

Bookstart Bump

Learning from a pilot intervention with vulnerable mums

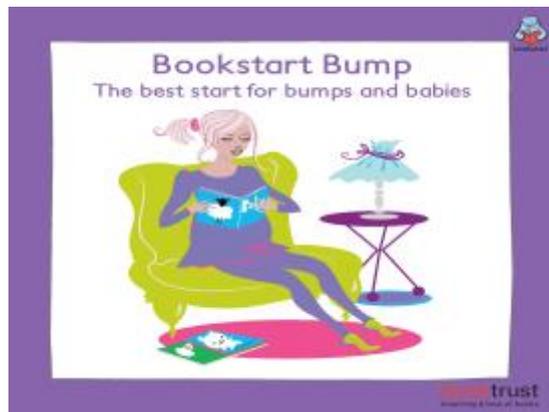
Today's session

- Rationale for Bookstart Bump
- Overview of intervention
- Overview of evaluation
- Findings
- Implications

Rationale

Rationale for Bookstart Bump

- Bookstart Bump supports professionals and vulnerable mothers-to-be to achieve **the best outcomes for children** by encouraging parents to talk, read, sing and say rhymes with babies in the womb and in early years



- Songs, stories and rhymes shared with babies in the womb serve multiple functions:
 - supporting babies' **brain development** through exposure to language
 - providing tools for parents to connect and **begin the bonding process**
 - developing **parents' habits and knowledge** to allow both the bonding and the exposure to language to continue
 - **creating a virtuous circle** where babies are both more able to learn and have more opportunities to do so.

Brain development

There is evidence “indicating that children can remember the tune and sounds of language quite early, and even prenatally. Newborns are able to extract information from rhymes and songs”

A review of behavioural and brain development in the early years: the “toolkit” for later book-related skills

A review of behavioural and brain development in the early years: the “toolkit” for later book-related skills

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Learning in utero

- The unborn baby can hear from 15 weeks, and can hear people around the mother by 24 weeks (NHS website)
- Finnish study found that babies recognise lullabies heard in the womb for up to 4 months, and this can help to support speech development (Kujala, 2013)
- Babies can distinguish between their mother tongue and a foreign language when born which suggests they are learning vowel sounds in utero (Moon, 2012)



Need: supporting people to communicate with their babies

- Feel self-conscious talking to bump
- Don't know what to say
- Literacy levels
- Don't know how to share books
- Language worries
- Don't see the point
- No time
- Lack of family support



Window of opportunity

Parents can be particularly receptive to messaging, advice and support during pregnancy; therefore it is regarded as a critical 'window of opportunity' for engagement. The following evidence focuses on young mums-to-be:

- Many young women see pregnancy as an opportunity for positive change (e.g. Clemmens, 2003)
- Interviews with teenage mums who planned their pregnancy found a need amongst many to put their own negative childhood experiences behind them and prove their capability as a parent (Cater and Coleman, 2006)
- Many young mothers are highly motivated to take the advice and support offered to them via midwifery services, especially if it is provided to them in a way that is respectful and non-judgemental (Asmussen and Weizel, 2010)

About Bookstart Bump

What is Bookstart Bump?

- Bookstart Bump offers advice, tips and tools to encourage expectant mothers to talk, sing or say rhymes, and read to their baby in utero
- Intervention is designed in three stages, affording multiple messaging
- Bump targets those who statistically have poorer outcomes for their children

Who is bump for?

- Families on low income or living in poor quality or over crowded housing
- Teenage mothers
- Where there are concerns around domestic violence, drug or alcohol misuse or maternal mental health
- Families where there are concerns over bonding with existing children
- Lone parent families
- Families where a parent is serving a custodial sentence
- Gypsy/Roma/Traveller women
- Refugees/Recent arrivals

Pack One (gifted at 28 weeks)



Cloth bag



Nursery rhyme CD



Scan frame



Information booklet



Rhyme booklet

Pack Two (gifted at 34 weeks)



Bath book



Rhyme sheet



Black and white booklet

Pack Three (gifted within 6 weeks of birth)



Black & white board book



Hints and tips sheet

About the research

Key aims: mums-to-be

- Begin the development of a positive bond with bump/baby
- Develop knowledge on the benefits of communicating with bump/baby through talking, singing/saying rhymes and sharing books
- Develop confidence in communicating with bump/baby through talking, singing/saying rhymes and sharing books
- Begin a routine of communicating with bump/baby through talking, singing/saying rhymes and sharing books
- To investigate whether the impact of Bookstart Bump is incremental to any other messaging directed towards expectant mothers

Practitioners perceptions of impact

- On participating women across the identified outcomes
- On improved communication, engagement and relationship development between themselves and women taking part in Bump
- On their own practice (for Bump and for wider practice)
- On their organisation (for example experience of partnership working)

Also to explore:

- Effectiveness of various delivery methods including targeting, recruitment and gifting
- Perceptions on additional training and support needs, and next steps for Bookstart Bump development

Numbers reached

Intervention audience

- 143 expectant mothers targeted to receive Bump across seven regions
 - 24 ante natal focus group or telephone interview participants
 - 14 post natal focus group or telephone interview participants
 - 42 survey participants

Control audience

- 124 expectant mothers presenting similar needs & backgrounds in the same regions
 - 28 ante natal focus group or telephone interview participants
 - 13 post natal focus group or telephone interview participants
 - 40 survey participants

Findings – Ante-natal

Findings: Ante-natal

- Most more conscious of the value of interacting than the Control group
- Exploring new ways of bonding and doing so frequently
- Some demonstrate understanding of the value to baby of talking aloud - particularly evident amongst those shown evidence of babies reacting in the womb
- Resistance linked to lack of knowledge with regards to when and what to sing and embarrassment around changing identity
 - Morning greetings are natural but the introduction of rhymes felt self-conscious
- Talking, singing or reading to their bump is like a verbal 'hug': reassuring and giving
- Awareness of the positive impact(s) on both parties

Pack 1: Response and appeal

- Bump highlighted to mothers the value they *did* and *could* bring
 - Motivated further interactions
 - Validated them as mothers to be
 - Improved confidence
- Less confident mums were encouraged to try new approaches
 - Even less engaged mums demonstrated good recall of the items in the pack and key messages
 - Sense that mothers were empowered to do whatever they were able
- Pack One planted a seed of knowledge and understanding
 - The benefits of interacting with their bump
 - May not as yet prompt a change in behaviour
 - First of multiple messaging opportunities to help overcome initial resistance.

Pack 2: Response and appeal

- Rapport had often built by the time of the second gifting
- High anticipation of the second pack amongst recipients
- Positive response to specific materials in the pack
- However lowest recall of the three giftings

90% of Practitioners noted that all of the mothers they targeted were pleased to receive the pack.

Findings – Post-natal

Findings: Post natal

- Confident and enthusiastic about value they are bringing
- Greater willingness amongst Intervention mothers to explore new ways of interacting
- Greater pride and belief in interacting
- Greater propensity to involve partners
- More mothers sang or said rhymes to their babies from birth or early on though by 12 weeks mothers in both groups were doing this
- Bookstart Bump books picked up in the early weeks: high-perceived value
- Intervention group had a better understanding of the value of interactions
- A very small number of first-time mums in the control group read to their babies from a young age
- In control group, right time to start perceived to be influenced by the baby's 'readiness'

Pack 3: response and appeal

- Harder than anticipated to gift Pack Three
- Giftings during pregnancy have greatest impact on attitude and knowledge
- The black and white book had the greatest recall of all items in the three packs
- Almost all mothers voiced confidence in sharing the book with their newborn baby

Pack Three scored most highly in terms of its perceived effectiveness:

- 80% of Practitioners perceived the board book to be very effective
- 80% perceived the black & white booklet and congratulations card to be very effective
- 90% perceived the hints and tips sheet to be very effective or quite effective

Perceived parental response reflects many of Practitioner and participant comments

- Black & white book motivated many to consider its immediate or imminent use

Key Impact on Bump group compared to control group (qual findings)

- **Greater self-belief and confidence** in engaging with baby by talking, singing/saying rhymes and sharing books
- **Greater understanding of benefits** they were bringing to baby. This resulted in pride and empowerment of vulnerable women
- **Combined features of the programme which enabled this:**
 - Pack contents (wide range of ways to engage, all given equal weight) – if something didn't work that day they would try something else. Different resources work at different times with different mums
 - Expert, trusted practitioner guidance
 - Peer support – supportive, open and encouraging environment

Benefits to practitioners

- Increased or improved partnership working
- additional value to mothers through joint agency approach
- 85% of Practitioners believe Bookstart Bump supports their own objectives
- 80% agreed Bookstart Bump incentivised mothers to visit the Centre for other checks
- 80% agreed that Bookstart Bump helped them to understand the potential of shared reading for a child's development.

Case study: Libraries

- Limited local opportunities for libraries to directly target pregnant women
- Bookstart Bump permitted relationship-building with isolated mothers
- Multiple gifting sessions build trust over time

“It’s been fantastic. One mum I spoke to had an 18 month old when she birthed. She was so anxious about her other child’s tantrums; I invited her to the Children’s Centre to participate in Bump and she subsequently signed up to a parenting course, and joined the library. She already went to the 1 o clock club but I told her about the sling library and her toddler listens to the Bump CD. All those other bits of info because of the Bump programme”.

Required support and further interest

- 50% of practitioners requested structured delivery plans and support engaging disengaged mothers
- Improved partnership working and removing some of the restrictions of the pilot would have aided these.
- Practitioners scored their interest in taking part again as 4 out of 5, indicating high interest in delivering Bump again.
- 20% of gifting Practitioners would be interested in purchasing Bookstart Bump packs for distribution though 50% confirmed that they could only participate if the packs were made available free of charge
- A further 30% indicated that they could only take part in a future iteration of Bookstart Bump if both the packs and staff time were funded.

Proposed pack design

- Just 30% agree that packs should be given out by the same Practitioner,
- 50% partially agree that a two pack model could have as much impact as the current model

- In the event that Bookstart Bump were revised to a two pack model:
 - Practitioners unanimous Pack One should be gifted during pregnancy.
 - Greatest interest in gifting during a booking in or midwife appointment.
 - Pack Two was considered most suited to being gifted very soon after birth
 - Partner resources considered the most useful addition

A note on survey data

Self report survey data did not reflect the changes in attitude, confidence and skill noted amongst the Intervention group versus the Control group

No major differences in outcomes were reported between the groups after birth

- Both groups display similar levels of propensity to bond with their baby, confidence and awareness of value

However it is important to note that the Intervention audience was observed to have a greater propensity to:

- Try a wider range of bonding behaviours in the weeks immediately after birth
- To have a greater understanding of the value they bring to their baby
- To be confident about trying another approach if the one they have tried does not work for themselves or their baby.

Researcher recommendations

A revised version of Bookstart Bump

- Recognising funding may not be available to support a three-pack model and that local budgets would be largely unable to fund these

A flexible model of delivery

- To permit Practitioners in every region to explore the targeting and distribution models most suited to their structure
- Including distribution of Packs One and Two by different Practitioners if this is necessary.

Further research into confidence and behaviours amongst Control and Intervention mothers post birth

- Following inconsistencies between survey data and qualitative research insights gathered.

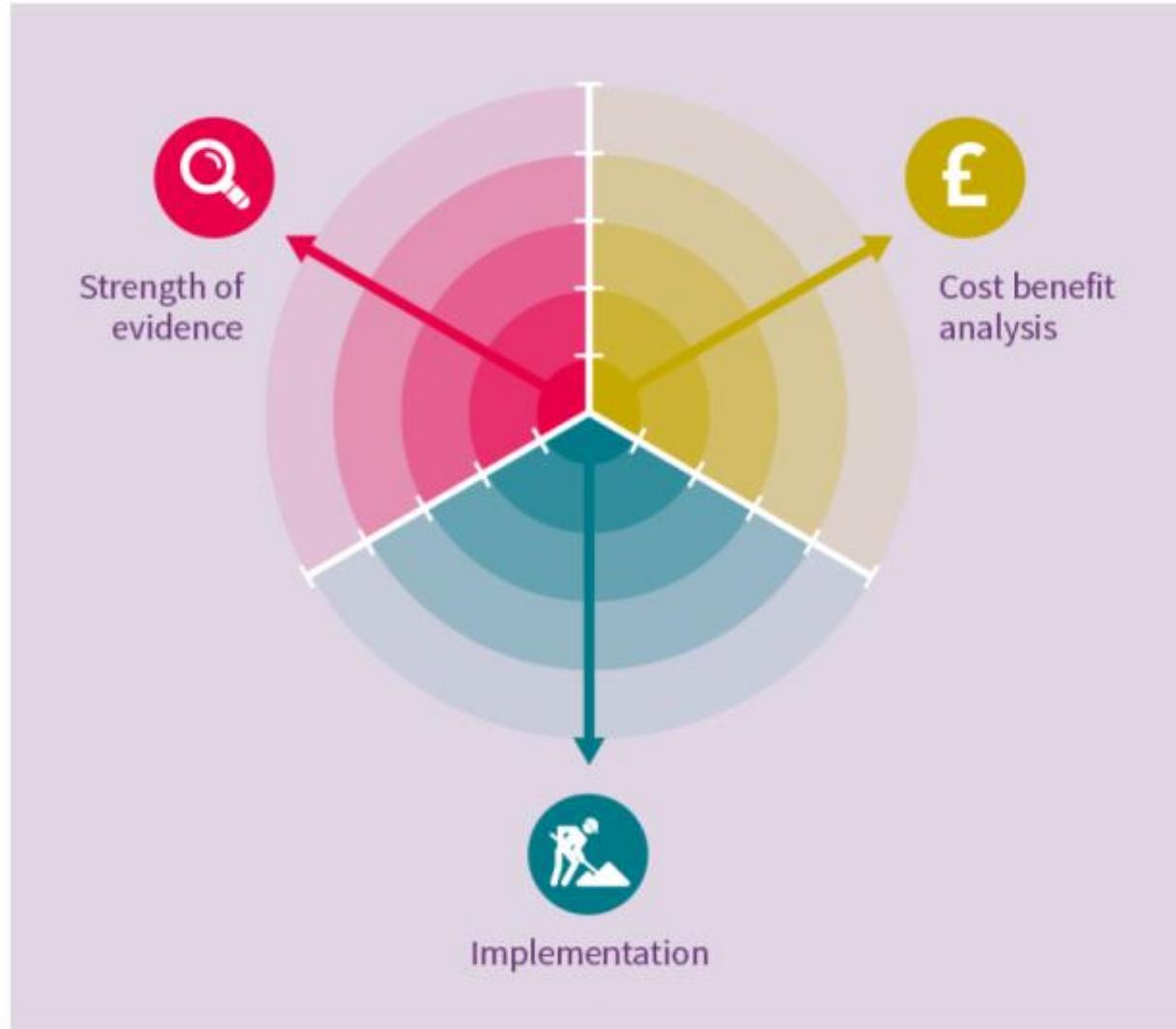
Conclusions (1)

- Programme delivery met the needs of participants
- Combined features of programmes produced results
- Programme offered unique provision that is lacking elsewhere
- Consensus that most efficient targeting route through midwives
- However children's centres also effective
- Provided opportunities for successful partnership working but was easier to target and recruit where this was already in embedded

Conclusions (2)

- Regions with dedicated provision for vulnerable groups well placed to deliver programme alongside existing services
- Specified targeting was appropriate
- Bump provided tangible ways to involve dads
- Practitioner commitment to programme and interest in delivering again was high
- Confidence levels to deliver programme varied
- Evidence of positive impact on outcomes but further research required

Implications and next steps



Source: EIF
'Translating the
evidence'



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