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## Book Reviews



### Volume 2

#### ***Water baby and Sleepy baby***

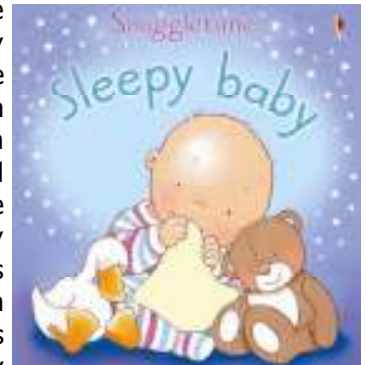
**Usborne Hardback £5.99**

**Words by Fiona Watt/illustrated by Catherine-Anne MacKinnon**



There was great competition among practitioners to use these books for group work and for home visits as they are so delightful. Sleepy baby is a super book to share with babies with its attractive pictures and touchy-feely patches on each page. It follows a baby's bedtime routine from getting undressed, bathing, teeth brushing, enjoying a bedtime book to settling down to sleep. Notice the way the baby becomes sleepier on each page as well as the bedtime routine progresses. On a home visit, the mother of a three-year-old could not believe how often her child looked at the book and felt the pages finishing off by talking to his teddy as if he was telling the story to his cuddly.

In our drop-in in a community shopping centre, Room to Play, the book was used with an activity about putting babies to bed and was popular with adults and children alike. Water baby celebrates a child playing with water and the sounds it makes such as 'splish', 'splosh', etc. It was used in a baby group with 'Singing with babies' with talk of what musical noises does your baby know around the home. It proved a very popular read with practitioners feeling that it was appealing to use with babies as well as with four-year-olds who were interested in fun words and how they look on a page.



#### Suggested use (Water baby)

Self-concept and disposition for babies: 'Babies making choices' – making sense of water through play.

Oral language for babies: 'Singing with babies' – musical sounds around the home.

Self-concept and disposition for ones: 'Playing and learning' and 'Play patterns' – exploring and finding out about water through play.

Reading for fours: 'Sharing books with children' – excellent for hearing different sounds.

#### Suggested use (Sleepy baby)

Self-concept and disposition for babies: 'Developing routines' – a lovely example of a happy bedtime.

Oral language for babies: 'Books for babies' – lots to talk about.

Reading for ones: 'Sharing books' – a brilliant book featuring an aspect of everyday life that is of interest.

Numeracy for ones: 'A sense of order' – useful when talking about establishing routines.

Reading for fours: 'Playing with stories' – a simple repetitive text that enables a child to 'read' the book using the picture cues.

## ***The Big Night-Night Book***

**Red Fox Hardback £5.99**

**By Georgie Birkett**

The touch-and-feely pages along with the cuddly subject matter of the book made it a favourite among adults and babies alike. The Big Night-Night Book follows a little boy as he prepares for bed and the rhythm and rhyme of the text is a natural to read aloud. It is heart-warming as he says good night to all the things around him before the light is turned out. A practitioner, using this book to illustrate ORIM, felt it would be a helpful resource to use in the routines' section of the curriculum. The bright, clear pictures held the attention of the children while the adults loved to relate the book to bedtime in their homes. It is also excellent to introduce for talk time as it is a subject that triggers so much interest. The book was given to the adults after the session and parents/carers encouraged their babies to feel all the different textures on each page.



### Suggested use

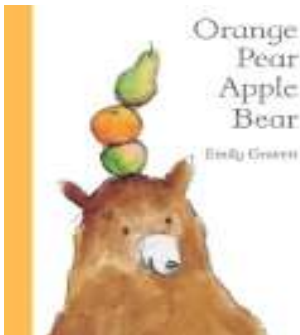
Self-concept and disposition for babies – 'Developing routines'.

Numeracy for threes – 'What comes next'.

## ***Orange Pear Apple Bear***

**Campbell Books Hardback £5.99**

**By Emily Gravett**



The beautiful simplicity of this book means it will remain a favourite in houses and early years' settings for a long time to come. The playful illustrations fit like a glove to the minimal text. The book was enjoyed on various home visits with some children fascinated by each page while slightly older children wanted more text. Practitioners reading it with groups found that it was a first class hardback to link with a healthy eating theme with one- and two-year-olds loving to pretend to eat the orange, pear or apple. There is also a good deal for adults and children to discuss in terms of the bright, colourful illustrations and the bear's constantly changing shape to look like the fruit he was eating.

### Suggested use

Oral language for babies: 'Books for babies' – good chunky book for holding with familiar fruits featured.

Reading for ones: 'Sharing books' clear pictures with repeating words. Very suitable for ones.

Numeracy for threes: 'What comes next' possibility of using book to support a child's sequencing.

Reading for fours: 'Playing with stories' – children can read the text using the pictures easily.

Text demonstrates for parents playing with sounds using just four words – 'Other worlds in books'



## ***My animals***

**Bloomsbury Hardback £6.99**

**By Xavier Deneux**

This is a very striking little book as it is illustrated in black and white with just the occasional splash of colour. The book was used twice on home visits by practitioners. One practitioner shared it with a year-old girl who loved looking at the different animals and particularly loved the dog on the front cover. A three-year-old and a one-year-old explored the volume on another visit. They loved the variety of wild and domestic animals and the playful cut out holes on each page. They were kept entertained by the practitioner making the sounds of most of the animals, although that became tough on some pages, such as those with the panda, penguin, giraffe and zebra! These children did not take to the black and white images and wanted the animals to be in colour. The practitioner also found the book too heavy to hold and turn pages for little hands and suggested that either an adult holds the book or it is rested on a surface.



### Suggested use

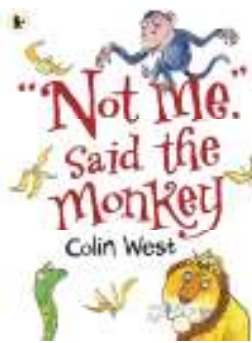
Oral language for babies: 'Books for babies' – another interpretation. Black and white book could be attractive to very young babies.

Reading for ones: 'Sharing books' – looking through the holes and predicting what comes next.

## ***Not me, said the monkey***

**Walker Books Paperback £4.99**

**By Colin West**



This is the perfect book for exploring the 'managing difficult behaviour' theme in the *Learning Together* programme. Colin West's character monkey is always up to mischief; dropping banana skins and throwing coconuts. When the other animals ask who is to blame, he is quick to reply, 'Not me' but goes a step too far when he tickles elephant. A practitioner used the book in a twos group and the children loved talking about how monkey was naughty or cheeky. The subject fitted in well with the adults during talk time and there was a discussion on how you can use stories in managing behaviour. In another group, adults and children alike enjoyed sharing the story and making animal sounds with parents/carers saying, 'Monkey has the coconut' or 'look at the monkey prints on snake'.

It is also a volume destined to be a favourite in the book borrowing box.

### Suggested use

Writing for ones: 'Making the most of favourite stories' – text allows child to join in with confidence. It could easily become a favourite book for frequent reading.

Self-concept and disposition for twos: 'Managing difficult behaviour' – using stories to manage difficult behaviour.

Oral language with threes: 'Talking with children' – chatting about books.

Numeracy with threes: 'What comes next' – knowing what comes next in a story. Text is very supportive of this.

Reading for fours: 'Playing with stories' – great text can be played with by adult and child at home. Repetition will enable the child to join in with the added bonus of the joke at the end!



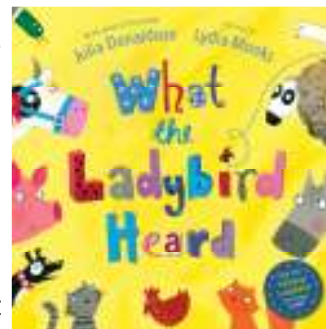
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## ***What the ladybird heard***

**Macmillan Hardback £10.99**

**Words by Julia Donaldson/illustrated by Lydia Monks**

This is a super volume to have around in a busy early years' setting for three and four year olds with Lydia Monks' wacky illustrations complementing Julia Donaldson's pacey, funny and well crafted text. The rhyming story tells how one tiny ladybird comes up with a cunning plan and enlists the other farm animals to foil two would-be raiders from stealing the farmer's prize cow. Practitioners found it was a great book to read aloud and it worked well in a multi-level group. The children loved finding the ladybird on each page, making all the animal noises, looking at the map of the farmyard and it was also interesting to talk to the older children about not being able to see around the farm at nighttime. Parents and children had fun joining in with the noises together and the volume worked well as a session book, fitting in with multi-level session plans around early reading and writing skills. A practitioner's only concern was the vocabulary used to describe the police arriving, i.e. 'cops' in a 'panda car' going 'nee nah!'



### Suggested use

Oral language with threes: 'Talking with children' – lots to talk about here.

Numeracy with threes: Supports special awareness of direction with lots of directional words. 'Talking maths'.

Reading with fours: 'Sharing books with children' – repetition, exciting story for child to comment upon.

Writing with fours: Possibility of using finger to follow trail of the ladybird. Also, children can 'follow' the thieves on the map.

## ***Healthy Food for Young Children, part of Usborne Parents' Guides***

**Usborne Paperback £12.99**

**By Henny Fordham with illustrations by Shelagh McNicholas and Ruth Russell**



The heaps of well presented information in this guide to healthy eating for children meant it was extremely well used in Room to Play as well as at our PEEP children's centre in Thame, just outside Oxford. Packed full of nutritional information, recipe ideas, techniques and tactics to get children to eat well, one parent commented, 'this is not just a book for children but for the whole family'. Practitioners felt the book stimulated discussions on diet among parents who might have been reluctant to talk about healthy eating.

It is a friendly, inviting book but adults with concerns over literacy levels would need support using it. It's an excellent book for practitioners to use in children's centres as well as to use in PEEP groups.

### Suggested use

Writing for fours: 'Learning about writing through play' – understanding the usefulness of writing with lots of recipes here, sometimes pictorially illustrated, e.g. page 72 that could be used with adult and children together.



## ***Ten little fingers and ten little toes***

**Walker Books Hardback £10.99**

**Words by Zita Newcombe/illustrations by Helen Oxenbury**

The non-judgemental and accepting-of-all nature of this book makes it a natural for PEEP groups. There's nothing quite so endearing as children's tiny fingers and toes and this book embraces those feelings with great multicultural images. When shared with a baby group, the adults enjoyed the repetition and joined in with the rhyme. They encouraged the babies to look at the pictures especially the animals and the swings. It's good to use when talking about rhythm and rhyme to develop talking and listening skills but the tiny eyes on Helen Oxenbury's illustrations means it is not so good for exploring the importance of eye contact. Sensitivity is needed when using the book if in a group there is a mother experiencing post-natal depression or a carer who has not got custody of their child as the text assumes the adult is fully attached to the child. One practitioner was unable to use it in a group as one of the children had an extra digit on a hand.

### Suggested use

Self-concept and disposition with babies: developing talking and listening skills.

Oral language with babies: 'Singing with babies'.

Oral language with ones: Discussion on importance and usefulness of fingers and toes and so valuable in supporting language development.

Numeracy with ones: 'Toddler numbers' – clapping games.

Reading with twos: 'Making the most of favourite stories' with repetition about a subject children are interested in.

Oral language with threes: 'Talking with children'.

Self-concept and disposition with fours: Supports understanding by children of their place in the world, i.e. babies born everywhere supports child's geographical knowledge.

Reading with fours: 'Sharing books with children' – the text elicits lots of things to talk about as well as possibilities for exploring rhymes.



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### **BOOK TITLE**

### **ISBN NUMBER**

Water baby	978 0 7460 8870 8
Sleepy baby	978 0 7460 6367 5
The Big Night-Night Book	978 0 3703 2985 7
Orange Pear Apple Bear	978 0 2307 0719 1
My animals	978 0 7475 9710 0
Not me,' said the monkey	978 1 4063 2103 6
What the ladybird heard	978 0 2300 1817 4
Healthy Food for Young Children	978 0 7460 7796 2
Ten little fingers and ten little toes	978 1 4063 1592 9



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