

**Embargoed until 00.01 5 February 2024**

## **BookTrust Cymru's annual Big Welsh Rhyme Time is back to help children in Wales enjoy the benefits of bilingual rhyming**

- **Thousands of children to share rhymes, poems and stories in more than 500 nurseries, schools, libraries and at home across Wales.**
- **Big Welsh Rhyme Time is funded by the Welsh Government and supports children's language and social development, their familial bonds and their relationship with reading.**
- **Families are invited to take part at home using new bilingual rhymes, poems and songs available on the BookTrust Cymru website: with a specially created poem from children's author and former Bardd Plant Cymru, Casia Wiliam.**

**05/02/2024** – BookTrust Cymru, the children's reading charity, is encouraging families, schools, and early years spaces across Wales to join in with **Big Welsh Rhyme Time**, a week-long national celebration of sharing bilingual rhymes, poems and songs with thousands of children in their early years.

Developed with the support of the Welsh Government, Big Welsh Rhyme Time invites families across Wales to experience how rhyming and sharing stories bilingually can be incorporated into everyday life – be it at home, an early years setting, or within their local community. More than 500 settings across Wales have signed up to take part in Big Welsh Rhyme Time, which takes place from **Monday 5<sup>th</sup> February- Friday 9<sup>th</sup> February 2024**. Participating settings include nurseries, primary schools, children and family centres, libraries, childminders, community groups and charities.

By encouraging children to enjoy rhymes during their early years, Big Welsh Rhyme Time raises awareness of the positive effects of sharing bilingual rhymes out loud with children. Reciting rhymes lays the foundation for developing children's speech and language, as well as their future relationship with reading. It can also be a fun, affordable bonding activity for families, which in turn helps support children's emotional development and self-confidence.

To support this year's celebration, former Bardd Plant Cymru **Casia Wiliam** has released a specially written poem. "*All The Little Treasures*", inspired by her own children's love of collecting things they find outside. The poem is available along with resources on the BookTrust Cymru website that schools, nurseries and families can use as inspiration for sharing bilingual rhymes, poems and songs together. This year's resources also include a bilingual farmyard-themed song by musicians **Babis Bach Babies** and a bilingual rhyming story by storyteller **Tamar Eluned Williams** – both created specifically for Big Welsh Rhyme Time.

Families and early years settings can take part in their own rhyming fun at home using the videos and downloadable resources that will be available at <https://www.booktrust.org.uk/bigwelshrhymetime> or @BookTrustCymru on X (formerly known as Twitter) and Facebook and are encouraged to share their own rhyming experiences on social media.

**Phil Savery, BookTrust Cymru Early Years Engagement Manager, says:**

*'Big Welsh Rhyme Time is back! Thanks to the Welsh Government and our network of partners, thousands of children across the country will experience the benefits of sharing rhymes, stories and songs out loud this week. Early years practitioners know how valuable this is for children's communication, language and reading skills, and it's also a fantastic opportunity for families to experience first-hand how sharing bilingual rhymes together is a quick, easy and affordable way to have fun together. There's still time to get involved and show us how your children get on with their rhyming. Whether you read a poem together at home or take part as a group, you can share your Big Welsh Rhyme Time celebrations using the hashtag #RhymingFunForEveryone.'*

**Casia Wiliam, poet and former Bardd Plant Cymru says:**

*'BookTrust Cymru do so much good work and create such great resources. I feel very privileged to be taking part in Big Welsh Rhyme Time this year and creating a new resource that will inspire young children and introduce them to the joy of rhyming. My children are forever collecting things when we're out and about, and it's their love of collecting 'treasure' that inspired my poem "All The Little Treasures". I hope children across Wales enjoy it, and it makes them want to head out on an adventure!'*

To find out more visit the [BookTrust Cymru website](#) or follow us on X and Facebook @BookTrustCymru

**[ENDS]**

For further information please contact Rose Dykins, on [press@booktrust.org.uk](mailto:press@booktrust.org.uk)

**About BookTrust:**

We get millions of children reading, especially those from low-income families or vulnerable backgrounds. Children who choose to read and who read regularly are happier and healthier. They form stronger bonds and relationships. They do better at school and are more creative. They enjoy more success in life. This is why we work with families, supporting them to start sharing stories and books together from the earliest possible age. Our carefully selected books and well-researched programmes are delivered by thousands of local partners, bringing the magic of reading to children in every community in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. [booktrust.org.uk](http://booktrust.org.uk)