

Reading Rainbows scheme to hand out free books to under fives



Edinburgh's youngest bookworms will be treated to tales of pirates and flying carpets as part of a scheme to get pre-school children reading.

Around 1200 four-year-olds across the capital will receive two brand new books each, specially chosen to inspire youngsters to read and share stories.

Reading Rainbows, launched in Edinburgh last year, aims to spark a love of reading amongst under-fives, giving them the best start when they begin school.

The project is also designed to support parents and carers to share books and stories with their children, encouraging them to think about the tales together and to visit libraries more often.

On Tuesday, Forthview Nursery pupils gathered in Muirhouse Library to celebrate the launch of the new Reading Rainbows programme, which will feature literacy events, book sharing and craft activities in libraries and early years settings.

The class of four-year-olds were the first to receive this year's books, *The Pirate House* by Rebecca Patterson and *My Granny Went to Market* by Stella Blackstone and Christopher Corr.



Culture Convener Councillor Richard Lewis said: “This initiative is clearly incredibly beneficial to Edinburgh’s youngest learners and it’s fantastic to see such enthusiasm from those involved.

“Literacy is a key priority for the city and by inspiring a shared love of stories amongst children and their carers we hope to encourage a new generation ready to read, write and learn.”

Reading Rainbows was implemented in 2013 by City of Edinburgh Council’s Library and Information Service and Children and Families Service and focuses on areas of disadvantage across the city.

The initiative addresses the fact that, in Scotland, children receive free book packs between birth and the age of three and once they turn five from the Scottish Book Trust, but nothing when they are four.

By supplying free literacy gift packs, including two books, a white board and marker and a literacy advice pack for parents and carers, as well as story and craft events, project leaders hope to impact children’s literacy development.

The scheme received an overwhelmingly positive response last year with feedback showing participating parents were encouraged to read more to their children and to take part in library activities.

Find out more about events in Edinburgh’s libraries on the [Your Library website](#).

Photos courtesy of The City of Edinburgh Council