

EMBARGOED: 00.01 9 November 2011

**98% of primary school teachers are concerned that not enough reading books for pleasure is taking place in some of the nation's homes**  
**1.38 million books given to reception-aged children from Booktime**

- 98% of teachers are concerned that reading books for pleasure with children does not take place often enough in some homes. 54% of all teachers describe themselves as 'very concerned' about this.
- Stress is an emerging key factor that stops reading at home for both parents and children: 18% of parents say that *they* are too stressed to enjoy reading with their child and 6% say that their child is too stressed.
- Reading IS on the increase though: according to the Booktime<sup>i</sup> study carried out in 2009, parents of four to five-year-olds were reading with their child for pleasure for an average of one hour 18 mins a week. This year's study reveals the figure has increased to one hour 26 mins in 2011<sup>ii</sup>, showing a 10% increase.
- Parents/carers devote over three days a year to reading for pleasure with children.
- 60% of parents/carers of four to six-year-olds say they read with their child for pleasure on a daily basis and 51% of parents state they read daily for 'school/education' purposes.
- Technology is changing the face of children's reading as one in four parents/carers (24%) say they now use a digital or audio device (in addition to books) to read with their child. The book is still the preferred reading mode: 86% of parents say their child prefers reading using a book.
- 64% of parents/carers say that reading with their own parent(s) for pleasure is a treasured childhood memory. Despite the stress and time pressures many parents now face with their own children, the Booktime research shows that daily reading rates have actually increased rather than decreased. 23% of today's parents/carers say they were read to on a daily basis when they were growing up compared to the 60% of parents/carers who say they now read books for pleasure with their child every single day.

New research<sup>iii</sup> published today (9 November 2011) reveals that 98% of primary school teachers are concerned that not enough reading for pleasure is taking place in some of the nation's homes and that this is having an impact on the time pupils spend reading and talking about books in school.

As part of the research, which has been commissioned by **Booktime**, the national free books programme for reception-aged pupils in England, over 1,000 parents and carers along with 200 primary school teachers participated in the study to explore the modern realities of children's reading habits.

Teachers said that they could see a clear difference between those children who are read with at home and those who are not: 72% of teachers attributed developed language skills and more advanced reading levels to those children who regularly enjoy shared book time with a parent/carers in the home, 30% of teachers found that these pupils also tend to be the first to answer questions in class/first with their hand up and 23% of teachers believe that children who are read with at home are better behaved children in class.

**What is happening at home?** Tiredness of a child or parent/carer is the main reason for shared reading not being fun, but stress is another factor with 18% of parents and carers stating *they* are too stressed to enjoy reading with their child and 6% of children *themselves* being too stressed.

The research also found that 33% of parents and carers say they are happy with the amount of time they are able to spend reading with their child for pleasure but a series of barriers prevents more reading time for others. Time is a major barrier with 15% of parents/carers (rising to 30% of dads) not getting home in time to read with their child. Even when home, 9% of parents/carers (rising to 13% of dads) state that they are prevented from reading with their child as a result of further work commitments.

**Reading time IS on the up. Parents/carers devote three days a year to reading books for fun with children:**

According to the Booktime study carried out in 2009, parents/carers of four to five-year-olds were reading with their child for an average of one hour and 18 minutes per week. The 2011 research shows a 10% increase in real terms with parents/carers now reading for an average of one hour and 26 minutes per week. This equates to three days, two and a half hours each year and a mean of 12.5 minutes per day. Shared reading is a regular habit for 60% of parents/carers of four to six-year-olds who confirmed that they read with their child for pleasure on a *daily* basis with 51% stating that they read *daily* for school/education purposes.

**Parents and children technologically switched on to reading:** For the vast majority of children, the book remains the main reading 'device' as 86% of parents say their child prefers reading using a book, though this does fall to 76% among parents of six-year-olds who are becoming more technologically aware. The Booktime research reveals that one in four parents (24%) say they now use a digital or audio device (in addition to books) to read with their child.

Device	Preferences of parents who use a device	% of all parents
Audio devices (ipods/MP3 players, CDs)	39%	9.3%
Computer/laptop	36%	8.7%
Smartphone	36%	8.5%
Tablet	30%	7.2%
e-reader	18%	4.3%

Booktime aims to promote the pleasure of reading by encouraging families to have fun reading together. **The publication of the Booktime research coincides with more than 1,380,000 books being given to every reception-aged child in England this term as a gift from Pearson, the world's leading learning company in partnership with Booktrust, the independent charity dedicated to inspiring a lifelong love of reading.** Each child will receive a free book pack including two free books: *Tinga Tinga Tales® - Why Elephant has a Trunk*, from the Puffin imprint of Penguin, and *Face Painting*, from Pearson UK, marking the first time Pearson's education business has provided books for Booktime. This year also marks the six millionth book being given to a child as part of the Booktime programme which is now in its sixth successful year.

Peter Hughes, head of corporate responsibility at Pearson, said: "A passion for reading is one of the greatest gifts we can give. Good reading skills are the basic cornerstone that helps all of us progress throughout our lives. Books inform, educate, but also inspire. Good reading starts early. Booktime is an incredibly important programme as through it, we and Booktrust offer a gift of inspiring books and, more importantly, another way for teachers, families and Pearson volunteers to help hook the next generation on reading."

**The research concluded by exploring generational attitudes to reading.** When it comes to reading for pleasure, 64% of parents revealed that reading books with their own parent(s) is a treasured childhood memory. Despite the stress and time pressures many parents now face with their own children, the Booktime research shows that daily reading rates have actually *increased* rather than decreased generation on generation (23% of today's parents/carers say they were read to on a daily basis when they were growing up compared to the 60% of parents/carers who say they now read books for pleasure with their child on a daily basis).

**Reading with children a real highlight of the day:** For the majority of parents/carers (71%), reading with their child is always or usually one of the highlights of the day. 80% of parents/carers say their child always/mostly associates book time with fun with 86% of children laughing out loud when sharing a book with an adult and 83% wanting to hear more of the story.

Booktime will be supported by a range of downloads and games on the website [www.booktime.org.uk](http://www.booktime.org.uk) and can be followed on twitter @BooktimeTweets and also on facebook.com/AllaboutBooktime.

#### Ends

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#### Quotes for media use:

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**Viv Bird, CEO of Booktrust,** says: “We’re delighted that Booktrust’s partnership with Pearson through Booktime has, over the last six years, gifted over six million books to families across the country. This year’s pack, with the wonderfully vibrant *Tinga Tinga Tales – Why Elephant Has a Trunk* and *Face Painting* will be enjoyed by reception-aged children and their families over and over again.”

**Actor and comedian Lenny Henry** says: “I’m delighted to help launch Booktime this year. It’s a brilliant programme and anything that encourages children to appreciate and enjoy books gets the thumbs up from me. When I was a little kid I went through a massive Dickens phase. I remember *Great Expectations* blew my mind, and then there was *Oliver Twist*. Then I just wanted to read more and more. What’s so great is that you can totally lose yourself in the story. They were great.

“I used to read all the Kipper books to my daughter when she was little. They were brilliant, because they were so funny and if a book’s funny they’re wonderful to read because the job’s half done. Her favourite was that book about the mole who wants to know who did a poo on his head – *The Story of the Little Mole Who Knew It Was None of His Business!* Whereas mine was *I Love You This Much*. I loved reading with her. It was a very sad day when she told me she could finish Harry Potter by herself.”

**Tinga Tinga Tales series creator Claudia Lloyd,** head of animation at Tiger Aspect Productions, says: “It’s exciting to think that right now, thousands of children and families are enjoying sharing *Tinga Tinga Tales – Why Elephant has a Trunk* thanks to Booktime. *Tinga Tinga Tales* gets to the heart of what traditional storytelling is all about: fantasy, fun and ultimately learning. Like all great picture books, *Why Elephant has a Trunk* gives parents and children the chance to share a really special moment together. It’s a big story with lots of action and silly voices and, of course, a lovely ending. I hope everyone really enjoys bringing the book to life.”

**Monica Hughes, author of Face Painting,** says: “I’m so pleased that children will receive a copy of *Face Painting* particularly as it complements the story book *Why Elephant has a Trunk*. Many children think all books are ‘stories’ but *Face Painting* introduces the concept of a nonfiction book that can be read in any order and in a format that is easy for small hands to hold.

“At the same time *Face Painting* provides an ideal opportunity for a young child to read alongside an adult following the words of the simple repetitive text and commenting on the photographs. Discussion between an adult and a child, or between two children sharing the book together, is likely to lead to them recalling their own experiences of have their own face painted or anticipating where and when this might happen in the future.”

### About Booktime

Booktime is run by Booktrust, the independent charity dedicated to inspiring a lifelong love of books for all, and Pearson, the world's leading learning company. The programme was launched in 2006 by Pearson in partnership with Booktrust. Booktime aims to promote the pleasure of books by encouraging families to have fun reading together. The programme supports, encourages and enables reading for pleasure in the home at an important transition stage in a child's learning and development. Book packs have included titles from a long list of much-loved children's writers and illustrators: Lynley Dodd, Janet and Allan Ahlberg, Ian Whybrow, Adrian Reynolds, June Crebbin, Ed Vere, Geraldine Taylor, Amy Schimler, and Eric Carle.

This year's story book is *Why Elephant has a Trunk* (Puffin), from the *Tinga Tinga Tales* series created by Claudia Lloyd. *Why Elephant has a Trunk* is a lively, laugh-filled story ideal to read aloud. Families will discover the fable of how Elephant got his trunk in a mishap with a very snappy crocodile and find out how he puts his new nose to great use. Its vibrant illustrations inspired by the Tingatinga artwork of Tanzania make *Why Elephant has a Trunk* an exciting and engaging title for families to enjoy reading together.

For the first time, book packs will also contain a title from Pearson UK, the education business. *Face Painting* (part of the Rigby Star series) is a non-fiction book to share, with colourful photos of children with their faces painted. There's a design every child will enjoy, from a beautiful butterfly to a fearsome pirate and a scary monster. *Face Painting*, by Monica Hughes, lets children have a go at sharing a book with an adult by describing what they see and reading the words they know.

### About Pearson

Pearson is the world's leading learning company. Our major businesses are: Pearson, the world's biggest education business, providing print and digital learning materials and services used by more than 100 million students of all ages every year; The Financial Times Group, which has an international network of business and financial newspapers and online services that are read by millions of business executives and investors every day; and Penguin Group, which is one of the pre-eminent names in consumer publishing, with an unrivalled range of fiction and nonfiction, bestsellers, and classic titles. Through our books, newspapers and online products and services, Pearson helps people of all ages to live and learn. See [www.pearson.com](http://www.pearson.com). Since the Booktime programme began, Pearson's UK staff have been giving their time to read with children in local primary schools through our Booktime Volunteer Reading Scheme. For the academic year 2010 - 2011, 210 Pearson volunteers spent over 3,374 hours (the equivalent of 482 working days) reading with children.

### About Booktrust

Booktrust is an independent charity dedicated to encouraging people of all ages and cultures to engage with books. The written word underpins all our activity and enables us to fulfil our vision of inspiring a lifelong love of books for all. Booktrust is responsible for a number of successful national reading promotions, sponsored book prizes and creative reading projects aimed at encouraging readers to discover and enjoy books. These include the Orange Prize for Fiction, the Children's Laureate and Bookstart, the national programme that works through locally based organisations to give a free pack of books to young children, with guidance materials for parents and carers. See [www.booktrust.org.uk](http://www.booktrust.org.uk)

### About Tinga Tinga Tales

You may think you know why Elephant has a trunk, or why Lion roars, but according to *Tinga Tinga Tales*<sup>®</sup>, it's a whole other story! This all-new preschool series introduces children to the vibrant art and sounds of Africa through stories told with a funny twist about how our favourite animals came to be. Produced in association with Homeboyz Entertainment in Kenya, Tiger Aspect Productions worked with local talent and Tingatinga artists from Tanzania to create *Tinga Tinga Tales*. The design and look of the show, as well as the sounds and music were all created by a talented team of local artists, animators, and musicians. Everyone involved in *Tinga Tinga Tales* believes in giving back to the region. Through the trade editions of the books and the cartoon series, some profits go towards schemes that improve education and literacy in some of the most underprivileged areas of East Africa.

*Tinga Tinga Tales* exposes children to a culture beyond their own. The series airs on CBeebies in the UK. Explore the world of *Tinga Tinga Tales* at [www.tingatingatales.com](http://www.tingatingatales.com)

<sup>i</sup> 2009 Booktime research: Online research canvassing the opinions of 1,772 parents of children aged four-12 year olds in the UK was conducted in September 2009 by Opinion Matters. Opinion Matters is an independent market research agency and all research conducted adheres to the latest MRS Codes of Conduct.

<sup>ii</sup> Research: Booktime 2011 research: Online research canvassing the opinions of 1,011 parents of four to six-year-olds in England and Northern Ireland was conducted between 18-24 October 2011 by Opinion Matters. Teachers: Online research canvassing the opinions of 207 primary school teachers (Year One and Year Two) in England and Northern Ireland was conducted between 18-26 October 2011 by Opinion Matters. Opinion Matters is an independent market research agency and all research conducted adheres to the latest MRS Codes of Conduct.

<sup>iii</sup> As cited in ii.