

Bookstart Shine

A guide to enjoying
books and reading with
deaf children



Welcome to Bookstart Shine

This guide provides ideas and tips on enjoying books with your child. It also suggests a range of books that you can share together. Not all of the information or books will be right for every child but we hope that this is a useful starting point.

Bookstart Shine is part of Bookstart which supports families to start sharing stories and books together from the earliest possible age.

Sharing stories helps to:

- Strengthen the bond between a parent/carer and child.
- Develop language and literacy skills and vocabulary.
- Support health and emotional wellbeing.



For the purposes of this booklet, BookTrust is using the term 'deaf' to describe children across the whole range of deafness/hearing loss. See our website for more information. The leaflet also refers to British Sign Language (BSL). BookTrust acknowledges that some families may use another sign language such as Irish Sign Language (ISL), or a sign system such as Makaton.

How to choose a book

Below are some ideas of what to look out for when choosing books for your child.

- Highly visual, colourful and uncluttered images can help children understand the story.
- 'Touch and feel' books are great to get your child exploring books.
- Look for books about everyday routines and familiar environments.
- Encourage your child to read the characters' emotions by looking at their expressions.
- Picture dictionaries can be useful (even in different languages!) because they group together images of different items in a theme.
- Try to include books that talk about feelings. Children can develop empathy by thinking about how the characters in stories might be feeling.
- Be prepared to share the same book over and over – young children love and need repetition.



Sharing books

There is no right or wrong way to share a story together, but these tips can help you get started.

- Think about how you are sitting. Can your child clearly see your face? Sit at the same level or angle as your child and make sure there is enough light.
- Try to keep your child's attention using eye contact, a lively voice and lots of facial expression.
- Enjoying the story through the pictures is just as important as reading the words. Be guided by your child's interest in the book and follow their attention. You may find you don't read the text word for word, but instead explore the story in your own way, led by your child, and that's fine!
- If you don't use BSL, try using actions to help tell the story. Try using facial expressions to show characters' emotions.
- Don't rush. Give your child time to look between the pictures and your face (and hands if signing) – this helps them connect your words with the illustrations. Try introducing one or two key words or signs from the story just before you start sharing the book, so that they are already familiar with them when you start reading.
- It may help if you prop the book up in front of your child and try looking over the top of it. You can use a book stand, sometimes sold as a recipe book stand, to keep your hands free while reading.

Have fun with it

You know best what your child enjoys but here are a few ideas about how to make sharing books as fun as possible.

- Use real-life objects or make props to help tell the story.
- Play at dressing up as characters and act out simple scenes from the story.
- Using funny facial expressions can help to keep children entertained.
- Try using different voices for the characters in your story. Changing your voice so it has ups and downs can help your child tune into what you're saying.
- Puppets by Post (details at the end of this booklet) produces many amazing puppets, including some with fingers so you can make them perform basic signs.
- Let children tell you the story themselves, using their own toys and props.
- Make a story sack! A great way of bringing stories to life, a story sack is a large cloth bag containing a children's book with interactive materials to make reading even more fun. Check at your local library if they have any story sacks you can borrow.
- Be aware that there will be times when your child will be more or less engaged depending on their mood.
- Look out for BookTrust Storytime events in your local library.
- Don't forget to look out for books with positive images of deaf characters - our website has lots of suggestions.

Moving on

- As your child grows, encourage them to play more of a role in telling the story, for example joining in with repeated actions or words.
- Encourage your child to read the characters' emotions by looking at their expressions.
- Find new words (or signs if you are using BSL) and use books to develop your child's language.
- If you use BSL, you can use your whole body to show scale—shrink movements for a tiny 'mouse' and go big and bold for an 'elephant'.



Books to enjoy

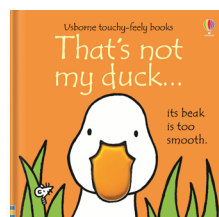
There are many wonderful books to explore. Here are just a few you may want to consider.

'Touch and feel' books are great for sharing as they are ideal for stimulating the senses and for discussing words like 'smooth', 'soft', 'bumpy' and 'sticky'. Look out for 'touch and feel' books with a variety of flaps, recognisable shapes and textures.

That's Not My Duck

by Fiona Watt, illustrated by Rachel Wells
Usborne Publishing Ltd
ISBN: 9781409565161

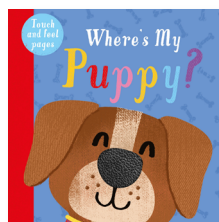
One of a growing series of 'touch and feel' board books with interesting textures and shapes for inquisitive fingers to explore. Series also includes *That's Not My Teddy* and *That's Not My Train*.



Where's My Puppy?

by Kate McLelland
Little Tiger Press
ISBN 9781788819206

Follow Puppy's pawprint trail across the pages and say hello to the different animal characters you meet along the way. Bright colours, simple text, different textures to touch on each page and a surprise flap at the end make this book a delight to share with little ones.



Peppa Pig Puddle Playtime

by Ladybird

Penguin Random House Children's UK

ISBN: 9780241375860

Join Peppa and George on a rainy day outing to the park. The book has a lovely variety of textures to touch, from a fluffy duck to shimmery raindrops and even a sticky, muddy puddle.



See, Touch, Feel

by Roger Priddy

Priddy Books

ISBN: 9781783417452

A sturdy board book with lots of bright photos of happy babies and lots of raised textures for them to explore.



Getting Ready

by Child's Play, illustrated by Cocoretto

Child's Play International

ISBN: 9781846438868

This sensory-packed book has multiple textures and clearly defined shapes to touch and feel, from a velvety teddy bear to shiny wellies and even a small zip to zip! It follows a simple and relatable morning routine, getting dressed and ready to go out for the day.



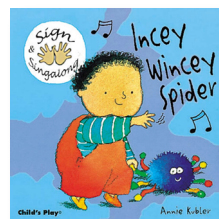
Books with signing

Signing and clearly saying the words at the same time (so your baby can see your lips) has been proven to help support children's understanding and communication.

Incey Wincey Spider: Sign & Singalong

by Annie Kubler
Child's Play International
ISBN: 9781904550037

A lovely book for sharing. Learn how to tell the nursery rhyme Incey Wincey Spider using actions and signs. For each section of the rhyme, there is a sweet illustration of a child demonstrating an accompanying action. Some illustrations use specific BSL signs, while others are actions that indicate what's happening in the song.



Sign About: Play Time

by Anthony Lewis
Child's Play International
ISBN: 9781904550792

A great introduction to simple signs which can be used with children from a very early age. One of a series which also includes Meal Time, Getting Ready and Going Out.



Representation in books

All children like to see themselves in books. Look out for books that show children signing and/or using hearing aids. All the books in this guide featuring signs use BSL, but not all books show BSL – so check before you buy or borrow.

Elephant and the Lost Blanket

by Alex Naidoo
National Deaf Children's Society
ISBN: 9781909706156

Elephant and her friends are enjoying a day in the park when her special blue blanket goes missing. Created with deaf children in mind, it presents deaf characters in a relatable story.

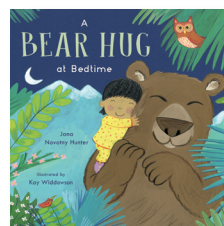
Available direct from the National Deaf Children's Society.



A Bear Hug at Bedtime

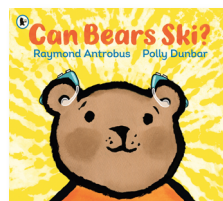
by Jana Novotny Hunter,
illustrated by Kay Widdowson
Child's Play International
ISBN: 9781846439889

A delightful picture book with a gentle story about the power of the imagination and the fun of play. It includes an extended, mixed-race family and the main character uses a hearing aid.



Can Bears Ski?

by Raymond Antrobus,
illustrated by Polly Dunbar
Walker Books
ISBN 9781406394627



The story of a day in the life of Little Bear, this engaging picture book depicts the experience of being deaf or hard of hearing in childhood. Told in a relatable child voice, it includes a visit to the audiologist and details such as feeling the vibrations of Dad's feet on the floor.

Rose Signs Good Night!

by Rose Ayling-Ellis
Dorling Kindersley
ISBN: 9780241681886



Rose is getting ready for bed in this bright and colourful board book that includes a selection of signs for different elements of the bedtime routine along the way. Written by actress and activist for the Deaf community, Rose Ayling-Ellis.

Let's Play

by Alex Strick,
illustrated by Annie Kubler and Sarah Dellow
Child's Play
ISBN: 9781835321034



This thoughtful, inclusive board book has a different texture and shape to touch on every double page. The BSL sign for those objects are shown on the back cover, plus there is both a child and a teddy wearing a BAHA pictured inside.

The National Deaf Children's Society



The National Deaf Children's Society is the leading charity for deaf children.

They are there for every deaf child who needs them – no matter what their level or type of deafness or how they communicate.

They support deaf children and their families, and work with decision-makers and professionals to overcome the barriers that hold deaf children back through their membership scheme. Registration is simple, fast and free to parents and carers of deaf children and the professionals who work with them. Contact the Freephone Helpline or register through **[ndcs.org.uk](https://www.ndcs.org.uk)**.

- **Freephone Helpline 0808 800 8880** (voice and text) offering clear, balanced information on many issues relating to childhood deafness, including schooling and communication options.
- A range of publications for parents and professionals on areas such as audiology, parenting and financial support.
- A regularly updated website with information on deafness and National Deaf Children's Society publications.
- A team of advice and guidance officers who provide information and local support across the UK.

- Specialist information, advice and support from their education appeals advisers.
- An audiologist and technology team to provide information about deafness and equipment that may help deaf children.
- Events for deaf children and their families.
- MyNDCS app for parents and carers, with information and stories tailored to your child's age and stage.
- Online training for professionals working with deaf children and young people.
- A network of local deaf children's societies offering support in your area.



Resources for parents and professionals

Let's Sign Early Years, BSL Building Blocks Child and Carer Guide

by Cath Smith and Sandra Teasdale

Co-Sign Communications

ISBN: 9781905913220

An easy-to-use collection of everyday BSL signs. The signs are well chosen and illustrated with babies and very young children in mind.

TinyTalk Let's Sign: baby signing DVD

A DVD introducing 150 baby signs, clearly demonstrated and brought to life with imagery and music. One of many resources from TinyTalk.

tinytalk.co.uk/shop.php

Signed Stories

Signed Stories is an interactive website featuring some of the UK's best children's stories with wonderful animation, fun illustrations, and engaging British Sign Language translation, text and sound.

signedstories.com

Speech and Language UK

A UK charity that provides free resources and services to help speech, language and communication milestones, provide support and ways you can help your child at home.

speechandlanguage.org.uk

British Deaf Association

The BDA's website offers information, resources and advice about BSL.

bda.org.uk

Puppets by Post

Puppets from around the world, many of which are ideal for deaf children, can be ordered by both individuals and organisations. Look out for their series of 'mitts' which can bring songs and stories to life.

puppetsbypost.com

Afasic

A UK charity helping children and young people affected by speech, language and communication difficulties, their families and the professionals working with them.

afasic.org.uk

Let's Sign

Let's Sign provide a range of BSL materials, including some free downloadable resources.

letssign.co.uk

More useful websites:

avuk.org

talkfirst.net



BookTrust is the UK's largest children's reading charity. We get millions of children reading each year. Children who read regularly experience better mental wellbeing. They form stronger bonds and relationships. They do better at school and are more creative. This is why we support families to start sharing stories and books together from the earliest possible age.

Visit our website for more information, tips and book recommendations at **booktrust.org.uk/families**



Special thanks to the National Deaf Children's Society for their help in developing the Bookstart Shine project and ongoing partnership.

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