



# Bookstart Superbox Conference 2016

## Experiencing Books

**Holywell, Springfield Hotel**  
12th October 2016

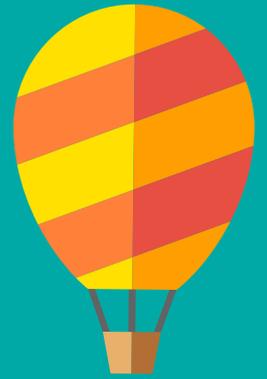
**Bridgend, Court Colman Hotel**  
18th October 2016

[booktrust.org.uk/cymru](http://booktrust.org.uk/cymru)



 **BookTrust Cymru**  
Inspire a love of reading Ysbrydoli cariad at ddarllen

# Welcome to Superbox 2016 – Experiencing Books



**‘Experiencing Books’ sums up so many things that we at BookTrust believe are important about books and reading in the Early Years.**



Of course, to experience books you need to have access to them. That’s why our best-known programme, Bookstart, aims to give every child in Wales their own books, and why we work closely with libraries to help parents and children continue to read and enjoy books and reading.

But ‘experiencing’ a book is about so much more, isn’t it? It’s about the experience of shared reading – cosy, comforting (or ‘cwtchy’), even magical. It’s about entering a new world and experiencing new people, places and ideas. And it’s about talking about and playing with the characters, stories and ideas that we’ve found there.

We believe that ‘experiencing books’ should be a joy and a pleasure for all children, and that it’s a right and a necessity. Experiencing books from an early age can affect factors including speech and language development, family relationships and later educational attainment – to name just a few.

Superbox has always aimed to bring together and share a rich range of ideas about how we can make ‘experiencing books’ for children and families interesting, useful and exciting. 2016 is no different.

Across the conferences, we’ll explore the relationship between books, creativity and arts in the early years. We’ll explore reading and outdoor learning, interactive storytelling, creating positive bilingual experiences with books and memorable storytimes.

At the heart of Superbox is a drive to put books and reading at the heart of Early Years work, whatever the setting or the focus of the practitioner. Families’ Bookstart packs are often just the start of a reading journey and we all have a role to play in making sure this journey continues. We hope that you’ll take away ideas from Superbox to add to your practice – and we’d love to hear about what you do.

Finally, thank you to all the contributors who are sharing their time, expertise and passion.

**Diolch yn fawr,**

**Helen Wales, National Development Manager, BookTrust Cymru and the BookTrust Cymru team**

# About BookTrust



BookTrust is the largest reading charity in the UK. Our work in Wales is delivered by our in-country office, BookTrust Cymru. We work to inspire a love of reading in children because we know that reading can transform lives. We give out over 3.5 million carefully chosen books to children throughout the UK; in Wales and England every parent receives a BookTrust book in their baby's first year of life. Our books, guidance and resources are delivered via health, library, schools and Early Years' practitioners, and are supported with advice and resources to encourage the reading habit.

Reading for pleasure has a dramatic impact on educational outcomes, well-being and social mobility, and is also a huge pleasure in itself. We are committed to starting children on their reading journey and supporting them throughout.

## BookTrust Cymru

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# Our programmes in Wales

Every year, we give out over 175,000 carefully chosen books to children in Wales and over 230,000 literacy and numeracy resources through our programmes Bookstart/Dechrau Da, Pori Drwy Stori and the Letterbox Club. Our programmes are accompanied by tailored support and guidance for parents, carers and practitioners. These programmes are funded by the Welsh Government.



**Bookstart/Dechrau Da** gets families reading and sharing books from a very young age. Every child in Wales receives two Bookstart packs, each containing English and Welsh books, guidance and other resources to help families share books, stories and rhymes. Packs are given out by Health Visitors in the first year of life and again at 18-27 months. Bookstart is delivered in partnership with Libraries in Wales. [www.bookstart.org.uk/about/wales](http://www.bookstart.org.uk/about/wales)

**Pori Drwy Stori** encourages families to enjoy books, rhymes and numbers together and is delivered in partnership with schools in Wales. Every child in Wales in Reception receives a specially designed literacy and numeracy resource each term. BookTrust Cymru provides a full programme of support for teachers and other practitioners to get the most out of Pori. [poridrwystori.booktrust.org.uk](http://poridrwystori.booktrust.org.uk)



**Letterbox Club** inspires children who are looked after to read and enjoy books and learning. Children receive regular parcels of specially selected books, stationery, number and writing activities through this award-winning programme. [www.letterboxclub.org.uk/letterbox-worldwide/wales](http://www.letterboxclub.org.uk/letterbox-worldwide/wales)

**Sign up to** BookTrust Cymru's Early Years Newsletter: <http://eepurl.com/b2bU2f>

**Follow us on Twitter** @BookTrustCymru

# Superbox aims



Bookstart Superbox is a programme designed to inspire children and families across Wales to enjoy books and read together. The Superbox programme was established in 2011 and is part of BookTrust's Bookstart/ Dechrau Da programme, funded in Wales by the Welsh Government.

Through Bookstart/ Dechrau Da all children in Wales are eligible to receive high quality baby and early years books, delivered in partnership with Library and Health Visiting Services across Wales.

Superbox aims to increase the impact of Bookstart/ Dechrau Da by engaging a wider range of Early Years workers in activity that supports the key Bookstart messages.

The programme equips frontline Early Years workers across Wales with skills and resources to:

- promote shared reading in a range of settings
- encourage parents and carers to read and enjoy books with their children
- use books creatively in Early Years sessions

# Superbox evaluation 2016



We ask practitioners taking part in Superbox to help us to evaluate the programme so that we can keep improving it.

We'll ask you to complete a conference evaluation. We'll then ask you to complete an online evaluation form in a few months' time to get your feedback once you've had chance to use Superbox in your setting.

You'll also find simple 'Session Diaries' in your Superbox resource packs. We'd be grateful if you could complete this to share an example of how you've used the resources. You can download extra copies from our website.



# Bookstart key messages 2016

The Bookstart Key Messages are shared with parents and carers by Health Visitors when they gift the Bookstart packs.

Sharing these messages in your Superbox sessions will help to reinforce them.

- You can be your child's first and most important teacher. Stories, books and rhymes are an essential part of your child's development, so it's important to include them in your everyday routine. This will help your child develop many important skills that will help them become happy and confident learners.
- It is good to enjoy stories, books and rhymes with your child from as early an age as possible. Babies don't need to understand all the words; they will just love to listen to your voice.

- Sharing books, talking about the pictures and cuddling up close together will help you to build a strong and loving relationship with your child. Everyone in the family can join in: dads, mums, grandparents, brothers, sisters, aunties and uncles.
- Your child will love lots of different kinds of books and will enjoy choosing ones for themselves, so it is good to join the library. Libraries welcome all ages, it's free to join and Welsh libraries do not charge fine for late children's books.

Find information about your local library at [www.welshlibraries.org](http://www.welshlibraries.org)

Explore our booklists for a great selection of Welsh language and bilingual books for babies and toddlers [www.bookstart.org.uk/books/booklists/124/](http://www.bookstart.org.uk/books/booklists/124/)



# Evaluating Superbox – What we've learnt

In 2016, the School of Early Childhood at the University of Wales Trinity St. David's undertook a qualitative evaluation of the Superbox programme.

Here is a brief summary of some of the main findings.

## 1. Children enjoyed using multiple copies of books in a Superbox Storytime

Feedback confirmed that there are real benefits to the Superbox Storytime approach of giving every parent/ carer a copy of the book to read with their child whilst the group leader guides the shared reading. Importantly, parents/ carers and children enjoyed this approach: 'The children were thrilled to have a copy each and loved following the trail [Slow Snail]'

## 2. The bonding and emotional benefits of sharing books can be supported and enhanced by Superbox Storytimes

The evaluation suggested that the benefits of shared reading in terms of quality time spent together, connecting being safe with reading and building a relationship through sharing a book can be enhanced by using multiple copies of the same book.

In the words of one practitioner, a Storytime with multiple copies of the book means that 'There is the intimacy of one to one but security of a group. Mum and child snuggled with a book but at same time [the] security of someone else running [the] story time.'

## 3. Superbox Storytimes and using the Superbox resources can raise parents' awareness and confidence about using books with their children

'Superbox shows it is not scary'.

Another said that 'Parents have been happy to take part – they like having a copy of the book to look at and to follow the story. A number say that they now feel more confident about reading with their children at home.' In addition, 'Parents seem to enjoy the sociable nature of these sessions. Some say that they read more with their children at home now as well'.

**Superbox Tip:** Remind parents that looking at books isn't about reading every word – looking at and talking about the pictures is beneficial, too.

## 4. Using Superbox ideas can support a child's holistic development

Parents in the evaluation noted that the sessions had supported their child's language, communication and motor skills development.

Practitioners also noted the value of the multisensory nature of some Superbox sessions and how the books can be used to support numeracy, communication skills and vocabulary development. One practitioner also noted how children developed incidental language about getting books and putting them away, as well as social skills and ideas about sharing and taking turns.

**Superbox Tip:** Make the Superbox books accessible to children in settings – some practitioners found that children were choosing to read those books themselves to look at them independently when they'd been read as a group.

## 5. Activities are useful when developing engagement with books

Many practitioners used Superbox resources as part of sessions with other activities, including baby massage, dancing, singing nursery rhymes and craft.

Activities enhanced experiences of sharing books and provided a 'way in' to books for less confident parents. One practitioner summed this up as the importance of 'Doing things together. Crafts activities helped bring more to books than just the reading of words. We tend to build on the content of the books rather than always reading the content.'

The social element of these sessions was also noted: 'Parents also like getting together and doing activities based on the books.'

## 6. The bilingual Superbox books can support families to engage with Welsh

Many participants in the Evaluation commented on the quality of the bilingual resources. Practitioners said that families enjoyed using the bilingual books.

Superbox Tip: Remember that there are audio recordings of the Welsh books on the Bookstart website – [www.bookstart.org.uk/about/wales/english/listen/](http://www.bookstart.org.uk/about/wales/english/listen/)

## 7. Superbox can help to raise awareness of Bookstart and reading at home

Many families will already have copies of the Superbox books via their Bookstart packs. Some practitioners made the link with these packs to encourage families to read the books at home. One practitioner noted that 'Parents commented on how lovely the resources were and how they could re-create the ideas at home. Some said they would re-look at their books at home.'

**Superbox Tip:** Make links to the books parents might have at home – especially if they have the Superbox books from their Bookstart packs.

**And finally...Enjoy it! The Evaluators saw that the enthusiasm of practitioners for the books was quickly passed on to parents and children.**



# Running a Superbox Session

## What is a Superbox session?

A Superbox session is a shared reading session with children and families using multiple copies of the same book. As well as the book itself, sessions can also make use of activities including rhymes, crafts and multi-sensory play to help families really get the most out of books.

Superbox resources are flexible and can be adapted for use in a wide range of Early Years settings.

## What are the benefits of Superbox sessions?

- The security of the group session can help parents and carers feel more confident and empowered to share and enjoy books with their child.
- Sharing books can help create a loving bond between parents and carers and their child as they cuddle up together with the story, and having access to their own copy of the book can help make this happen.
- In Superbox sessions, young children and babies also love having their own copy of the book so that they can see the pictures and turn the pages.
- Superbox sessions are a great way to get babies and young children familiar with books and encourage families to read together regularly at home.
- Activities can provide a 'way in' to the book for less confident parents.

## Tips for running a Superbox session

This advice comes from practitioners who have run Superbox and Storytime sessions.

### Preparation

It's a good idea to prepare more activities than you need, just in case something you've chosen isn't right for the group or takes less time than anticipated.

It can be helpful to have:

- A session plan
- Materials/ props and Superbox books to share
- A watch or clock to time the session
- Background music – this can help make the environment more welcoming when people arrive (public licencing laws permitting)
- A couple of alternative activities and rhymes in case the ones you have chosen 'don't work' or your audience is younger/ older than you anticipated
- 'Feedback book' so that families can give instant feedback as to how the session has gone
- Parental permission/ consent forms if you are taking photographs or filming the session

### The session itself

The session content will depend on what you want to get out of the session, but here are some useful tips.

- Don't be afraid to read the book more than once! Children like hearing the same book many times and this helps them develop language. You can also add different activities if you read the book a second time.
- Use an empathy doll (or the Bookstart Bear if you have one!) when you're reading the book – this is a great way to model to parents and carers how to interact with their children.
- If you're using rhymes, think about which rhymes will fit at different points in the session and try to use a variety. 'Types of rhymes' include:
  - Welcome/ Hello/ Name songs – at the start
  - Counting songs
  - Action songs – lively and noisy, good for raising energy!
  - Parachute songs – for use with a parachute, if you have access to one
  - Calming songs – parents will appreciate these after action songs!
  - Goodbye songs

- Have fun yourself! If that means picking your favourite rhymes/ activities for your first sessions then that's fine.
- If you're not confident about singing rhymes yourself, stick to ones that you know at first. Children really won't mind hearing the same rhymes again and again!
- Always read through your story before the session and familiarise yourself with the content.

### Be flexible

You don't have to stick to the plan! If families would like to take longer over an activity, request a special song or rhyme or want one repeated later in the session then that's fine – it means they're enjoying things!

Don't worry if you don't get through all the activities you planned. The mood of the group will often dictate what works and what doesn't. The main thing is that the sessions are fun!



# Running Superbox Sessions: Common Questions

## What if I forget the words or actions to the rhymes I use?

Choose a few simple rhymes that you are familiar with first to build your confidence and repeat a rhyme two or three times in a session. The first time you sing it will help children and families get familiar with it, then when you sing it again they'll start to learn it. It's best not to hand out sheets with the words written down as these can be distracting.

## What if no one else joins in?

At the start of a session, ask parents/carers to join in and explain that children will have much more fun and enjoy the session even more if they can hear their parents joining in and having fun. If adults are self-conscious about singing, remind them that babies and children just like to hear the sound of their voice and don't care whether they can sing in tune.

## What if hardly anyone attends the session?

Adults might be self-conscious about joining in if there aren't very many people present. If this happens, use activities which involve the adult and child close together, such as 'jigging on the knee' or 'cuddling' and 'tickling' songs.

When sessions are new, it's common for numbers to be lower but word of mouth often brings in more people in time.

Encourage families to bring friends with children along to the next session. Promote your sessions as widely as possible, through other partners and social media, if you have access. And, of course, make sure the sessions are fun, friendly and relaxed and a social occasion for the adults, too.

## How do I stop parents talking during the session?

Some people set 'ground rules' at the start of the session in a friendly way. For example, they might remind adults to turn off mobile phones and how much children like it when they join in. Making sure that there's time at the end for parents to chat can help, too. Involve the adults as much as possible: ask them questions about the books, songs and rhymes and activities they remember as a child or their child's favourite activities and rhymes.

## Useful Resources

- Ideas for rhymes can be found on the BookTrust Cymru website [www.booktrust.org.uk/cymru/rhigymau](http://www.booktrust.org.uk/cymru/rhigymau)
- Activity cards to accompany the Bookstart books can be downloaded at [www.bookstart.org.uk/professionals/get-involved/super-box/](http://www.bookstart.org.uk/professionals/get-involved/super-box/)

# Meet the contributors

## Keynote speaker and workshop leader (North and South Wales)

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**Ruth Churchill Dower**  
Director of Earlyarts, an award winning creative teaching and training network.

Ruth will be exploring how creative approaches through music, singing, movement, drawing and malleable materials can provide fantastic pathways for children's voices to be expressed and heard, for their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills to be developed.

Delegates will learn how, when we as adults discover our own creativity, we become superb facilitators of children's many languages, helping them express deep and significant ideas through different outlets, so that children feel better understood as well as improving their physical, social, emotional and cognitive skills.

Ruth works as a trainer, consultant, author, speaker and thought leader with a specialist focus on how creative strategies can nurture our learning and leadership development.

[ruth@earlyarts.co.uk](mailto:ruth@earlyarts.co.uk)

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## Workshops – North Wales

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**Peter Dain**  
Ysgol Hiraddug, Dyserth

### Taking Reading Outdoors

The session will focus on a selection of books with accompanying activities in the outdoors to compliment, enthuse and engage children and adults. The aim of the session is to give practitioners inexpensive ideas and inspiration to take literacy outdoors and to demonstrate how easy it is to bring their favourite books alive.

Peter taught in the Foundation Phase across all ages for 16 years and seconded as Foundation Phase Training Support Officer for Denbighshire for 3 years. He also seconded as Environmental Education Officer for Dwr Cymru at the Alwen Environmental Education Centre. A father of five adopted boys aged 2-13, Peter is

passionate about the outdoor environment and a keen developer of the outdoor classroom on a shoestring!

[pcdain@gmail.com](mailto:pcdain@gmail.com)

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**Gwenda Williams**  
Gwynedd Flying Start

### Bringing Books to Life

Gwenda will share ideas and examples from her experience of working with families and creating an enthusiasm for books and reading. This will include ideas about how she has used Superbox books, as well as other books that have worked well in her practice. This will be an interactive workshop with opportunities to hear ideas, as well as to share and develop your own. Gwenda will include suggestions about how to incorporate movement and props into story sessions, as well as other ways to 'extend the life of a book'.

Gwenda has a wealth of Early Years experience having been a part of the Language and Play programme since 2004. Her real passion is sharing books and stories and in her previous role as Language and Play Coordinator for Gwynedd, she also ran storytelling training courses for Mudiad Meithrin.

[gwendalloydwilliams@gwynedd.llyw.cymru](mailto:gwendalloydwilliams@gwynedd.llyw.cymru)

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## Workshops – South Wales

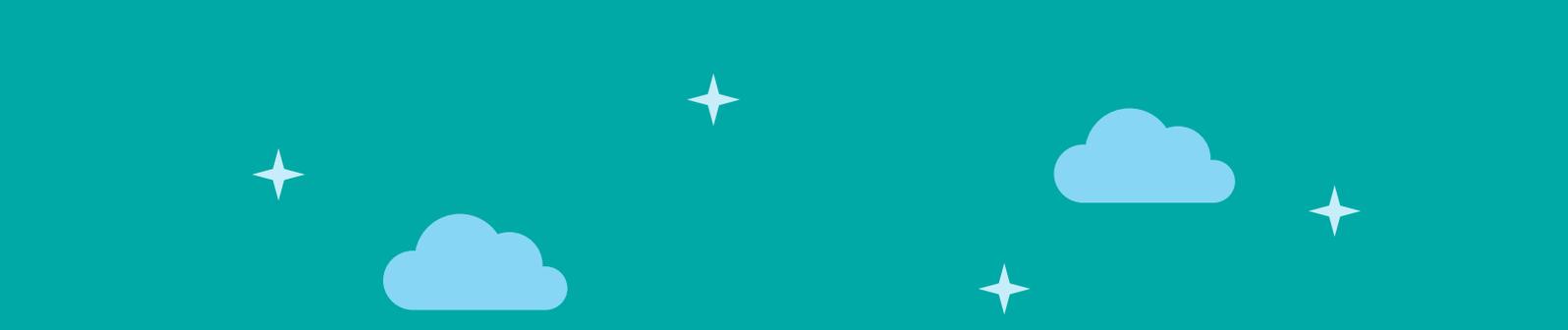
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**Jen Dafis and Glenda Tinney**  
School of Early Years, University of Wales Trinity Saint David

### Reading and Outdoor Learning - Parachute Clip Clop

This session will explore the benefits of using outdoor learning to develop literacy skills. During the workshop delegates will learn different ways of linking shared reading to outdoor learning activities and will be given ideas for physical activities which can be linked with Superbox books.

Jen Dafis has worked in the field of Early Years for several years and has extensive experience in outdoor learning.



She has lectured at UWTSD for over four years following several years working in Early Years provision and developing and implementing policy and strategy with local government, health and the voluntary sector in South East Wales.

[j.dafis@uwtsd.ac.uk](mailto:j.dafis@uwtsd.ac.uk)

Glenda Tinney has a long term interest in outdoor learning and sustainability in the Early Years sector and has been a lecturer at UWTSD for fifteen years. She is a qualified Forest School leader and was involved in undertaking the School of Early Years' Evaluation of Superbox 2015 with colleagues from UWTSD.

[g.tinney@uwtsd.ac.uk](mailto:g.tinney@uwtsd.ac.uk)

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**Donna Hardman, Aneurin Leisure  
(Blaenau Gwent Libraries)**

**Trish Thomas, Powys Library Service**

**Building Confidence  
in Rhymetimes and Storytimes**

Forget using puppets and props, this workshop aims to make the book the star of a Storytime session! Delegates will be given practical skills and plenty of tips to deliver Storytime and Rhymetime sessions with confidence in their own settings.

Donna became the Bookstart Coordinator for Blaenau Gwent in 2000 and later went on to combine this with her role of Children's Officer. Currently working as a Development Officer, Donna is responsible for Bookstart, the Summer Reading Challenge and Every Child a Library Member, as well as adult reading projects in Blaenau Gwent.

[donna.hardman@aneurinleisure.org.uk](mailto:donna.hardman@aneurinleisure.org.uk)

Trish joined the Library Service in 2007 and for the last two years she has been the Children's Librarian for Powys, delivering Storytime and Rhymetime sessions co-ordinating the Every Child a Library Member Scheme and the Summer Reading Challenge. Trish is also the Bookstart Coordinator for Powys.

[patricia.thomas@powys.gov.uk](mailto:patricia.thomas@powys.gov.uk)

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## Workshops – North and South Wales

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**Vanessa Powell, Lou Stevens-Jones,  
Catherine Morris  
academi, Mudiad Meithrin**

### Expanding Stories

Delegates will learn how to support children's emerging language skills through the medium of Welsh. There will be examples of practical activities to encourage the use of Welsh when delivering bilingual activity sessions to bring the experiences of books to life.  
[academi@meithrin.cymru](mailto:academi@meithrin.cymru)

Vanessa has over ten years of experience in the Early Years sector and now provides specialist support for settings across Wales. Her day-to-day work includes developing Welsh-medium resources for use within cylchoedd meithrin.

Catherine has a wealth of experience in the Early Years sector. She has worked for Mudiad Meithrin in North East Wales for over fifteen years, supporting cylchoedd meithrin and cylchoedd Ti a Fi to provide Welsh medium experiences for children and families.

Lou has over ten years' experience in the Early Years sector. In her time with Mudiad Meithrin, she has provided specialist language support, developed cylchoedd Ti a Fi and currently provides day-to-day support for settings in Cardiff and additional support for settings across the South East.

[academi@meithrin.cymru](mailto:academi@meithrin.cymru)

# Carousel of best practice

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## North Wales

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### **Amy Ballard, Speech and Language Therapist, Flintshire Flying Start**

Amy's session will focus on introducing some basic principles in being an effective reading partner.

[Amy.Ballard@flintshire.gov.uk](mailto:Amy.Ballard@flintshire.gov.uk)

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### **Shan Cooper, Interim Library Lead, Wrexham Library**

Using Join the Zoo Hullabaloo, Shan will share lots of tips on sharing books with families and schools groups.

[Shan.Cooper@wrexham.gov.uk](mailto:Shan.Cooper@wrexham.gov.uk)

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### **Kathryn Parry, Conwy County Borough Council Library**

Kathryn will demonstrate that sharing stories, the creation of atmosphere, keeping focus and breaking down barriers are key skills that can be taught, developed and nurtured in professional practice as well as in a family/carer context.

[kathryn.parry@conwy.gov.uk](mailto:kathryn.parry@conwy.gov.uk)

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## South Wales

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### **Viv Blair, Flying Start Early Play & Language Co-ordinator, Pembrokeshire**

Viv's session will use Pi-po Parc! and focus on working with parents to engage their children through singing and simple crafts.

[viv.blair@pembrokeshire.gov.uk](mailto:viv.blair@pembrokeshire.gov.uk)

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### **Hannah Piontecki, Projects Coordinator, Faith in Families**

Hannah will be looking at the benefits of HighScope and using its methodology to bring the Superbox books to life for children and families.

[PC.bsr@icloud.com](mailto:PC.bsr@icloud.com)

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### **Sarah Wiggin, Engagement Worker, Wales Pre-school Providers Association**

The session will focus on interactive story sessions and how to promote physical literacy through stories and emergent literacy through physical activity.

[Sarahw@walesppa.org](mailto:Sarahw@walesppa.org)

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## North and South Wales

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### **Leanne Jones, Lowri Bell, Elin Jones, Elaine Griffiths Cymraeg for kids – Mudiad Meithrin**

A fun and lively bilingual session using What a Wonderful World by Louis Armstrong. A useful model for Early Years practitioners to use in their local settings with suitable activities, rhymes and tips for parents to use at home with their child.

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