



Psychological
Service Home
Visiting Teachers

EASEYS for ASN

Encourage And Support Early Years Skills for Additional Support Needs

Together time

Important first reading

Some key messages from Realising the ambition: Being Me, which are relevant to sharing a song, rhyme or story with children with Additional Support Needs (ASN), include:

“Connect with personal stories created with my family through familiar photos, words and objects, engaging with the senses.”

“Involve me in fun games, songs and rhymes where I stretch out and touch my hands, fingers or toes.”

“Continue to give sensory and tactile experiences by providing resources which support talking about stories and factual texts and having fun with books.”

“It is understanding and using patterns and cues for interaction, sequencing thoughts and ideas, and making stories that help us understand what is happening, and what is next.”

“Sing and recite counting songs and rhymes with me, linking to visual representations using rhyme and rhythm.”

Realising the ambition: Being Me

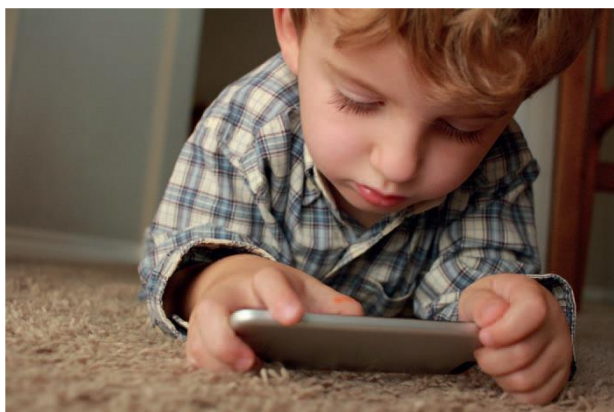
Why are sharing songs, rhymes and stories so important for children with Additional Support Needs?

“The majority of brain development occurs in the first three years of a child’s life. Reading to and sharing books with babies and young children, and giving them time to respond, feeds their brain, helps them learn new words and grows their vocabulary.”

Literacy Trust

This also applies to children with ASN but we may need to support sharing books differently as some find it difficult to explore literacy in typical ways. These types of activities promote bonding and attachment opportunities. Here are some ideas to make sharing songs, rhymes and stories more accessible for children with ASN:

- For some children it may be enough to think ‘younger’ and provide activities and books which would suit an earlier stage of development.
- Enhance the child’s interaction by adding sensory activities, movement and rhythm.
- Using a favourite character or toy from a book is a great motivator to encourage engagement.
- Some children find it easier to engage with a book/activity after seeing the whole story as a video or animation first.
- Try making the activity more accessible and interactive by using toys, props and/or visual supports.
- For some children with sensory or physical difficulties you may need to think about high contrast books, books with auditory output or adaptations to support independent page turning.
- Think about where you do this activity. Does the child benefit from a distraction free space?
- Consider positional options e.g. tummy lying, standing frame, etc.
- It may be easier for some children to share a story with just you before joining in with others.
- Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) aids can help provide inclusive opportunities for children to participate e.g. BIGmack switch, talking tin, etc.
- Cueing in to the activity at the start and into the next activity at the end can be useful for some children who struggle with transitions.
- Repetition provides opportunities for children to engage more over time as the content becomes familiar.



Hal Gatewood on Unsplash



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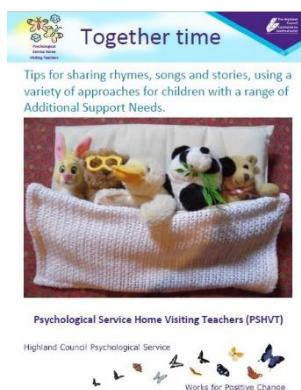
Story Saacks

The Psychological Service Home Visiting Teachers have produced some differentiated **Story Saacks**. These contain ideas, including props and AAC resources, to support the engagement of children with ASN.



'Together Time'

The **Together Time booklet** is designed for parents and practitioners. The booklet contains differentiated ideas to help support children with ASN engage with rhymes, songs and stories. The activities suggested cover a wide ability and interest range. Dip in to find something which works for your child.



Adaptations

Lollipop sticks can act as page turners. Be careful with the spacing so that each one can easily be accessed. Look here for other ideas for **page turners**.



Sensory Umbrellas

Sensory umbrellas can provide a simple way of screening off distractions and help a child focus on the stimuli we are presenting. The added benefit for a non-mobile child is to create a new environment in which to play, explore and learn. The umbrellas can be linked to story books, songs, rhymes, seasons, festivals, weather, the list is endless!

A word of caution: umbrellas require close supervision. Most umbrellas come with a pointed metal ferrule and the spokes are of a metal construction with plastic caps. There are potential dangers if the child is left unsupervised or if used with a child with unpredictable or distressed behaviour. Used with supervision, however, they offer many advantages and are easily stored and quick to put up.



Useful links

Teddy Talk Supporting EAL Children in Nursery School

Words Up—Key Messages

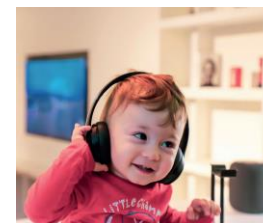
Books for All books in accessible formats

CALL Scotland—Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)

Book Bug Scottish Book Trust

Hints and Tips!

- Talk to the child's parents or carers to find out what the child's favourite songs, rhymes and stories are.
- A blanket is an excellent prop for cueing the child into the activity.
- A 'BIGmack' or 'Talking Tin' can provide an opportunity for a non-verbal child to participate.
- Consider the size of the group you are sharing a book with. Not everyone can manage group story sessions.
- Some children enjoy the sensation of wearing earphones and they can minimise distractions for better engagement.
- Always seek the advice of professionals supporting children to ensure you are using an approach suitable for the individual.
- Share what works well with everyone involved.



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