

Bookstart Toddler

Information for partners



About BookTrust

BookTrust is the UK's largest children's reading charity. Each year we reach millions of children and families, inspiring them with our books, resources and support to get them started on their reading journeys.

Alongside knowledgeable and experienced staff, BookTrust brings together:

- A network of skilled delivery partners including local authorities, health visitors, schools, libraries, social workers, community organisations, and early years practitioners
- A diverse community of children's authors, illustrators and publishers
- National agencies in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and children's reading organisations around the world
- Committed and supportive funders, donors and friends



About BookTrust Cymru

BookTrust Cymru delivers engaging and impactful reading support to children and families in Wales.

Our aim is to bring the benefits of reading to children in the greatest need, with children and families at the heart of innovation, design and development of our programmes.

By drawing on research, evidence and a long and successful history, we deliver engaging and impactful reading support for children and families.

Our programmes and support are designed to help children and families start and continue reading and sharing stories, because we believe it should be a part of childhood for all.



The benefits of reading



From babies to children in their early years and all the way through to early teens, reading brings profound and wide-ranging benefits that can have a lifelong positive impact on children's lives.

The evidence shows that reading supports children to:



Overcome inequalities before they deepen



Meet early development milestones and do better at school



Bond with their caregivers and experience better mental wellbeing



Develop empathy, creativity and imagination

See BookTrust's interactive **benefits of reading resource**, produced in partnership with the Open University, for an in-depth look at the many ways reading supports children.

Reading in the early years – BookTrust's Family Survey



From BookTrust's latest **Family Survey** of 3,508 parents and carers of children aged 0 to 8, we know that whilst **90%** of parents and carers report **high levels of enjoyment from reading with their child**:

- **74%** of parents and carers **want their children to spend more time with books and stories**
- **53%** of parents and carers would like to receive **more information and support to help their child** spend more time with books and stories
- **31%** of parents and carers say it's **hard to find time** to read with their child
- **18%** of parents and carers **don't find reading with their child easy**

BookTrust Cymru Reading Journey



BookTrust Cymru's Early Years Reading Journey has been designed in collaboration with partners and families to encourage a love of books, stories and rhymes in children from as young an age as possible.



BookTrust Cymru's Bookstart Toddler Offer

- The Bookstart Toddler programme is a core part of BookTrust Cymru's early years reading journey
- The target audience for these resources is lower income families with children aged 1-4, who may need more help to make shared reading a regular part of their lives.
- Our research tells us that whilst most families in this group know reading is important, many face barriers in making reading together a regular part of daily life.
- BookTrust developed this programme in close collaboration with families from its target groups, and our expert partners.
- BookTrust has worked with local authorities to identify pathways to reach and engage families through a diverse range of routes, including including nurseries, children's centres, libraries, health visiting teams, and charities and community organisations.
- Each year, partners support BookTrust to gift over 400,000 book packs and resources to families.



Bookstart Toddler

The Bookstart Toddler programme includes the following resources:

- Pack for families which includes:
 - 2 high quality, age-appropriate, bilingual books
 - Rhymes and activities to enhance the story sharing experience
 - Hints and tips for families on sharing stories together
- Digital resources for parents/carers
- Physical and digital supporting resources for early years practitioners



Bookstart Toddler

Families have told BookTrust that sharing the books and activities in their Bookstart Toddler or Pre-schooler pack has **helped them to bond, make memories and encourage interaction:**

76% **learnt something new** about the different ways to read and share stories with their children

71% **believed more strongly in the benefits of reading** for their children

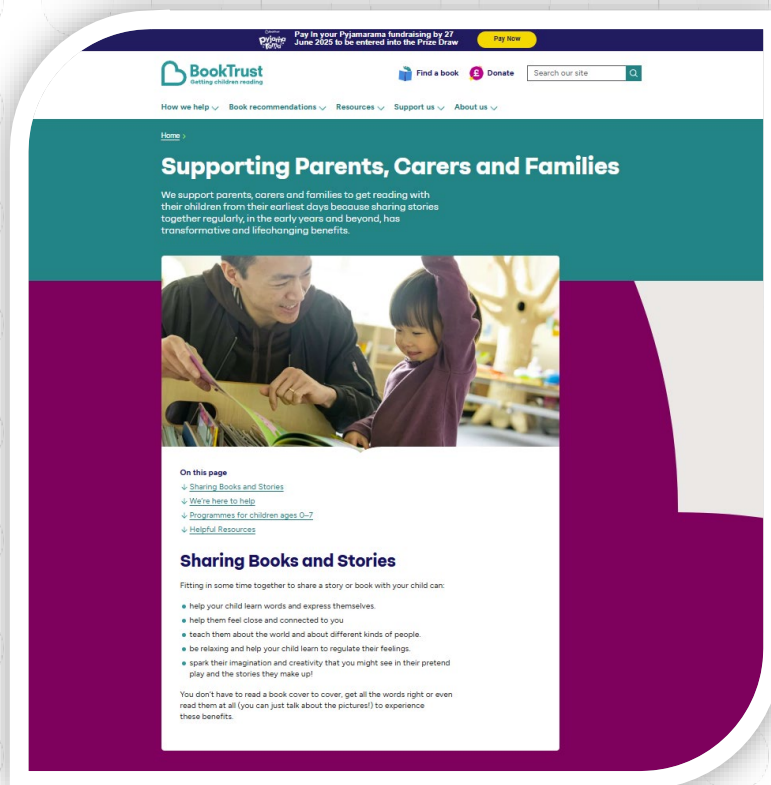
69% **felt more confident** reading and sharing books and stories

55% had tried to **set up a reading routine** at home

76% had been prompted to **read or share books and stories more** with their children



Early Years: Resources for Parents



The programme resources also include a dedicated web page for families.

Here, families can find further activities, read-along videos, book suggestions and advice on reading with their child.

Families can access this webpage via the QR code on their pack, or by going to:

booktrust.org.uk/families



Early Years: Digital Resources for Partners



The BookTrust's [webpage for partners](#) is a dedicated space for information and tools to help you support families on their reading journeys.

Here you will find:

- Information on what's inside your packs and how you could use them
- Downloadable resources, booklists, activities
- Storytelling tips from Michael Rosen
- Videos to share with families
- A letter to share with Parents and Carers
- Social media templates for you to share what's going on in your setting with families

Gifting your packs

When you receive your packs:

- Gift the packs to families that you work with
- Encourage children and their parents or carers to explore the contents of their packs together
- Talk to families about the benefits of shared reading
- Signpost families to BookTrust's [webpage for families](#) for further activities and support
- Encourage families to provide feedback on their packs by taking part in BookTrust's online Family Survey
- If your setting gifts both Bookstart Toddler and Pre-schooler resources, you might like to mention when gifting Toddler packs to families, that they will receive another pack when their child is aged 3-4.



Creating an impactful gifting moment

Some families may need more help to make shared reading a regular part of their lives. BookTrust's research has told us that modelling how families can use the packs, and incorporating storytelling into the gifting experience can make gifting more impactful.

74% of families who received **modelling or information** felt more confident sharing stories, compared with **57% who received none**, and **64%** went on to try **setting up a reading routine**, compared with **46%.***

Why this matters

- Normalises shared reading as simple and flexible
- Helps families see how books fit into everyday life



Supporting families to continue sharing stories

Encourage and celebrate small steps like reading a favourite page at bathtime or bedtime. Building a routine matters more than reading for a long time.

Model fun, playful experiences by showing enthusiasm and enjoyment when reading and pointing out the pictures. Your energy encourages families to join in and helps to focus on fun and connection over reading perfectly.

Share ways to continue enjoying stories at home by using the rhyme and activity cards. Demonstrating sharing songs or rhyme in a session can help families feel more confident too.

Why this matters

- Learning by seeing and doing
- Shows that interaction matters more than getting it right



Building confidence to share stories

We know that not all parents and carers find reading with their child easy. Here are some messages you may wish to share with the families you work with to help increase their confidence:

- It's never too late to start sharing stories.
- There is no wrong way to share a story. Having fun together is way more important than getting the words 'right'!
- A book doesn't need to be read from cover to cover to get the benefits. You can talk about the pictures or even make up your own story.
- Just a few minutes or looking, talking or reading together each day supports your child's learning.

Why this matters

- Reduces pressure to do it 'correctly'
- Encourages more people to take part



Libraries

As well as having lots of great books that families can enjoy together, many libraries run regular story and rhyme sessions, including BookTrust Storytime, for children to enjoy. Why not encourage families to visit their local library to continue their reading journey?

You can find your nearest library at libraries.wales

Why this matters

- Creates opportunities beyond the home
- Builds shared reading into social spaces
- Makes reading visible and valued



Using reading and sharing stories to support school readiness

From your work with families, you will know that starting school can come with mixed emotions.

BookTrust's research shows that sharing books and stories can be a powerful way to support children and families at this significant point of transition. With the Government's pledge to increase the number of children starting school ready to learn, we have created some tools to help you when you are thinking about transition support and school readiness for families.

BookTrust has created a [starting school booklist](#), which you can use to help children feel more familiar and confident before they start school.

BookTrust's Starting School [web page](#) also includes tips and guidance to support parents and carers who have children starting school.



Useful links and further information



General information

- [BookTrust Cymru's webpage for families](#)
- [BookTrust Cymru's webpage for partners](#)
- [Author permissions](#)

Research reports and briefings

- [BookTrust's latest National Family Survey briefing](#)
- [Bookstart Toddler and Pre-schooler Impact report](#)
- [Benefits of reading](#) - an interactive evidence summary showing the many ways reading supports children
- [How reading evolves in the early years](#) - how children's reading habits evolve during their crucial first years, including longitudinal insights from families
- [Reading in the early years](#) – what our research tells us about the importance of shared reading in the early years
- [Supporting generational cycles of readers](#) – the influence that parental reading enjoyment has on nurturing generational reading habits
- The role of reading in supporting [executive function and self-regulation in the early years](#)

Thank you for helping to get children reading

Sign up to BookTrust's **Early Years Newsletter** for regular updates.

Contact **booktrustcymru@booktrust.org.uk** for more information about BookTrust in your area.

