



# WSOA Early Years: Priority 1 newsletter

## Welcome to the Winter edition of the Priority 1 newsletter

I joined the Priority 1 team in March, and my role is to support the interventions which are being rolled out, and to work with everyone to develop new interventions which will continue to support 'every child starting school with a strong start, having achieved a good level of development at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage'.

It has been a very busy term with a lot of training opportunities covering a wide range of areas, including maths, outdoor play and communication. A lot of new interventions have been introduced to Early years providers, schools and parents through Youth Support Trust, Home Start, Research School, Health etc.

I feel very privileged to be part of the WSOA project, and enjoy working with everyone who is involved, and would like to say thank you to everyone who has organised, participated in and supports Priority 1.

If anyone would like to make contact, please use the new e-mail address below:

[WSOAP1@Somerset.gov.uk](mailto:WSOAP1@Somerset.gov.uk)

Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Nikki Difford

Senior Early Years and Schools Improvement Officer, Somerset County Council



If you would like to contribute to the next newsletter then please email your article/photograph to:  
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## The West Somerset Opportunity Area delivery plan

The Opportunity Area programme is a flagship policy at the heart of the Government's ambition to drive up social mobility and improve outcomes for young people.

The West Somerset Opportunity Area delivery plan was part of the first six wave of Opportunity Areas published in October 2017.

Click [here](#) for a link to the published plan.





## West Somerset- Early Years Inset day

West Somerset Early Years cluster group had a very successful training day on November 5<sup>th</sup> exploring Communication, language and literacy provision.

National and local Data was presented by Alison Jeffrey (EYA) who also led a Moderation activity focussing on the engagement and attainment of boys.

Practitioners attended workshops relevant to their new funded resources .One of these was the Pegs to Paper handwriting intervention programme led by Charlie Jones. This programme is aimed at accelerating and improving motor control. The alternative workshop involved a presentation by Nikki Difford on 'Boo Zoo' (books and games that enhance Mathematical provision) and discussions about how different elements of the resource could be used .

After Lunch we welcomed Catherine Benham and Louise Smalles from the Health Visitor Service who updated us on the 2 year old ASQs. (Ages and stages Questionnaires)

Later In the afternoon Tom Colquhoun from the Blue School in Wells explained how West Somerset were involved with the ' Leading Communication and Literacy EY programme'. The role of the research school was discussed in the development of good practice in settings. This work will culminate in a conference at the Tithe Barn in Dunster in April. For Information on the programme and to register your interests for the conference go to [westsomerset.researchschool.org.uk](http://westsomerset.researchschool.org.uk)

For the rest of the session Anne Harvey demonstrated how Clickety books, a resource devised and developed with speech and language therapists can support early language skills.

Thank you to the Staff of St Dubricius CofE school Porlock for the use of their facilities and organising a delicious lunch. Many thanks also to all those involved in delivering and organising the event, for another stimulating and successful training day.

Alison Oakley

EY Cluster lead and member of WSOA Priority 1 group



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## Secretary of State for Education visits Minehead...

Damian Hinds Secretary of State for Education, visited West Somerset on Friday the 9th of November to hear from parents how they share and enjoy books with their children. The West Somerset opportunity Area is funding a number of projects which families can take part in.

During his visit the Secretary of State went on a Wild walk with young children to hear the story of Little Red Riding Hood, and meet some of the characters from the book. The event was organised by Clowns and hosted by Minehead Eye as a wild storm was forecast. Paul Matcham of Clowns said "It was great to be able to clearly demonstrate to Damian the real barriers and restrictions an area such as ours holds, alongside some of the fantastic work CLOWNS and other early years providers are delivering to not just overcome these, but to show real promise and progression across West Somerset for our young children and families. Damian was genuinely impressed in how well organisations worked together and the passion they showed in achieving real opportunities for our families both now and for the future'. 'He went on to highlight what a fabulous idea and project our 'Wild Walks' sessions had become, by using our biggest resource, the rural outdoors, to enable young children and families to improve their imagination and engagement, alongside their reading and phonic skills. Improving young children's ability towards achieving appropriate school age readiness in such a fun manner'.

One parent also shared her experiences of I CAN, The Children's Communication Charity, Tots Talking. Liz Wood, I CAN Speech and Language Advisor, talked through the principles of the approach and the impact it was having on the way parents support their child's early language and communication skills.



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**This is the last chance to receive *Tots Talking* free training and resources.**

Please get in touch if you would like to be part of the *Tots Talking* pilot, there are places for just 2 more settings. *Tots Talking* runs for 8 weeks and is for parents of two-year olds. Through films, fact sharing, discussion and creative activities parents develop language and behaviours that support the development of their children's communication skills. Full training and free resources given. Don't miss out on this opportunity! If you'd like to find out more, please contact Liz Wood [lwood@ican.org.uk](mailto:lwood@ican.org.uk) Tel 01749 678366/ 07912 848697.

## Ten Tips to develop children's speech and language



### Tip No 3

**With very young children, simply imitate their words and sentences.** This will show them that you're valuing their words and will encourage them to keep on talking.



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# South West Early Years Communication and Literacy Conference

What does the evidence suggest is good practice in developing communication and literacy?

There are many communication and literacy initiatives already employed in schools and nurseries; this conference is the culmination of a West Somerset programme to help EYFS teams map out what is working in their environment, what has impact and what doesn't. The aim is to ensure that we as schools, nurseries and practitioners have the confidence to select the most appropriate practices, interventions and strategies to support communication and literacy development for the children in our settings. The conference includes an exploration of the recommendations included in the Education Endowment Foundation's Preparing for Literacy guidance report.

When and Where?

- Monday 29 April 2019, 9:30am – 4:00pm
- The Dunster Tithe Barn, TA24 6RY

Cost?

- Free to WSOA settings (£49 per non-WSOA delegate)

More details and how to book can be found here:

- <http://bit.ly/EYFSConference>

<https://westsomerset.researchschool.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/10/Conference-Leading-Communication-Literacy-vs-1.4.pdf>



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## SPEAKERS



**Tom Martell**  
Literacy Programme Manager, EEF  
Author of the EEF guidance report *Preparing for Literacy*



**Megan Dixon**  
Director of Literacy Aspirer Research School  
Macclesfield



**Professor Jonathan Sharples**  
Snr Researcher, EEF  
Author of the EEF guidance report *A School's Guide to Implementation*



**Anne Harvey**  
Associate Research School Lead  
West Somerset Research School



**Liz Wood**  
Regional Manager, Speech and Language Advisor  
I CAN, the children's communication charity.

## Hopping Higher

**Happening in West Somerset January to April 2019**  
**In partnership with Take Art and West Somerset Opportunity Area**

### What is it?

Hopping Higher is a theatre initiative for under 5s and their families living in West Somerset. It aims to give young children and families in rural places better access to brilliant theatre experiences. 20 fun and fabulous theatre performances will be held in a variety of settings including schools, nurseries and village halls across West Somerset. 6 Early Years practitioners will be empowered to host shows specially made for under 5s. The 6 hosts will invite neighbouring settings, childminders and family members to join the fun making it as inclusive as possible.

### How will it add benefit?

Take Art are delighted that West Somerset Opportunities Area has funded Hopping Higher as part of its commitment to ensuring that every child in West Somerset has a great start in life. The shows have been chosen to support the Early Years Foundation Stage benefiting communication and language, personal, social, emotional and physical development. Learning will be extended post show with accompanying resource packs. Creative workshops will also be offered to support EY practitioner's professional development.

Helen Robinson, Early Years Lead at Knights Templar First School explains

"If children aren't exposed to theatre they will miss out on a wonderful opportunity to stimulate their imagination. I've seen a two-year-old up on her feet copying parts of the performance before it had finished, children sat in silence staring at the stage, whilst others call out ideas and suggestions to help the performers."

Hopping Higher is an extension of the recent hugely successful Hopper project.

For more information <https://takeart.org/hopper>



*Image: Practicing some flying after seeing an under 5s show about a family of birds*

Take Art's features in Early Years-

<https://takeart.org/news/take-arts-work-features-in-early-education>



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## Physical Literacy Project

Physical activity is fundamental in the early years of a child's life. It helps children to acquire a range of new skills such as language and numeracy, develop their brains and establish the building blocks for an active and healthy life.

The Youth Sport Trust (YST) has been commissioned to deliver an 'early years physical literacy and social mobility project' in all 16 early years settings. This started in October and will continue until March 2020.

This project will ensure that every child in the area gets the opportunity to achieve a good level of physical development linked to their language and literacy skills. In doing so, it will increase the children's self-esteem and wellbeing, develop agility, balance and co-ordination which all help children gain a better start to their life.

### Early impact

From the initial Healthy Movers training Healthy Movers Champions reported a high level of satisfaction. All participants rated the training as 'good', with most rating their overall experience as 'very good'. They also reported that the training had 'helped a lot' to make them feel more confident, competent and motivated in their role.

Many settings are delivering Healthy Movers on a daily basis and the children are enjoying the repetitive songs and progressive activities. Settings are also personalising the Healthy Movers cards and sharing the information with parents as to how they can help their children be more active in the home environment to complement the work that is taking place in the pre-school or nursery.

Jennie Rawle, Nursery Assistant at Dunkery Pre-school, said the programme has been key to helping children's cognitive development skills and is unlike any other initiative the nursery setting has tried. A key thing that we find important about this programme is its intent to educate parents and help them to see the importance of activity in learning other life skills."

With the children reacting well to the programme the nursery decided to show Ofsted the programme in action. Jennie said: "It was a bit of a risk as we hadn't been using the programme that long but the difference we have seen in the children at nursery since using the activities has been brilliant. They can sit still for longer, they're more focused and they are learning from the activities how to relate them to everyday life.

"Some of the activities with the Healthy Movers is about controlling objects across the body and one day that will transfer to controlling a pencil, so we were keen to show Ofsted the work we have been doing. It paid off because Ofsted absolutely loved it and we came away with a 'Good' rating."



For more information of this Early Years Physical Literacy project please contact:

Chris Caws- Youth Sport Trust South West Development Manager  
[chris.caws@youthsporttr ust.org](mailto:chris.caws@youthsporttr ust.org)  
07825 065185



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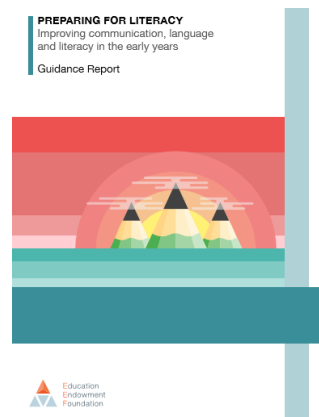


[WestSomersetOA](https://www.tweetsomerset.org)

## Early Years- Preparing for literacy:

Megan Dixon, Director of Aspirer Research School, introduces the EEF's early literacy guidance report and explains how the small stuff can make the biggest difference when it comes to learning to read and write: <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/news/eef-blog-sweating-the-small-stuff/>

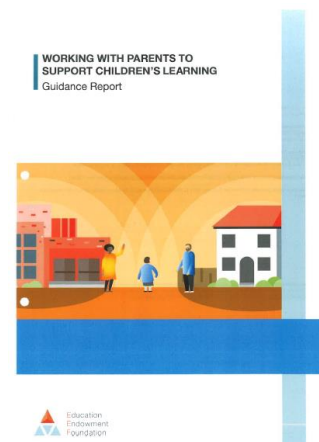
Find the Preparing for literacy booklet here: <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/tools/guidance-reports/preparing-for-literacy/>



## Working with parents to support children's learning:

New guidance offering four practical and evidence based recommendations on working with parents to support their child's learning.

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/tools/guidance-reports/working-with-parents-to-support-childrens-learning#search>



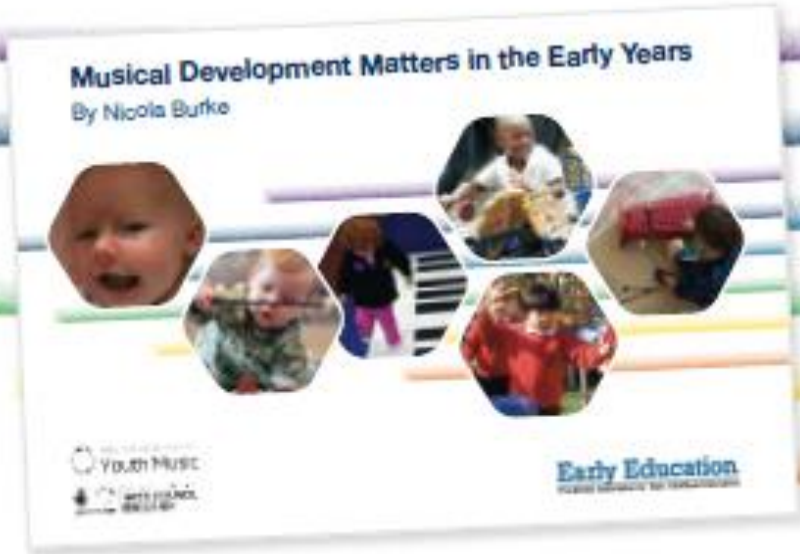
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# Musical Development Matters

Musical Development Matters in the Early Years is a new guidance document published in September 2018. Its overall purpose is to support practitioners, teachers, musicians and parents to see the musical attributes of young children and to offer ideas as to how they can support and nurture children's musical development by offering broad musical experiences.

Musical Development Matters forms part of the legacy of the Tri-Music Together project. The free online accompanying resource can be found here: [network.youthmusic.org.uk/musical-development-matters](http://network.youthmusic.org.uk/musical-development-matters)

Download a copy for free or buy a printed copy from: [www.early-education.org.uk/musical-development-matters](http://www.early-education.org.uk/musical-development-matters)



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**Early Education**  
The British Association for Early Childhood Education



community  
employment hub



# Employment Hubs



Every Tuesday 9.30am-12.30pm

'The River', Williton Children's Centre

Wednesdays (fortnightly)

9.30am-12.00pm

'The Well', The Greyhound,  
Lime Street, Stogursey

Every Thursday

9.30am-12.30pm

'The Sanctuary', Watchet

First Thursday of the month

10.00am-12.30pm

'The Valley', Dulverton Library,  
Fore Street, Dulverton

Every Friday

9.30am-12.00pm

'The Bridge' @ The Hub  
Hopcott Road, Minehead

## FREE

- Access to the internet/IT
- Help with searching and applying for work
- Support with CV writing
- Assistance with interviews
- Signposting service
- West Somerset Advice Support

No Booking Required, Just Drop in for  
Free Friendly Help and Support!

All hubs need valued volunteers if you can help  
please contact the hub in your area of choice  
Anyone Welcome

**Your  
Pathway to  
Support  
Starts at the  
Hub**

For further information please contact

Williton Hub - Tel: 01984 635980

Stogursey Hub - Tel: 01278 732490

Watchet Hub - Tel: 01984 248169

Dulverton Hub - Tel: 0300 123 2224

Minehead Hub - Tel: 01643 707598



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The next date for The Stogursey Hub is Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> December, then every two weeks after that

More information can be found here:

<https://www.westsomersetonline.gov.uk/Community---Living/Employment---Skills-Support/Community-Employment-Hubs>

# Club Activities

in Somerset

For children and young people with a disability or additional need

## TAUNTON & WEST SOMERSET



### Children's Autism Outreach Team (CAOT)

Club for children who have a diagnosis of autism and their families  
3rd Tuesday of the month: A's Activity Centre, Frobisher Way, Taunton,  
TA2 6BB, 5pm – 7pm, over 4's £5, under 4's £4, 1st adult free, any  
additional adults £1 each, free squash.

Contact a CAOT member for more info: 07919 540995 / 07584 175261.



### Hill Billy Farm Club @ Rainbow Care Farm

Farming, animal care, arts & crafts, campfire cooking, games &  
nature activities! Insert Image no Logo available  
The Old School, Huish Champflower, TA4 2BX  
Saturdays: 6 Oct, 3 Nov, 1 Dec, 2 Feb, 2 March, 6 April, 4 May, 1  
June  
10am – 3pm (or 10am – 12 noon if preferred)  
£10 per person  
For 3+ years

\*We also have a Riding For The Disabled facility on site, so please contact us to chat about  
riding lessons as well as our club\*  
Contact Rexy on 07814 606176 / rainbowcarefarm@gmail.com



### Saturday Drop in Club

Come along, have fun, make new friends – cooking, arts &  
crafts, Wii games, all ability bikes, outdoor play and much  
more!!

Monthly on a Saturday term time: 22nd Sept, 20th Oct, 17th  
Nov, 15th Dec 2018, 19th Jan 2019, 9th Feb, 23rd March, 27th  
April, 18th May, 15th June, 13th July 2019  
Selworthy School, Selworthy Road, Taunton, TA2 8HD

10am – 1pm, for 0 – 18 years, siblings welcome. Children must  
be accompanied by a parent / carer, £3 per child

Contact the Short Breaks office on 01823 358117 for more information.  
No need to book, just turn up and have fun!



Minehead Exclusive Soft Play Session  
supported by the Short Breaks Team and the  
Children's Autism Outreach Team (CAOT)  
Monthly Soft Play session for children and  
young people with a disability or additional  
need @ The Hub Indoor Soft Play Centre,  
Hopcott Road, Alcombe,  
Minehead, TA24 6DJ, 4.30pm – 6.30pm,  
£2.50 per child, under 1's free. Refreshments

available to buy. Please wear socks!  
13th Sept, 11th Oct, 8th Nov, 6th Dec – 2019 dates likely to be: 17th Jan, 14th Feb,  
14th March, 25th April, 9th May, 6th June, 4th July  
Contact Joyce 07584 175247 or Tim 07976 697240 for more info.  
No need to book.



### Teenage Club 'West'

Delivered by the Short Breaks Team  
An evening club for teenagers aged 13 to 18 with a disability or additional  
need.

One Thursday evening each month. Come along for dinner and make  
some new friends along the way!

Young people will need to be able to manage under group supervision.  
Skills to learn include: Managing money, social skills, independence

27th Sept, 25th Oct, 22nd Nov, 20th Dec 2018, 31st Jan, 28th Feb, 28th March, 23rd May,  
20th June, 18th July 2019.

We meet at the venue at 6:15pm and finish at 8pm and usually you can find a menu online  
to look at prices.

Please call us to find out more about where we will be meeting - Joyce Evans 07584  
175247 / Gemma Coggins 07977 412818.



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View the full Club Activities booklet here:  
<http://online.pubhtml5.com/fuxz/qjwt/#p=9>