

Introducing Bookstart



Who are we?

BookTrust transforms lives by getting children and families reading.

Each year we reach millions of children across Wales, England and Northern Ireland with books, resources and support- and you can help.

Our work supports every family in Wales from their child's first year of life right through to the end of their Reception year in school, starting with the Bookstart Baby.

Bookstart encourages families to share and enjoy books, stories and rhymes from the first few months of life and throughout the early years.

Bookstart Baby packs are gifted at around 6 months and Bookstart Early Years packs are gifted at around 27 months.

All 22 local authorities in Wales have a Bookstart Coordinator who work with Health Visitors to deliver packs to families across Wales.



What is Bookstart?

Bookstart is available for every child in Wales.

Bookstart encourages families to share and enjoy books, stories and rhymes from the first few months of life and throughout the early years.

Bookstart Baby packs are gifted at 6 months and Bookstart Early Years packs are designed to be gifted at 27 months. They are included in the Healthy Child Wales Programme scheduled contacts.

All 22 local authorities in Wales have a Bookstart Coordinator based in their Library Services who work with Health Visitors to deliver packs to families across Wales.

The Bookstart programme in Wales aims to enable every mum, dad and carer to inspire a love of books, rhymes and stories in babies and young children, aged 0-3 years.

Health Visitors are the first point of contact with the child and their family and are ideally placed to help reach families who might otherwise not access messages about the benefits of reading together.



The Bookstart programme in Wales

The Bookstart programme in Wales aims to enable every mum, dad and carer to inspire a love of books, rhymes and stories in babies and young children, aged 0-3 years.

The outcomes of the programme are:

- to increase mums', dads' and carers' understanding of the importance of sharing books, stories and rhymes
- to make sharing books, rhymes and stories fun for families
- to improve mums', dads' and carers' confidence in sharing books with their baby/young child
- to expand mums', dads' and carers' knowledge on ways to access and share books, stories and rhymes with their baby
- to support mums, dads and carers to develop a reading habit with their children from birth
- to enable partners to deliver high quality messaging to mums, dads and carers around shared reading
- to increase mums', dads' and carers' confidence and willingness to share both English and Welsh books, stories and rhymes with their baby/young child



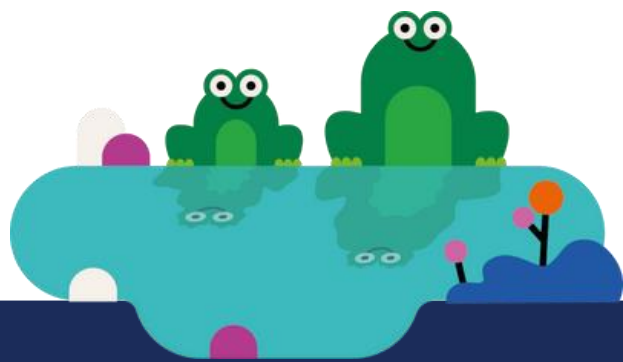
The Bookstart programme in Wales

Bookstart is more than a physical pack - it's a programme that encourages social development, early language, pre-literacy and communication skills through the enjoyment of books, stories and rhymes.

With the help of Health Visitors, every child in Wales can receive their Bookstart Baby and Early Years packs.

We want Health Visitors to use this training and resources to ensure Bookstart key messages are given to parents and care givers when they receive their packs. This encouragement from a respected professional will help increase families' ability to support their child's early development through the use of books, stories and rhymes.

Bookstart is a bilingual pack. You can find out how to introduce Welsh from birth at <https://www.gov.wales/cymraeg-for-kids>



The benefits of early shared reading

Socio-emotional development

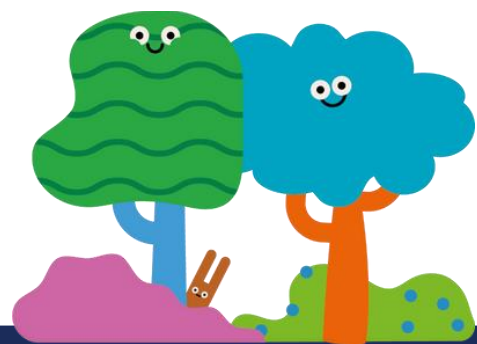
- Early shared reading supports child development by providing bonding opportunities. Babies love to be held close and to hear a parent or caregiver's voice
- Having routines and a rhythm to the day can help children to gain confidence and independence
- If a parent seems to be struggling with routines the Bookstart pack offers an opportunity to start a conversation about introducing regular events into their baby's day
- Establishing a reading routine helps a young child understand their day and what to expect from their environment and can help make a child feel more confident and secure. This can support self-esteem and wellbeing
- Sharing a book or story at night is an ideal way to settle a child
- Shared reading can increase the quality time that children and parents/carers spend together
- Stories and talking about books can help to develop empathy and encourages children to recognise and talk about their feelings and the feelings of others



The benefits of early shared reading

Cognitive Development

- Sitting quietly together supports listening, concentration and attention
- Babies and children will begin to anticipate their favourite illustration/character/part of the story and will use their memory to recall what happens next
- Talking around a book, looking at pictures, characters and story lines can support toddlers' imagination and thinking
- Exposure to stories helps to enrich the imagination and provide knowledge of a range of experiences that a child can draw on to give them confidence
- Stories can provide children with a framework within which behaviours can be interpreted and given meaning
- Providing a learning friendly environment at home helps children test and learn about the world around them and develop and maintain strong language, literacy and numeracy skills



The benefits of early shared reading

Language Development

- Encouraging parents and carers to share books, stories and rhymes can improve a child's language and communication skills
- Using funny voices and animal sounds brings a story to life and helps children sound-out words from an early age
- Hearing a story read aloud, learning songs and nursery rhymes can encourage children to have a good vocabulary
- Shared reading can encourage turn-taking and develops listening skills

Physical Development

- Sharing books from birth supports the development of physical coordination through page turning, lifting flaps and pointing at images
- Babies like to physically explore books using and developing their sensorimotor skills by sucking, patting, stroking or scratching books. Handling skills develop rapidly through a baby's first year



The longer-term benefits of reading

Reading brings profound and wide-ranging benefits that can have a lifelong positive impact on children's lives.

Children who read:

Are more likely to overcome disadvantage caused by inequalities

Are more likely to be happier, healthier and experience better mental wellbeing and self esteem

Are more likely to do better at school and make more progress across the curriculum

Are more likely to develop empathy and creativity



Bookstart Baby - Gifting

Baby Pack

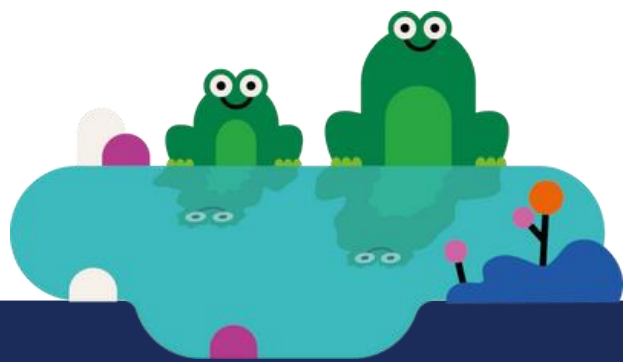
It's never too early to start sharing books, stories and rhymes with your child.



Bookstart Baby Pack

It is recommended that the Bookstart Baby pack is gifted around 6 months old

- It's important to open the pack and take out the contents with the parent or carer
- It's ideal to show the book to the child – parents may not have shown the baby a book before and it's nice for them to see how they respond
- For parents who may have low levels of literacy or lack confidence, explain how they can use the book to look at the pictures and talk with their children about what they can see
- Demonstrate how to use the finger puppets
- Let families know where their nearest library is and when Rhyme time or Storytime sessions are held – these are ideal social occasions for parents/carers and their children. Libraries will also have parenting books with advice about feeding and sleeping and information about local support groups



Bookstart Baby Pack

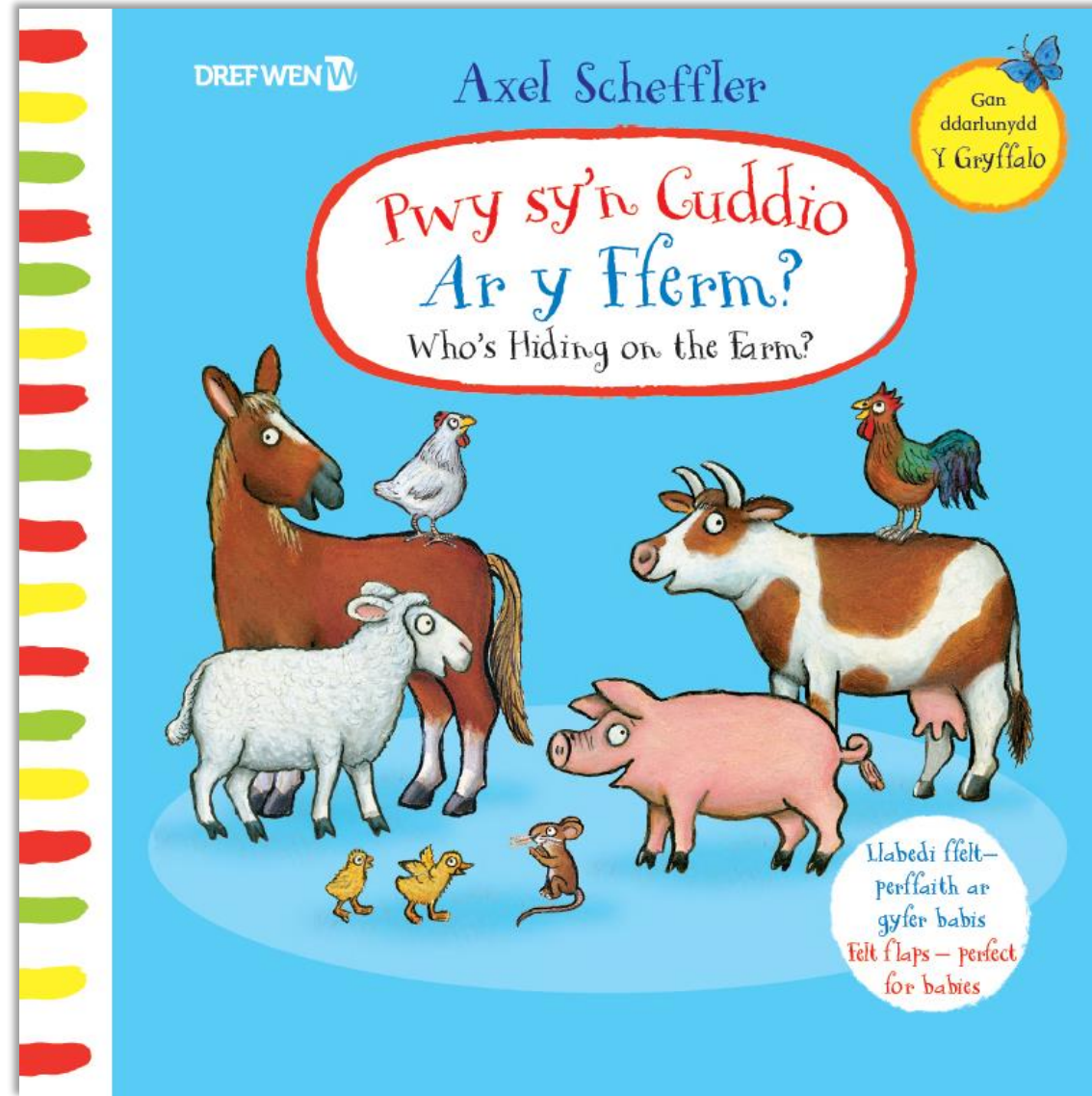
Using the baby book at the 6 month developmental check

- Engage the child directly with the book and encourage the parent/ carer to watch how they respond socially or with use of language
- Watch their facial expressions for reactions – do they smile/ show pleasure/ laugh?
- Observe how they use their manipulation skills to handle the book check for fine motor skills. Board books can be tactile and encourage babies to interact and develop their motor skills
- Good maternal and child mental health can be encouraged through the shared positive experiences of looking at a book together
- Share your observations with the parent/ carer – point out how their child smiles, engages with the book etc



Bookstart Baby Pack

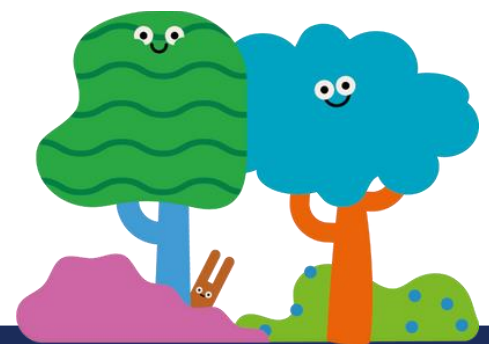
Bilingual book



It's never too early to start sharing books, stories and rhymes with your child.

The book is colourful, has engaging images and simple language that babies love.

If parents or carers don't speak Welsh, encourage them to give it a go – they can find an audio recording of the book in the pack at www.bookstart.org.uk/cymru



Bookstart Baby Pack

Sharing stories together leaflet

This bilingual booklet contains tips and advice on sharing stories, books and rhymes with babies at different stages of their development.

The leaflet helps parents understand how to use books throughout the first year of their baby's life.



Finger puppets

These fun and colourful finger puppets can be used to bring a story to life.

Putting fingers through the holes and making the puppets dance, or 'help' turn the page encourage babies attention and sensory exploration of the book. The puppets can also be easily popped into a bag and taken on adventures.



Bookstart Baby Pack

Library leaflet



The leaflet is a blue rectangular card with white and yellow text. At the top left is the BookTrust Cymru logo, a heart shape with a book inside, followed by the text 'BookTrust Cymru' and 'Dechrau Da Bookstart'. Below this is the main heading 'Come along to your local library' in large yellow font. To the left of a central illustration is a bulleted list of five points. The central illustration shows a woman with glasses and a purple top sitting on the floor, reading a book to three children (two boys and one girl) who are also sitting on the floor. At the bottom left, there is a small icon of a person with a plus sign. At the bottom right, there is a small icon of a book with a heart inside. The bottom of the leaflet contains contact information and logos for BookTrust Cymru, the Welsh Government, and the Department of Education.

BookTrust Cymru
Dechrau Da Bookstart

Come along to your local library

- Hundreds of free books to borrow for parents and babies
- Fun and friendly free rhyme time sessions
- Meet other families and make friends
- Noisy babies welcome
- It's never too soon to take your child to the library

Why not join your local library? It's free!
Find your local library at libraries.wales

BookTrust Cymru
Yr afael ym 1000
Getting children reading

booktrust.org.uk/cymru
@BookTrustCymru

Ymgydd Gŵyl Lyfrau Cymru
Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

This leaflet gives parents and carers information about what libraries can offer families, including information about events they can join.

Libraries are a great place for new parents and carers to get information and support – and make new friends at rhyme time and story time events.



Bookstart Baby Pack

Advice for gifting the Bookstart Baby pack:

Discuss the books with the parent. Ask if they currently read or sing rhymes and songs to their baby.

- If they do, discuss what they do and what works for them. You might want to encourage them to read regularly, develop reading/ rhyming routines or
- If they don't, that's okay! Now's the time to start.

Explain how reading aloud and sharing a book can contribute to bonding, socio-emotional, and speech and language development.

Model how a book can be shared with the baby so parents/ carers can see the baby's reaction. Explain what the baby can see and hear. **Engaging the baby with the pack during your visit is one of the most useful things you can do!**

Suggest how to establish a reading routine – even just 10 minutes a day after a bath and before bed, while dinner is cooking or finding any quiet time to cuddle up to share a book is beneficial to baby and parents. Help them identify what might work for them.



Bookstart Baby Pack

Gifting tip

If you don't have much time make sure that you:

Give a warm and encouraging message about the joy and benefits of sharing books

Show the contents of the pack

Encourage families to use their library

Let them know about any local events, such as rhyme times, or relevant family learning opportunities



Talk with me

Talk with me - tips and guidance to support baby's speech and language development from the Talk with Me campaign.

For more information visit gov.wales/talkwithme

Talk with me

10 tips to help me learn to talk



1 Start talking to me before I am born

2 I can learn our language and culture from you

3 Our best place is face to face

4 Sing me a rhyme at any time

5 Let's talk and play every day

6 Let's look at books together

7 Talk with me about what we can see

8 Let's turn 'screen time' into 'you and me time'!

9 Add a word to what you have heard me say

big!

10 I love to talk with everyone!

The Welsh version of this poster is available at: llyw.cymru/siarad-gyda-fi

gov.wales/talkwithme



Talk with me

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1 Start talking to me before I am born



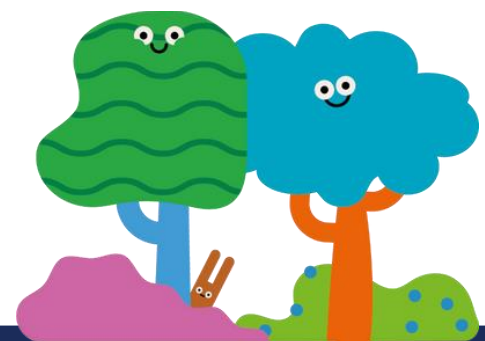
- I can hear sounds from 24 weeks of pregnancy.
- I love to hear you talk and sing to me before I am born.
- After I'm born, I soon recognise voices that I heard in the womb.



2 I can learn our language and culture from you



- I can learn any language from birth.
- I can learn more than one language at the same time. You can learn with me.
- Talk with me in the language you know best.



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3 Our best place is face to face



- Before I can talk, I tell you how I feel through eye contact, smiling, gurgling, and crying.
- When we are face to face, you can see what I'm interested in and what I'm trying to tell you.
- I like looking at you when we're talking together.



"Talk with me at mealtimes about the food we're eating."



4 Sing me a rhyme at any time



- If I know lots of songs and rhymes, I will learn to read more easily.
- I like to hear the same songs and rhymes again and again.
- When we are singing, I like joining in with actions and words with you.

Heads, shoulders...
knees and toes...



"Find a rhyme that makes me smile and join in with the actions."



BookTrust Cymru
Dechrau Da Bookstart

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5 Let's talk and play every day

- Talk with me when we are playing and I will learn new words.
- I enjoy playing with you. If I choose the game, I may play for longer.
- Meal times, nappy time and bath time, anytime is 'talk and play' time.

"Sit teddy with us at meal time and talk to him too!"

'Carrot.'

'Mmm, carrot.'

6 Let's look at books together

- Talking about the pictures in books helps me to learn new words.
- I can't read yet, but I love listening and joining in when we look at books together.
- I like it when you use funny voices and faces to tell me the story.

ball!

"Find books with big pictures and talk with me about what we can see."

'Rooooar!'

'And the dinosaur said 'Rooooar!''



Talk with me

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7 Talk with me about what we can see

- If I hear the same words again and again, it helps me to remember them.
- Tell me what I can see around me, even before I can talk.
- Give me time to join in, then copy my words back to me.

"Point at what we can see and say the name for me."

"It's a dog."
"Doggy."

8 Let's turn 'screen time' into 'you and me time'!

- I can't listen to two things at once, it's easier for me to learn if TVs and screens are turned off.
- Our talking time is special, so please focus on me not your phone.
- Talk with me about what we can see, if we are watching a screen.

"Use my toys to play along as we sing a song on screen."

The infographic is divided into two main sections. The left section, titled '7 Talk with me about what we can see', features a yellow dog illustration at the top right. Below it, a large speech bubble contains three bullet points. To the left, a baby in a yellow onesie sits on a blue speech bubble with the text "Point at what we can see and say the name for me." Below this, a woman sits on a bench with a baby in a stroller and a dog. Speech bubbles from the woman say "It's a dog." and "Doggy." The right section, titled '8 Let's turn 'screen time' into 'you and me time'!', features a baby in purple overalls holding a tablet showing a dinosaur. A large speech bubble contains three bullet points. Below it, a man and a child sit on a sofa with a laptop and musical notes. A speech bubble from the man says "Use my toys to play along as we sing a song on screen."



Talk with me

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9 Add a word to what you have heard me say

- I learn from you, so let's take turns talking together.
- When I am learning to talk, remember to praise me, even if it sounds like I'm babbling.
- Tell me what I have said and add another word, so I know what to say next time.

"When I try to say something, say the right words back to me and add another word."

"Yes, it's a car, a BIG car."

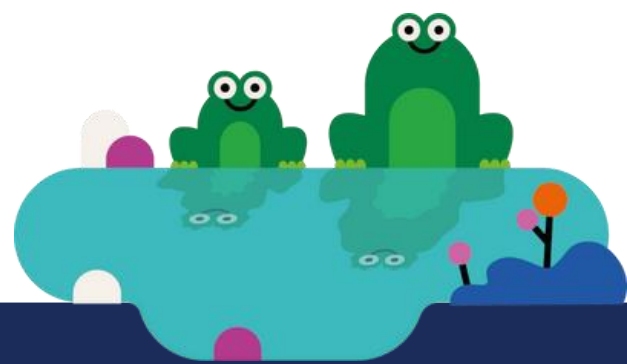
"Car."

10 I love to talk with everyone!

- I like looking at faces and listening to people talking with me.
- It's easier for me to talk and babble without a bottle or dummy.
- I love to talk with my friends, family, pets and toys!

"Have a picnic with my favourite people and talk about the food we like."

The infographic is divided into two main sections. The left section, titled '9 Add a word to what you have heard me say', features a yellow car icon at the top right. It contains a large speech bubble with three bullet points: 'I learn from you, so let's take turns talking together.', 'When I am learning to talk, remember to praise me, even if it sounds like I'm babbling.', and 'Tell me what I have said and add another word, so I know what to say next time.' Below this is an illustration of a baby sitting on a rocket, with a man and a woman below. The man says 'Car.' and the woman replies 'Yes, it's a car, a BIG car.' A speech bubble from the baby says 'When I try to say something, say the right words back to me and add another word.' The right section, titled '10 I love to talk with everyone!', features a yellow heart icon at the top right. It contains a large speech bubble with three bullet points: 'I like looking at faces and listening to people talking with me.', 'It's easier for me to talk and babble without a bottle or dummy.', and 'I love to talk with my friends, family, pets and toys!'. Below this is an illustration of a baby sitting on a carrot, with a family having a picnic on a rug. A speech bubble from the baby says 'Have a picnic with my favourite people and talk about the food we like.'



Bookstart Early Years - Gifting

Early Years Pack

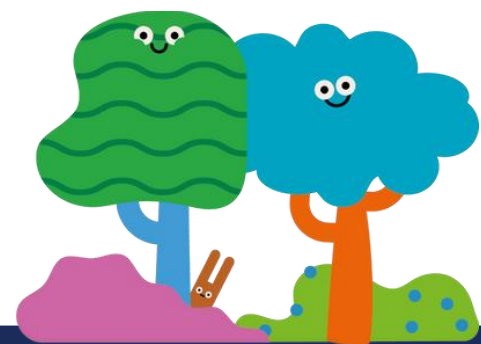
The Bookstart Early Years pack is a gift for the child, so you can hand it directly to them and help them open it up to explore.



Bookstart Early Years Pack

It is recommended that the Bookstart Early Years packs are given out at the 27 month check

- Families should already have received the Bookstart Baby pack at 6 months and will have been encouraged to establish a simple reading routine. The Early Years pack can support families to build on this routine, or gives them another prompt to start reading together regularly
- At this age you can give the pack to the child to open and explore
- If parents have not established a reading routine already or don't have books at home, signpost them to their local library where they can borrow lots of free books to enjoy together
- Encourage parents/carers to ask questions to the child when sharing a book – What can they see on the page? What colours? How many? Names of animals/characters. What do they think will happen next?



Bookstart Early Years Pack

Using the Early Years pack at the 27 month development check

- Books can be used to assess manipulation skills, such as turning pages of the book
- Ask the child questions about what's happening in the book to demonstrate their comprehension and understanding of the world around them – can they recognise colours and objects, have they seen them in the real world?
- Does the child smile/laugh and show emotional responses?
- Can the child tell you what's going to happen next? Do they know some of the words in the books or the names for objects?

Additional messages to share with parents/ carers

- Use books to help develop your child's language and communication skills. Ask your child to join in with the words and actions in a book. Ask questions about what you can see in the pictures
- Encourage your child to choose what they want to read next. This will help increase their enjoyment
- Don't worry if your child wants to read the same book again and again! This will help them learn the language in the story and can be comforting



Bookstart Early Years Pack

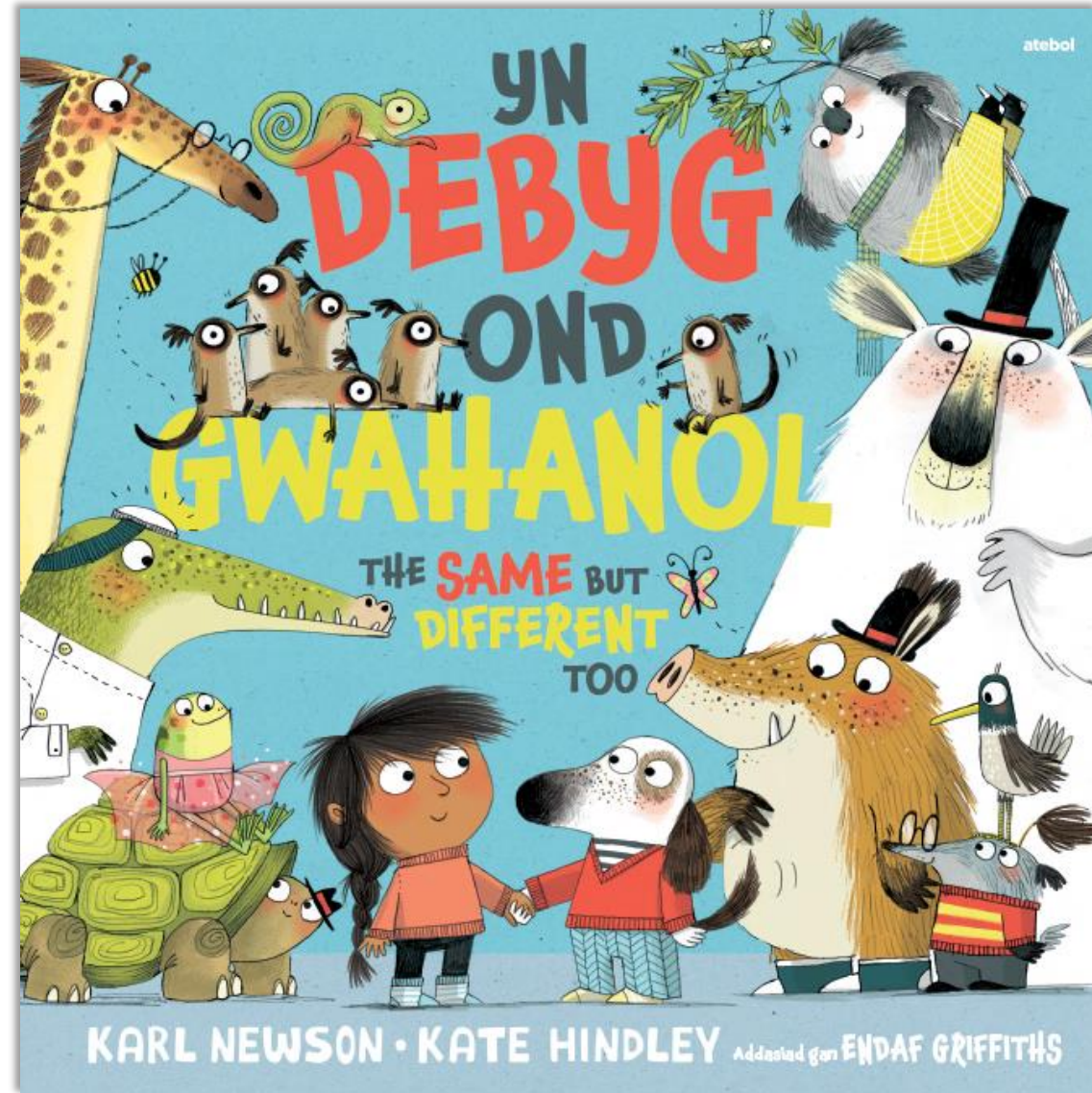
Using books and rhymes to support development at 27 months

- Books and rhymes can support sleep routines. Try using a rhyme like 'Twinkle Twinkle' to signal that it's nap time or bedtime – this can be a cue to help your child cope with transition from wakefulness to rest and sleep. Cuddling up with a book can soothe your child and help them sleep
- Use books and rhymes as a reward or reinforcement e.g. in potty training, have a potty/toilet rhyme or find a fun book about potty training
- Books and rhymes can help distract your child when they are weaning
- Use rhymes and songs to include your child in household routines (e.g. tidying up, going shopping, getting into the car or any period of change/transition)
- Favourite books and rhymes can help distract or entertain your child when they are waiting or anxious e.g. at the doctor's surgery, on a bus or long journey
- Most nursery/ day care settings will share lots of books and rhymes. If your child is already familiar with these things and enjoys them, it can will help them transition from home to nursery to school settings



Bookstart Early Years Pack

Bilingual book



The book has been selected to be age appropriate for toddlers. It is colourful and engaging and can be enjoyed over and over again.

Spending just 10 minutes a day reading together every day helps your child develop and social and emotional skills and can help them grow into a confident and happy learner.

If families aren't Welsh speakers they can listen to the book in Welsh at www.bookstart.org.uk/cymru



Bookstart Early Years Pack

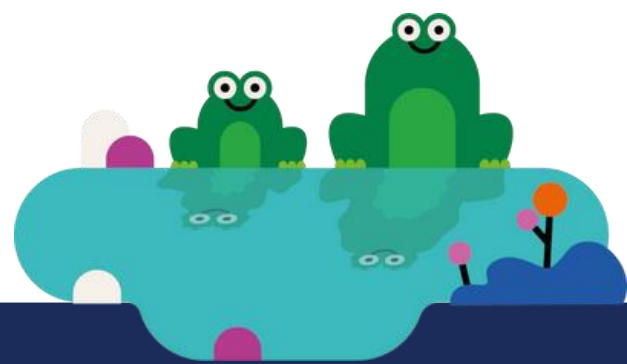
Sharing stories together leaflet



This leaflet contains tips on how to read with your toddler, including how to choose books and how to make sharing stories fun.

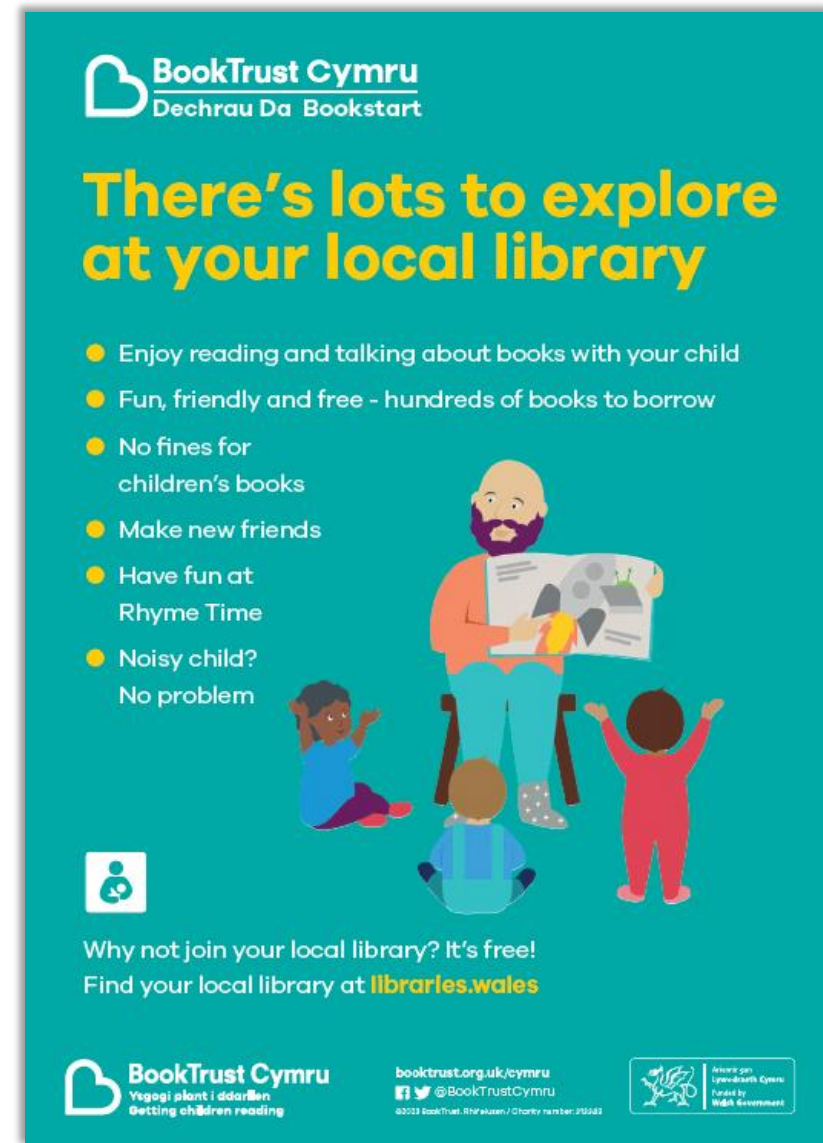
It also has a pull out and keep book list that you can take along to the library

Reading with a toddler is different to reading with a baby. Parents and carers shouldn't feel discouraged if children won't sit still to listen to a story. This resource suggests different approaches to reading with toddlers to make it fun and interactive. If reading together is fun, a child is more likely to want to do it again.



Bookstart Early Years Pack

Library leaflet



This leaflet encourages parents and carers to go along to their local library and choose books with their child.

Families can borrow books for free, attend child-friendly events and find books that give help and advice for issues that arise during the toddler stage – sleeping routines, tantrums, fussy eating etc.



Bookstart Early Years Pack

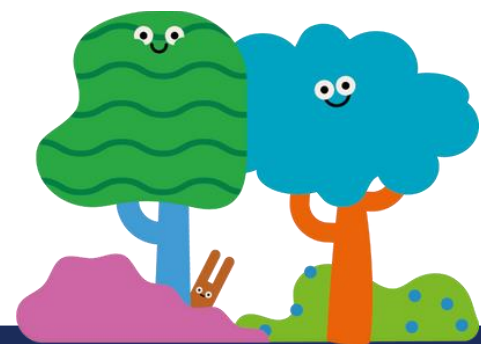
Advice for gifting the Bookstart Early Years pack:

Discuss the family's reading routine– ask the parent when they read, what is the child's favourite book? If families don't have books at home, you can ask how the child enjoyed their Bookstart Baby books, and sign post them to their local library as a great place to choose books to enjoy together.

Explain that stories, books and rhymes can help a child's development -including them in every day routines can help their child develop the skills they need to enjoy school.

Model how to choose a book and demonstrate how they could read it together – ask the parent to sit down with the child, discuss the pictures, and colours. Make animal noises or funny voices to bring the story to life and make the child laugh.

Suggest that parents encourage the child tell the story – what's happening in the pictures? What do they think will happen next?



Bookstart Early Years Pack

Gifting tip

If you don't have much time make sure you:

Give the pack to the child

Demonstrate reading to the child – talk about what's happening in the book, the colours, the characters, guess what happens next, use funny voices and sounds

Encourage parents to have a regular reading routine – 10 minutes a day if possible

Encourage parents to use their library



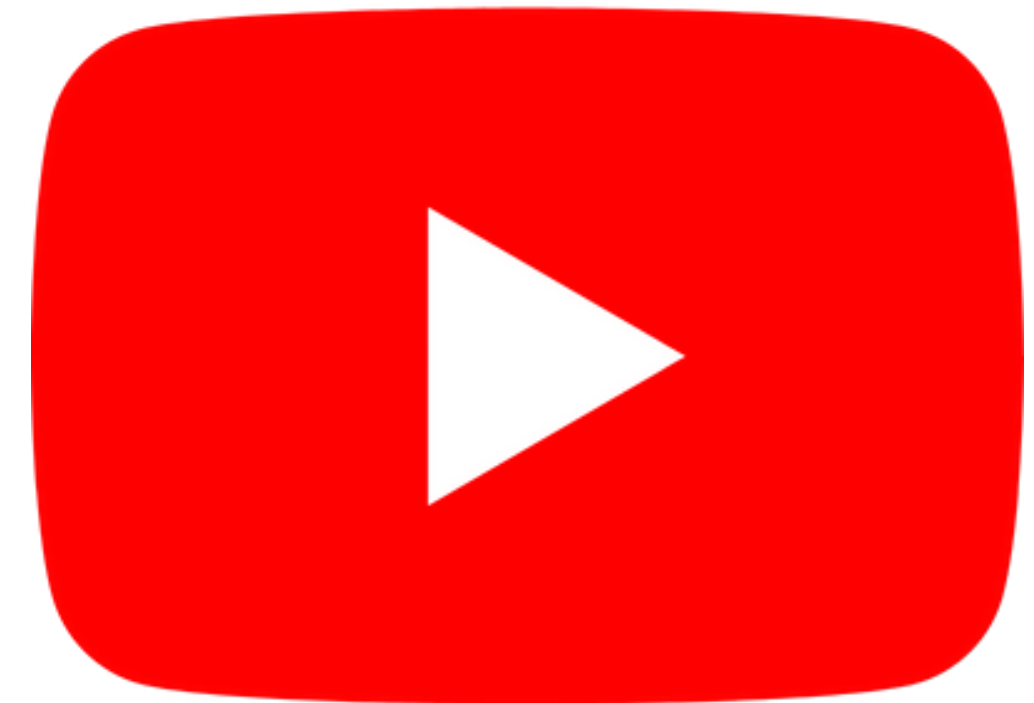
Library Services

Bookstart and library services partnership video

The library service supports families with small children by providing rhyme and story events with opportunities for parents to socialise with their babies and toddlers.

Please signpost families to their local library and events that they can participate in.

You can find your local library here: <https://libraries.wales>



Next steps in the reading journey

Early years settings, childcare providers and families are invited to take part in **Big Welsh Rhyme Time** which takes place every February.

From the age of 3, children in nursery settings can take advantage of our **Pori Drwy Stori Nursery** programme and all reception age children in Wales can take part in **Pori Drwy Stori Reception** at their primary school.

The BookTrust **Letterbox Club** programme supports vulnerable children and looked after children.

To find out more about our work visit www.booktrust.org.uk/cymru and follow us on Twitter **@BookTrustCymru**

Illustrations by Josefina Preumayr

