

# London Literacy Champions

1 June 2011 to 31 July 2012

## Evaluation report



MAYOR OF LONDON

® REUBEN FOUNDATION

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## Executive summary

Research shows that early intervention is vital to improve the life chances of children in areas and situations of disadvantage. We also know that many less advantaged families feel more comfortable receiving advice about supporting their children's literacy from a friend or peer rather than a professional, and equally that many people are keen to support families in their local community with their children's literacy.

London Literacy Champions used the unique power of volunteers to shift the attitudes and behaviours of families in their communities, giving them the confidence and knowledge to support their children's literacy development. Over 450 volunteers helped reach more than 1,600 families across the capital, providing them with focused and dedicated time within their often busy lives to engage with their child's communication and literacy.



Volunteers were active, engaged members of their own communities who were empowered to improve the lives of their friends, neighbours and peers. Nearly half (46 per cent) had not volunteered previously. The project has illustrated how the right volunteers can work alongside statutory provision and actively make a difference in their communities.

Volunteers finished their opportunity happy that it had made a difference to the families they supported and with increased skills and confidence. 88 per cent were satisfied with their volunteering opportunity. Nearly three quarters (73 per cent) told us they would volunteer again and 84 per cent would recommend the opportunity to a friend.

***“I gained some self-confidence back after a long time of not having much left. Also a renewed belief that I can make a difference and I want to follow a slightly altered career path as a result.”***

Literacy Champion volunteer, Croydon

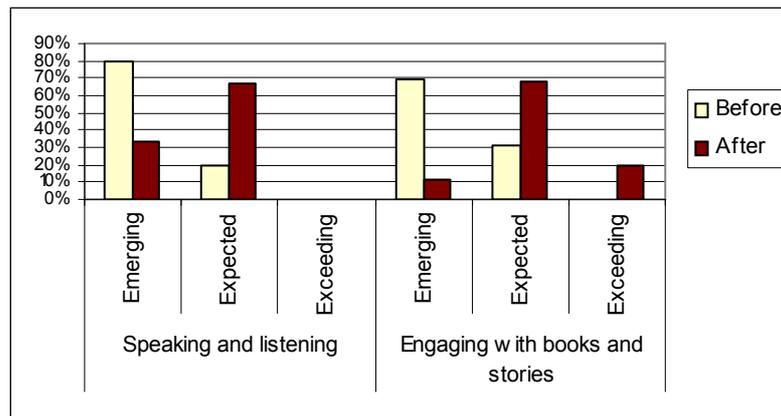
At the end of the project's first year, professionals and parents taking part reported a significant increase in children's basic literacy skills and behaviours. Whilst the project was designed to monitor families' shifts in attitudes, behaviours and engagement, with the support of five settings we were able to measure increases in attainment against the Early Years Foundation Stage framework (EYFS) for children participating in each centre or school. A practitioner review found that, two months after involvement in the project, 46 per cent of participating children had improved their communication development in terms of speaking and listening from emergent levels to levels expected of their age. 52 per cent improved their engagement with books and stories from emergent to expected levels, with 16 per cent improving from expected levels to exceeding expectations for their age.

While it is difficult to attribute positive change to any intervention alone without the funding and evaluation methodology necessary, 69 per cent of project staff felt these gains to be directly related to the families' involvement with the London Literacy Champions project.

***“It has made a lot of difference because I now have a better understanding of how to support my child at home – I can be like his teacher! It has made a huge difference because I have learnt new skills. It has helped my child to understand new things.”***

Parent, Croydon

**Figure 1. Child EYFS assessment, before and after project**



Families also reported significant changes in their children’s literacy development and how they as parents could support it:

- 84 per cent of parents felt that the project would have a positive long-term impact on their child’s reading and communication skills
- 83 per cent of parents reported an increase in their confidence in sharing books with their child
- 80 per cent reported an increase in awareness of the importance of talking with their child about something they are interested in.

Through the project, families were introduced to the support available to them within their community, by being invited to attend a family literacy activity at their local library or children’s centre. Over half the families who attended these sessions reported that it was unlikely that they would have done so without the support of the volunteer. 100 per cent of these families felt more confident about attending activities after the project, with 94 per cent intending to go again.

### Project learning

- Reaching family targets was a challenge for all areas. Taking the programme forward, we will consider the capacity of local authority partners in light of external pressures when setting targets. We will also look for strong links with early years settings and libraries when building delivery partnerships and ensure project aims and deliverables are communicated early on.
- Delivery timescales should be revised to account for complex set up, with consideration made for school holiday periods.
- Allowances should be made for low family retention rates. This can be mitigated by spreading the referral requirement across as many settings within an area as possible.
- Literacy Champion volunteers and families should work one-to-one within groups in order to provide further peer support.

### Programme development

11 of the 12 local authorities involved in London Literacy Champions have expressed a wish to run the programme again, seven particularly strongly. Many authorities report having built or developed stronger relationships with settings, volunteers and families in their communities as part of their involvement with the programme, alongside a concern that much of the progress made could be lost if they are unable to find funding to continue. Continued funding would allow them to sustain the momentum of the programme and to build on the achievements of the last project year.

***“This is an incredibly worthwhile project that has allowed volunteers to access our children’s centres who have not previously had any involvement with our services.”***  
 Brent

# Section 1: Introduction

London Literacy Champions is a community volunteering project that aims to improve children's literacy in the capital, by boosting parents' confidence and their ability to support their children's literacy development.

The project is part of the Team London programme and is funded by the Mayor of London and the Reuben Foundation.

1,605 families have benefited from the project, supported by 465 volunteers. A target of 500 volunteers and 2,000 families was revised with agreement from GLA (see Section 4). By the end of July, volunteers had completed approximately 5,643 hours of volunteering.

This project is complementary to local authority early intervention initiatives and intends to support communities in working together to help more children reach their potential. The National Literacy Trust is expanding this work to share learning to selected new areas, both within London and nationally, through funding from the charitable arm of a publishing house.

## 1.1 Context

- One adult in six in the UK has significant literacy problems.<sup>1</sup>
- 20 per cent of children leave primary school without reaching the level expected for their age.<sup>2</sup>
- Nearly a third of all London children struggle with literacy at age 11.<sup>3</sup>
- Poor literacy is more prevalent in disadvantaged communities and intergenerational patterns of low educational achievement in families stop many children from fulfilling their potential at school.<sup>4</sup>

The role parents and carers play in their child's development is crucial. Early intervention with families that includes parental engagement to support young children's early literacy development before they start school is vital to supporting all children's later outcomes. The majority of children's time before they start school is spent with their parents, and it is parents who are in the best position to effect change and promote the development of their child's communication skills.<sup>5</sup> Their involvement is the most important determinant of language development<sup>6</sup> and their support of their child's reading is a more powerful force than social class, employment or the level of their own education.<sup>7</sup>

However, many parents are not aware of the importance of their role in their child's education.<sup>8</sup> The National Literacy Trust's *Face to Face* research<sup>9</sup> demonstrates that one parent in eight believes that their child's language acquisition is somebody else's role. Despite this, 82 per cent said that they would welcome more information about how to support their child.

<sup>1</sup> Department for Education and Skills (2003) *The Skills for Life Survey: A national needs and impact survey of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills*

<sup>2</sup> Department for Education (December 2010) *National Curriculum Assessments at Key Stage 2 in England*

<sup>3</sup> Centre for Policy Studies (July 2010) *So Why Can't They Read?*

<sup>4</sup> National Literacy Trust (September 2008) Clarke C. and Dugdale G. *Literacy Changes Lives: An advocacy resource*

<sup>5</sup> National Literacy Trust (2004, revised March 2005) *Talk To Your Baby: Developing language for life*

<sup>6</sup> Institute of Education (2003) Sylva, K. et al. *The Effective Provision of Pre-school Education (EPPE) Project: Findings from Pre-school to end of Key Stage 1*

<sup>7</sup> Sanders, M. G. and Epstein, J. L. (1998). *School-family-community Partnerships and Educational Change: International perspectives*

<sup>8</sup> Department for Children, Schools and Families (2007) Harris, A. and Goodall, J. *Engaging Parents in Raising Achievement – do parents know they matter?*

<sup>9</sup> Prepared for the National Literacy Trust by Solutions (2010) *Management summary of qualitative research report prepared for the Face to Face research project*

Additionally, research commissioned by Words for Life, the parent-facing campaign from the National Literacy Trust, found that nearly a third (29 per cent) felt the most important influence on their children's communication and language skills lays with someone other than themselves and nearly one in 10 spent less than 10 minutes per day helping their children develop literacy and communication skills. Our work with 21 local authorities in the Partners in Literacy project<sup>10</sup> found that changes in literacy behaviours within the home are often achieved through the influence of friends, neighbours and other community members.

## 1.2 Project vision

Every child has the support they need from parents, carers and their community to develop their early literacy skills, helping them to reach their potential in their early years and be ready for school, creating a strong foundation on which to build throughout life.

### Aims

The project aims to:

- Engage active, engaged community members with the potential to influence their friends and neighbours and promoting the importance of literacy, empowering local people within their communities.
- Empower parents to find ways of supporting their children's learning, by increasing parents' awareness, confidence and day-to-day interaction with their children.
- Increase children's enjoyment of books and print, contributing to children's early literacy development.

## 1.3 Project design

The London Literacy Champions project incorporates recommendations from research and policy and builds on experience gained through a volunteering project in Rochdale. Based on consultation with families and with the support of the National Literacy Trust, Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council developed a Literacy Champions training programme for frontline workers and volunteers to ensure that literacy support reached the individuals and communities in most need. The training and expertise developed and validated in Rochdale through the National Literacy Trust's work has informed the development of the London Literacy Champions project.

***“This project seemed a great way to use peer-to-peer support to present a less threatening approach which would hopefully overcome barriers and draw these families in so they're able to access all the support available to them and their children, through the schools and centres and through family learning provision in the community.”***

Fiona Spargo-Mabbs, Curriculum Team Manager, CALAT Family Learning, Croydon

<sup>10</sup> National Literacy Trust (2011) McCoy, E. *Local Authorities Improving Life Chances: A review of a new approach to raising literacy levels*

## 1.4 Project description

The London Literacy Champions project uses the unique qualities of peer volunteers to help parents overcome the barriers preventing them from supporting their children's literacy development.

The project operated in two strands of volunteering opportunities: Literacy Champion volunteers and Literacy Ambassador volunteers.

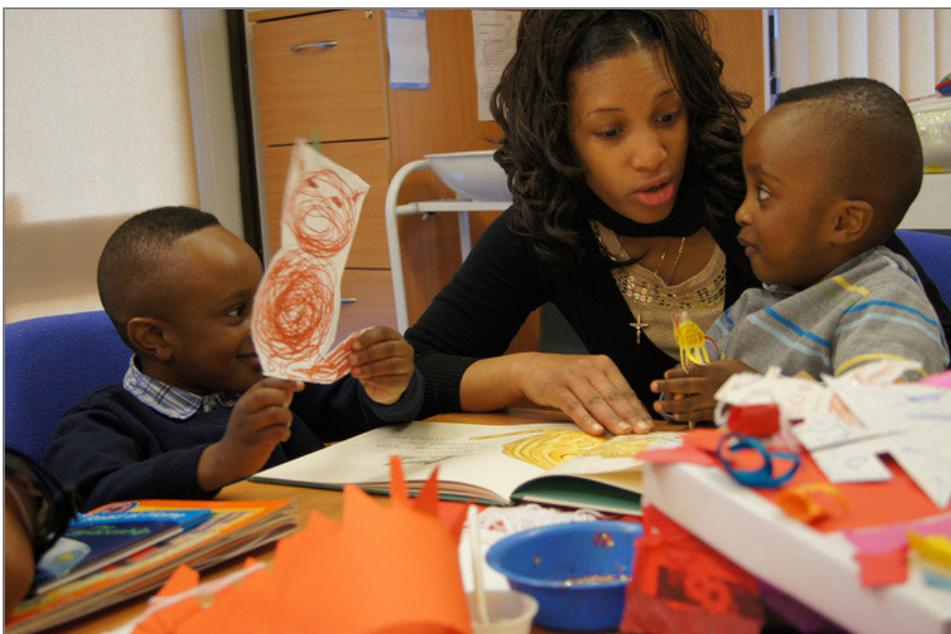
Through one-to-one sessions, Literacy Champion volunteers encouraged parents to make talking and sharing books with their children part of their daily lives by introducing fun learning activities that develop good communication skills and inspire a love of reading. The sessions provide an opportunity for parents to spend time with their children, dedicated solely to their communication and literacy development.

Literacy Ambassador volunteers promoted literacy activities in their local community, for example by inviting families to attend library rhyme and story sessions for the first time.

## 1.5 Project delivery

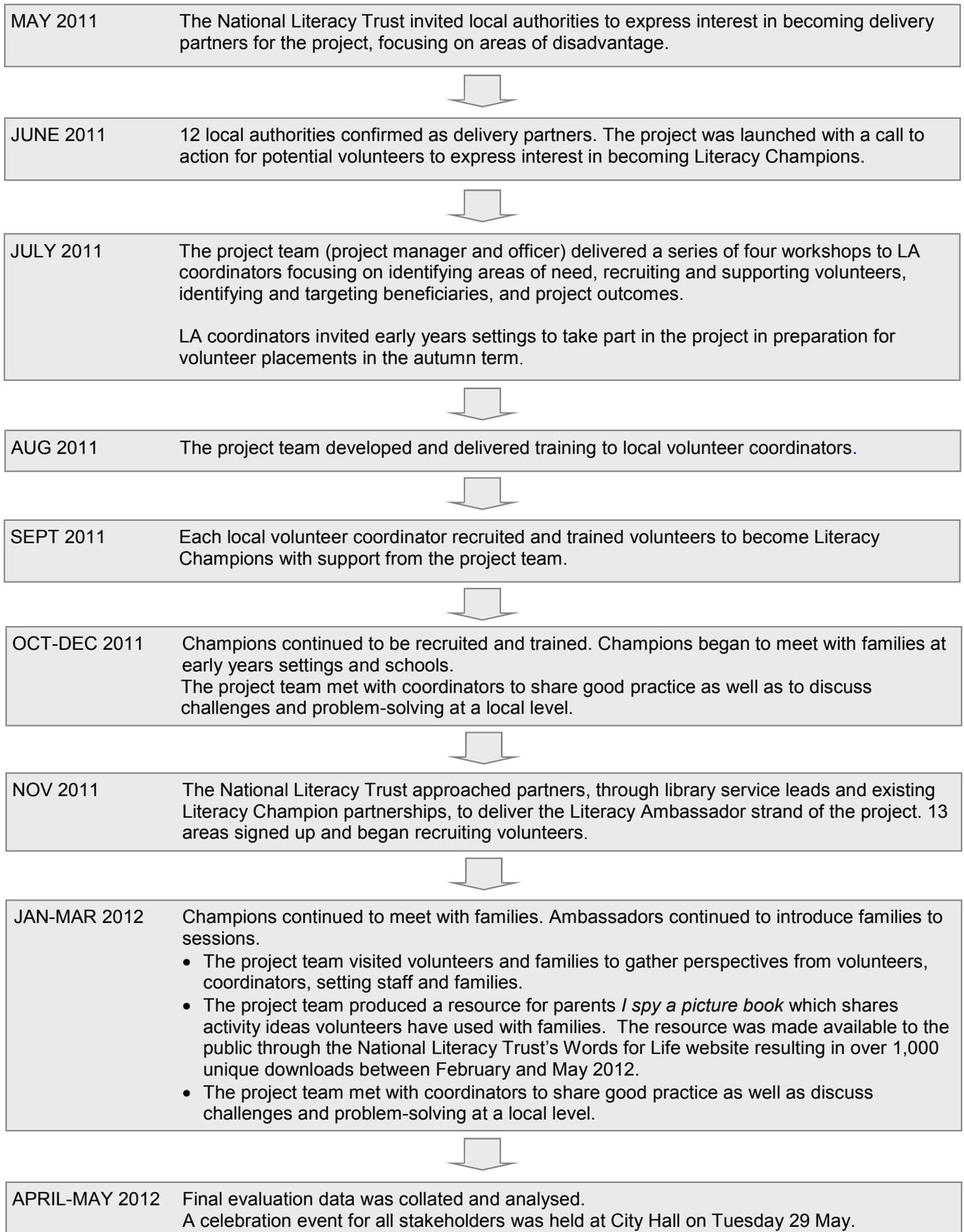
The project was delivered by the National Literacy Trust working in partnership with organisations within the following local authorities: Barking and Dagenham, Bexley, Brent, Bromley, Camden, Croydon, Ealing, Haringey, Havering, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Kensington and Chelsea, Lambeth, Lewisham, Newham, Redbridge, Sutton, Tower Hamlets, Waltham Forest and Wandsworth. Through this network of delivery partners we developed and shared good practice in how to generate greater community engagement and boost parents' confidence in supporting their children's literacy development.

A local authority-based contact was assigned as a volunteer coordinator in each of the 12 Champion boroughs, and a further coordinator was identified in each of the participating Ambassador areas or settings. Participating local authorities were given a grant to assist the running of the project. A £100 honorarium was provided to the Ambassador settings.



A Literacy Champion volunteer in Lambeth shows two brothers and their mum how reading can be fun by helping them make their own puppets

## Project timeline



## Section 2: Literacy Champions

**375 Literacy Champions** have worked with **906 families** over the course of the project until the end of July 2012. 31 per cent of Literacy Champions had not volunteered previously. Literacy Champion volunteers completed approximately 5,499 hours of volunteering.

### 2.1 Delivery

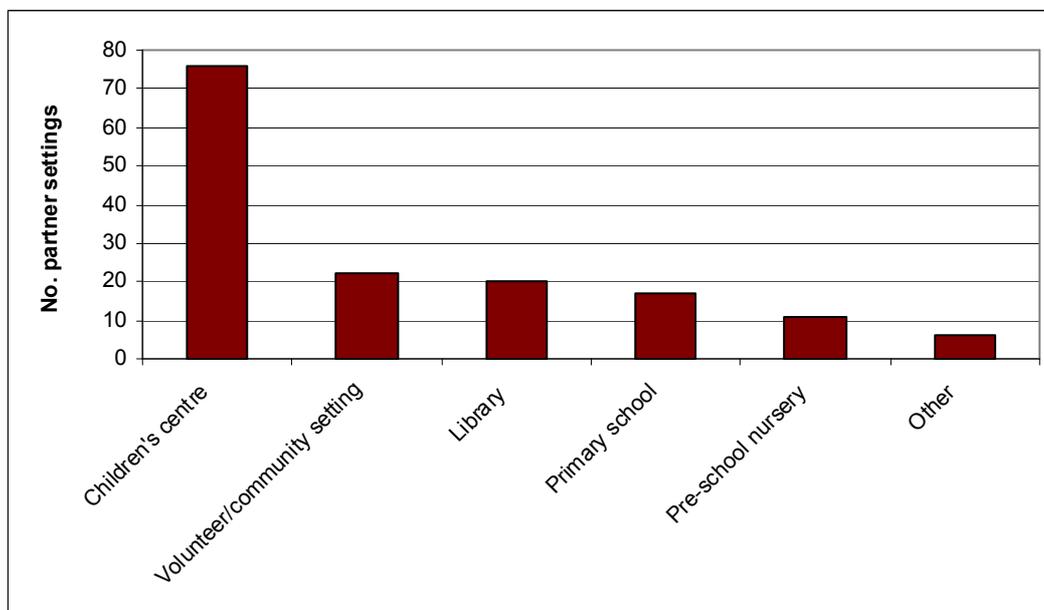
#### How volunteers were coordinated

The Volunteer Coordinator role sat within different departments or services, dependent on the local authority. Some areas had services commissioned to outside organisations. Local authority services involved directly in the project included:

- Children's Services, Targeted Support
- Children's Services, Community Development
- Early Years and Integrated Services
- Adult and Community Learning
- Family Learning
- Family Outreach
- Early Intervention and Play
- A primary school

Each Volunteer Coordinator then worked through a number of different settings to deliver the project locally. The project was intended to complement the existing work of the setting and encourage parents to engage more with them. As can be seen from the chart below, the large majority of these were early years settings.

**Figure 2. Literacy Champion partner settings**



Volunteer Coordinators were responsible for the recruitment of volunteers as well as their ongoing management. In the most successful areas this was supported by staff at partner settings, and in one area the expertise of the local volunteer centre was used to recruit and manage volunteers.

Volunteer Coordinators ran a one day training session for Literacy Champion volunteers, which covered:

- Literacy awareness
- Their role in facilitating literacy sessions
- How to work together with families
- How to carry out evaluation
- Practical activities for young children
- Safeguarding

Some local authorities chose to run this training over two days and others supplemented it with additional knowledge from their service, for example volunteers' rights and responsibilities, early years development and the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and a session dedicated to practical activities. Comments from training evaluation forms included:

*"This was a very useful session, both in information and practicality. The programme was well constructed and delivered fluently."*

### **How Literacy Champions delivered sessions with families**

Once they were trained and CRB checks had been completed, Literacy Champions were placed in a partner setting. Some areas placed volunteers and families together one-to-one, matching their location and time availability to the setting (and where possible, volunteer and family languages, where the parent's English was not strong). Other areas chose to place volunteers and families together in groups at set dates and times each week, which, while retaining a focus on one-to-one relationships within these groups, allowed volunteers to feel more supported.



A Literacy Champion volunteer shares a book with a family in a children's centre in Tower Hamlets

Literacy Champions worked with families for a minimum of one hour per week for at least five weeks, including a library visit. They modeled positive interaction with children to support early literacy and encouraged parents to follow their lead, helping them to make sharing books and talking with their children a part of their daily lives by introducing a range of fun learning activities. Two of the 12 local authority partners were unable to operate in this way, and instead set up holiday interventions where groups of volunteers worked with groups of families for an hour a day over a number of consecutive days.

*"I have a lot of interest in giving children the best start in life that they possibly can get because I, through no fault of my parents, did not get a good start, but now I have grown up I can see the importance and believe I can support and encourage children to overcome some of the obstacles they may face. I think it's also important to pass on and give something good to the next generation in the hope that it will encourage it to become an ongoing chain."*

Literacy Champion volunteer, Croydon

### How families were matched with volunteers

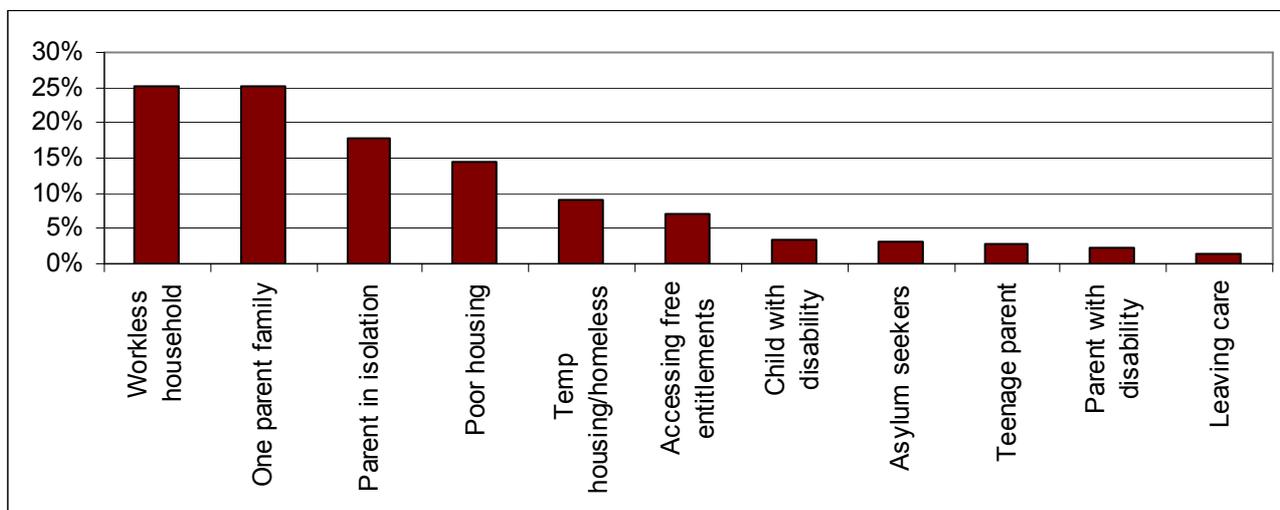
The majority of families that took part in the project were referred by staff at the partner settings or other professionals such as health visitors or social workers. However, for some areas where family referrals were slow to come in, it fell to the Volunteer Coordinator to approach and sign up families.

Families identified to take part in the project had children aged two to five years, and were living in areas of disadvantage or were experiencing particular challenges that meant their child would benefit from additional literacy support. These could be for a number of reasons including:

- Children who were under-achieving on assessment levels or more generally
- Parents who had limited English language skills or cultural barriers to supporting their children
- Parents or carers who did not currently engage positively with the setting
- Parents or carers identified as having literacy needs themselves

Each referred family was required to indicate that they wanted the support offered, and needed to fall within at least one of the areas of disadvantage indicated in Figure 3 (plus parent in prison/ex-offender, of which there were no recorded referrals). Many families were facing multiple disadvantages, with higher than the average number living in workless households (25 per cent)<sup>11</sup> and close to the national average from single parent families (25 per cent).<sup>12</sup> A large proportion of families were also living in isolation<sup>13</sup> (18 per cent) or in poor housing (15 per cent).

Figure 3. Family background



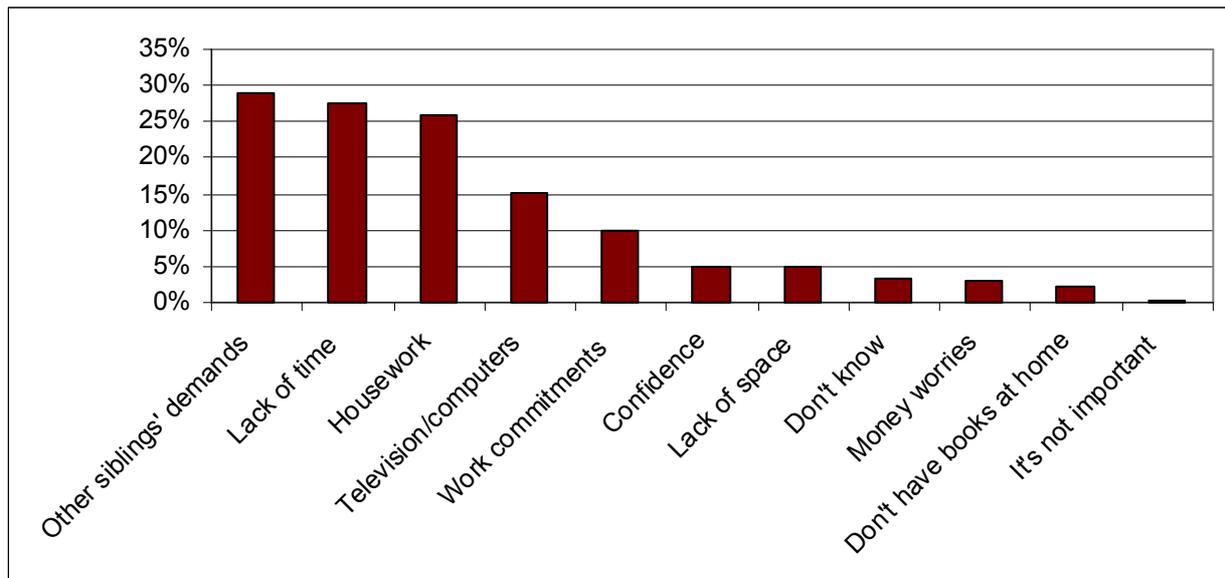
As part of the pre-assessment, parents were asked whether there were any barriers that prevented them from sharing books or talking with their child. The most common barrier related to the demands of other siblings (29 per cent), followed by lack of time (28 per cent) and housework (26 per cent). Part of the Literacy Champions' training involved how to support parents to consider what barriers they are facing and help them find their own ways to overcome them.

<sup>11</sup> Office for National Statistics (May 2012) *Labour Force Survey*

<sup>12</sup> Office for National Statistics (2001-2011) *Families and Households*

<sup>13</sup> For example, parents who were new to the area or who did not have strong links to the community

**Figure 4. Barriers to supporting child's early literacy**



### 2.1.1 Successful strategic approaches

Different local authorities took different approaches to the delivery of the project, according to local set-up and needs. Below are two examples of particularly successful approaches.

#### **Croydon case study: Peer-to-peer parent volunteers**

Croydon was a local authority whose close relationships with schools and children's centres contributed to their success. The Volunteer Coordinator role was shared between two professionals within the family learning service, who were supported by a part-time administrator. The project in Croydon built on existing strong relationships between family learning and the settings; having the support of headteachers and centre heads was very important to their success, with many hoping to extend the work of the project further.

The majority of Literacy Champion volunteers were recruited from family learning courses with the remainder recruited direct from settings they visited themselves with their own children. This meant that volunteers were local and were very much a part of the community in a similar way to the parents they went on to support.

#### **Croydon volunteer impact statement**

*"I have been using the facilities and services of the children's centre since it opened in 2008. I have attended numerous courses at the centre, including family literacy where my elder son attended with me. I also gained my first qualifications from these courses.*

*"I became a Literacy Champion because I wanted to have the opportunity to be able to give back and share within the community. We all want our children to achieve their full potential and we can help and empower one another by sharing ideas with support. I felt that Literacy Champions was a brilliant idea and could see its importance and I wanted to be part of it."*

Stephanie, Literacy Champion

## Waltham Forest case study: A practitioner approach

Waltham Forest offered their volunteering opportunity to early years practitioners, as a professional development opportunity for staff and to reinforce partnerships with parents.

Children's centre and nursery settings in the area would run weekly "Stay and Play" sessions. These are drop-in, often unstructured, sessions that allow parents and children to interact and play together informally. However, settings were looking for strategies to engage parents to participate in the play, reporting that they would more frequently leave the children to play by themselves.

Champion volunteers worked within stay and play activities, identifying families there and inviting them to take part in the project, providing enhanced one-to-one time with their children within sessions they already attended. Champions would also identify the parents within the sessions who were already very engaged in their child's play and development and approach them about becoming Champions themselves.

### Waltham Forest volunteer impact statements

*"Even teaching children that parents do join in, that they do come and get involved, that's been good as well – just the parents coming and joining in. Getting to know the parents as well you can find out what kind of background they come from and what kind of things they are interested in and you can take that back to your setting and use that."*

Mehnaz, practitioner and Literacy Champion volunteer

*"It kind of re-educates me with how to be hands on with my daughter – I do it at home all the time, but obviously there are always differences. I sometimes think that parents should already be doing this and then you actually see, no – not every parent does. It's educated me to see that not everyone understands what's involved within nursery and how things in nursery work."*

Shaheen, parent and Literacy Champion volunteer

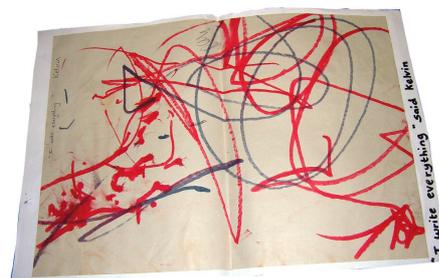
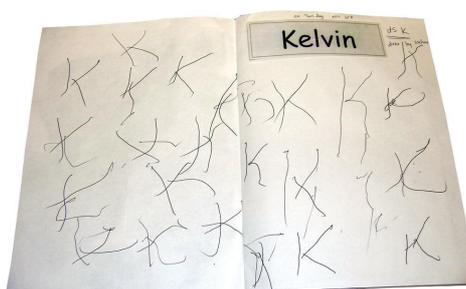
### Waltham Forest family impact statement

*"I felt that Kelvin was too young to know these things, and with this project, when Mehnaz told me we are going to the library I was like, 'He's too young for that!' But when we were walking there I realised he was telling me colours and I was like, 'How did he know the colour?' So I have realised he has learnt a lot and I got to know that there are so many things that I thought he was too young to teach, but now I think he learns a lot."*

Kelvin's mum

*"I write everything!"*

Kelvin, aged three



Pages from Kelvin's scrapbook

## 2.2 Evaluation

### 2.2.1 Intended outcomes

The following outcomes were agreed with the GLA to determine the success of the project.

#### Parents:

- Increase their awareness of the importance of their role in supporting their child's literacy
- Improve their confidence in their ability to support their child's literacy and learning
- Increase their engagement in supporting their child's literacy and learning

#### Children:

- Increase their enjoyment of books and print
- Increase their basic literacy skills
- Improve literacy behaviours

#### Volunteers:

- Satisfaction with volunteering opportunity
- Increase their knowledge of supporting family literacy

### 2.2.2 Methodology

The central project team asked local coordinators for monthly reports in order to gather quantitative data on the number of volunteers and beneficiary families reached including equal opportunities data from both. Local coordinators were also given the responsibility of gathering evaluation data from volunteers and setting staff to pass back to the central project team. Volunteers were encouraged to electronically enter data from their volunteer journal where possible.

Feedback on the project was sought direct from local coordinators through two coordinator meetings during the delivery of the project (November 2011 and March 2012) as well as through strategic surveys and informal telephone updates. A setting feedback survey was also circulated to gain an insight into what worked well and what could be improved in terms of setting partnerships.

Volunteers were given evaluation forms to complete at the end of their training day and at the end of their volunteering opportunity, in order to gain an insight into their experience of the project and their satisfaction with this opportunity.

The key means of collecting information on family outcomes took the form of the volunteer journal which Literacy Champions used with families in order to facilitate parents' self-assessment on their progress through the project. Literacy Champions asked parents and carers questions in their first session in order to gather a baseline of what parents were already doing in terms of supporting their child's literacy. The same questions were asked in their final session with an additional set of questions relating to confidence. In order to ascertain whether the project had influenced any sustained behaviour change in families a parent follow-up questionnaire was given out to a sample of parents two months after their final session with Literacy Champions. A questionnaire was also given two months after the project to a sample of teachers/practitioners (key person) who knew the child well in order to gain their perspective on whether the project had contributed to the child's literacy development.

A sample of 243 journals were used to evaluate the project. Journals were selected where first and final session information had been completed, providing baseline and post-project data. Samples of parent and key person surveys were much smaller (20 and 26 respectively), and

were received from Croydon, Hillingdon and Lambeth. 24 surveys that looked at the impact of the project more generally were received from Brent, Croydon, Hillingdon, Lambeth and Sutton. The small sample sizes were mainly caused by lack of capacity for partners to collect this secondary evaluation.

### 2.2.3 Key findings

#### Outcomes for children

Involvement in the project has improved children's literacy, with parents and professionals reporting significant increases in children's enjoyment of books, their basic literacy skills and their literacy behaviours.

#### ***Changes in children's enjoyment***

72 per cent of parents reported an increase in their child's enjoyment of books since being involved in the project.

When volunteers asked parents if this was due to the project, many listed discovering that learning could be fun, spending time together as a family and trying new things as important factors.

*"We can make books more fun."*

This development continued in the longer term, with 80 per cent of families from the parent survey sample reporting that they felt their child now enjoyed books and stories more as a result of the project.

*"My child now really enjoys reading stories with me and it is the project that has given him that enthusiasm."*

85 per cent of respondents to the key person survey felt that the child now enjoyed books and print more as a result of the project.

*"Particularly more interested in sharing home reading books with staff."*

*"She is more confident in choosing stories and talking about her favourite ones."*

#### ***Changes in children's basic literacy skills***

81 per cent of parents reported that their child was now more able to listen and join in with stories since being involved in the project.

*"My child is motivated and happy to learn because of the project."*

Importantly, 84 per cent felt that the project will have a positive long-term impact on their child's reading and communication skills.

*"I think my child will continue to be enthusiastic about stories."*

*"Yes because he can now explain and predict what is happening or about to happen in a story and he is now able to read repeated/rhyming words."*

Parents' perceptions of their child's improvement were echoed by the practitioners completing the key person surveys. 71 per cent felt that the family's involvement in the project contributed to the child's early literacy development, again citing increased awareness or confidence as important contributing factors.

***“Parent appeared to become more aware of how to engage her child in books and how to interact when looking at books.”***

***“The sessions have given mother and child the opportunity to interact and have quality time together. Mother has learnt to give her child time to respond and ask questions about what he looks at in the books.”***

Within this sample of families, practitioners also reviewed children's development in terms of the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework, looking specifically at their speaking and listening skills and their engagement with books and stories. Under each of these two areas, children are assessed in terms of their age-related expectations as “emerging”, “expected” or “exceeding”.

Two months after the family's time with their Literacy Champion volunteer, practitioners reported that nearly half (46 per cent) had improved from emergent to expected levels in terms of their speaking and listening skills. 52 per cent of children improved from emerging to expected levels in terms of their engagement with books and stories. 16 per cent of children went on to exceed their age-related expectations for engagement, where they had been at their expected level previously. There was even one child who was reported to improve from emerging to exceeding levels for his age.

Practitioners felt that the child's involvement in the Literacy Champions project had played a role in these developments, with 69 per cent reporting that they felt the project had contributed to improvements in the child's speaking and listening skills and 65 per cent who felt it had contributed to their increased engagement.

Professionals recorded examples of children showing an increase in their ability to listen intently, speak more, learn new words more quickly and develop longer sentences.

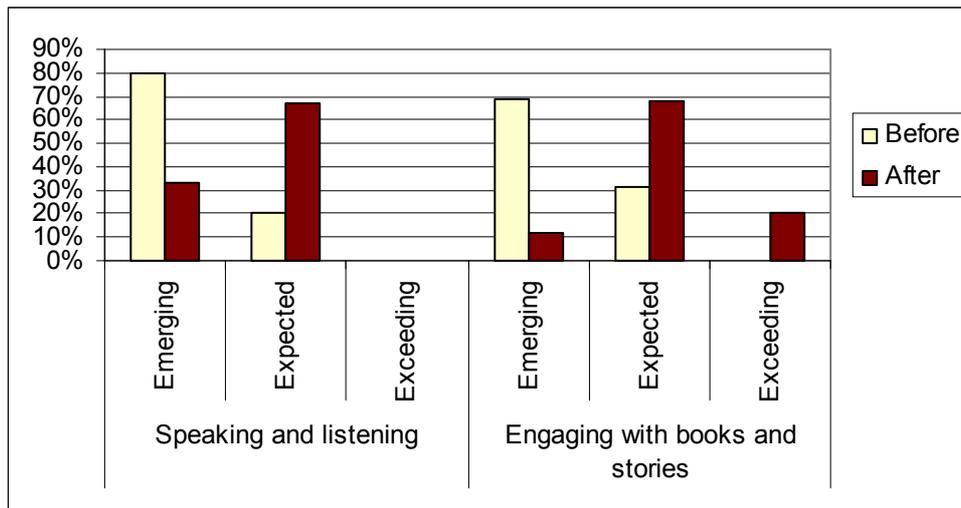
***“I have seen an improvement in Alex's confidence when communicating with adults and children. He now looks at books more frequently and asks lots of questions/makes lots of observations about what he can see in the books.”***

***“His understanding of English has improved as well as his speaking skill. He also seems to do writing/stories at home with his siblings and parents.”***

***“Is able to use language to share feelings and thoughts during circle time activity.”***

Figure 5 below illustrates children's improvement through the project.

**Figure 5. Child EYFS assessment, before and after project**



### **Changes in children’s literacy behaviours**

55 per cent of parents reported an increase in how often their child asked to hear a story, while 59 per cent reported that their child had acquired a favourite book during the project. This is useful as it indicates a child’s motivation towards and enjoyment of books, even if they aren’t using language yet. It can also indicate parents’ awareness of their child’s interests and preferences.

*“Yesterday I spent more than two hours at the library and we chose seven books. Yezda picked the books and asked me to read, she knows now that it is a place where we read. She really enjoyed her time at the library.”*

*“Gracie is choosing more books from the library herself. She spends less time on the computer now as she has become more interested in books.”*

### **Outcomes for parents**

The London Literacy Champions project has resulted in families better supporting their child’s literacy development.

### **Changes in parental knowledge**

Parents involved in the project now know more about why it is important for them to support their child’s literacy development. 75 per cent of parents reported an increase in their awareness of the importance of sharing books with their child. 80 per cent reported an increase in their awareness of the importance of talking with their child about something they are interested.

*“I feel I have gained a greater insight into how valuable children find it [talking].”*

*“I realise the importance of the library and making time for good conversation with my child.”*

*“It has made a lot of difference because I now have a better understanding of how to support my child at home – I can be like his teacher! It has made a difference because I have learnt new skills. It has helped my child to understand new things.”*

### **Changes in parental confidence**

This increase in knowledge is complemented by an increase in how confident parents feel about supporting their children:

- 83 per cent of parents reported an increase in confidence in sharing books with their child
- 77 per cent of parents reported an increase in confidence in talking with their child
- 83 per cent of families reported an increase in confidence in visiting the library

*“It helped me to read better, it helped to show how books can be fun.”*

*“Because mum feels more confident she can use her first language to share books.”*

*“Mum feels confident to do different voices now, which Shanice really enjoys. When mum did voices and expression in the stories, Shanice listened and made eye contact which didn’t happen before. She asked Mum to ‘do Old Man’ and ‘Can you do it again?’”*

Anecdotally, we know that some parents’ increase in confidence has led to their greater involvement in their child’s formal education, for example through the school or children’s centre.

*“Very keen to get involved in other parent/school activities. Never did it before.”*

*“It really surprised me that she actually signed up to this. I’ve not known her want to get involved in anything else and she was the first one to come forward and has really enjoyed it.”*

*“Increased parent’s confidence to approach teacher and ask about child’s progress.”*

### **Changes in parental engagement**

Through their involvement in the project, parents are now doing more to support their child’s literacy.

- 53 per cent of parents reported an increase in the number of times per week they now share books with their child.
- 44 per cent of parents reported an increase in the number of times per week they talk with their child about something they are interested in.
- A high proportion of families indicated that they were existing library members (80 per cent). Anecdotally, we were told that some families may be library members, but did not attend regularly. 89 per cent of families indicated that they would continue to visit the library. At the end of the time with their Literacy Champion volunteer, 30 per cent of parents reported an increase in how often they visit a library with their child.

*“The mum did try reading to the child as she knew it was important, but the child didn’t like being read to, she had no interest and wouldn’t engage. Mum thought that reading to her child was just that, she had no notion of interaction or how to make it fun. I read a story to the child in the way I would read with my own children and grandchildren, as a model, pointing things out and asking questions. I think that was useful and what opened this lady’s eyes. We could see the change in the child engaging and becoming interested in books. The interaction was better.”*

Joe, Literacy Champion volunteer, Tower Hamlets

80 per cent of parents said that, as a result of the project, they are now more involved in supporting their child's reading and communication.

*"I now find supporting my child's reading more fun. The project helped me understand how much more I can get out of a book than just reading the words."*

*"Now we read together every day after school."*

*"I really enjoyed the sessions, it gave us that special time to read and make things with both my children, which made me realise that I should try to make time in the day to do things with my children."*

*"I have more patience with my child and I will now make the time to talk with him. My child gets excited and wants to share things with me."*

Practitioners reported that involvement in the project had led to 85 per cent of parents from this sample being more engaged with supporting their child's literacy. When asked to explain, an increase in parents' awareness and confidence was particularly highlighted:

*"This parent now values the importance of sharing books with her child. She is aware books can help develop many skills her child will need as he progresses in age."*

*"Talks about progress in self-confidence and self-esteem all round."*

### **Outcomes for volunteers**

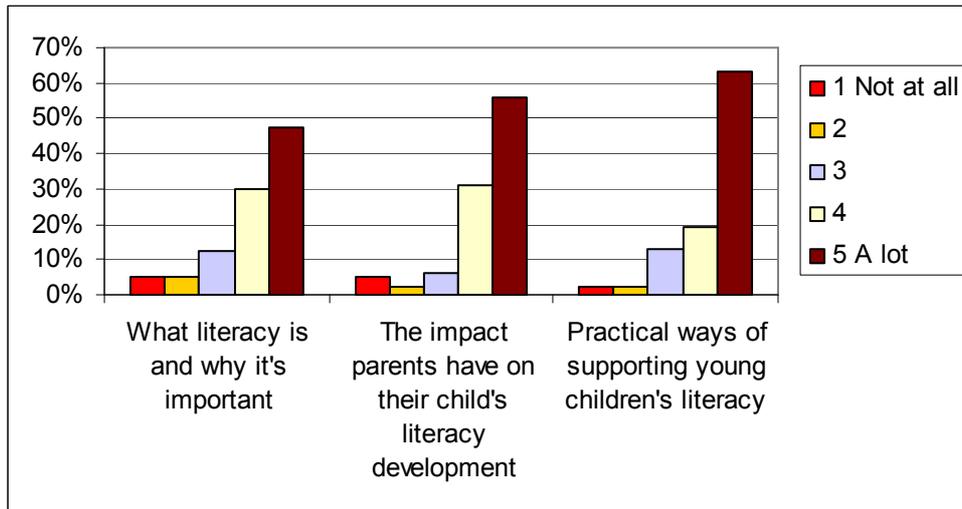
Literacy Champion volunteers were satisfied with their volunteering opportunity, feeling that it benefited the families they supported and contributed to their own confidence and skills.

From the evaluation forms completed after volunteers' training:

- 97 per cent reported an increase in their knowledge of what literacy is and why it is important
- 91 per cent reported an increase in their knowledge of the impact parents have on their child's literacy development
- 96 per cent reported an increase in their knowledge of practical ways of supporting young children's literacy development

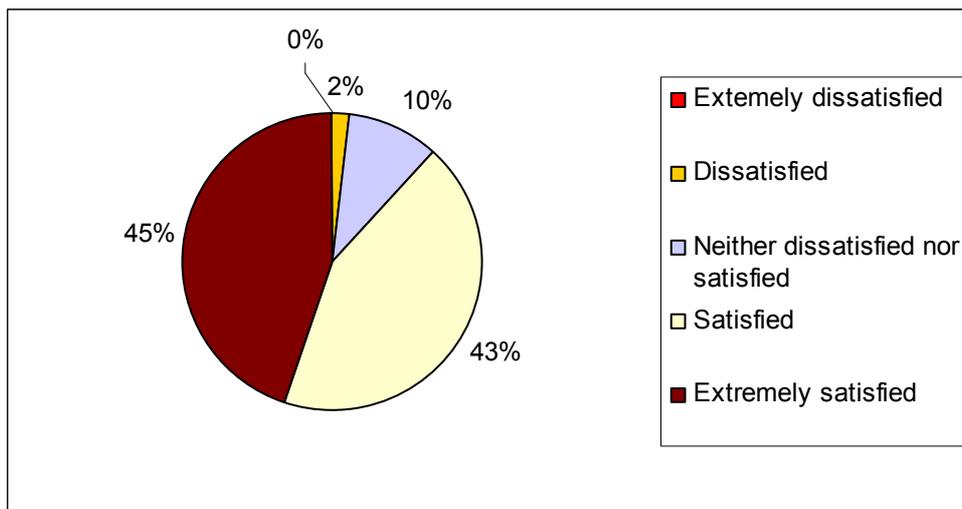
From the exit surveys returned, the majority of volunteers felt that their knowledge had increased quite a lot or a lot, as can be seen in Figure 6 below.

**Figure 6. Volunteers rate their increase in knowledge and understanding**

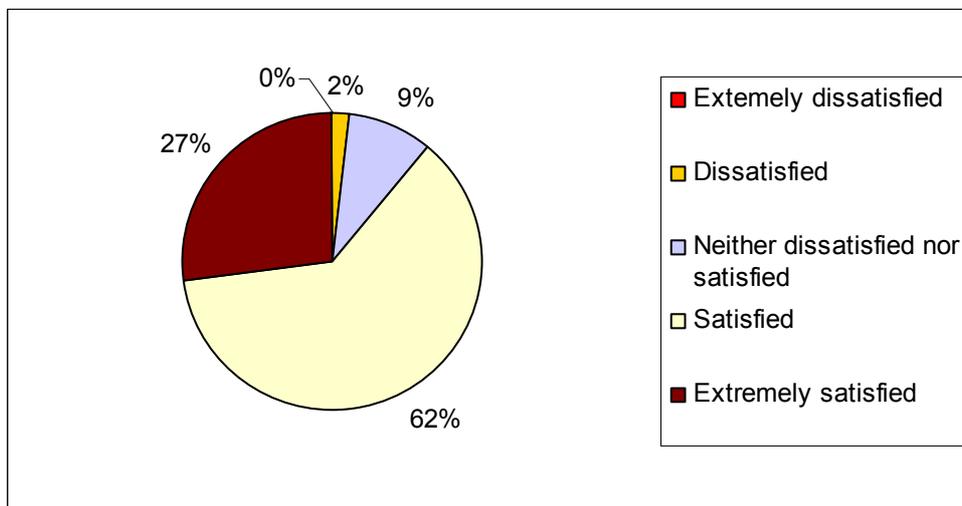


The majority of volunteers (83 per cent) rated that they were either satisfied or extremely satisfied overall with their volunteering experience, with 85 per cent stating that they were either satisfied or extremely satisfied with the level of impact their volunteering opportunity has had on families.

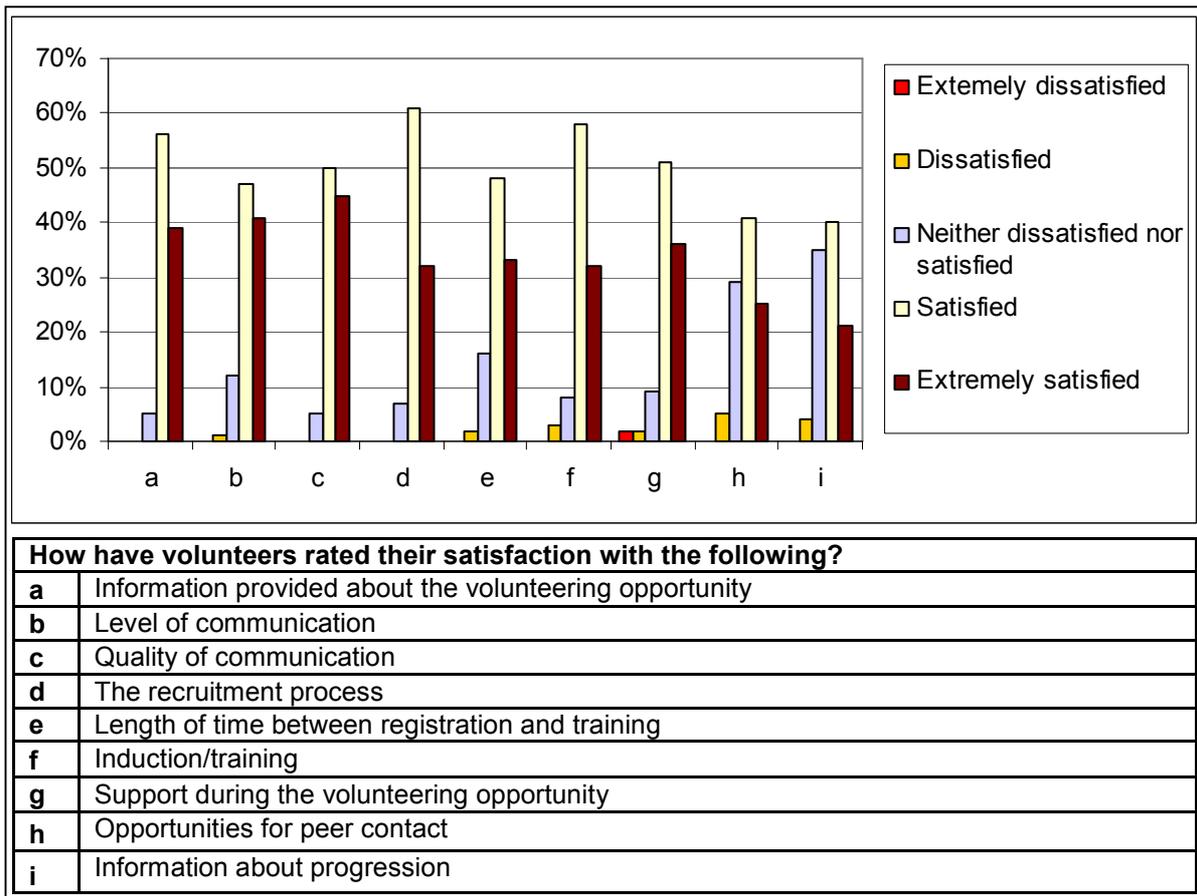
**Figure 7. Volunteer rating for their overall satisfaction with the volunteering opportunity**



**Figure 8. Volunteer rating for their level of satisfaction with the impact the opportunity has had on families**

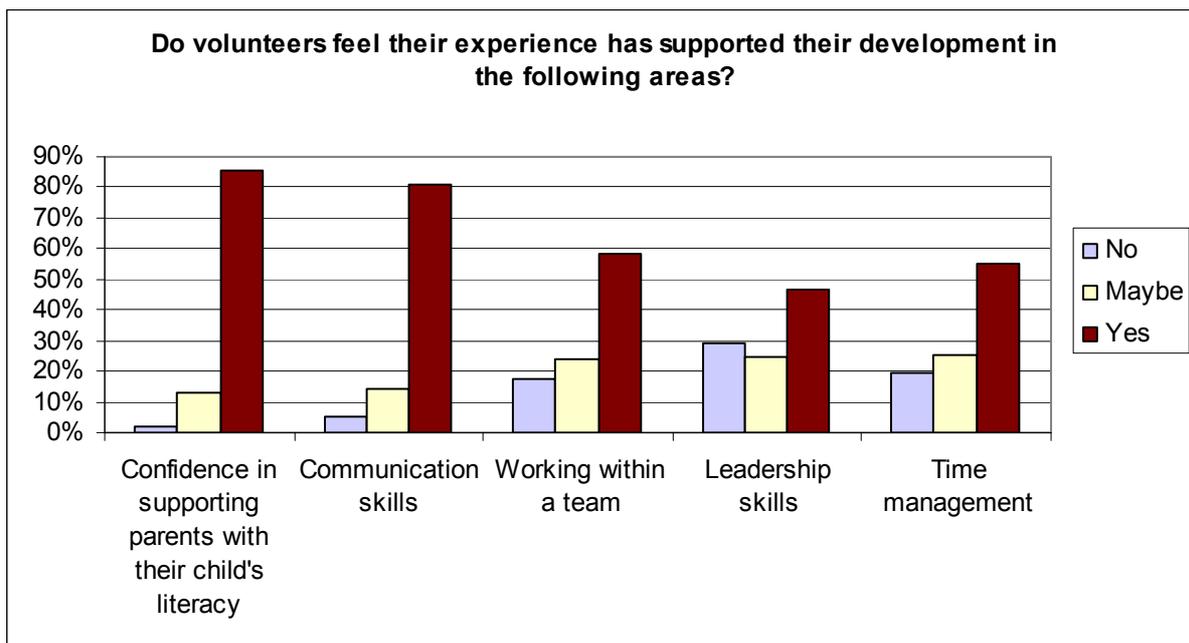


**Figure 9. Volunteer satisfaction**



62 per cent of volunteers also felt that their experience as a Literacy Champion had developed their skills. For many of the cases where volunteers felt that their experience did not support their development, we were told anecdotally that their levels in the specified areas were already high.

**Figure 10. Volunteers' skills**



91 per cent of volunteers stated that it is likely or that they may volunteer again. 81 per cent of Literacy Champions would recommend the opportunity to a friend, while a further 18 per cent may do so.

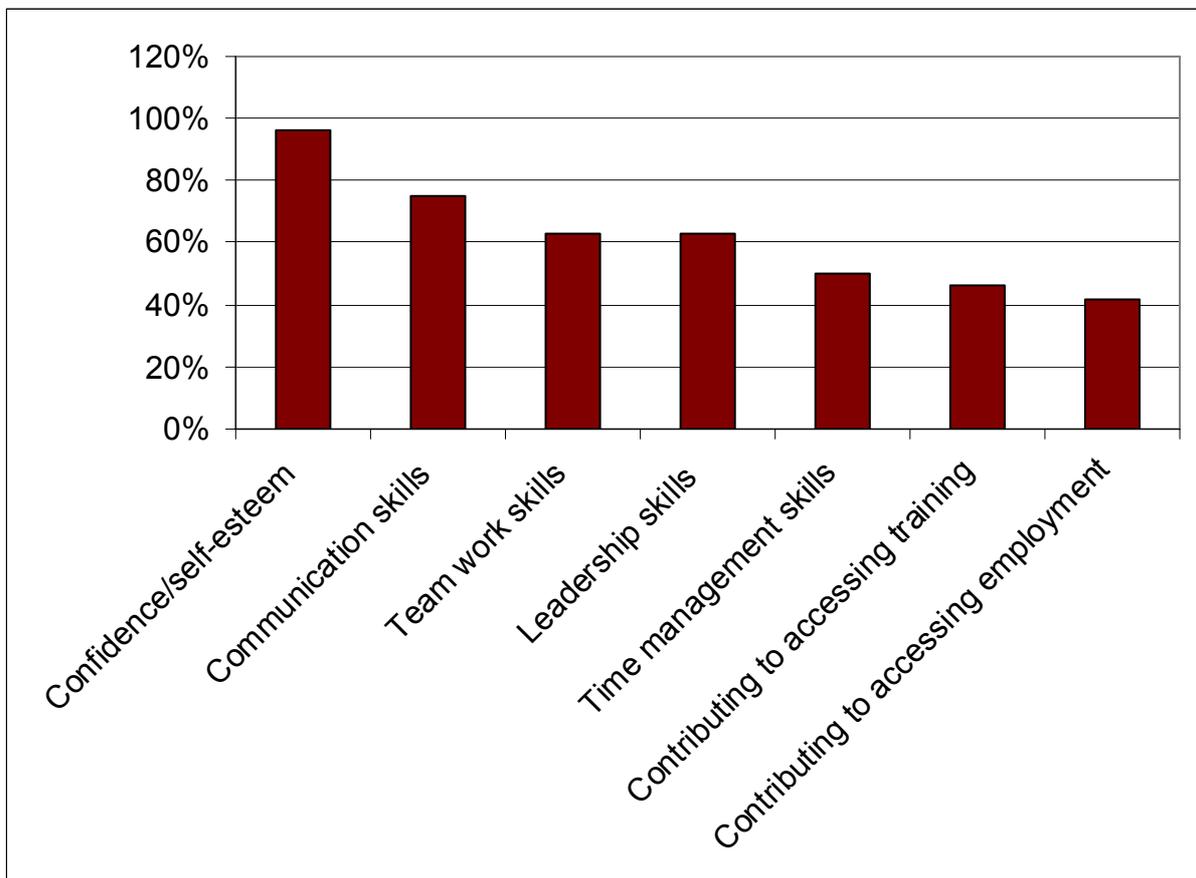
*“I got to share my knowledge and experience with other families and also to learn how other families teach, or have fun with learning.”*

*“I gained some self-confidence back after a long time of not having much left. Also a renewed belief that I can make a difference and I want to follow a slightly altered career path as a result.”*

*“I got an amazing feeling that I was really making a difference to this child’s life.”*

From the 24 setting feedback forms received, 92 per cent of setting practitioners felt that volunteers had benefited from their experience.

**Figure 11. Volunteers’ skills**



### Outcomes for settings

From the 24 responses we had back from individual settings, 88 per cent told us that they would like to continue with the project. The rest did not know, and this was mainly due to uncertainty around the setting’s future.

71 per cent felt the project had helped contribute to their setting’s own targets, including payments by results, increasing parental involvement, preparing children and families for nursery or school and engaging with vulnerable families.

## 2.3 Programme learning and development

### Family referrals

To aid family referrals in the future, we will recommend that project partners work with a large number of settings. This means that there will be a wider pool of families that would benefit from support available, and aids the capacity of staff to support placements of small groups of volunteers. Croydon worked with 10 settings, who were then responsible for supporting only three volunteers each and were required to refer only 15 families. This may make meeting targets more manageable.

A number of families taking part in the project were already actively engaged in supporting their children's literacy development, as evidenced in the baseline information they provided to volunteers in their first session. Anecdotally, we also know that some parents took part in the project not really understanding its purpose and what would be involved. To mediate this risk in future programme delivery, we will create resources to be shared amongst settings that set out the project's aims and their role within it and provide supporting resources for families. We will transfer the baseline questions from the volunteer journal to become part of the referral process carried out by professionals. We will also recommend that a representative from the setting takes part in the volunteers' training. We hope this will ensure that all staff involved in the project are aware of the aims and feel confident to refer only families that meet the criteria requirements.

### Volunteer retention

Because of the intensive nature of the Champion volunteering opportunity and the long period of time covered by the project, it is likely that some volunteers will drop out part way through. A number of volunteers were lost to this project when they gained employment, in some instances thanks to the increase in confidence they had gained through the project; some volunteers even secured jobs within the settings where they were volunteering. This of course is a benefit of the project, but needs to be mediated to ensure that enough volunteers are available to support the numbers of families. Within this project we recommended that partners recruit more than the 30 required volunteers to allow for this drop out. Going forward, we will also recommend that the recruitment of volunteers is staggered, to shorten the length of time they are required to be involved and to replenish any numbers lost.

### Family retention

In one area as many as 50 per cent of the families referred dropped out of the project. Over 450 volunteer journals were submitted, but of these only 243 had complete final session information indicating that families had completed the project. This problem may be in part due to incorrect referrals, but is more likely due to the chaotic lifestyles faced by the families we hoped to reach and reflective of a more general lack of engagement. Inconsistencies in families turning up to sessions also has a negative effect on volunteers and their motivation.

In order to mitigate this, some settings were able to contact the family by phone to remind them of the session. However this was not always possible due to capacity and was not always successful, for example in cases where the child or siblings were ill, where the family had gone on holiday unannounced or where the family had been forced to leave the area due to temporary housing.

## How families and volunteers work together

Within future programme delivery, we will recommend that volunteers work in groups with families whilst retaining one-to-one relationships with families, for the following reasons:

- Volunteers are able to offer each other peer support for planning and delivering sessions with families.
- Families tend to feel more confident in groups and less targeted. They also have the opportunity to meet other families, which is particularly important if they are isolated.
- In groups where there are families with English as an additional language, having a volunteer who shares that language has worked well when they are able to translate to help other volunteers and families work together.
- If one family does not turn up, volunteers can still support the group as a whole and not have a wasted trip.
- It is logistically much easier for settings and volunteer coordinators to arrange group sessions at a set time each week.

One strength of the current project design was that it was not too prescriptive, allowing volunteers to respond to the needs of the family and the child's interests. However, in order to further support volunteers in the future and to ensure that all learning areas are covered in their session, we will recommend a weekly session framework. This is something that worked well in some areas, including Croydon, and for one volunteer in Waltham Forest who used the following structure:

Week 1: Welcome and introduction to the project

Week 2: Library visit

Week 3: Songs and rhymes

Week 4: Messy play

Week 5: Out and about – trip to the supermarket

Week 6: Story treasure box

We will do this by continuing to develop the parent-facing resource that was created to share the learning from this project. *I spy a picture book* (available to download at [www.wordsforlife.org.uk/families-getting-ready-for-school](http://www.wordsforlife.org.uk/families-getting-ready-for-school)) provides examples of easy activities used by volunteers that support the four areas of early literacy development set out by the REAL project – environmental print, sharing books, early writing and oral language.<sup>12</sup> *I spy a picture book* has had over 1,000 downloads from the National Literacy Trust's parent campaign website.



A Literacy Champion volunteer in Waltham Forest celebrates with some of the families she has supported

<sup>12</sup> University of Sheffield, REAL Project (2011) Nutbrown, C. *A Framework for Early Literacy Development with Parents: Opportunities, Recognition, Interaction and Models*

## Section 3: Literacy Ambassadors

Literacy Ambassadors inspire and empower parents to support their children's literacy development by using library and community services.

**90 Literacy Ambassadors** have encouraged **699 families** to attend literacy-based activities for the first time. A number of new initiatives have been put in place to ensure an additional 441 families are introduced to positive family literacy activities by the end of July. These include recruiting additional partners within Haringey, Peabody housing estates and Team London's existing library volunteer programme across 10 local authorities. For 67 per cent of Literacy Ambassadors, this was their first volunteering opportunity. Literacy Ambassadors completed approximately 144 hours of volunteering.

### 3.1 Delivery

Local authorities participating in the Literacy Champion strand of the project were invited to take part in the Ambassador strand. New areas were also invited to participate through heads of library services. One primary school also became a partner. 12 areas or settings delivered this strand of the project.

Ambassadors were identified by coordinators as parents or carers active in their settings. They were trained through an informal briefing session which covered their role, literacy awareness and safeguarding.

Ambassadors identified parents or carers they knew, for example family and friends, and invited them to attend an organised family literacy activity for the first time. This might have been a story time or rhyme time session taking place in a library, children's centre or other local organisation. Ambassadors invited parents or carers who were unsure of what they could do to support their children's literacy development and wanted support, or who were apprehensive about attending for the first time. Ambassadors encouraged families and supported them during their first activity, sharing information about what the library or centre offers as well as providing information about other activities happening in the local area. The intention is that by supporting families in their first visit they will be inspired to join in a session again independently, and perhaps in the longer term begin to attend regularly.

#### 3.1.1 Successful strategic approaches

The Ambassador strand of the project worked best where settings placed a lot of importance on the story or rhyme time session that they ran, with staff who were able to commit time, resources and their expertise to the activities and families who attended regularly.

Lambeth Library Service ran the ambassador strand through Brixton Library, who contributed to nearly one quarter of all family reach (24 per cent) across this strand of the project. Staff there had built very good relationships with many of their current users and were easily able to identify those best suited to the Ambassador role.

As well as open rhyme time sessions, Brixton Library also set up an activity specifically for looked after children and their carers. This approach worked particularly well for Ambassadors, as it made the most of existing networks and relationships outside of the library setting.

Lambeth delivered both the Champion and Ambassador strands of the project, and there were strong connections between family learning, local children's centres and the library service. Parents or carers who had successful experiences of working with a Champion volunteer and

became much more active within the library were then approached to become Literacy Ambassadors themselves.

## 3.2 Evaluation

### 3.2.1 Intended outcomes

#### Parents:

- Increase their confidence in using local community services to support their child's literacy development
- Increase their involvement in supporting their child in group literacy activities
- Increase their awareness of what support is available to support their child's literacy development

#### Children:

- Increase their involvement in literacy activities and enjoy taking part

#### Volunteers:

- Increase their knowledge of supporting family literacy

### 3.2.2 Methodology

At the end of the first session attended by each family, Ambassadors completed a survey with them, recording their experience and likelihood of returning. At the end of their opportunity, Ambassadors completed an exit survey to determine their satisfaction with the project.

Settings were also asked where possible to record follow-up information including whether the family attended another session and, if a library, whether they accessed the service again and borrowed books.

129 family surveys were received with follow-up information from settings on 46 families. 34 Ambassador exit surveys were returned.

### 3.2.3 Key findings

#### Outcomes for children

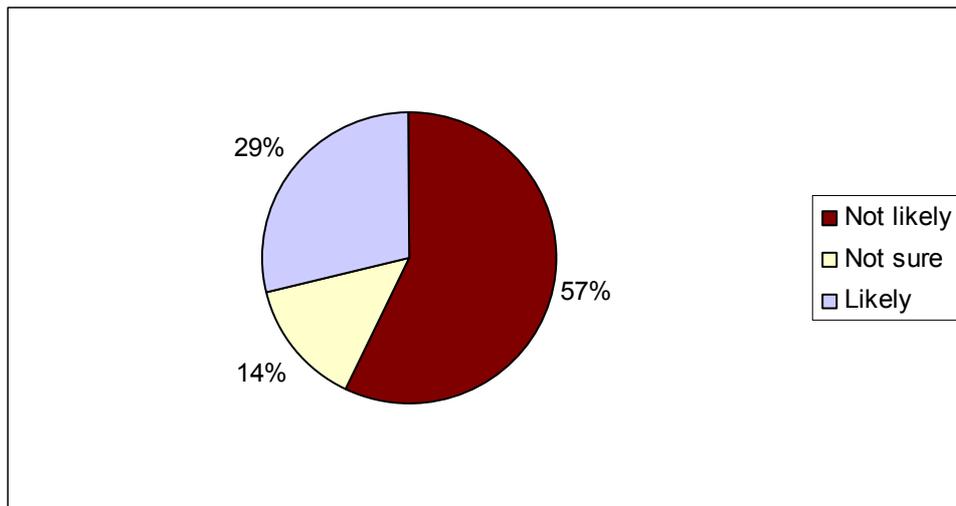
Through this intervention, children were introduced to a positive family literacy activity having never experienced one before. 73 per cent of the children participating did so for the first time. 96 per cent of the children enjoyed the activity.

#### Outcomes for parents

##### *Changes in parental confidence*

Over half (57 per cent) of the families attending sessions reported that they would not have gone if it were not for the Ambassador volunteer inviting them. A further 14 per cent were unsure. Of those who would not have attended, 67 per cent gave the reason why as not knowing about the activity, 24 per cent as not knowing it was free and 27 per cent as not feeling confident to attend before.

**Figure 12. Parents rate likelihood of attending without an invitation from a Literacy Ambassador**



Of those who didn't feel very confident about attending a session, 100 per cent increased how confident they felt about going again.

96 per cent of parents felt welcome and comfortable at the session, and 97 per cent enjoyed themselves.

#### ***Changes in parental involvement***

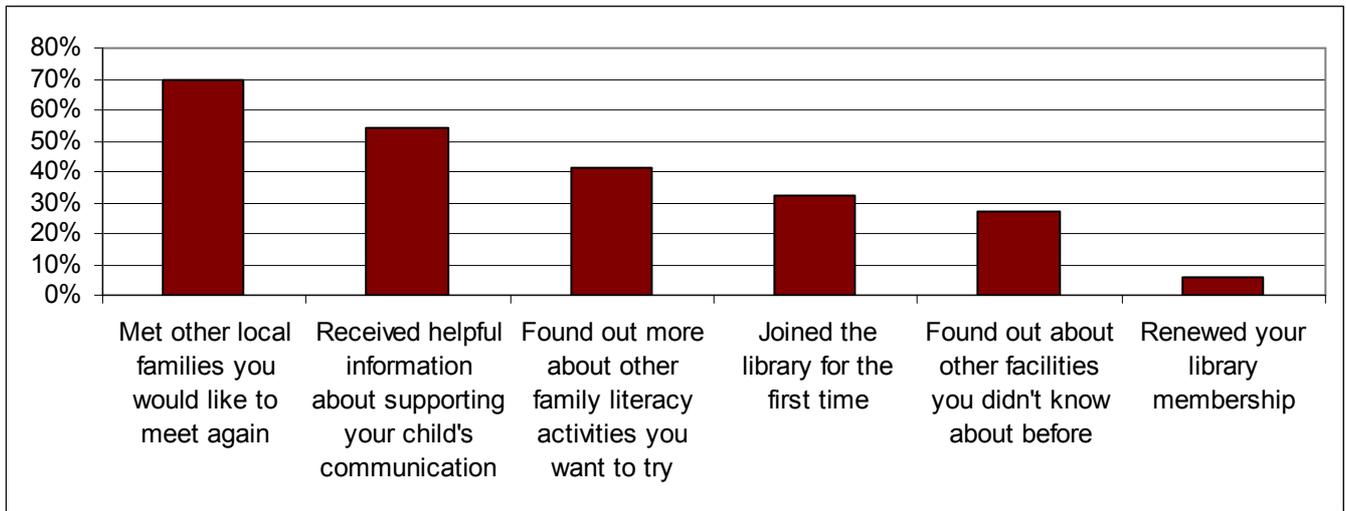
At the end of their first session, 94 per cent of parents told us that they intended to go to an activity again. 91 per cent of the smaller sample of follow-up surveys did return, attending three additional sessions on average.

Over the following three months, over half of families (59 per cent) became library members for the first time or renewed their membership. Reporting shows that only five per cent of families went on to use their new library card, on average three times, in the three months after their first session. Reporting on this was very low however, due to the capacity of library staff and the systems they have in place to capture this sort of information.

#### ***Changes in parental awareness***

85 per cent of families told us that they had benefited from their experience of attending the activity with their child. 70 per cent felt this was through meeting other local families they would like to meet again. 50 per cent felt that they had received helpful information about supporting their child's communication and 41 per cent benefited from finding out about other family literacy activities they would like to try. 27 per cent found out about other facilities offered by the setting that they didn't know about before.

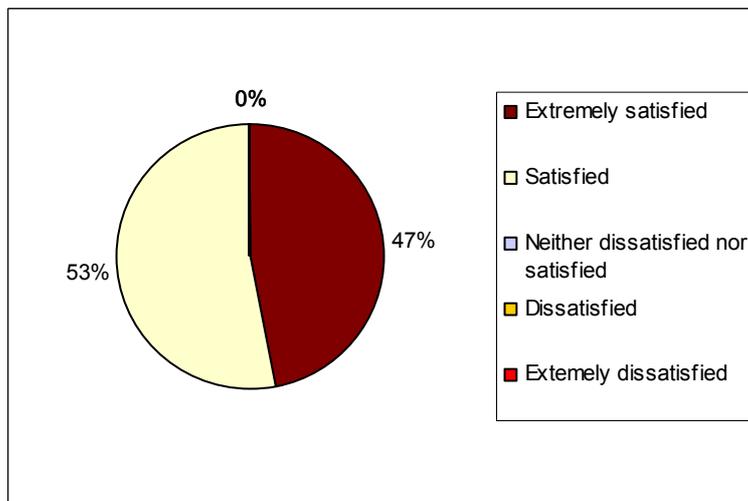
**Figure 13. Benefits of Literacy Ambassador library visit**



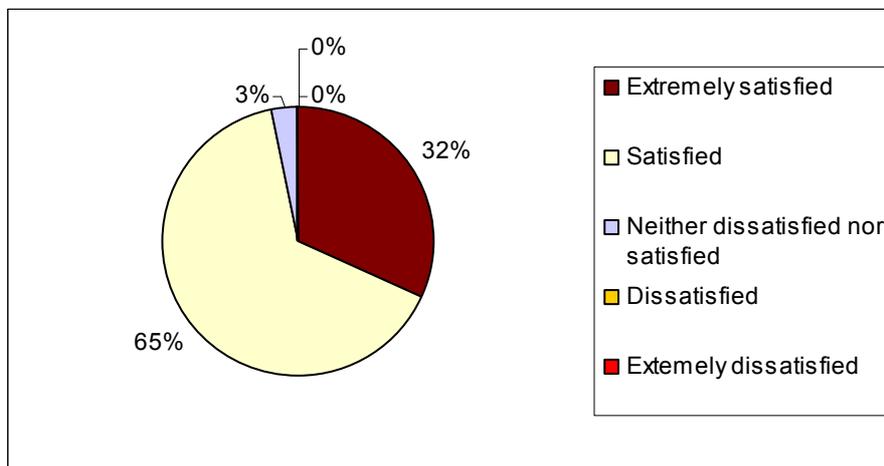
**Outcomes for volunteers**

Volunteers also benefited a lot from the project. 100 per cent were satisfied or extremely satisfied with their experience, with 97 per cent satisfied with the impact it had on the families they supported.

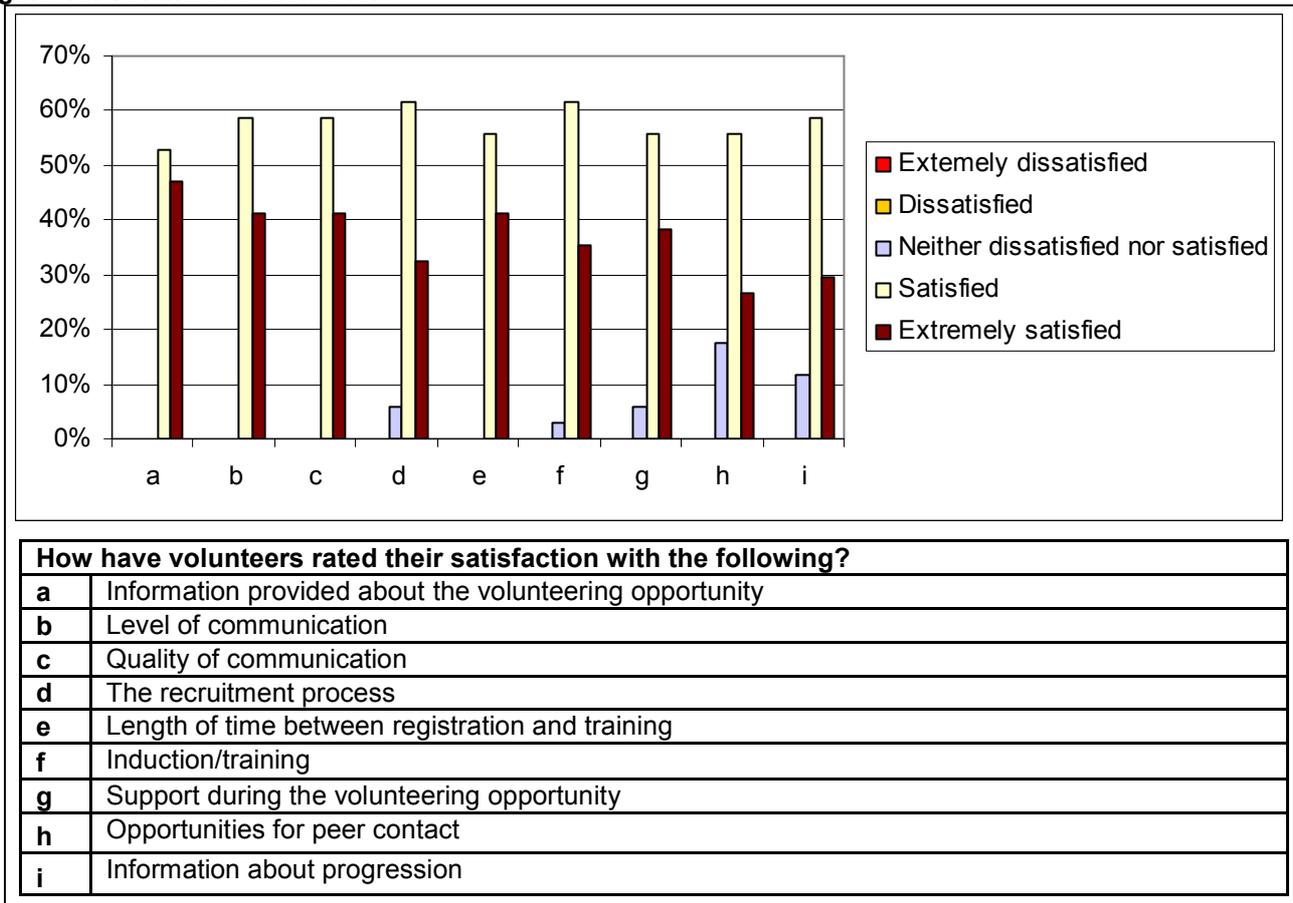
**Figure 14. Volunteer rating for their overall satisfaction with the volunteering opportunity**



**Figure 15. Volunteer rating for their level of satisfaction with the impact the opportunity has had on families**

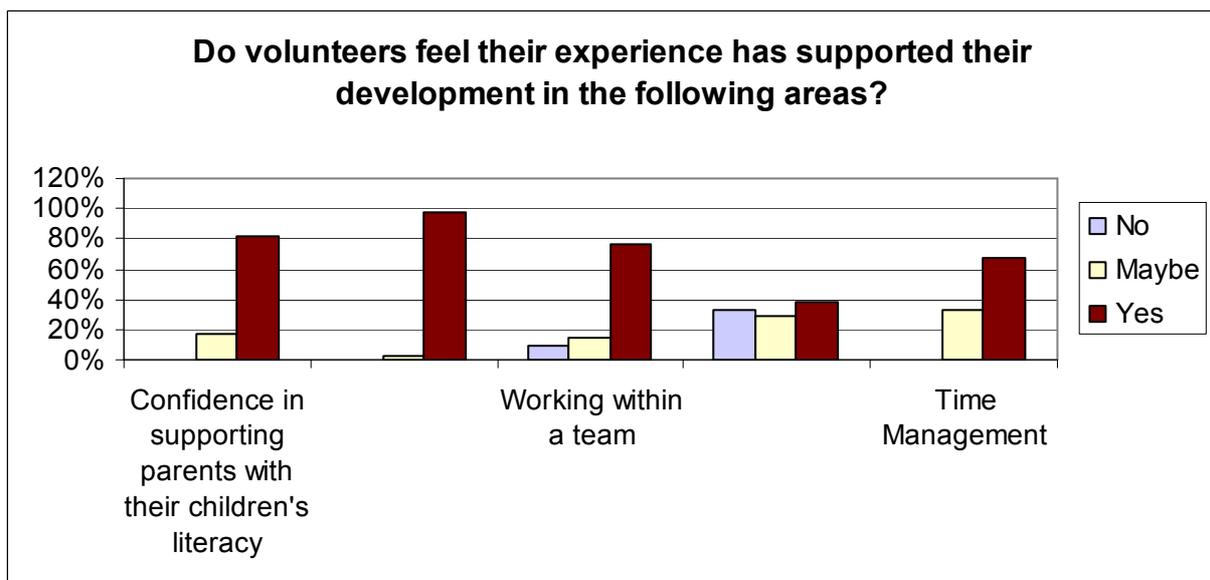


**Figure 16. Volunteer satisfaction**



Nearly all (97 per cent) volunteers felt their involvement in the project had increased their knowledge of what literacy is and why it is important, the impact parents have on their child’s literacy development and practical ways of supporting young children’s literacy development.

**Figure 17. Volunteers’ skills**



*“I’ve thoroughly enjoyed it. I worked full time right up until my niece Milly come along, then I was thrust back into a baby world again. So for me I’ve got some of my brain cells back again.”*

Tracey, Literacy Ambassador volunteer, Havering

### 3.3 Programme learning and development

A number of different approaches were again taken in the delivery of the Ambassador strand of the programme. Those that worked best were in areas where family literacy activities were well established and stable and where setting staff could be actively involved in recruiting volunteers and ensuring the families they brought along felt welcome.

The appeal for library services and individual settings is that the Ambassador strand is light touch and can easily complement their existing outreach work. For future programme delivery, we will streamline the paperwork requirements for this opportunity, as it was off-putting for some and, upon reflection, not all necessary.



Families enjoy a story and rhyme session with Literacy Ambassador volunteers at Brixton Library

## Section 4: Challenges and solutions

Original project targets were for 500 volunteers (360 Champions and 140 Ambassadors) to work with 2,000 families (1,800 Champion families and 200 Ambassador families) by the end of May 2012. There were however key factors that restricted delivery to the intended level.

- Setting up the project within the tight timeframe was challenging, and required delivery to take place alongside development work.
- Both local authorities and partner organisations faced unprecedented financial pressures, staff restructuring leading to instances of the coordinator role changing hands a number of times and reduction in capacity among remaining support staff or those in partner settings.
- Original projections for delivering training, recruitment (including the time required to obtain CRB checks) and referrals were unachievable for some partners due to competing commitments.
- Some partners struggled at first to recruit volunteers. This was mainly due to lack of capacity in the authority or a lack of links with existing pools of volunteers that could be easily tapped into.
- Some partners found it difficult to get family referrals in from settings and other professionals. Coordinators with good pre-existing relationships with children's centres and schools found this relatively easy to facilitate, but those without needed longer to develop them.
- Success was also in part reliant on the position of the local volunteer coordinator within the local authority, for example their seniority and the department they were based within.

A number of mitigating actions were taken to resolve the above issues:

- The National Literacy Trust supported partners in the recruitment of volunteers through linking with the Team London publicity campaign and an online expression of interest form. The incredible response to this campaign, evidenced by over 450 applications, showed what an important opportunity this programme offered both for potential volunteers with a desire to improve the literacy of London's children and for the families themselves. Unfortunately, only a small proportion of applicants took up the role, mainly for reasons around time commitment and availability.
- The project team suggested flexible ways of working, allowing smaller numbers of volunteers to reach the set number of families through working in groups or within school holiday times.
- The project team encouraged the sharing of good practice between partners, to allow those who were facing challenges to learn from those who had overcome them. For example, how to target and link with strong partner settings and when to aid facilitation through senior involvement and engagement.
- Some partners were able to save time on lengthy CRB applications by recruiting volunteers already within the local authority system, such as teaching assistants.
- Partnership agreements were signed by each local authority. Where start-up was slow in some areas, grant payments were withheld until progress had been made.

## Section 5: Recommendations

The experience of managing the programme over the last year would suggest that the structure of the model could be refined in the following areas:

**Setting targets:** More accurate consideration can be given for the capacity of local authority partners when setting quantitative targets for volunteer recruitment and family reach. The average number of Literacy Champion volunteers recruited in each of the 12 boroughs was lower than the projected target, as was the average number of families worked with by each volunteer.

**Delivery partners:** Partnership should only take place where local authorities are fully engaged and committed to the project's aims, and where our priorities match their own. Proof of existing links with local early years settings, libraries and volunteer groups should be considered an advantage in applications to participate in future programmes.

**Evaluation:** It would be helpful to agree key performance indicators at the outset, to allow evaluation to focus on the intended outcomes. Excessive paperwork has been cited by several partners as a reason for incomplete or late evaluation being returned. Dr Christina Clark and Naomi Eisenstadt CB will be consulted on ways to strengthen the evaluation process without adding to the administrative burden for partners and volunteers.

### What has worked well

- Where partners have identified early on pools of volunteers or active groups, for example through the volunteer centre or participants of existing family learning courses.
- Where successful communication has ensured that setting partners understand the priorities of the project and how it can support them to meet their own targets.
- Where setting engagement has resulted in the correct identification of families who would benefit from the project and setting practitioners have been involved in the families' progress through the project.
- Where volunteers and families have worked together within groups, and where that group is supported by a member of staff from the setting who can oversee their development.



Sharing books together at a library in Ealing

## Section 6: Going forward

**Sustaining momentum:** Seven of the 12 local authorities involved in London Literacy Champions have expressed a wish to run the programme again, and a further four have said they may wish to do so. This will sustain the momentum of the first year and build on the progress that the project has already made to their communities. Continuing the programme within these areas would be contingent on external funding.

**Research opportunities:** The evidence gathered by practitioners on participating children's movement on the EYFS scale presents a very exciting opportunity for further academic research. This could be commissioned to help determine the educational and developmental benefits of peer-to-peer literacy projects, and their effect on attainment. Randomised Control Testing has been suggested as a potential method of gaining useful evidence in this area, but would require at least two years' funding and a significant sample size.

**Resource development:** Plans are in place to enhance the quality of the project's resources for improving children's early communication skills (the building blocks of literacy) by incorporating new resources developed in partnership with the Communication Trust.

**Developing reach:** We are developing the Literacy Champions model to work directly through existing community organisations, for example, in partnership with housing associations and faith communities. These programmes will form part of the National Literacy Trust "hub" model, which aims to support the development of local literacy strategies and involves them in national research and advocacy.

**Strategic planning:** Following the evaluation and reporting stage of the programme, we will be focusing on developing strategic plans around the viability, scalability and sustainability of the Literacy Champions commercial model, and the issues around retaining fidelity and quality in licensed programmes.



Volunteer Literacy Champions in Croydon meet with their families

# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Volunteer equal opportunities data

Number of volunteers that have volunteered before	185
Number of volunteers with no previous volunteering experience	155
Uncollected	295

	No. of Volunteers				
	1 Extremely dissatisfied	2 Dissatisfied	3 Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	4 Satisfied	5 Extremely satisfied
Of the volunteers that had previously volunteered, how did they rate their previous volunteering experience?	3	1	4	68	116

### Age

16 to 17	18 to 25	26 to 65	Over 65	TOTAL	Uncollected
3	53	335	16	407	43

### Gender

Male	Female	Transgender	TOTAL	Uncollected
27	387	0	414	36

Ethnicity	No. of Volunteers
White British	148
White other Background	35
Black British	19
Black African	36
Black Caribbean	28
Other Black Background	9
Indian	39
Pakistani	21
Bangladeshi	15
Other Asian background	16
Black Caribbean and white	6
Black African and white	0
Asian and White	4
Other Dual Heritage	3
Chinese	4
Traveller	1
Other Ethnic group	10
Prefer Not to Say	17
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>411</b>
Uncollected	39

Disability	No. of Volunteers
Physical Disability	12
Sensory Disability	3
Learning Difficulties	3
Prefer Not to Say	45
No stated disability	331
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>63</b>
Uncollected	387

Sexual Orientation	No. of Volunteers
Bisexual	3
Gay	2
Heterosexual	341
Lesbian	0
Other	3
Prefer Not to Say	52
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>401</b>
Uncollected	49

Employment, Education, Training Status	No. of Volunteers
Employed	138
Not in education, employment or training	83
In education/learning	41
In training	11
Self-employed	33
Retired	25
Prefer Not to Say	53
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>384</b>
Uncollected	66

Additional Information	No. of Volunteers
Homeless	0
In or leaving care	0
Lone parent	60
Offender/ex-offender	0
Refugee/asylum seeker	2
None of these	305
Prefer Not to Say	27
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>394</b>
Uncollected	56

Faith	No. of volunteers
No religion	24
Baha'i	0
Buddhist	0
Christian	50
Hindu	7
Jain	0
Jewish	2
Muslim	14
Sikh	6
Other	4
Prefer not to say	32
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>139</b>
Uncollected	311

How did they hear about the opportunity?	No. of Volunteers
Word of Mouth	124
National Literacy Trust website	39
Team London Website	17
Other website	19
Search Engine	12
Press	19
Radio	1
Other	167

Boroughs	No. of Volunteers
Barking and Dagenham	20
Barnet	1
Bexley	4
Brent	30
Bromley	11
Camden	25
City of London	0
Croydon	41
Ealing	33
Enfield	1
Greenwich	1
Hackney	3
Hammersmith and Fulham	2
Haringey	5
Harrow	6
Havering	6
Hillingdon	29

Boroughs	No. of Volunteers
Hounslow	25
Islington	3
Kensington and Chelsea	23
Kingston upon Thames	0
Lambeth	58
Lewisham	1
Merton	0
Newham	5
Redbridge	10
Richmond upon Thames	0
Southwark	7
Sutton	16
Tower Hamlets	22
Waltham Forest	19
Wandsworth	6
Westminster	1
Other	1

## Appendix 2: Parent equal opportunities data

### Age of parent or carer

16 to 17	18 to 25	26 to 65	Over 65	TOTAL	Uncollected
0	182	595	7	784	75

### Gender of parent or carer

Male	Female	Transgender	TOTAL	Uncollected
51	634		51	808

Ethnicity	No. of parents or carers
White British	177
White other Background	76
Black British	49
Black African	105
Black Caribbean	42
Other Black Background	20
Indian	62
Pakistani	42
Bangladeshi	69
Other Asian background	57
Black Caribbean and white	14
Black African and white	9
Asian and White	3
Other Dual Heritage	5
Chinese	16
Traveller	0
Other Ethnic group	26
Prefer Not to Say	45
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>817</b>
Uncollected	42

Disability	No. of parents or carers
Physical Disability	8
Sensory Disability	4
Learning Difficulties	25
Prefer Not to Say	80
No stated disability	555
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>117</b>
Uncollected	742

Sexual Orientation	No. of parents or carers
Bisexual	3
Gay	0
Heterosexual	439
Lesbian	3
Other	4
Prefer Not to Say	291
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>740</b>
Uncollected	119

Employment, Education, Training Status	No. of parent or carers
Employed	131
Not in education, employment or training	316
In education/learning	109
In training	48
Self-employed	31
Retired	6
Prefer Not to Say	122
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>763</b>
Uncollected	96

Additional Information	No. of parents or carers
Homeless	5
In or leaving care	1
Lone parent	176
Offender/ex-offender	0
Refugee/asylum seeker	17
None of these	233
Prefer Not to Say	68
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>500</b>
Uncollected	359

Faith	No. of parents or carers
No religion	35
Baha'i	0
Buddhist	1
Christian	6
Hindu	1
Jain	0
Jewish	0
Muslim	44
Sikh	4
Other	1
Prefer not to say	51
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>143</b>
Uncollected	716

How did they hear about the opportunity?	No. of parents or carers
Word of Mouth	138
National Literacy Trust website	0
Team London Website	0
Other website	6
Search Engine	0
Press	0
Radio	1
Other	307

Boroughs	No. of parents or carers
Barking and Dagenham	34
Barnet	1
Bexley	3
Brent	54
Bromley	1
Camden	108
City of London	0
Croydon	90
Ealing	28
Enfield	0
Greenwich	15
Hackney	0
Hammersmith and Fulham	1
Haringey	0
Harrow	0
Havering	0
Hillingdon	38

Boroughs	No. of parents or carers
Hounslow	48
Islington	0
Kensington and Chelsea	44
Kingston upon Thames	5
Lambeth	114
Lewisham	0
Merton	0
Newham	0
Redbridge	0
Richmond upon Thames	0
Southwark	0
Sutton	39
Tower Hamlets	85
Waltham Forest	29
Wandsworth	0
Westminster	2
Other	0

### Appendix 3: Evaluation sample sizes

- Literacy Champion training evaluation form: 264
- Family referral form: 778
- Volunteer journal: 243
- Parent/carer follow-up survey: 20 (Croydon, Lambeth and Hillingdon)
- Key person follow-up survey: 26 (Croydon and Lambeth)
- Setting survey: 24 (Brent, Croydon, Hillingdon, Lambeth, Sutton)
- Literacy Ambassador parent/carer survey: 129
- Literacy Champion exit survey: 75
- Literacy Ambassador exit survey: 34



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## London Literacy Champions Training Evaluation Questionnaire

One of the main aims of the London Literacy Champions project is to prepare and support volunteers to work with families. We would like to know your thoughts on the training day.

Information you provide will inform the evaluation of the London Literacy Champions project which is required by the National Literacy Trust and funders.

Please return to your volunteer coordinator.

Trainers: Date: Borough:
--------------------------------

For each question, please circle the number or description that most closely represents your view. Please also add comments in spaces provided.

**Please rate your knowledge and understanding of the key areas covered in the training before and after attending the training.**

N.B. We acknowledge that people attending our training may already be very experienced in the areas mentioned, so it is possible that some parts of the training may have more impact than others.

Key area of training	Before the training	After the training
What literacy is and why it is important.	1 2 3 4 5 A little A lot	1 2 3 4 5 A little A lot
The impact parents have on their children's literacy development.	1 2 3 4 5 A little A lot	1 2 3 4 5 A little A lot
Practical ways of supporting young children's literacy development.	1 2 3 4 5 A little A lot	1 2 3 4 5 A little A lot

**How well do you understand your role as a London Literacy Champion?**

Not at all well      1      2      3      4      5      Very well



## Appendix 5: Family referral form



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### London Literacy Champions Project Family Selection Form

This form is to be kept confidential. It should be completed by a professional within the setting/school and returned to the London Literacy Champions Local Volunteer Coordinator.

Your name:		Date:	
Name of setting:			
Name of Borough:			
Family postcode			

This family has a child \ ..... children aged two to five years old.

Please provide the age of each child in years and months, adding more if needed.

Age of child: ..... years ..... months

**Families will be selected because they are experiencing particular challenges that mean their child/ children would benefit from literacy support.**

London Literacy Champions will work with **families who want support** and are able to commit to a minimum of eight sessions.

**Family profile** (tick as many that apply):

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teenage parent   | <input type="checkbox"/> Workless household                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lone parent family   | <input type="checkbox"/> Refugee / asylum seekers                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parent or child in or leaving care                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Parents of children with disabilities        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Living in poverty / poor housing   | <input type="checkbox"/> Parent with disabilities                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parent in prison / ex-offender   | <input type="checkbox"/> Family / parent in isolation                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family has children who are accessing free entitlement for two-year-olds | <input type="checkbox"/> Living in temporary accommodation / homeless |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please state)   |   |

.....

Has the family been referred by another professional (such as health)?

Has the family been referred by a community or faith leader?

The family are aware of what time commitment is required for the project and would like to take part in the project.

## Appendix 6: Volunteer journal - first and final session questions

### **Session 1**

#### **Child's enjoyment of books and print**

If more than one child takes part in the sessions, note their answers on the scale using a different mark or symbol.

**How old is ..... (name of child)?**

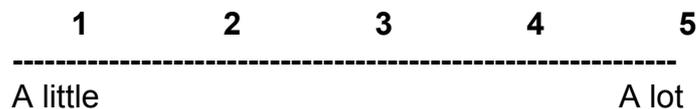
Years ..... Months .....

**How old is ..... (name of child)?**

Years ..... Months .....

**Q1. How much does your child enjoy books and stories?**

For example, smiling, pointing to pictures, being engaged, listening and joining in.



**Q2. In a typical week, how often does your child ask to hear a story?**

For example, by bringing a book to you, or by asking for another story.

Every day	Almost every day	Two or three times a week	Once a week	Less than once a week
--------------	---------------------	------------------------------	----------------	--------------------------

**If less than once a week, prompt further discussion**

-----  
-----  
-----

**Q3. Does your child have a favourite book?**

Yes      No      Don't know

**If so, what is it?** This can prompt further discussion.

-----

#### **Parent's engagement in supporting their child's literacy and learning**

**Q1. In a typical week, how often do you share books with your child?**

Every day	Almost every day	Two or three times a week	Once a week	Less than once a week
--------------	---------------------	------------------------------	----------------	--------------------------

**Q2. In a typical week, how often do you talk with your child about something they are interested in?**

**Note the child's interests**

-----

**Q3. In a typical week, how often do you visit a library?**

Every day	Almost every day	Two or three times a week	Once a week	Less than once a week
-----------	------------------	---------------------------	-------------	-----------------------

**Q4. Does anything get in the way of spending time sharing books or talking with your child?**

You can offer a couple of prompts below in an informal way if you feel it would be helpful to get the conversation going.

(Please tick as many as apply)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of time                | <input type="checkbox"/> Money worries           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Work commitments            | <input type="checkbox"/> Housework               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other siblings' demands     | <input type="checkbox"/> Television or computers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> It's not important          | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of space at home   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Confidence              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> We don't have books at home |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other.....                  |  |

Explain that together you'll explore different ways of supporting their child's literacy and practical ideas of how to make opportunities for learning part of everyday routines.

**Q5. How much do you feel you know about why it's important to share books with your child?**

1	2	3	4	5
-----				
A little				A lot

**Q6. How much do you feel you know about why it's important to talk with your child?**

1	2	3	4	5
-----				
A little				A lot

**Q7. Roughly how many children's books do you have at home?**

These can be borrowed rather than owned.

## **Final session**

In this session you can use the scrapbook as a prompt for discussion and reflect on what you and the family have done over the course of the project.

Ask the following questions from the welcome session to see if parents feel more aware, more engaged and more confident in supporting their child's literacy. Re-introduce the rating cards and encourage both the parent and child to respond.

**It might be that there are small steps of progress in these areas.** These can potentially make a huge difference to the child's future development. Every tiny step forward is a wonderful achievement for you and the family.

### **Q1. In a typical week, how often do you share books with your child NOW?**

Every day	Almost every day	Two or three times a week	Once a week	Less than once a week
-----------	------------------	---------------------------	-------------	-----------------------

### **Q2. In a typical week, how often do you talk with your child NOW about something they are interested in?**

Every day	Almost every day	Two or three times a week	Once a week	Less than once a week
-----------	------------------	---------------------------	-------------	-----------------------

### **Q3. In a typical week, how often do you visit a library with your child NOW?**

Every day	Almost every day	Two or three times a week	Once a week	Less than once a week
-----------	------------------	---------------------------	-------------	-----------------------

Before asking questions four and five, remind parents of how they rated their awareness in the welcome session on page 13.

### **Q4. How much do you feel you know NOW about why it's important to share books with your child?**

1	2	3	4	5
-----				
A little				A lot

### **Q5. How much do you feel you know NOW about why it's important to talk with your child?**

1	2	3	4	5
-----				
A little				A lot

### **Q6. Roughly how many children's books do you have at home?**

These can be borrowed rather than owned.

Re-visit child's enjoyment of books

Ask the family about the child's enjoyment of books and print, and find out about the child's early literacy skills NOW to see if there has been any change over the course of the project.

**Q1. How much does your child enjoy books?**

For example, smiling, pointing to pictures and being engaged.

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
-----			-----	
A little			A lot	

**Q2. In a typical week, how often does your child ask to hear a story?**

For example, by bringing a book to you, or by asking for another story.

Every day	Almost every day	Two or three times a week	Once a week	Less than once a week
-----------	------------------	---------------------------	-------------	-----------------------

**Q3. Does your child have a favourite book?**

Yes      No      Don't know

**If so, what is it?** This can prompt further discussion.

-----

**Q4. Have there been any changes in your child's enjoyment of books since being involved in the project?**

Yes, definitely      Yes, a little      Not sure      Not much      No, not at all

**Has this changed because of the project or for any other reason?**

-----

**Q5. Have there been any changes in your child's ability to listen and join in with stories since being involved in the project?**

Yes, definitely      Yes, a little      Not sure      Not much      No, not at all

**Has this changed because of the project or for any other reason?**

-----







**Were you a member of a library before the project?** Yes  No

If no, did you join the library during the project? Yes  No

**Have there been any changes to your confidence in sharing books with your child as a result of the project?**

Yes – increased  Yes – decreased  No change  Don't know

**Have there been any changes to your confidence in talking with your child as a result of the project?**

Yes – increased  Yes – decreased  No change  Don't know

**Would you recommend the project to other families?**

Yes  No  Maybe

**Any other comments about the project:**

**I would be happy to be contacted by a staff member of the National Literacy Trust to discuss your responses further**

Name:

Telephone number:

Thank you



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**London Literacy Champions key person survey on child progress**

This form is to be completed by the key person or teacher within the setting or school two months after the end of the family's participation in the London Literacy Champions project. Please keep this form confidential and return it to the local volunteer coordinator. Personal details will not be shared beyond your authority.

If you have any questions about this survey please contact Lucy Williams, London Literacy Champions Project Manager at the National Literacy Trust on 020 7840 9558.

**The London Literacy Champions project sets out to boost parents' confidence in supporting their children's literacy development by engaging volunteers across London.**

A volunteer worked with this child and their parent or carer in sessions which focused on sharing books and talking.

Date:	Family postcode:
Family name:	Name of centre or school:
Age of child:      years      months	No. of sessions volunteer worked with family:

**Do you think the child's parents or carers are more engaged in supporting their child's literacy as a result of their participation in the London Literacy Champions project?**

Yes                       No                       Don't know

Please explain your answer:

**To what extent do you think the involvement in the London Literacy Champions project has contributed to the child's early literacy development?**

Not at all    1                      2                      3                      4                      5    A lot

Please explain your answer:

**Your EYFS assessment of the child in terms of age related expectations of communication development shown in speaking and listening skills:**

**Before the start of the project?**

Emerging       Expected       Exceeding

**Two months after the end of the project?**

Emerging       Expected       Exceeding

Provide an example based on the EYFS:

Please assess the level of contribution of the project to the child's progress in communication development:

Not at all    1            2            3            4            5    A lot

**Your EYFS assessment of the child in terms of age related expectations of literacy shown in engagement in books and stories:**

**Before the start of the project?**

Emerging       Expected       Exceeding

**Two months after the end of the project?**

Emerging       Expected       Exceeding

**Have there been any changes to the child's enjoyment of books and print?**

For example, the child asks to hear a story more often, or spends more time in the book corner.

Yes – increased       Yes – decreased       No       Don't know

Provide an example from the EYFS:

Please assess the level of contribution of the project to the child's progress in literacy development:

Not at all    1            2            3            4            5    A lot

**How would you rate the effectiveness of the volunteer's work with the family?**

Low level    1            2            3            4            5    High level

**What improvements would you suggest to enhance the outcomes for the child?**

**Any other comments:**

Thank you



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## London Literacy Champions setting feedback form

This form is to be completed by a professional within the setting or school at the end of the London Literacy Champions project. Please keep this form confidential and return it to the local volunteer coordinator. If you have any questions about this survey please contact Lucy Williams, London Literacy Champions Project Manager at the National Literacy Trust on 020 7840 9558.

### The London Literacy Champions project set out to boost parent's confidence in supporting their children's literacy development by engaging volunteers across London.

A volunteer worked with families in one-to-one sessions which focused on sharing books and talking. These sessions were delivered between October 2011 and April 2012.

Date: ..... Name of setting: ..... Your job title/position: .....

Type of setting: Children's centre  Primary school  Other   
 Day nursery  Pre-school  please state: .....

No. of Literacy Champions supported: ..... No. of families that took part from your setting: .....

#### Has your setting worked with volunteers before?

Yes  No  Not sure

#### Has it been of value to have champions working in your setting?

Yes  No  Not sure

If yes, please list ways in bullet points below:

#### Would you like to continue to support volunteers to deliver the London Literacy Champions project in your setting in the future?

Yes  No  Don't know

Please explain:

#### Would you be able to continue to support volunteers in this way in the future?

Yes  No  Don't know

Please explain:

**Do you think the volunteers benefited from the experience?**

Yes                       No                       Don't know

If yes, in what ways (please tick as many as apply):

Confidence / self esteem

Communication skills

Team work skills

Leadership skills

Time management skills

Contributing to accessing training

Contributing to accessing employment

Other  please explain:

**Do you think families benefited from the experience?**

Yes                       No                       Don't know

Please describe how you know this:

**What worked well?** Please provide examples in relation to families, volunteers and/or the setting.

**What would you change to make the experience better for families, volunteers and/or the setting?**  
Please provide examples.

**Please list three learning points from your setting's involvement in the project:**

**Has the project contributed towards meeting targets within your setting?**

Yes

No

Don't know

Please list/describe:

**Any other comments:**

Thank you



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**London Literacy Champions Project**

**Ambassador – Family survey**

Please complete straight after attending your family literacy activity. If you have any questions about this survey please contact Lucy Williams, London Literacy Champions Project Manager at the National Literacy Trust on 020 7840 9558.

Personal details will not be shared to third parties. Your feedback will contribute to the overall evaluation of the project and will be shared with the National Literacy Trust and partners.

Date:		Family name:	
Name of library, centre or school:		Family postcode:	
Mum / Dad / Grandparent / Carer / Other:		Number of children attending:	

Where required, please circle the number or description that most closely represents your view. Please also add comments in spaces provided.

**Is this the first time you have attended a rhyme time or story time activity?**

Yes  No

**If no,**

how long ago did you attend one? .....

how many have you attended previously? .....

had you and your children enjoyed it? .....

why did you stop going? .....

**How welcome did you and your child or children feel here?**

Not at all welcome                      1      2      3      4      5                      Very welcome

**How comfortable did you and your child or children feel here?**

Not at all comfortable      1      2      3      4      5      Very comfortable

**How much did you enjoy the activity?**

Not at all      1      2      3      4      5      Very much

**How much did your child or children enjoy the activity?**

Not at all      1      2      3      4      5      Very much

**Why?**

**Would you recommend this activity to other parents?**

Yes       No       Maybe

**Please rate the likelihood of whether you would have attended the activity without an invitation from an ambassador?**

Not likely 1      2      3      4      5      Very likely

If you rated 1 -3 was this because:

- You didn't know about this activity?
- You didn't know the activity was free of charge?
- You didn't feel confident about going before?
- Another reason?
- Please describe: .....

**Do you intend to go to a future session?**

Yes       No       Maybe

**Have you benefited from this experience in any of the following ways? (Tick if applicable)**

- Met other local families you would like to meet again
- Found out more about other family activities you want to try   
Please describe: .....
- Found out more about other facilities you didn't know about before   
Please describe: .....
- Received helpful information about supporting your child's communication
- Joined the library for the first time  or Renewed your library membership

**Any other comments?**

Thank you for giving your feedback.

## Appendix 11: Volunteer exit survey

### London Literacy Champions



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### Volunteer exit survey

Hello! This is a short questionnaire designed to get your feedback on the London Literacy Champions project. It should take no more than five minute to complete.

This is not a test and there are no right or wrong answers. Please just answer the questions as openly and as fully as you can. Thanks!

<b>Setting:</b>		<b>Borough:</b>	
-----------------	--	-----------------	--

How have you rated your satisfaction in the following?	Extremely satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Extremely dissatisfied
The volunteering opportunity overall					
The level of impact you feel your volunteering opportunity has had on families					
Information provided about the volunteering opportunity					
Level of communication (for example, information you need, when you need it during the project)					
Quality of communication (for example, easy to understand and useful)					
The registration process					
Length of time between registration and training					
Induction/training (fit for purpose?) Do you feel the briefing session prepared you for your volunteering role?					
Support during the volunteering opportunity					
Sharing experiences/contact with other volunteers					
Progression opportunities/information					

<b>Do you think your volunteering experience has supported your development in the following areas?</b>	Yes	Maybe	No
Confidence in supporting parents with their children's literacy			
Communication skills			
Team work skills			
Leadership skills			
Time management skills			

<b>After working with families, how do you feel your knowledge and understanding of the following has increased, if at all?</b>	1 Not at all	2	3	4	5 A lot
What literacy is and why it is important.					
The impact parents have on their children's literacy development.					
Practical ways of supporting young children's literacy development					

	Yes	Maybe	No
<b>Are you likely to volunteer again?</b>			
Why?			
<b>Would you recommend the opportunity to a friend?</b>			
Why?			
<b>What do you feel you most got out of this volunteering opportunity?</b>			

<b>Do you have any other comments you would like to share?</b>