



**The
Vital
Link**



GET ON WITH GOT KIDS? GET READING!: SUMMARY

Get on with Got kids? Get reading! was a pilot project managed by The Reading Agency and The Vital Link and funded by the DfES Skills for Life Strategy Unit. Through partnerships between children's centres, family learning staff and public libraries, the project aimed to attract parents with skills gaps back into learning by encouraging them to read for pleasure with their children.



The project was piloted from January to March 2005 in nine English regions, in HMP Birmingham, Brent, Hull, Leicestershire, Newcastle upon Tyne, Solihull, Somerset, Southampton, Stockport and Thurrock. Pilot locations received specially chosen collections of books and promotional materials aimed at both parents and children, and staff delivered a

range of reading and learning activities in the children's centres.

261 families took part and 599 books were read in the course of the project; 106 of these were read frequently. 49 adults and 72 children from the project locations joined the local library; many of these had not been in the library before.

Although it ran for such a short period, the programme achieved some notable successes in attracting parents to read more with their children and to a lesser extent to read for pleasure themselves.

"One parent said that since the collection arrived, she had read to her child every night, which she had never done before."

Parents with young children particularly appreciated being able to access books at a place and time convenient to them. They felt more confident in choosing books from a small collection which had already been tested and endorsed by other parents, learners and professionals.

"For the first time my son has picked up a book and run to me to ask for it to be read". Parent

Many parents had not used the library before and had a range of

misconceptions about it which had prevented them from going there themselves. These misconceptions were largely dispelled when they were taken to the library as a group and encouraged to join. A number of parents with skills gaps were encouraged by the programme to come forward and seek help. A few were actually enrolled in courses but many more expressed an intention to go on learning as a result of taking part. Library staff and children's centre staff gained confidence in their ability to identify skills needs and to signpost potential learners to suitable learning opportunities.

*"Prisoners involved in the project at **HMP Birmingham** said they would use their local library regularly after release."*

Although all participants were enthusiastic, the short timescale of the project and other delays during the pilot programme limited the benefits parents and professionals could gain from taking part. Partners recognised the complementary roles each agency could play in encouraging parents to read and learn with more confidence; all expressed the intention to continue working together in the future.

Two guidance leaflets were produced:

a. Got kids? Get reading! Improving family literacy and learning through reading for pleasure¹ - a booklet of guidance for professionals wishing to

become involved in this way of working.

b. Got kids? Get reading! Ideas for parents and carers² - a short leaflet for parents with hints and tips for reading and learning with their children and advice on learning opportunities.



Recommendations were made to The Vital Link, the DfES Skills for Life Strategy Unit, The Reading Agency and to the project locations that :

- The outcomes should be widely disseminated
- The project should be extended and developed further
- Identified training and awareness needs should be addressed
- Collections and materials should be reviewed and developed further
- Existing networks should be drawn upon to provide ongoing support
- Reading for pleasure should be integrated into the work of all family learning practitioners.

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¹ Available from DfES Publications, PO Box 5050, Sherwood Park, Annersley, Nottingham, NG15 0DJ Ref. GOWGK

² Available from DfES distributors on 0845 60222260. Quote reference GKGR/P