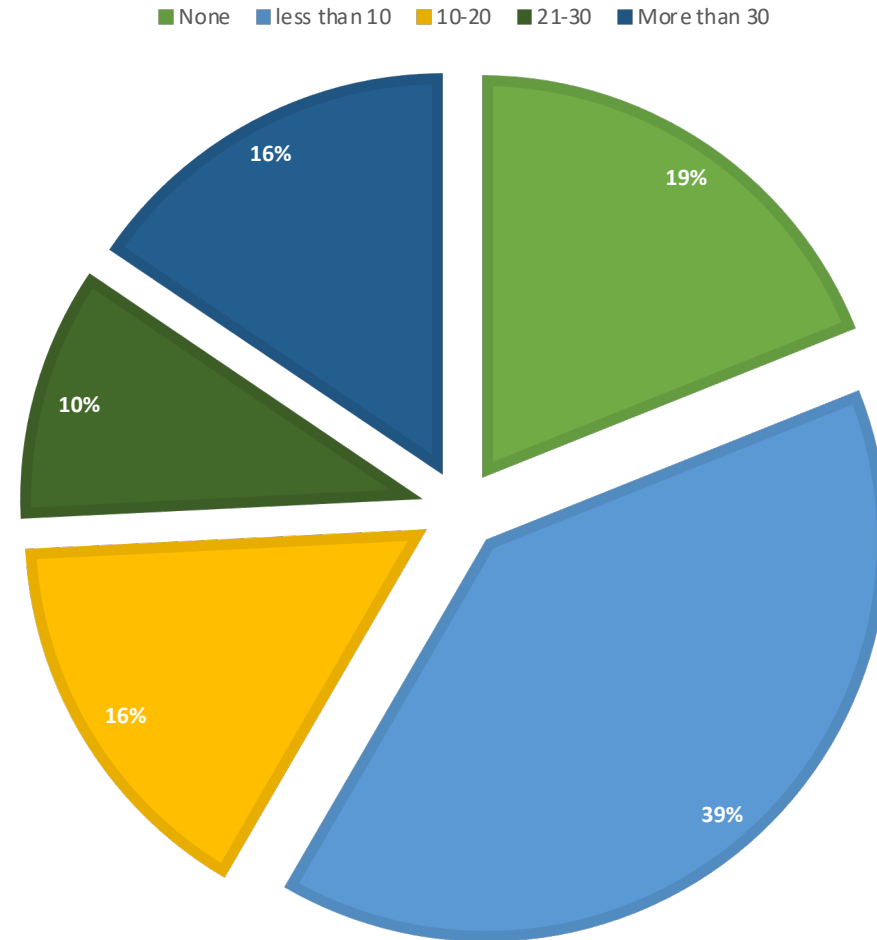
Book selection

- Overall positive feedback from parents/caregivers on the wordless picturebook
- A mother whose first language was not English explained during an interview how she enjoyed creating a story about *Owl Bat Bat Owl* (book 1) – *‘So, I started reading to him, not reading but creating a story, there is no letters on it, he was listening, he was playing with it, he started turning the pages himself.’*
- *I think it was a good idea that the book can be read from both sides. I didn’t realise it, but my older daughter brought me the book and told me that you can read it from the other side, and it reads a different story*
- *One parent explained how her ‘eldest son, he is 6 now but at the time he was 5, and he made up stories that went along with the story’.*
- *‘Even though the book without the words was great, if you’re tired, you’re really not in the mood try to make up the story, it takes time and energy. It’s hard to think up of a story and it is easier to just read, you don’t have to try as hard and it’s not so demanding that way, you know the words are there for you ‘*



Areas of concern

- Of the 323 parent respondents, 41% never or hardly ever look at/read books with their 3-month old infant, with only 22% looking at or reading to their infant daily.
- 19% of homes had no children's books, and 39% of homes had less than 10 books.

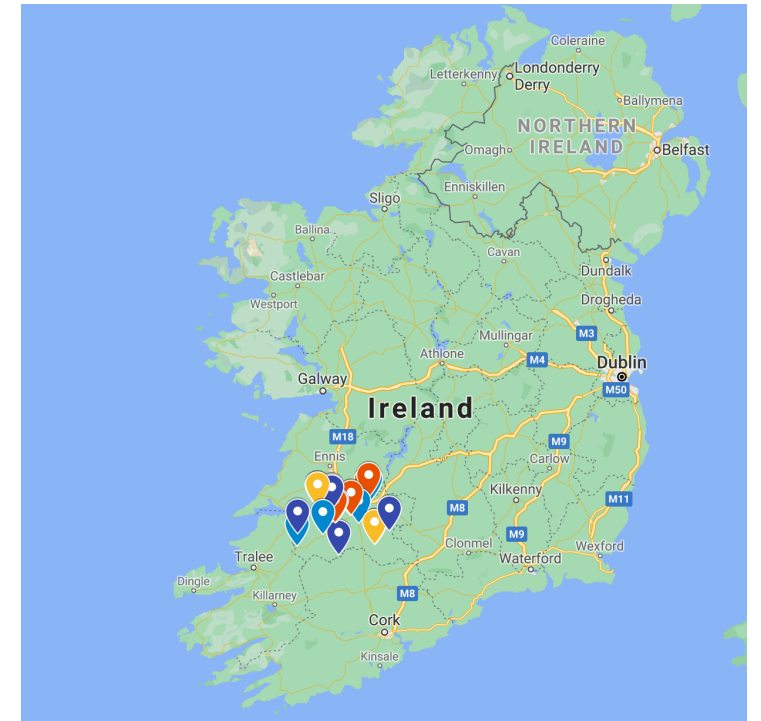


Evaluation – limitations

- Big fall off in numbers of respondents from 3-month survey (n=323) to 7-9-month survey (n=31) to parent interviews (n=7)
 - But – findings mirror international evidence
- Respondents at 7-9-month survey, and parent interviews are possibly the more engaged parents, interested in early reading already, rather than from hard-to-reach groups

Challenges

- 7-9-month data collection was difficult
- Covid-19 impacted on
 - Data collection
 - Project delivery
- Geography
- Low collection figures from libraries, and little we can do to improve currently with libraries working from a 'call & collect' model



Outcomes

Bookseed resulted in three overarching benefits for parents and infants relating to:

- **Fostering positive relationships**
- *'We take time, he sits down, he is listening to it and he really enjoys it'.*
- *'It's one-on-one time with her Dad and herself, or with me and herself or even family time where the boys will sit down and read with her. So, it's just about engaging with her more and interacting with her more'.*
- *'I think she enjoys the time together on the lap and the dedicated one-on-one time'.*
- *'For me it's definitely about the one-on-one time, and he responds to that as well'.*

Outcomes

Bookseed resulted in three overarching benefits for parents and infants relating to:

- **Supporting language development**
- *'I enjoy introducing him to new vocabulary; you know developing his interest early on.'*
- *'It'll definitely get her to recognise shapes, words, pictures so her vocab will be better.'*
- *'I suppose she sits because she's got into the habit of sitting for the book but I will, I will just kind of keep talking and she'll turn the pages and you know I might rub whatever the tactile thing is on the page and encourage her to do the same.'*

Outcomes

Bookseed resulted in three overarching benefits for parents and infants relating to:

- **Developing a general interest and positive relationship with books** (*'And then with this one the latest one 'SSH we have a plan', so my three-year-old loves that and he was making the ssh noises and getting my baby, well trying to get my baby to say the words and stuff'*)
- *'I think it's really useful for the future...but this baby I want him to love it, to go to the library often, we were there last week and he met his friend there, a baby girl, and they were playing together with books.'*

Looking to the future

- Re-starting the scheme in Limerick, potentially in a slightly different format
- Launch of evaluation report in February
- Sharing our knowledge with government and influencing decisions on the Department of Children and Youth Affairs pilot study

