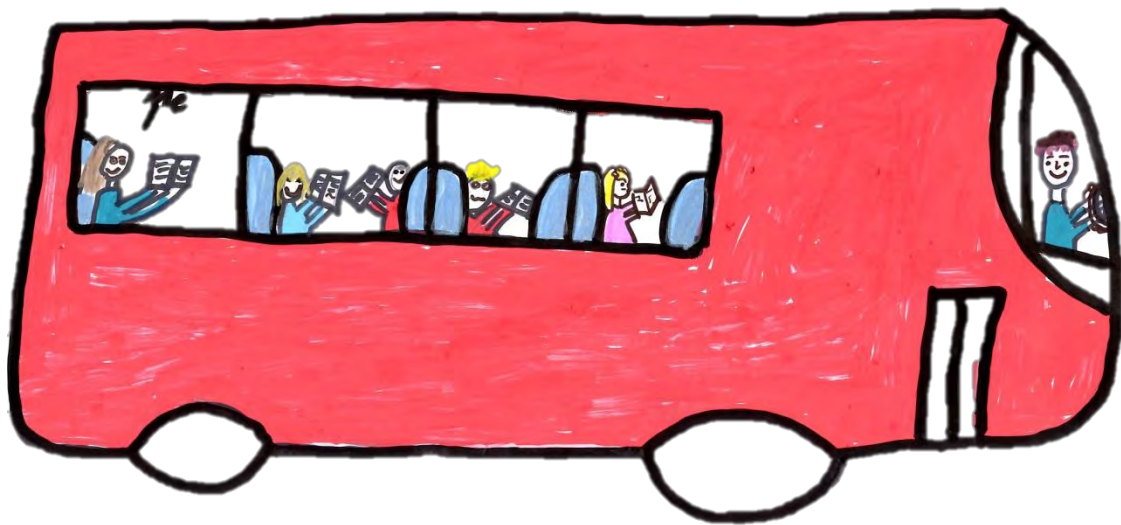
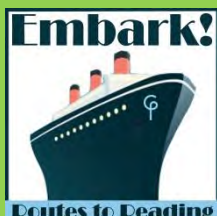


Reading takes me to another place!



Final Report

A report for Save the Children by Children's Parliament on 'Embark! Routes to Reading', a consultation with children on the importance and enjoyment of reading as part of the *Read On. Get On.* Campaign.



Save the Children



Thanks

Children's Parliament would like to thank the children and staff from the schools who participated in this consultation for their enthusiasm and support.

St. Francis Primary School, Port Glasgow, Inverclyde
Auchinraith Primary School, Blantyre, South Lanarkshire
Leith Primary School, Leith, Edinburgh

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Children's Parliament
Summerhall
Edinburgh
EH9 1PL
0131 558 9030
www.childrensparliament.org.uk
Scottish Charity SC026247



@creative_voices | childrensparliamentscotland

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About the consultation

As part of Save the Children's *Read On. Get On.* campaign, which aims to have all children in Scotland reading confidently by the age of 11, Children's Parliament was commissioned by Save the Children to undertake direct engagement with children of primary school age.

Children's Parliament staff visited three primary schools and facilitated a series of five creative workshops with children from P1 to P7 in each school. Children came to the workshops with differing abilities and levels of engagement or interest in reading. In total, 103 children (47 boys and 56 girls) took part in the consultation. More information about the participating children can be found in Appendix 1.

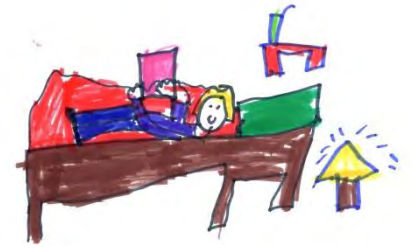
The workshops introduced children's rights in order to allow the children to explore issues around their participatory rights, including their right to express their views and to have them taken seriously. Within this framework, the children then discussed their experiences of and attitudes towards reading. Our discussions with the children were conversational and informal, using props and creative activities to help make the conversations focused and enjoyable. Using these methods the children were able to express their views around the consultation themes: **The Importance of Reading, Accessing Books, Learning and Support for Reading, and Enjoyment of Reading.**

The workshops brought additional benefits to the consultation process by introducing and establishing relationships between Children's Parliament staff and participating children, which enhanced their awareness and confidence levels in the process, leading to a more meaningful experience for the children involved. More information about Children's Parliament can be found in Appendix 2.

The quotes in this report come directly from the children, as do the illustrations. When a quote is used it states the gender and age of the child.

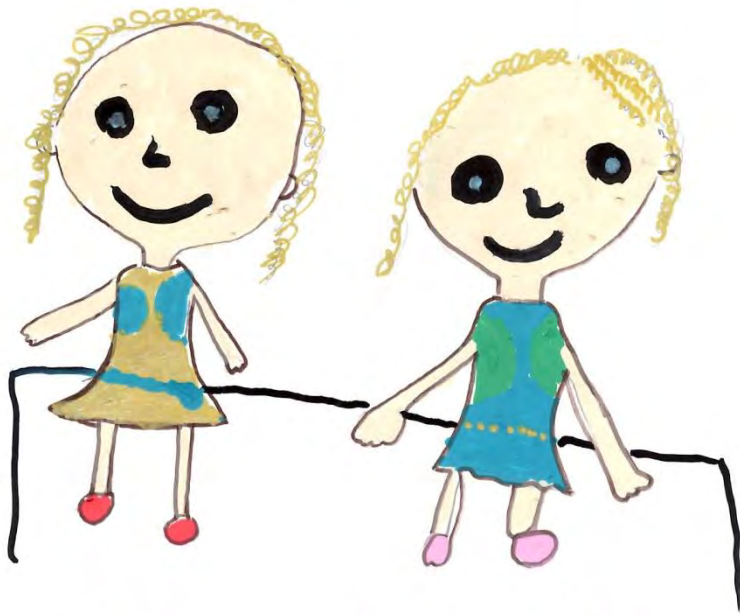
Top 10 Messages

These are the most important messages from children about reading. There is more about these top messages throughout the report.



1. **FREEDOM.** Children need time and space to practise and to be free to enjoy reading. There may be distractions or obligations at home and at school and children are not able to focus on reading as much as they would like.
2. **CHOICE.** Children value having a choice in what they read. While they recognised that sometimes it was necessary to read an assigned book in school and that these experiences could challenge them and introduce them to new ideas, their enjoyment of reading increases when they have the opportunity to select their own reading material.
3. **HELP + SUPPORT.** Children require help and support from their teachers and parents/carers in order to progress with their reading, from the early years through school. They feel frustrated when they get stuck on words or when they don't understand the main concepts, and without adequate help and support from adults, this can negatively impact on their reading habits.
4. **SHH! QUIET!** For many children, the biggest challenges when reading are noise and distractions from classmates, friends and family. They feel frustrated and unfocused when they cannot get on with their reading because of outside interference.
5. **READING TOGETHER + INDEPENDENTLY.** Reading is both an individual and social activity. Children emphasise the importance of and pleasure in reading on their own, but they also enjoy being read to and sharing in the collective experience of hearing a story.
6. **A JOURNEY, AN ESCAPE.** Reading is a vehicle that allows them to travel to new places through the pages of a book. Children love the way reading can spark their imaginations and allow them to pretend to be someone or somewhere new. They also discuss reading as a temporary escape from things that might be upsetting or difficult in real life.
7. **IN THE FUTURE.** Children made connections between reading now and success in the future. They see reading as an essential life skill that would impact upon their ability to do well in their education and to get a job when they were older. They also discussed reading as a cycle – it's good to read now because as adults they will read to their own children.
8. **DEVELOPING EMPATHY.** Children frequently discuss pretending that they are in a story or putting themselves in the shoes of a main character. Reading provides an opportunity for children to explore a vast array of feelings, make connections to characters' experiences and develop a sense of empathy.
9. **FIND WHAT YOU LIKE.** For those children to whom reading does not come easily, finding a particular story, genre or format that inspires them can deeply affect their feelings towards and habits of reading.
10. **21st CENTURY.** Technology continues to play a bigger role in developing children's literacy skills. Some children enjoy reading much more on a device, finding it cooler and more accessible than a book. Along with reading stories on devices, children use technology to play games that build vocabulary and improve spelling and to write their own stories.

READING IS
THE KEY



TO ALL YOUR
LEARNING

'Children should always feel free to read.'

(Girl, 10)

The importance of reading

Children of all ages feel that reading is important. They view it as the 'key to all learning' and as an important step for the future. There is a clear connection between learning to read as a child and advancing through school, higher/further education and getting a job in adulthood. Additionally, the majority of children view reading as important for its own sake – reading is fun, interesting and engaging.

'Being able to read means having options. If you want to get a good job, you need to be able to read.' (Boy, 9)

'I enjoy reading because it is good for your brain and it's also fun.' (Girl, 10)

'If you can't read or write, then you'll have a hard time in life.' (Boy 9)

Part of a good future

Children view reading as an essential skill for life. They speak of reading in terms of a progression, from learning letters and sounds and being read to as small children to reading on one's own, using reading skills to learn other subjects, and being able to fill out forms and job applications. Even those children who struggle with reading recognise the benefits of being able to read well in relation to future success. In addition to the skill of reading, children think reading is an important way to learn about different career options and life choices for when they are older.

'Starter books make it easier to read, then you go on to Harry Potter and reading gets harder at high school, then you read adult books.' (Boy, 10)

'Books are so important for your education and I want to have a good education and a good future.' (Boy, 7)

'Reading is one of your life skills. It's part of school, part of language. It can improve your future for a job.' (Girl, 9)

'It gives me ideas of things I can do when I'm older.' (Boy, 10)

New skills, ideas and knowledge

Children of all ages identify the skills, ideas and knowledge they gain from reading. First and foremost, they discuss reading as a way to become more confident readers, develop communication skills, and improve vocabulary and spelling.

'Babies learn a little bit from being read to, like learning how to speak and learning new words.' (Boy, 9)

'I learn new words when my mum reads it out. Normally I look to see how to spell it so I know that word.' (Boy, 6)

'Reading teaches me how to make my writing better. I learn new words and expressions.' (Boy, 11)

'I learn how to spell things and it improves my vocabulary.' (Boy, 10)

'Reading helps you get confidence and know what you're saying.' (Girl, 10)



Children recognise that reading could also teach them other new skills and knowledge. They frequently read books or search online to learn about personal interests or topics for school.

'You need books to cook.' (Girl, 7)

'You need books for instructions, like fixing your car.' (Boy, 9)

'You can get an animal book and learn all about animals.' (Boy, 6)

'My dad reads me stories and I learn about time and then I look at my clock.' (Girl, 5)

'Things like how to work a computer.' (Boy, 10)

'When I was three, my mum read a counting book and my mum was teaching me how to count.' (Girl, 8)

'If you are reading, you can see the pictures and they help your imagination.' (Boy, 6)

Children also identify that reading helps them understand emotions, other people and the wider world. This demonstrates the important role that reading can play in developing empathy and tolerance in children through sharing the stories of others, both historical and contemporary. They like to imagine themselves in the story alongside the characters and they discuss the events and emotions of the story in very real terms. They share in the joy, sadness, frustration and anger of the characters and can recognise similar experiences within their own lives.

'When you read books, you think about what is happening and how others feel.' (Boy, 9)

'Reading helps me know more information about the world.' (Girl, 11)

'Reading helps me have an idea of how life is in other places in the world.' (Girl, 11)

Children frequently discuss reading as a way to relax and to cope when life gets too stressful. They feel that books provide an escape and they value the opportunity to spend some quiet time on their own engaged in reading. The use of reading as an escape or a coping mechanism reveals children's self-awareness and their ability to self-regulate. As mentioned above, reading about other people's experiences allows them to think about their own lives and may provide a chance for reflection and to sort out their feelings.

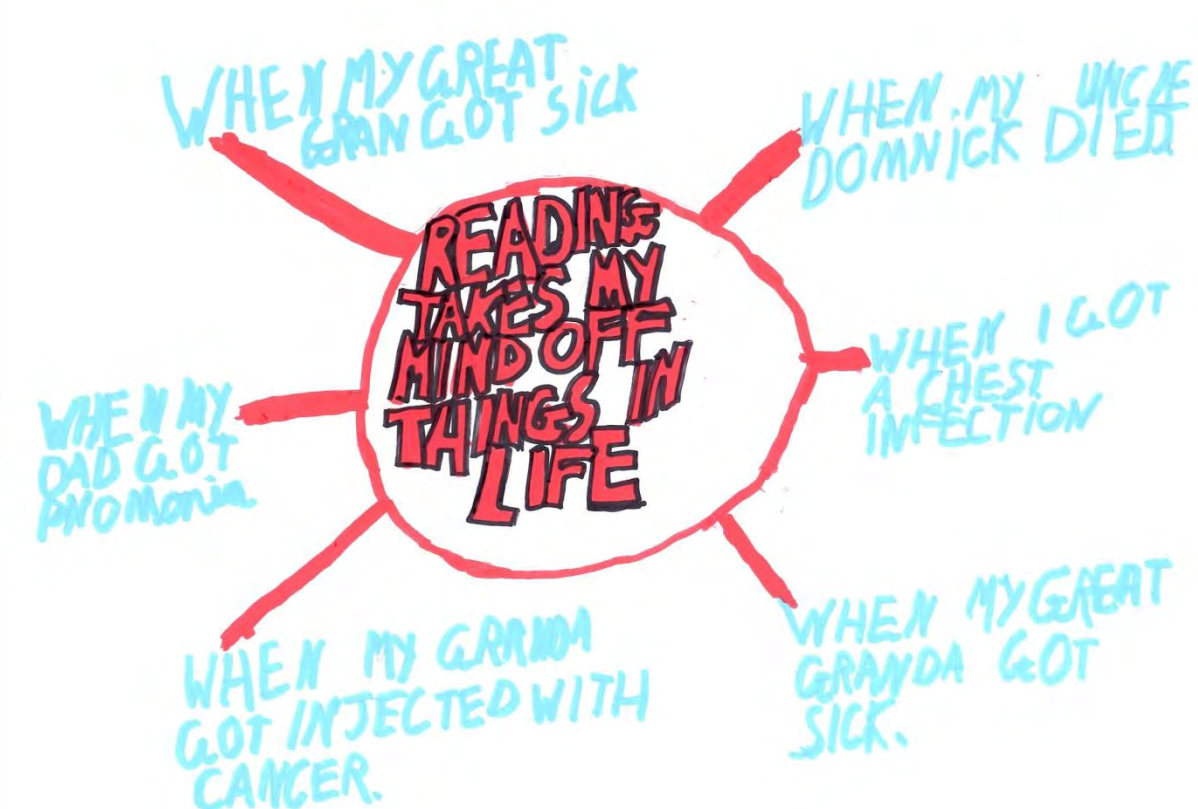
'It kind of takes you to another world.' (Girl, 11)

'It's fun and also you can use it to shut people out.' (Girl, 11)

'[I enjoy reading because] I calm down.' (Boy, 9)

'It's a good way to escape.' (Boy, 10)

'It takes my mind off bad things that are happening in life.' (Boy, 9)





'If I got a really great book...'

(Girl, 10)

Where children get books

Children identify a wide range of sources for books. Predominantly children discuss buying books, borrowing books and receiving books from others. When purchasing books, children identify bookstores (e.g. Waterstones and W.H. Smith), supermarkets (e.g. Tesco and Asda), charity shops and online retailers (e.g. Amazon and eBay) as places they go to get new books. Children also download books on Kindles, iPads and tablets.

When borrowing books, children access both their school libraries and community libraries. However, children have different experiences with visiting libraries, with some visiting both school and community libraries regularly, some going occasionally, and others only visiting school libraries with their classes.

Children also receive books as gifts for birthdays or Christmas, as prizes for doing well in school or at a club, and as hand-me-downs from older siblings and cousins.

'My mum is going to give me her whole collection of Harry Potter. She's been saving them since she was a little girl and they are her favourites. They are kept in a cupboard so they can't get ripped and she can pass them down to me.' (Boy, 8)

'My mum bought me a present of lots of books, but reading is boring and I hate reading. I like eating chocolate more.' (Girl, 6)

'My dad takes me to the library – I don't go to Leith Library a lot, but I go to the one nearer my house. They have lots of books that I like. I've been there loads of times and I keep seeing books that look interesting.' (Boy, 8)

'I mostly get books at school – at the book fair. They are expensive, but I quite like to get them there.' (Boy, 9)



Reading at home

Access to reading materials varies quite dramatically for children. Some children say their families place great importance on reading and value having books in the house. These children say they have 'loads' or 'hundreds' of books in their homes, some belonging to them and others to family members and they can access whenever they like. Other children said that reading wasn't something that interested or engaged the people in their families and books weren't common in their houses. These children have very few books at home, with the majority of their reading material coming from school. It is important to recognise that each child has a different experience of reading in their family life and the impact this can have on their interest in and success at reading in school and throughout life.

'I've got a book box under my bed. I've got loads now so I've lost count. I get a book from the box when I'm bored.' (Boy, 10)

'I never see them reading and I think they find it boring.' (Girl, 9)

'I wouldn't say we are rich, but we have lots of books. You can go to the library or you can get them at the supermarket.' (Girl, 9)

'Rich people might have libraries and more books though.' (Boy, 10)

'You might not have money to buy new books so you have to read the same ones over and over.' (Girl, 7)

'Tablets are more expensive and books aren't so much expensive.' (Boy, 8)

'Anyone could have lots of books. You can save up your pocket money. Everyone has the right to read a book.' (Girl, 7)

'I would enjoy reading more if I had more books in my house' (Girl, 8)

Other kinds of reading materials

Similar to books in the home, children have widely different access to other reading materials. Some children have very few alternate reading materials in their homes, while others have access to a range of magazines, newspapers, tablets and computers. Most often children say they prefer reading books, but they recognise the importance of other reading materials as well, especially the role of technology. Many children see great benefits to reading on a tablet, such as the ability to store multiple books, it's easier when traveling, adjustable settings to make it easier for each individual reader, and feeling cooler and more modern with the latest technology. They also highlight the drawbacks of technology for reading, such as being dependent on battery life, it can be hard on one's eyes, and the worry of dropping and breaking the device.

'I like reading on a Kindle because it's a single page at a time.' (Boy, 10)

'I don't have much books so I can't read them, but I have three iPads and my granddad gave me one. You can pick lots of stories from a big list.' (Girl, 6)

'My mum reads the newspaper in the morning time getting her breakfast. I like reading the newspaper too.' (Boy, 5)

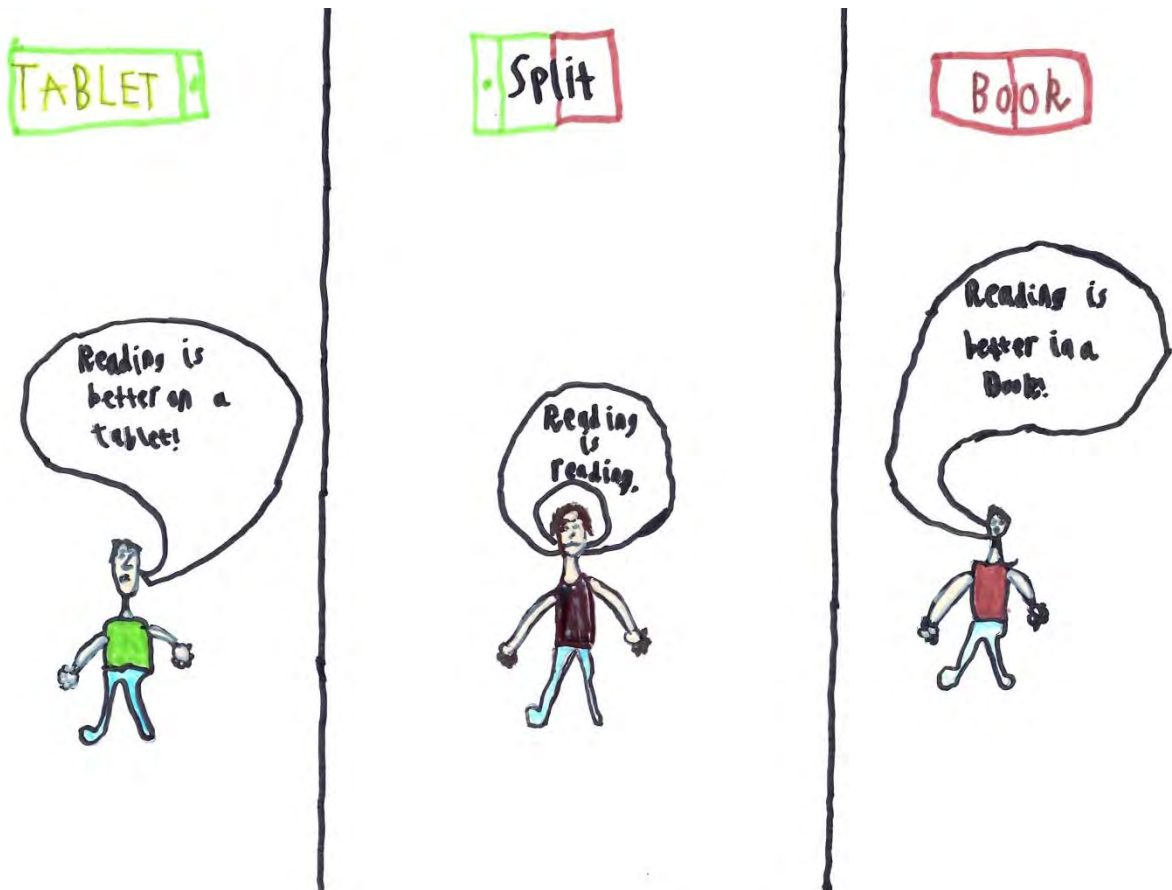
'It's embarrassing walking about with a book. It's more techy walking about with a tablet, and you don't tear pages.' (Boy, 11)

'If you're reading, then you're reading. It doesn't matter if it's a book or a tablet.' (Boy, 11)

'But tablets are technology and screens and they might hurt your eyes. And it might fall and break.' (Girl, 10)

'Sometimes a tablet hurts my eyes.' (Girl, 10)

'You could just make your own book on the computer using PowerPoint.' (Boy, 9)



Accessing books outside the home

Children generally feel that they had good access to books in their classrooms and discuss this as a key source for reading material. However, children have different experiences with school libraries – sometimes they were rarely accessed or just not functioning, while others could access books easily through their school library.

'There's a school library and it doesn't cost anything.' (Girl, 9)

'I don't like reading books from the school library because there aren't many I like. And I was in the same class for two years so I had the same books.' (Girl, 9)

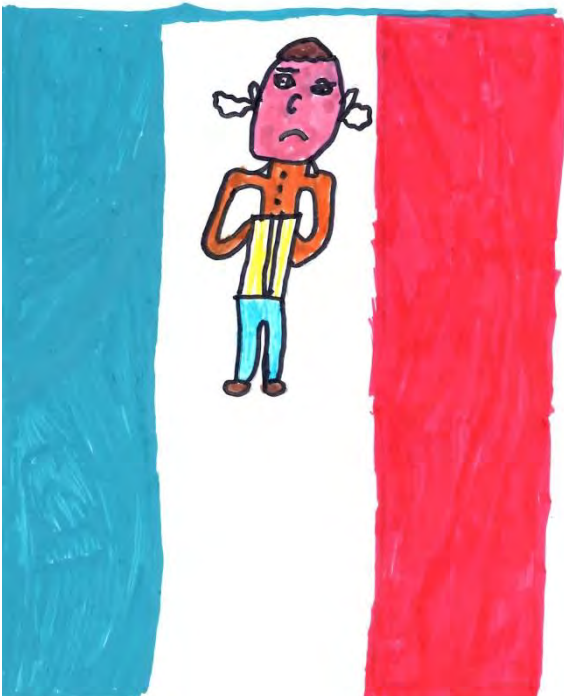
Children also have varied experiences of accessing books through the public library. Some children were introduced to the library at a young age and go frequently with their families. Other children have never been to the library or aren't able to access the library regularly due to inconvenient opening hours, the distance from their homes, and some confusion about the method and cost of checking out books.

'There are two libraries near my house and I can choose different books. There's fun things there!' (Boy, 7)

'It's boring and you have to read. You can't speak out loud in the library.' (Boy, 8)

'My mum said it was expensive.' (Boy, 7)

Don't stress out over reading!.



'If you keep reading every day, you get better.'

(Boy, 6)

People who help children read

Children identify many people in their lives who help and support them to read. Parents and carers are the people identified most frequently, particularly for young children. Teachers are also a main source of help and support for children, especially when developing vocabulary, spelling and other literacy skills. Other people that children go to for help and support include grandparents, aunts and uncles, older siblings, learning assistants and librarians. Generally, children feel supported in their reading both at home and in school. They value sharing the reading experience with the adults in their lives and children of all ages say that they like to be read to, both by the class teacher and at home by parents and carers.

'My teacher helps us do the letters and she reads a story on the carpet.' (Girl, 5)

'Books help you learn, but there are too many to choose from. This is my teacher helping me pick a book from the school library.' (Boy, 11)

'My big sister helps me when there are big words and she helps me spell them out.' (Girl, 6)

'My mum helps me with my homework after school in the sitting room.' (Girl, 6)

'My mum is at uni and sometimes we do homework together at our desk and there's lots of books on it.' (Boy, 9)

'My teacher is helping me read a book because I got stuck on the word "brilliant". I felt happy when she helped me spell it out.' (Girl, 7)



However, children are keenly aware of when the adults they live with are not particularly interested in or good at reading. They recognise the impact that this has on their own reading and express a desire to make reading more accessible and commonplace in their homes.

'My mum hardly reads. I never see her read. So I said to her "Why don't we do some reading together after school?"' (Boy, 8)

'We need to be able to read because if we have kids, we need to be able to help them – you would feel kind of silly and stupid if you couldn't read.' (Boy, 10)

Additionally, there are times when children do not require help or perhaps need other types of support than they are currently receiving. Children can sometimes feel put on the spot when asked to read out loud in class, particularly if they get nervous or make mistakes. When this happens, they can feel embarrassed when they are corrected and their mistakes are pointed out in front of other children.

'When you come to a really long word because it takes a really long time to spell out. The teacher says, 'Can anyone help him?' I don't like it because it makes me feel like I'm not good at it.' (Boy, 8)

Children as teachers

Children also identify situations when they provide help and support with reading to others. In school, children read and discuss stories together and this provides an opportunity to help each other with difficult words or concepts. Additionally, children often talk about taking on the role of teacher by reading to younger siblings or other relatives.

'In the afternoon, I read to my wee cousin.' (Girl, 6)

'If you're reading a really hard book, you might get stressed out, but in a group, then someone is there to help you.' (Boy, 11)

'I like to teach my sister. She's two and I read her a book and she copies me.' (Boy, 7)

'When my friend helps if I'm stuck at a word.' (Boy, 6)

Learning to read

For some children, learning to read has been an engaging and enjoyable process. They like to have the opportunity to read and enjoy the challenge of more difficult books. However, for many children, learning to read has been a difficult experience. Children identify many reasons why this is so, including learning difficulties, lack of help and support, not being read to at a young age and a lack of appropriate or interesting reading material.

'I feel proud now that I can read. I never thought I would be able to read in Primary 1.' (Girl, 10)

'Dyslexia makes it hard to read.' (Boy, 11)

'If we don't know what it means the pictures help.' (Boy, 5)

'When you're younger pictures help, but when you get older you don't like it.' (Boy, 9)

'It's hard when the words are difficult and there's no one to help me.' (Boy, 11)

Practising reading

Reading habits vary greatly among children. Some children say they read 'all the time' or 'whenever I can!' and they feel that reading is an important part of their daily lives. They carry books with them and have regular reading routines, individually, with family and at school. Other children, however, do not have this same experience of reading and it does not play as prominent a role in their daily lives. They would choose to do other activities in their spare time and read when it's the only option or it's an assigned task.

'My books are dusty because I hardly ever read them. I just have them in my room.' (Boy, 11)

'I read quite a lot. I've got lots of books at both my mum's house and my dad's house. My sisters don't read much so I steal their books. I like reading in my room because it's quiet and my bed is comfy and I can relax . . . at least until my little sisters come in.' (Girl, 10)

'I read when it is night and it means that it will be quiet.' (Girl, 9)

'I like to read when it is a rainy day.' (Girl, 10)

'I read after school when there is nothing to do.' (Girl 8)

'I like to read when I'm tired.' (Girl, 6)

What helps children to read and what makes it difficult

Children have very clear ideas about what helps them read and what makes it difficult to read. The biggest issues for many children were too much noise and lots of distractions. They want to read in a quiet space that allows them to focus on what they are reading.

'I would enjoy reading more if I could have some peace and quiet!' (Girl, 9)

'When the teacher shouts at someone.' (Boy, 9)

'Because other people at your desk might try to speak to you.' (Girl, 10)

'When it's too loud.' (Girl, 9)

'When everyone's blabbing in my ear. Because you can't read a book and answer questions. I can't focus.' (Girl, 9)

'It's hard to read if people are talking or the TV is on.' (Girl, 10)

Other suggestions for what helps children read include reading out loud, reading with others, looking up new words, looking at pictures or watching the film of the book and practising whenever you can.

'My younger brother reads out loud to my mum and she can help him if he gets stuck.' (Boy, 9)

'At reading time at school, I hate when I've just started reading and my teacher tells us to stop!' (Boy, 6)

'I think children shouldn't be forced to read on their own. In a group, you know what point everyone is at and you can help.' (Girl, 10)

'I like to read when I'm with other children.' (Boy, 8)

'If you're reading on your tablet or laptop, you can use the internet to look up words on the dictionary.' (Boy, 8)

'Picture books for early years because they can imagine what's going on.' (Boy, 11)

'If you've got a book and the movie, then it can help you read and understand.' (Girl, 11)

'Maybe have a family meeting where you all read the same book!' (Girl, 11)



'I would have all the time I needed with no distractions.'

(Boy, 10)

Reading for fun, reading as an obligation

Most children (90%) say they enjoy reading and being read to. They view reading as an engaging, imaginative and informative activity and they read just for fun. Children value reading on their own and desire the freedom to have the space and time to read whatever they want at their own pace. They also look forward to reading with adults and other children and they enjoyed sharing in the collective experience of listening to a story.

However, some children (10%) do not enjoy reading and find it quite frustrating or challenging. They have not had good experiences with reading and only engage in reading when they have to.

'You can read a book and dream about it at night.' (Girl, 6)

'Because it is fun and you get more description of things than a video or movie.' (Girl, 10)

'It keeps you from being bored.' (Boy, 8)

'Some people read for fun and some people read for knowledge.' (Boy, 9)

'It can be both serious and fun. It can have useful information and it fuels your imagination.' (Girl, 11)

'You don't have to read if you don't want to, but it's important that you know how.' (Girl, 8)

'You don't want to read all the time. Maybe you want to do other things.' (Boy, 5)

How children feel when they are reading something they enjoy

When children are reading material that they enjoy, they feel more engaged and connected to the story. They speak about the immersive quality of good stories and how it is fun to imagine oneself in the middle of the action. There is a sense of joy, comfort and significance when children discover a book, genre or format that they really like.

'I enjoy reading because I can imagine that I'm in the story.' (Girl, 9)

'I like long books with pictures in them. It helps you to see things if you don't know what's going on.' (Girl, 8)

'I'm busy – I'm reading!' (Girl, 11)

'Whenever I read, I shut off and I'm not listening.' (Boy, 10)

'You can forget about the book and then when you read it again, you can feel the same things that you felt the first time.' (Boy, 9)

How children feel when they are reading something they don't enjoy

Alternatively, when children are not enjoying what they are reading they experience a range of emotions. Children talk about the frustration and embarrassment that comes when books are too challenging and they struggle to get through them. There is a sense of pressure around reading for schoolwork because of time limits in which children have to finish their work and a desire to do well. Additionally, there is a feeling of being uninspired by certain books, especially if they are the wrong level, the content isn't interesting or is out of date, and when children feel reading isn't 'their thing'.

'I don't like reading because I get frustrated.' (Girl, 7)

'School books are not always so good because you don't get to choose them. Sometimes the teachers choose fact books and you want to get back to the book you really enjoy.' (Boy, 9)

'It's not always fun if you *have* to read. Last year I had to read a full novel in a week and I felt under pressure.' (Girl, 10)

Where children like to read

Children read hidden away in wardrobes, under covers at night, at their caravans, sitting on their gran's sofas, on buses, trains and planes, in forts and dens, in the park or under a tree. The important thing is not so much the place, but the quality of the space – children want to read somewhere that is comfortable, quiet and free of distractions. They seek out reading places that allow them to become absorbed in the stories.

'When I go to the park, I sometimes find a tree to read under or I go and sit up in the branches. When you're up high, you can't hear anyone else and it's just a really nice place to read.' (Girl, 9)

'At the weekend I go to my gran's and I read there.' (Girl, 5)

'I always go to the library to read because that's where everyone has to be quiet.' (Boy, 8)

'When I was in nursery, my mum used to read the Gruffalo at night in my room, but now I like reading on my own when it's quiet—unless I'm blasting music.' (Boy, 11)

'Me lying on the beach in Spain with my book.' (Girl, 7)

'This is my book fortress between two sofas.' (Boy, 10)

'In my bedroom, my mum reads to me and I fall asleep.' (Girl, 5)



With whom children read

Most children like to read on their own. They enjoy the freedom to read at their own pace, in their own way and at the appropriate level for them. Children feel that this control and independence and being able to read away from the formality of education and homework is very important to their enjoyment of reading.

'I like reading on my own because you have more chance just to imagine the story.' (Girl, 10)

'See when you read yourself, you've got more chance to develop skills.' (Boy, 10)

'It's just more peaceful.' (Girl, 9)

However, children also enjoy and value reading with their parents and carers, reading in groups at school and listening to a teacher read out loud. Many children like to read in a variety of ways because it influences the way they understand the story and how they learn new words and concepts.

'It is entertaining to be read to. You can just listen and fall asleep.' (Boy, 10)

'Being on your own helps you concentrate.' (Boy, 9)

'I do like reading on my own, but when you read in a group, you can hear other people's opinions.' (Girl, 10)

'If you're reading a really hard book [on your own], you might get stressed out, but in a group someone is there to help you.' (Boy, 11)

'My mum reads to me at night and in the morning. We read Roald Dahl books. Well, I don't read any, I just listen because then I don't have to wear my glasses.' (Boy, 8)

'I like listening to my teacher read out loud because she has lots of expression.' (Girl, 9)

How reading could be even better

Although most children view reading positively, there are things that could make it even more enjoyable for all children. Reading is a personal experience and what works for some children may not be ideal for others. Children need to be encouraged to find what they like and what works best for them. Adults need to recognise the individual needs of children and support them to ensure that all children are engaged and reading to the best of their ability. Overwhelmingly, children speak about being inspired, having adequate time and resources to read, and pursuing their interests.

'If I could find that one book that I love.' (Girl, 10)

'It would be great to have my own room so I could read more.' (Girl, 11)

'To not read the same book all the time.' (Girl, 8)

'Having time to do it by myself.' (Girl, 8)

'To have more books in my house.' (Girl, 8)

'Finding the right book. Three months ago, I wasn't reading a lot, but then I found some good books and now I'm reading more.' (Girl, 11)

'If the books are about 592 pages long!' (Boy, 9)

'More books of my choice.' (Boy, 10)

'If I had all the Harry Potter books!' (Girl, 10)

'Talking about it more.' (Girl, 11)

Children's favourite stories and characters

Some examples of children's favourite books include:

Monster! By Angel McAllister and Charlotte Middleton

'My mum helps me read it. I like it because he eats the corn which makes him huge!' (Boy, 5)

Dinosaurs and Prehistoric Myths

'My mum bought it for me. It was a surprise. I like finding out about prehistoric facts.' (Boy, 9)

Minecraft Books

'It inspires me to build better buildings in Minecraft. My mum bought them for me. I tick off the things I have built!' (Boy, 8)

A Thousand Splendid Suns by Khaled Hosseini

'It's realistic and that's what I like. I don't like books with pictures – it's just not the kind of book I like. It's my big sister's book.' (Girl, 11)

You and Your Body

'I like it because it shows you the inside of your body. This is an x-ray and I had this done when I broke my arm.' (Girl, 5)

Cosmic Cousin by Nancy Hayashi

'I like mysteries and I started to read it in P4, but it was too hard. Now I'm reading it again and I like it.' (Girl, 9)

The BFG by Roald Dahl

'I like the descriptions and when you pick it up you don't want to set it down!' (Girl, 11)

Diary of a Wimpy Kid by Jeff Kinney

'They're good to read and it makes you feel like you are actually reading someone's real diary and it helps you imagine what's happening in the story. On the long weekend, my mum bought me the collection and I'd finished them all by the end of the weekend!' (Girl, 10)

Bad Girls by Jacqueline Wilson

'I thought it was good. It had lots of descriptions and made me feel part of the book.' (Girl, 9)

'Thank you so much for this magical adventure you took us on!'

(Girl, 10)

Children's rights and participation

As part of the workshops, children were introduced to children's rights as outlined in the UNCRC in the form of CP's Big Book of Promises. The Big Book of Promises simplifies children's rights down to children being safe, healthy and happy and having a say in their lives. This framed future discussions and activities about reading so children felt confident to share their views and experiences with the group.

'I learned about children's rights. It's good because it keeps me and my friends safe.' (Girl, 5)

'Children must have a say.' (Boy, 8)

'I liked that we got freedom of expression. We all got an equal opportunity to talk. Everyone here gets listened to.' (Girl, 11)

'I learned other people's opinions on things. For example, when we were doing the needs and wants activity, somebody thought that you need a phone and told us why, but other people didn't think having a phone was a need. It was really interesting.' (Girl, 9)

Impact on reading

Through Embark!, the children had an opportunity to discuss reading in a new way, sharing views and experiences, asking questions and exploring new ideas. This resulted in many children reporting that they thought and felt differently about reading after taking part in this project, especially around recognising the importance of reading and their own personal enjoyment of reading.

'I learned to share about our books. We don't do that in class.' (Girl, 8)

'I learned the importance of reading and I think that will make me read more.' (Boy, 10)

'I've never read on my own until I came to CP!' (Boy 7)

'I learned that reading is very important in life and even though I read a lot, I will read more now.' (Girl, 10)

'I have learned that reading is very special and helpful and I could do it more often at home.' (Boy, 9)

Response from teachers

Through this project, children have demonstrated incredible enthusiasm, honesty and creativity. This has been recognised by the adults who work with them on a regular basis in school; they frequently commented on how much the children enjoyed the experience of participating in Embark! In addition, adults have also recognised the value of this type of project and have taken away important messages from the children. Many adults have stated the need to look at how reading was approached within their schools and to take on board some of the children's ideas, particularly ensuring that books were easily accessed within the schools if children didn't have them at home or didn't use the public library.

'We just forget sometimes when we're teaching, when we're telling them to get on with this and that - that they are in their own worlds, they are just children. They are so young and sometimes they are dealing with so many things, and we don't always know because they never let on. Just listening to them just now talking about their pictures reminds me to really stop and appreciate how differently they see and approach things.' (P7 teacher)

Appendix 1

Selection of Participating Schools and Children

Children's Parliament is proactive in ensuring that children who participate in our projects and consultations reflect the diversity of children in Scotland. We make a point of engaging with children who come from a range of backgrounds, ages and ability levels, including those from more marginalised and disadvantaged backgrounds.

As this particular consultation sought to engage with children living in poverty, Children's Parliament focused our work within three geographical areas with high levels of deprivation.

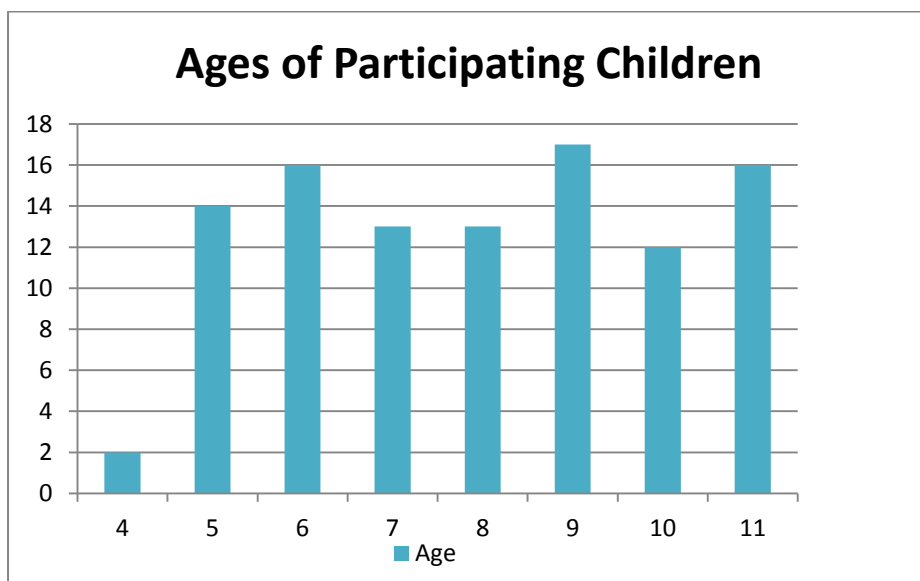
School	City	Local Authority	SIMD	Free School Meals
Auchinraith Primary School	Blantyre	South Lanarkshire	Lowest 15%	51.8%
St. Francis' Primary School	Port Glasgow	Inverclyde	Lowest 15%	42.5%
Leith Primary School	Edinburgh	City of Edinburgh	Lowest 15%	35.5%

Children's Parliament worked with individual schools around the selection of children to participate in Embark! Schools were advised to select children based on the following criteria:

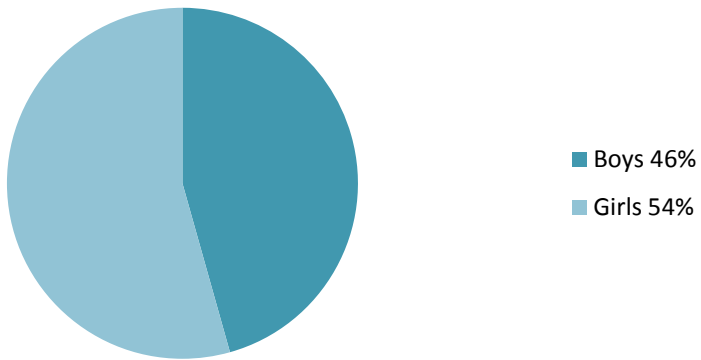
- Five children from each year group (P1 to P7)
- Equal numbers of boys and girls
- At least half of the children receive free school meals
- Interest in the creative arts
- Range of views, experiences and abilities of reading, both positive and negative

Demographics

In total, 103 children participated in the Embark! project.

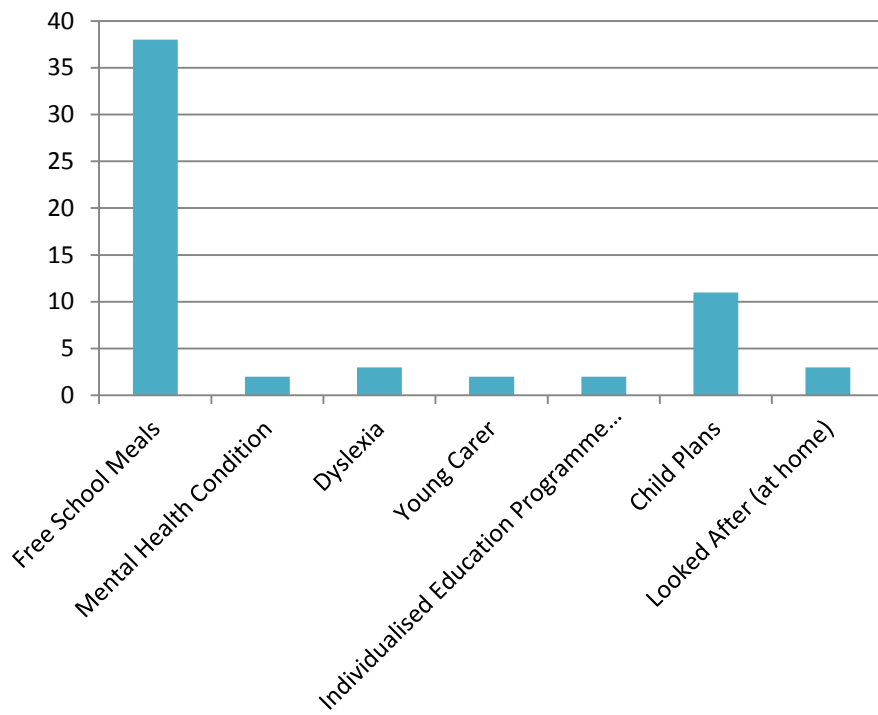


Gender



Additional Information

(Number of children)



Appendix 2

About Children's Parliament

Children's Parliament is Scotland's Centre for Excellence for Children's Rights and Participation. We give children and young people the opportunity to voice their ideas, thoughts and feelings so that their concerns and opinions can be listened to and included in our social and political landscape. We seek to increase awareness, knowledge and understanding of children's rights embedded in Scottish and international human rights policy and legislation.

Children's Parliament aims to improve outcomes for children and young people across Scotland through a rights-based approach. We do this in two ways. Firstly, we work directly with children and young people in projects, consultations and programmes which allow them to develop the skills, knowledge, behaviours and values necessary to engage in civic life. We focus on the development of respectful relationships and safe, supportive environments where all children can flourish. Secondly, we work with adults – parents and carers, government officials, teachers and other professionals – to raise awareness of children's rights and to equip them with the knowledge and skills to replicate Children's Parliament's approach in their own settings.

Through the unique combination of a rights-based approach and the creative arts, Children's Parliament allows adults to hear directly from children and young people in an engaging and innovative manner. Children's Parliament believes that children and young people are experts in their own lives and that they should be included in any discussion that will impact upon them. It is essential that their voices are heard in regard to life at home, at school, in the community and the wider world. By gaining a clearer understanding of children and young people's experiences and ideas, we (as policy makers, service managers and practitioners) will experience better relationships with the children and young people with whom we work and be better informed when making decisions.

For more about the work of Children's Parliament visit our website:

www.childrensparliament.org.uk