Bookstart Superbox Conference 2017
Reading, Talking, Sharing

Holywell, Springfield Hotel
19th October 2017

Bridgend, Court Colman Hotel
26th October 2017

booktrust.org.uk/cymru
Welcome to Superbox 2017 – Reading, Talking, Sharing

The combination of reading, talking and sharing lies at the heart of Bookstart and BookTrust’s early years work.

It’s easy to think of reading as a quiet, individual experience. We might think about sneaking off and curling up with a good book, or escaping into another world through reading.

But reading in the early years is fundamentally social and interactive. That’s one reason why at BookTrust we often talk about ‘booksharing’: it’s through sharing books that many of the benefits of early reading are achieved. ‘Booksharing’ is about talking, interacting and communicating.

Take early language development. We know that we need to hear language to master it – and to hear it repeatedly. Children’s books present a rich seam of often unusual vocabulary, and repeated reading enables children to hear these words again and again.

And that’s just the words on the page. Children’s books are a valuable stimulus for talk, from labelling and talking about pictures to making connections with a child’s own experience; from exploring how other people might feel to helping a child understand and ask questions about our strange and wonderful world. It’s through this talk – and through play related to books – that many of the benefits of booksharing are achieved.

The very act of sharing a book can also support bonding and relationship building. There’s a growing perception that opportunities for quiet quality time between parents/carers and children are increasingly rare, especially as digital devices play an increasing role in our lives. Cuddling up together with a good book has arguably never been so important.

This year’s Bookstart Superbox conference contributors will address topics including talking with babies, supporting bilingualism, extending children’s talking and thinking and the importance of oral storytelling. We’d like to sincerely thank all of today’s speakers and session leaders.

We hope you’ll leave today with plenty of ideas to share with children and families and that you’ll have time to talk with peers and share the wealth of experience and expertise that we’re proud to bring together at these conferences.

Finally, we hope you’ll help us celebrate 25 years of Bookstart. The programme began in Birmingham in 1992 and has gone from strength to strength. This is because people like you have supported and contributed to it. Thank you for being part of the Bookstart community – we look forward to working with you over the next 25 years!

Helen Wales, BookTrust Head of Country – Wales and the BookTrust Cymru team
About BookTrust

BookTrust is the largest children's 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 3.4 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.

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Our programmes in Wales

Every year, we give out approximately 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 at six months and 27 months. Bookstart is delivered in partnership with Libraries in Wales.

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 Drwy Stori.

poridrwystori.org.uk

The 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.

letterboxclub.org.uk/letterbox-worldwide/wales
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, aunts 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 welshlibraries.org
Support and resources

Our website is packed with research papers, games, case studies, blogs and more. Here is a selection of some of the resources that may be of interest to you.

**Bookstart Superbox Conference 2016 video**

Be inspired by previous conference delegates sharing their tips and experiences at last year’s Superbox conference. Watch the video on YouTube at [bit.ly/2xfJ7ap](http://bit.ly/2xfJ7ap) (English) and [bit.ly/2vsftN0](http://bit.ly/2vsftN0) (Welsh).

**BookFinder**

Finding books that are engaging, age-appropriate and fun to share with groups is not always easy. Explore our booklists for recommended reads, including Welsh language and bilingual books [booktrust.org.uk/books/bookfinder](http://booktrust.org.uk/books/bookfinder)

**Listen to stories in Welsh**

People can struggle to have the confidence they need to engage children with Welsh rhymes and stories. Our recordings of Bookstart stories can help parents and practitioners. They’re available on: [booktrust.org.uk/supporting-you/families/our-programmes/bookstart/bookstart-in-wales/listen-to-bookstart-stories/](http://booktrust.org.uk/supporting-you/families/our-programmes/bookstart/bookstart-in-wales/listen-to-bookstart-stories/)

**National Bookstart Week**

National Bookstart Week will be with us again in spring. It’s a week-long celebration of reading and sharing stories. Nurseries, libraries and playgroups are invited to hold a themed reading session, supported by our free bilingual books and resources. Find out what happened last year by visiting [booktrust.org.uk/supporting-you/families/our-programmes/bookstart/national-bookstart-week/](http://booktrust.org.uk/supporting-you/families/our-programmes/bookstart/national-bookstart-week/)

**Supporting your Superbox sessions**

Don’t forget you can download, print and share activity cards packed with ideas and rhymes to accompany the Bookstart books for 2017. Find them at [booktrust.org.uk/supporting-you/practitioners/our-programmes/bookstart/bookstart-in-wales/](http://booktrust.org.uk/supporting-you/practitioners/our-programmes/bookstart/bookstart-in-wales/)

**Keep in touch**

It’s been a busy year at BookTrust Cymru. To keep up to date with all our programmes, news and latest resources, sign up to our Early Years Newsletter via [eepurl.com/b2bU2f](http://eepurl.com/b2bU2f)

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National Bookstart Week book 2017
Superbox aims

The Bookstart Superbox conference provides early years workers with additional copies of the current Bookstart titles to use in their settings and ideas for ways of bringing these books to life with children and families. 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.

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, 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.
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 – 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.
Meet the contributors

Keynote speaker and workshop leader (North and South Wales)

Dr Kathy Goouch
Professor of Early Education, Research Centre for Children, Families and Communities, Canterbury Christ Church University

Tell, Talk, Tattle: how talking with and about books can support literacy from birth

In this presentation, the power of books and stories, within a landscape of talk, will be discussed. Kathy will consider how books and stories can entrance, inform, entertain, console, inspire, lull, offer worlds and warmth to babies and young children – with the benefit of good companions.

Kathy’s career in education began in the 1970s as a teacher in London schools, later focusing on teaching very young children in school and kindergarten. She now enjoys teaching, researching and writing. Recent publications include The Baby Room (Open University Press, 2013), with Sacha Powell, Teaching Early Reading and Phonics: Creative Approaches to Early Literacy (Sage, 2017, 2nd ed) with Andrew Lambirth, and The Routledge International Handbook of Philosophies and Theories of Early Childhood Education and Care (Routledge 2016), edited with Tricia David and Sacha Powell.

Workshops - North and South Wales

Alison Rees Edwards and Sioned Saer
School of Early Years, Yr Athrofa, University of Wales Trinity Saint David (UWSTD)

Supporting Literacy development using the Sustained Shared Thinking and Emotional Wellbeing (SSTEW) Scale

This practical and research based workshop will explore the concept of Sustained Shared Thinking through storytelling, sharing books, singing and rhymes. The workshop will focus on elements of the Sustained Shared Thinking and Emotional Well-being Scale (SSTEW) and research evidence from the EPPSE and REPEY studies, and will demonstrate how this approach can be put into practice.

Alison joined the Flexible Learning Route for the BA Early Years Education degree at UWTSD in 2005. She attained a First Class Honours degree and joined the University College as a tutor on the Geiriau Bach project. Alison was awarded a University of Wales Welsh medium Fellowship and lectures in the School of Early Years.

Alison’s academic interests include children with Additional Learning Needs, the importance of play, language acquisition and bilingualism.

a.rees-edwards@uwtst.ac.uk

Sioned Edwards and Nesta Griffiths
Cymraeg i Blant / Welsh for Kids - Mudiad Meithrin

Bringing Welsh into the home through reading, talking & sharing

This workshop will concentrate on ideas to encourage the introduction of Welsh in groups and in the home using books and songs with parents who are non-Welsh speakers or learners. There will be examples of practical ways in which to introduce Welsh in the home and how to increase parental confidence in using the language.

s.saer@uwtst.ac.uk
uwtsd.ac.uk/early-years/
Catrin, Menai and Nesta were all Twf Field Officers for over 10 years and have vast experience of holding bilingual story and rhyme sessions for Welsh and non-Welsh speaking parents and learners. They have used this experience to support them in their roles as Partnership and Activities Officers for Cymraeg i Blant, a project run by Mudiad Meithrin. They coordinate and support a team of 25 Field Officers throughout Wales.

nesta.griffiths@meithrin.cymru
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Workshop – South Wales

Cath Little
Storyteller
We are all Storytellers – How storytelling without a book can help us to be more confident and creative at reading, talking and sharing books with children.

This is a practical workshop. It aims to inspire, give confidence and share good ideas. We will listen to some traditional rhymes and stories, make up some new stories together and explore ways of sharing our own experiences and personal stories with children.

Cath is a storyteller and teacher from Cardiff. She was a Kindergarten teacher at the Cardiff Steiner School for seven years and now works as Language Support Teacher at Kitchener Primary School. She tells stories in schools, libraries and museums, castles, cafes and fields. She is the author of Glamorgan Folk Tales for Children. Cath helps run the Cardiff Storytelling Circle and curates their seasonal concerts, Tales for the Turning Year. Cath also runs a storytelling circle at Oasis, a charity which offers a warm Welsh welcome to refugees and asylum seekers in Cardiff.

cath@cathlittle.co.uk
cathlittle.co.uk

Workshop - North Wales

Fiona Collins
Storyteller
Story Telling, Story Sharing

Fiona will share some simple storytelling ideas and inspire you to have a go at using a book as a ‘jumping-off’ point for storytelling, finger play, rhymes and games.

This will be an interactive workshop and you will take away ideas for tried and tested activities. You will also have the opportunity to develop and practise your own ideas in the session.

Fiona is a storyteller telling traditional tales from around the world, with a special interest in the tales of Wales.

She enjoys working with all kinds of people, but especially loves sharing stories, rhymes and games with young children, in English and Welsh.

fionastory3@gmail.com
Carousel of best practice

North Wales

Matt Anthony, Welsh Language Project Co-ordinator, Wales Pre-school Providers Association

Matt will be using Hooray for Fish by Lucy Cousins to showcase how English-speaking practitioners can easily introduce Welsh in their sessions, even with English books.

matthewa@walesppa.org

Catrin Mai Roberts and Gwenda Lloyd Williams, Play and Early Development Officers, Gwynedd Flying Start

Catrin and Gwenda bring books to life with fantastic props. Find inspiration for this year’s Bookstart Baby books.

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catrinmairoberts@gwynedd.llyw.cymru

South Wales

Sarah Wiggin, Engagement Worker Engagement worker/Welsh Language Project Support worker, Wales Pre-school Providers Association in collaboration with Deaf Creative Hands

Explore sensory stories and learn why you should use them. In this unique session Sarah and Deaf Creative Hands will re-tell Lucy Cousin’s story Hooray for Fish with a sensory twist. The session will feature British Sign Language, singing and movement.

sarahw@walesppa.org

Tracy Symon, Talk and Play Coordinator, Talk and Play

Tracy will share fun and interactive activities for parents/carers to explore Dawns yr Anifeiliaid/Doing the Animal Bop by Jan Omerod and Delyth George with children aged 0 – 4.

tracy.symon@rctcbc.gov.uk

Carole Billingham, Children’s and Youth Librarian, Swansea Libraries in collaboration with Pets As Therapy

Carole will introduce special guest Stella the dog to participants and share explain how Stella helps children engage with books. This session will focus on Mae Llygoden yn Fach by Mary Murphy.

carole.billingham@swansea.gov.uk

North and South Wales

Non Cooper, Rhian Green, Catrin Jenkins, Elfair Roberts, Cymraeg for Kids – Mudiad Meithrin Officers for Ceredigion, Denbighshire/Flintshire, Pembrokeshire and Wrexham.

Cymraeg i Blant will boost the confidence of Early Years practitioners with limited Welsh, with a special focus on Dawns yr Anifeiliaid/Doing the Animal Bop by Jan Omerod and Delyth George.

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