

The ‘hundred languages of book sharing’ – so many different ways of sharing books

The Imagination Library study

Interim report 30th May 2010

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1. The process of doing the study

This section of the report sets out the activities undertaken on this project. It goes on to give further information about the recruitment of practitioner researchers and the families who gathered data. The section concludes with reflections on this process.

The project began in December 2009 and involved a number of different activities; these activities are outlined below.

Imagination Library Study – Table of Activities

Date	Activity
December 2009	Scope and geographical spread of study agreed
December 2009	Ethical review approved by University of Sheffield School of Education
December 2009	Costing approved by University of Sheffield and Inspire Rotherham
December 2009	Research proposal written and approved
January – March 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identification of agencies key to the Imagination Library scheme in Rotherham• Identification – from the above agencies - of stakeholders/recruiters/advocates of Imagination Library scheme across Rotherham• Recruitment of practitioner researchers from these agencies, to work with families in order to gather film footage of family book-sharing practices• Development of fieldwork tools <p>The aim was to recruit 10 practitioners, but in practice 9 were recruited.</p>

<p>10th March 2010</p>	<p>First practitioner research event held at Rockingham Centre in Rotherham. The aims of this event were to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide information about the research project • provide an opportunity for practitioners to input into project planning • give out FLIP cameras for families to use • discuss fieldwork tools • provide an opportunity for practitioners to air and share any concerns about the project <p>7 practitioners were able to attend the event.</p>
<p>April 2010</p>	<p>Telephone and email feedback obtained to uncover perceptions of the Imagination Library scheme. Views were sought from stakeholders/recruiters/advocates of the scheme within Rotherham agencies, in response to the following questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) What role does your organisation play in relation to Imagination Library? 2) What role do you play in relation to Imagination Library? 3) What is working well? 4) What isn't working well? 5) How could the scheme be improved or enhanced? <p>Feedback was invited from 32 individuals and a total of 18 email or telephone responses were elicited.</p>
<p>April – May 2010</p>	<p>Fieldwork conducted. This involved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practitioner researchers identifying and recruiting participant families • Practitioner researchers carrying out an initial home visit to their participant family (or families in one case) to obtain written consent, give out FLIP camera, provide guidelines about what to film, and discuss any concerns • Families filming book sharing practices within the home • Practitioner researchers carrying out a second home visit to discuss the process of filming, to review footage and if possible record brief contextual information to support analysis of the films, and to gather basic background information about the families <p>8 practitioners worked with one family each and 1 practitioner supported 2 families to undertake filming. 1 practitioner, a childminder, gathered FLIP data but this was accidentally deleted – see discussion</p>

	below.
13 th May 2010	<p>Second practitioner research event held at the Rockingham Centre. The aims of this event were to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect FLIP cameras • Collect in the hard copies of data gathered by practitioners, i.e. information relating to the footage, background information about participant families etc. • Review the footage gathered by families and collectively interpret the films, i.e. 'make meaning' of the data • Air and share experiences, e.g. collectively discuss the research process – how did the participants feel about their experiences as practitioner researchers, and how did they feel the families experienced the research? • Discuss implications for practice • Explore 'next steps' and possible future follow-on project
28 th May 2010	Completion of written report relating to the study

Recruitment of practitioner researchers

A key strand of this project was to support practitioners to undertake research and evaluation of the Imagination Library. Our aim was to raise the profile of and increase the capacity for research and evaluation among practitioners within the Rotherham. From the outset we envisaged working with 10 practitioners from a wide range of organisations involved to a greater or lesser degree with Imagination Library. We liaised with a number of organisations to ensure that practitioners reflected the range of different organisations working with under 5's in Rotherham, including practitioners working in both health and education. Key routes for recruiting practitioners included:

- Children and Young People's Service at RMBC
The Senior Quality Early Years and Childcare Improvement Officer invited practitioners involved in the ECAT scheme to get involved in our study
- Imagination Library
The Co-ordinator provided details of key stakeholders and brokered access to the PCT clinical team manager in order to recruit health practitioners to the project
- Existing contacts via Inspire Rotherham
The research team are currently evaluating the Inspire Rotherham initiative and have worked with a number of organisations; this was also a useful recruitment route.

Although we originally planned to recruit 10 practitioners, in the event 9 practitioners were successfully recruited to the study. These practitioners worked in a range of settings, including:

- Children's Centres (2)
- primary school (1)
- private day nurseries (2)
- FE college nursery (1)
- voluntary and community sector (1)
- childminder (1)
- nursery nurse (health) (1)

Recruitment of families

The practitioner researchers were invited to identify and recruit families they work with who they felt might be willing and would enjoy taking part in this study. At the initial practitioner research meeting in March the university researchers explored with the practitioners issues relating to sampling including: geographical area, social class and ethnicity.

As this was a study involving home visits and visual data focusing on children and families, ethical issues relating to this study were also discussed at some length. It was important to prioritise an ethical framework to support the project and in addition to following their own organisations ethical frameworks the practitioners were asked to agree to follow a research protocol developed by the university team. This protocol included: legal requirements; good practice standards; beneficence and non-maleficence; informed consent; confidentiality/anonymity and some key aspects of conducting research in the homes.

Initially a total of 10 families were recruited onto the study. However during the course of the project 2 families withdrew a further discussion relating to this is outlined below. Families who took part in the project included:

Family 1

Mum, dad and 3 boys age 4, 6 and 8. Mum is aged between 40-49. English is the first language spoken and mum describes the family as White British. Mum left full time education at age 21 and her highest qualification is a degree. Mum is currently working full time. The family started receiving Imagination Library books in 2008.

Family 2

Mum, dad and twin girls aged 2 years. Mum has an older adult child from a previous relationship. Mum is aged between 30-39 and left school at 16; her highest qualifications are CSE/GCSE O level, NVQ/BTEC, Level 1 C&G Maths and Level 2 C&G English. She looks after her home and family and describes them as White British. English is her first language. The family started receiving Imagination Library books in 2008.

Family 3

Mum, dad and child – a girl age 2. Mum is aged between 20 – 29. English is their first language. Mum describes the family as Black African; mum is from Kenya and dad from Zimbabwe. They are a family seeking asylum having fled the regime in Zimbabwe. Mum

left full time education age 21 years with a degree. She is pregnant – her baby is due in September. Started receiving Imagination Library books in March 2009.

Family 4

Mum is aged between 30 – 39. There are two children, with the focal child a boy age 3 years 10 months and a sibling age 2 years. Grandfather appears in the footage as he plays a key role in the focal child's life. English is the family's 1st language and mum describes the family as Caucasian. Mum is in full time employment; she left school aged 21 with a degree. Started receiving Imagination Library books in summer 2008.

Family 5

Mum, dad and daughter age 4. Mum is aged between 40 – 49. English is the family's first language. Mum describes herself as Afro-Caribbean. She is working part-time. She left full time education at age 16; her highest qualification is CSE/GCSE O-level. Started receiving Imagination Library books in March 2009.

Family 6

Mum is aged between 40 – 49 and has two daughters age 2 and 4. English is the family's first language and Mum describes the family as British. Mum, who left school age 18, is currently unemployed. Her highest qualifications are HNC/HND and CSE/GCSE O level. Started receiving Imagination Library books in October 2005.

Family 7

Mum, dad and two children. Mum is aged between 30-39. The children are daughter age 3 years and son age 19 months. The family's first language is English. Mum is working part-time. She left full-time education at age 18 with A levels. Started receiving Imagination Library books in Autumn 2007.

Family 8

This information was not forthcoming, however, we hope to have it in June.

Reflections on recruitment of practitioners and families

- Families withdrawing from study

On the whole we were delighted with the response to our invitation to both practitioners and families to take part in this study. However, as is often the case with this type of study, two families did withdraw from the project and as the drop out occurred at an advanced stage in the research there was not sufficient time to recruit further families.

- A range of practitioners

We were pleased that the practitioners who took up the invitation to take part in this study are based in a wide range of settings. However, it was more difficult to recruit representatives from health and our practitioner researcher working within the health field

was one of the two practitioners whose families withdrew from the study. Despite her disappointment, this practitioner attended the second event in May and her contribution to the discussion at this meeting was invaluable.

- A range of families

The eight families who took part in the project were characterised by a range of different backgrounds in terms of ethnicity, where they lived and social class. Our final sample included families who could be considered 'hard to reach' as well as those who access a wide range of services and for whom book sharing is an embedded practice. However, it is worth noting that our sample did not include: a minded family; a foster family; a family of Pakistani origin; and a family with a child with significant special needs.

2. Interviews with practitioners about Imagination Library

Telephone and email feedback obtained to uncover perceptions of the Imagination Library scheme. Views were sought from stakeholders/recruiters/advocates of the scheme within Rotherham agencies, in response to the following questions:

- 1) What role does your organisation play in relation to Imagination Library?
- 2) What role do you play in relation to Imagination Library?
- 3) What is working well?
- 4) What isn't working well?
- 5) How could the scheme be improved or enhanced?

Feedback was invited from 32 individuals and a total of 18 email or telephone responses were elicited. The findings are reported below:

- **What role does your organisation play in Imagination Library?**

The majority of organisations that responded to this question explained that their principal role was to promote, inform, signpost and/or recruit to the scheme. Comments included:

'We promote to parents and signpost them to the relevant place'

'We give information to pregnant women so when they register with us they can also recruit into the Imagination Library scheme'

'We work with families with children under 5, therefore we feel it's essential to promote the use of Imagination Library as it's a fantastic resource for all homes'

A small minority of organisations (4) described their role in terms of support of and/or the modelling of book sharing of the Imagination Library books. For example one organisation highlighted:

'I model the use of these books in groups bringing them to life with puppets and songs'

'We promote the use of books and help parents to learn other book sharing skills'

Two organisations described their role in terms of linking to schools. For example one organisation highlighted that it is linking with schools, working with school age children and looking to see if they have any younger siblings who could benefit from Imagination Library. Another highlighted :

'When the books come out we get them into schools and promote them that way'

Two organisations explained that currently their role was only small. An additional respondent pointed out that it had only recently met with representatives from the Imagination Library scheme but it was looking at ways to enhance its role within the scheme.

- **What is working well?**

A number of aspects of the scheme were identified as working particularly well, these included:

Promoting, informing and recruiting to the scheme

Several organisations highlighted that informing families about the scheme was successful. One stated that they thought take up to the scheme had increased significantly and another commented on the speed of recruitment:

'I think they get a quick response when they send in the forms and I've had some good feedback from that'

One respondent articulated their own organisations success in signing up more vulnerable families to the scheme.

Families enjoy receiving the books

About a quarter of those surveyed highlighted the enjoyment and pleasure that children and families experience as a result of receiving the books. For example one organisation stated *'all families report they enjoy receiving a book each month'*, another *'most people I speak to already have their babies registered and are enjoying receiving their books'*. As well as *'enjoyment'* several organisations described the *'excitement'* generated by the books, for example one respondent highlighted that *'they love the fact that the children get excited about getting a book every month'*, another that *'it gives children ownership of their own books and makes children feel special as they are getting their own post'*.

Prompts 'book sharing'

A number of respondents more explicitly described this 'enjoyment' in terms of book sharing. Indeed, when asked what was working well several reported that the scheme prompts or encourages book sharing. Comments included:

'The sheer pleasure on the faces of children when they receive a new book – the enjoyment that they demonstrate when reading with an adult'.

'For families who already promote and share books it's an extra resource for them. For those who don't it prompts them to pick up a book and share it with their child'.

Quality and range of books

Several respondents commented that the scheme does allow access to books , with one organisation highlighting that families speak highly of the quality and range of books available.

• What isn't working well? What could enhance the scheme?

Just under half of respondents shared their thoughts on what was 'not' working as well within the scheme. A variety of issues were raised. One respondent made the point that there were still a lot of people who were not aware of the scheme. In terms of 'reach' the same respondent who pointed out their organisation was successfully reaching 'vulnerable families' also pointed out that not 'all' vulnerable families were being recruited. A further respondent reported that funding issues made it difficult to extend the work of the scheme through parents' groups etc.

In addition one respondent highlighted that distinct groups of children were not fully benefiting from the scheme – this respondent identified that ‘twins’ receive the same books and that the scheme was not able to accommodate those children with additional needs.

When asked what would enhance the scheme a third of respondents pointed to **better links and more partnership working with Imagination Library**. Comments included:

‘It’s working well but there is still room for improvement...organisations like us could be given more information and we could share good practice with each other...we need more links with Imagination Library’

‘Increasing partnership working with people like ourselves, we have other contacts that link to families’

‘Someone coming in from Imagination Library on a regular basis to do some book work, although this fell off the agenda, but I do think it would be beneficial to our work...I do think Imagination Library is a good scheme’

Several organisations highlighted that **more information and resources around book sharing** would be beneficial. One respondent stated that ‘sometimes the scheme can be seen as just a book, more information and resources would be good and I’m not sure how much the books are being used in the home’. Another highlighted that ‘more education for parents /carers to learn how to share books effectively’ would enhance the scheme. A further respondent stressed that the scheme could be improved ‘by having an additional stream of alternate books for those children with additional needs who find the content or some of the books inappropriate. We would love a copy of the books so that we could encourage their use in the home’

Additional ideas to enhance the scheme included: provision of the books in schools; tracking children accessing the scheme via own organisational database; twins receiving different books; and promoting other services via the scheme i.e. what’s happening in children’s centres.

It is of note that two respondents stated that **embedding Imagination Library principles** into their Early Years Strategies would enhance the scheme and that this work was currently being undertaken.

- **What do you think parents/carer’s/families get out of Imagination Library?**

A wide range of benefits were described by respondents. Comments included:

‘Parents think it’s a fantastic resource as the books are delivered to the door, it’s especially good for those parents who can’t get to the library. Children get excited about the books which promotes a love of books’

‘The parents can be nervous about going to the library and taking the books out and some of them don’t have the income to buy books so it’s good in that sense’

'A platform to teach children reading & imagination skills – it is particularly useful as some parents/carers do not really know what books to buy at what age – the Imagination Library provides books “straight to the door” for parents to use with their children'

'The children get their own parcel in the post (which they love) as well as quality books to look at and share. Parents are appreciative of the project as it highlights to them that their child's development is considered important by the council'

3. Video analysis

In each case, we asked the practitioners to select the videos that they thought were most significant. Below we analyse these excerpts. We were greatly helped by the contextual information provided by the practitioners, as these situated the interactions and made sense of the videos. Much of the video analysis happened in the session where the practitioners brought the videos in for discussion. The conversations as the practitioners watched the videos they had selected informed this analysis below. We coded the excerpts by looking closely at gesture, including pointing and also gesture as an addition to the family. We also looked at sound, and how the parents used sound in the story sharing. We focused on emotional closeness between parents and children and on the talk around the story sharing.

See Appendix 1 for the link between these videos, and the practitioner descriptions of the families. The table also gives a sense of the sample from which the video was chosen.

Themes coming out of video analysis

1. Book sharing as opening up opportunities for gesture, sound, and talk.

The practitioner said that this parent had an older child who had been in some difficulties, and who she felt that she had let down. She had had many problems and was now with a new partner, and had recently had baby twins, two girls. She was determined to read with them and support them. The dad was doing the filming.



Figure 1 Stills from film

This excerpt shows how the children slowly became involved in the story. The mother leaves gaps for the children to fill in, and the stills show the child responding. The mother then asks the children to do the actions to 'chiny chin chin' and the child on the mother's left takes her dummy out of her mouth and begins to respond. As the story progresses, the children get more involved, stroking their chins. The child on the left spontaneously says puff! This model of book sharing sees books as potential opportunities for action, for gesture and for conversation; it is a highly interactive, dialogic model, which creates action from the story.

2. Imagination Library as creating opportunities for children to read different kinds of books and for siblings to share books together.

The practitioner commented that the mother's favourite books are connected to characters and emotions. Mum wouldn't have bought that particular book for her daughter but this clip shows how valuable a non-fiction book is for the child.



Figure 2: Stills from film

This video shows the role of pointing and naming in the experience of looking at non-fiction books. The mother said that she would never go out and buy these books. This family is being supported by the Imagination Library by its offer of a *wider range* of books. The use of the floor as a reading space is interesting, as this is another book sharing space. The brother comes in and points to the truck, saying bike, and the older girl says 'no this is not a bike'. The pointing opens up all sorts of conversational opportunities, and the mother, not on screen, responds to the comments of the girl. As the girl says 'what's that?' the mother supplies the answers – this flow of information is a dialogic exchange, which is similar to some school -based discussion. However, about half way through the exchange the girl starts to be the person naming, with the mother listening. She also relates the information in the images to her experience of the world – one of the cars is like 'daddy's car'. This referential, naming process is congruent with many school literacy practices (Heath 1983). At the end of the excerpt chosen for analysis, the older girl goes up and gets another book. The young boy, aged about 1, starts to read the book, and makes noises. The mother says, 'What's that (name of child) have you found the car? Here, siblings are seen to be learning from each other, and the older girl's modelling to her brother is now being seen.



Figure 3: Siblings book sharing

3. Book sharing as emotional, sensory, linked to closeness with child and carrying sensory memories of breast feeding and emotional attachment

The practitioner interviews the mother about the Imagination Library books. In the interview the mother said the following:

Does IL make a difference to your family? A: Yes. When the new books arrive each month N is very excited to find out what book she is getting. As asylum seekers we are not entitled to any money so cannot afford to buy good quality books, so getting the IL books means that N can build up her own little library of excellent quality books.

Where are the books kept? A: The books are kept in the living room in a wicker box, which N can access at any time.

What do you think to the quality of the books? A: The books are of excellent quality, and I enjoy sharing them with N. It is lovely that N now has her own library of books, we do go to the library in Rotherham on a regular basis, but it is nice for N to have books that she doesn't have to return.



Figure 4: Mother/child experience close book sharing

This mother held her child close while telling the story. The story was about porridge and she enacted the porridge boiling over by raising her hands into the air. She left spaces for her child to help tell the story. Towards the end of the video the child says, 'Messy' filling in a word from the story, and the mother, affirming says, 'Messy, indeed its messy'. This video shows a very skilled story sharer giving her child emotional support while interacting with her while telling a story. At the end, the child gets up and goes away, the mother calmly says, 'have you had enough?' The atmosphere in the video is very close, calm and quiet. This video excerpt, in particular, sums up what can only be described as 'love' between parent and child (Page 2008:187). This was present in all the videos where book sharing took place between parent and child.

4. **Book sharing in two ways in one household**

The focal child was four. He enjoyed opening the books when they arrived. The child commented of the book sharing experience that, Mum asks questions, Dad changes his voice, Mum likes to face the 4 year old –'making the story come out for him' and Dad likes to sit with his son in bed. Book sharing is mostly at bedtime.

Father sharing a book

In this example, the father is sitting in the bed with the son, and sharing the book side by side with the child. He tells the story in a very expressive way. The story is enacted through the dad's voices and expressions as he reads the book. The son listens, without speaking. The father makes the story come alive, shouting 'Ship Ahoy!' really loudly.



Figure 5: father telling the story with a child listening

Book sharing as interaction across the book – ‘making the story come out for him’

In this example, the mother is sitting looking at the child as he points out letters in the book. By using their fingers to point and looking directly at the child, the mother is engaging the child in the book in a different way. She is using this technique as the child has been referred for speech therapy and it is to encourage his use of language. The mother leaves a gap for key words, which the child supplies. As the story progresses, the child tells more of the story to the mother, so the process gets more dialogic. The child says ‘MIAOW’ very loudly, when it comes to Scar Face, providing the atmosphere.



Figure 6: Book sharing across a book and making the story come out

5. A grandfather shares with a grandson: intergenerational talk comes alive

The family did have plenty of books already, but they mentioned the excitement of a book dropping through the door each month, and said that this promotes a shared, warm family experience and creates lots of discussion, interaction – ‘why’ questions. The family said that the books were great for oral development.



Figure 7: Book sharing across generations

This excerpt of video showed the grandfather sharing a ‘Charlie and Lola’ book with his grandson, filmed by the practitioner. There was a lot of conversation in the story – the grandfather asking the child ‘what do you do when you have a cold’. The story prompted a

lot of talk. The grandfather points to the words as he reads. He then asks the grandson to point to the straw and trace where it goes in the picture.

6. A father shares a book with a daughter – being an owl

In this excerpt the father reads the story of the 'Owl Babies' to G, who listens attentively. At one point, he mimics the flight of the owls with his hand. He also asks the daughter if they have owls in their back garden (they have) thus linking the story to everyday experience.



Figure 8: Father reading to a daughter.

7. Two sisters share books – filling in the gaps

Mum really thinks the Imagination Library has made a difference to her girls. She said they love to receive the books through the post because they don't normally get any post and it has their name on them. It is always a nice surprise for them and they get excited when they arrive. Also she said she couldn't afford to go out every month and buy them both a new book.

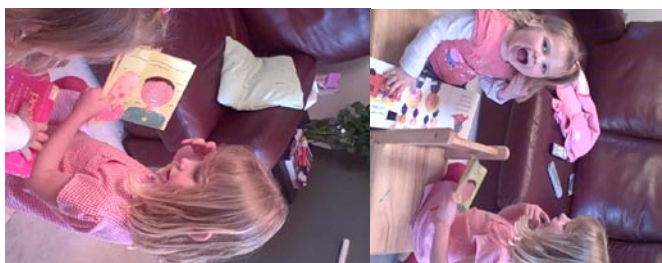


Figure 9: Sisters book sharing with each other. (note: FLIP angle means you have to view these side on)

In this excerpt the older girl is 'teaching' her sister. She asks the younger girl: 'Where's your hair? There! Where's your eyebrows? Younger girl: There! Older girl: Good.' In this excerpt she is almost 'playing school' (Gregory 2001) and enacting the actions of a teacher with a child. She is pointing to her nose, eyes, teeth, cheeks, eyebrows and asking her sister to copy her. The atmosphere is of two girls sharing books, at the same time, with one asking questions, and using the books as a starting point for a conversation with her sister. At the end, she said, 'who likes running?' and the younger sister says yes! This excerpt links books to actions very strongly. This episode shows the role of imaginative play in learning and also the importance of role play and adopting other voices in book sharing. The sisters are learning from each other in an interesting model of reciprocity.

The mother chose this episode because both girls knew the book and because C was asking L about the pictures and both girls were engaged in what they were doing.

8. Are you going to read it later?



Figure 10: Child holding up an Imagination Library book, still in its wrapper

Mother asked the child, 'What is it?'. The child said, 'A dinosaur'. The mother then asked: 'Are you gonna read it later?' In this very short film, the mother's comment, 'Are you gonna read it later' shows books as being individualised, something the child does on their own. This viewpoint, that books are not for sharing, but for 'reading' on their own, by the children, is a perception we have found in a number of families including those with lower literacy levels. We would not like to make any conclusions as yet, but would like to suggest that families where this is clearly the norm for the children are possibly not as strong book sharers as those who regularly share books. In this excerpt the child has the book in its plastic wrapper. The child holds up the book as if it were a toy.

Places for book sharing

In the videos we found that four families used the settee for book sharing. Of the selected videos, two involved bedtime stories. In several other families, however, children were pictured in pyjamas sharing books. One of the family films was on the floor and one on small chairs in a bedroom.

Different activities from book sharing

We found that tracing round letters and pointing was significant in at least three of the videos. Parents, grandparents and siblings emphasised filling in gaps a lot and asked the children to supply familiar words or phrases, which the children clearly enjoyed (4 videos). Gesture was used by some parents, for example, the swoop of the Owl or the porridge boiling over, in three of the videos. Sound had a key role – such as a child making a 'Meow' noise, an adult being the Big Bad Wolf or a grandparent singing a song, in four of the videos. Two of the families made connections to everyday life, like owls in the back yard, or just having had tea, in the stories. The stories opened up new worlds for the children, that involved dramatic action, play, stories and a dialogic space in which they might begin by listening, with a parent leading, but then the pair might reverse roles, and switch over and the child would be more of the 'teller'. We would suggest that this is a very powerful and positive model of book sharing. One key thing to focus on is the importance of a switch in agency from parent or storyteller as teller to child as teller during a book sharing episode and this might be something to share with practitioners.

The role of the FLIPS

A majority of the parents found the FLIP cameras easy to use and enjoyed using them. Only a minority of parents said they felt self-conscious in front of the camera. It is notable that the variety, the '100 languages' of book sharing produced in the films is a testament to the way in which the videos genuinely did reflect the diversity of book sharing practices in homes. The difference between the examples of book sharing shown in the videos was strong, and the *habitus* of each family clearly different (Bourdieu 1990). As an experienced ethnographic researcher, who has done a lot of research in homes, Kate found the videos to be a reflection of each family's habits and ways of being (See Pahl 2002, 2004). The families drew on their own and their children's acquired dispositions, ways of being, and familiar ideas of book sharing in order to produce the videos. In order to show book sharing they drew on existing *repertoires of practices*, those that they already knew and had done many times before. We therefore feel that this dataset is a reasonably accurate picture of those families' book sharing practices. Only one family did not produce many videos and their record of book sharing was minimal, and focused on the child reading the book to herself. However, this too, is suggestive of the role of book sharing in that household.

Conclusions and recommendations

1. Book sharing in homes comprises a diverse set of practices. There is not one way of sharing books. This study taught the practitioners and the researchers about the diversity of book sharing practices in families. Book sharing involved: pointing, gesture, singing, talking, conversation, emotion, love and making links between the books and other aspects of the children's lives. It could take place in bed, on a settee, on the floor or on a chair. It was often a dialogic activity, that is, it was about conversation and talk and the weaving of this talk together. It involved emotional connections between parent or grandparent and child, which we could call 'love' (Page 2008). It was a way of sedimenting relationships and was a healthy activity leading to emotional well-being (comment by nursery nurse who works closely with health visitor team).

We would therefore recommend that a wide range of practitioners, including health visitors, Foundation stage teachers, Children's Centre workers, and community outreach workers, as well as all those connected to book sharing such as librarians and Bookstart pack disseminators, work together to create as much awareness as possible of what book sharing can do for children. The DVD, proposed below, might help start this process but inter-agency conversations and reflective discussion as well as further support for book sharing in homes across agencies, would be a good way forward.

2. Book sharing is not the same as school literacy. We found, however, that in some homes, a skills-focused approach was more usual. These families tended to film their children on their own with a book rather than film book sharing. Families also sometimes used books to point out letters and phonics rather than tell a story. We would not like to generalise from this data, but it could be that families who did not focus on sharing books but on independent 'reading' of books could be further supported to share books. The idea of children as 'independent' readers, one that

schools focus on, needs to be counteracted by the image of the parent/carer and child, as book sharers, who alternate roles and listen to each other telling the story.

We would therefore recommend that schools listen carefully to the concept of book sharing as developed in homes by families and make connections between the books offered by Imagination Library and what is going on at school. We would also recommend that libraries connect up book sharing activities in libraries with the homes experience. Families might not know how book sharing is connective, multisensory and positive in other ways, eg for emotional closeness and wider communication. The role of the library service, health services, extended services and schools in recognising this and disseminating this with families is vital.

3. A strategic approach to Imagination Library as something embedded within many areas of family life is essential if this scheme is to really make a difference to families' literacy lives. **We would therefore recommend** that Imagination Library be promoted:
 - a. On a *macro* level, that is, by making high level links across all the services connected to book sharing in homes, that is cultural services, extended services, schools, early years and children's centres as well as health. Through these links a shared practitioner understanding of the social and emotional benefits of book sharing across the various book gifting or lending schemes (Imagination Library, Bookstart and libraries) could lift children's experiences of home book sharing considerably.
 - b. On a *meso* level, that is, by practitioners talking to each other to create strategic and targeted interventions with families who might not be recognising the value of book sharing. This could include a focus on a particular community in a particular area, e.g. the Roma community in Eastwood, or a focus on a particular strategy to include more parents in an initiative to talk through book sharing from their perspective, such as the Central Rotherham Family 'Babble' space.
 - c. On a *micro* level, families need to be able to see how practice is something they can engage with, already do, and are doing successfully so that they can become book sharing champions. The families in the proposed DVD already are those role models, but a network of family book sharing champions across Rotherham would then create a new space for discussing book sharing in homes and its benefits.

Next steps

We would like to produce a DVD of the '100 languages of book sharing' for practitioners in Rotherham. We would also like to work with practitioners to develop some key points coming out of this dataset that they could use in their work with families. We would also like to develop the Family Babble space so the DVD can be listened to and families contribute their ideas. The DVD is already in hand and progressing with Alison Lilburn.

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Appendix 1: Videos by practitioner with family background

Video	Job title of practitioner	Family background	Number of videos collected	Length of video analysed
1. Book sharing as opening up opportunities for gesture and talk	Parent outreach worker, Children's Centre	Mum was aged 30-39, left school at 16. Highest qualifications – GCSE O level, NVQ/BTEC, Level 1 C&G maths and Level 2 C&G English. She looks after home/family. White British. English first language. Started receiving IL books in 2008.	1	8 minutes
2. Imagination Library as creating opportunities for children to read different kinds of books and for siblings to share books together.	Nursery nurse, college day nursery	Mum age 30-39. Children are daughter I age 3 years and T aged 19 months. Dad either appeared in films or took footage. Started receiving IL books approx Sept/Oct 2007. First language English. Part time employed or self employed. Age 18 when left FT education. Highest qualifications A levels.	15	8 minutes
3. Book sharing as emotional, sensory, linked to closeness with child and carrying sensory memories of breast feeding and emotional attachment	Outreach worker at children's centre	Mum age 20 – 29. Child girl N age 2 years. Started receiving IL books March 2009. English is first language. Black African. Asylum seeker. Left full time education age 21 years. Has a degree or above. Mum is from Kenya. Dad from Zimbabwe. They fled from Mugabe. Mum pregnant – baby due September	4	4 minutes

4. Book sharing in two ways in one household	Practitioner at a day nursery	This family was a professional family with three boys. Mum, dad and 3 boys age 4, 6 and 8. Mum aged 40-49. Started receiving IL books 2008. English first language. White British. Employed or self employed full time. Left full time education at age 21. Highest qualification degree or above.	10	2 analysed one 10 minutes one 5 minutes
5. A grandfather shares a book.	Foundation stage leader	Mum age 30 – 39. J age 3 years 10 months. Sibling age 2 years. Granddad in footage as he plays a key role in J's life. Started receiving IL in 2008 – possibly June. English 1 st language. Caucasian. Mum employed FT. Mum aged 21 when left school. Mum has degree or above	14	10 minutes
6. A father shares a book	Foundation stage leader (same)	Mum age 40 – 49. Daughter G age 4 Started receiving IL books March 2009. English first language. Mum Afro-Caribbean. Mum part-time employed or self employed. Mum left FT education age 16. Highest qualification is CSE/GCSE O-level.	9	5 mins
7. A child is to read later	Parent support worker, voluntary organisation	To come	1	30 seconds
8. Two sisters share books – filling in the gaps	Deputy manager, day nursery	Mum is 40 – 49. Daughters L and C age 2 and 4. Started receiving IL books October 2005. English first language. Family are British. Mum unemployed. Mum left	19	3 mins

		school age 18. Highest qualifications are HNC/HND and CSE/GCSE O level.		
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