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Book Reviews



Volume 3

Sharing a Shell

ISBN: 978 1 4050 2047 3

MacMillan Hardback £10.99

Words by Julia Donaldson/illustrated by Lydia Monks

For those fans of touchy-feely books with lots of glitter thrown in, *Sharing a Shell* should prove popular. The illustrations are eye-catching and lavish and the text is an excellent device for exploring children's friendships, i.e. falling out and making up. The text is long and quite complicated, so the book is best shared with children aged three, four and five. Children tend to dip in and out of the text due to its length but it does provide lots of opportunity for discussion. In our Room to Play drop-in provision, staff designed an activity around the book for children. They drew shells and various characters in the book, such as the crab, purple anemone and bristleworm, and the children decorated them with glitter (with the help of a little glue). Some parents commented that it was a good book to get children thinking of the animal life in rockpools.



Suggested use

Self-concept and disposition for threes – 'Children's friendships'. This explores falling out with friends and how to make up.

Oral language for threes – 'Things to talk about' and 'Talking with children'.

Self-concept and disposition – 'Helping children want to learn' page 14. Opportunities to talk about how characters might be feeling.

Reading for fours – 'Other worlds in books'. Chances to find out about rock pool animals and about language, page 9. Good rhythm and rhyme as well as word play in 'whelkcome'.

Good Morning Jungle!

ISBN: 978 0 230 70896 9

Campbell Books Fabric book £6.99

By Luana Rinaldo

The children loved the bright, eye-catching images in the book and the adults warmed to the idea of a fabric book that could be washed. However, there was disappointment linked to the 'an interactive touch-and-feel' book claim as there were only two felt peepo flaps on the front cover and no textures or crinkly fabrics inside for little fingers to explore or any sounds to make. The book was used during baby book share time and adults commented that it was useful to have a book that babies could chew and that could easily be washed afterwards. One practitioner commented that the book would be useful to include in a book borrowing box for babies. Another practitioner who used '*Good morning Jungle!*' with a mum and a five-month-old baby were discussing stories and sharing books. They enjoyed chatting about how the book could be extended and what could improve it. The book features a different wild animal on each page with statements, such as 'Stripy tiger are you awake?' or 'Golden lion, get ready to play!'.

Suggested use

Oral language for babies – 'Books for babies'. Cloth books help support parental confidence when sharing books with their babies.



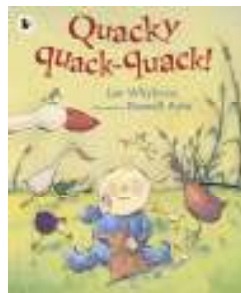
Quacky quack-quack

ISBN: 0 7445 9460 X

Walker Books Paperback £4.99

Words by Ian Whybrow/illustrated by Russell Ayto

This book is a guaranteed winner with children and adults. Perhaps its success is due to Ian Whybrow's intelligent text incorporating rhyme, animal noises and oodles of humour. Or maybe it's down to Russell Ayto's wacky, wonderful and unusual illustrations. Combine the two and you have a lovely book to use with your PEEP work. The storyline focuses on the repercussions when a toddler refuses to give the bread he has been given to the birds. He decides the bread is much too tasty to waste on them; a scenario many parents/carers will be only remember too well. When used in a group with two-year-olds, the children were captivated and the adults loved encouraging them to make animal noises. The practitioners felt the book provided a good opportunity for animal songs after the story, such as 'Five Little Ducks' and 'Old MacDonald had a farm' and there was also the chance to focus on the value of modelling with the older sibling sensitively dealing with this challenging situation. There is also excellent use of font style and size to bring the story to life but the illustration of the baby munching bread by the river while the mum lounges in a deckchair is a bit of a worry!



Suggested use

Oral language for ones – 'Amazing noises'. Gives opportunity to make a number of different animal noises that ones find so appealing.

Reading for ones – 'Amazing noises' page 5 and 'Sharing books' page 26. A lovely book to pause and allow a child to make the appropriate sound. Good picture cues to encourage the child to join in. Good extension activity – making a sounds books, 'Sharing books' pages 34-35.

Self-concept and disposition for twos – 'Living with tantrums. Good examples of diversions to avoid a tantrum and giving a choice.

Reading for twos – 'Making the most of favourite stories' page 27. Lots of opportunities for child to join in. Text relates to very day activity – see picture page 29 of folder.

Self-concept and disposition for threes – 'Helping children to learn'. Good illustrations of baby learning lots of things.

Oral language for threes – 'Talking with children', page 17. Could lead to conversation about how three-year-old would have helped the baby to feed the birds.

Numeracy for threes – 'Talking maths' page 29. Pictures feature groups of animals – good form talking about differences, similarities and counting.

Reading for fours – 'Sharing books for children'. Child might be able to join in with the rhyme, page 11. Good picture cues to support this. Lots of opportunities for questions and exploration of situation, page 10.

Song reference:

'Old Macdonald had a farm' – Singing Together Book 1: song 47.



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Buster's Farm

ISBN: 978 0 230 70720 7

Campbell Books Hardback £7.99

By Rod Campbell

Practitioners are spoilt for choice as to how to use this book with children and adults. We join Buster on the farm as one-by-one he visits his farm animal friends. It is a mixture of a touchy-feely volume and a lift the flap book with lots of questions, providing useful prompts for parents/carers exploring the story with their youngsters. Used with one-year-olds, the big bold pictures could easily be seen at a distance; vital when using it with large groups. The adults loved the prompts, e.g. stroke Skip's furry coat, although it's rather odd when you are told to feel the friendly cow's rough coat as the material is incredibly soft! There is plenty of opportunity for animal songs or noises while going through the pages and it is useful for children to see conversation captured in speech bubbles.

Suggested use

Oral language for babies – 'Familiar sights, sounds and smells' page 30.

Variety of textures supports exploration.

Reading for babies – 'Books for babies'. Good clear illustrations.

Self-concept and disposition for ones – 'Playing and learning'. Book depicts Buster finding out about the world by 'doing', i.e. by playing ball with dog, stroking animals, feeding animals, etc.

Oral language for ones – 'Amazing noises'. Lots of opportunities to make appropriate animal sounds and for singing, 'Old McDonald' page 12.

Reading for ones – 'Sharing books' page 26. Simple plot featuring clear beginning, middle and end. Allows child to explore a farm through a book. Page 29.

Numeracy for ones – 'Toddler numbers' pages 14 and 16. Clear illustrations aid touching and counting one thing at a time. Gives opportunities as well for exploring 'What makes two'.

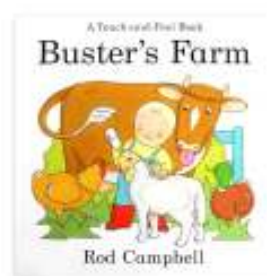
Reading for twos – 'Making the most of favourite stories'. The book gives lots of opportunities for joining in, e.g. animal sounds as well as talking about everyday experiences, e.g. feeding ducks.

Numeracy for twos – 'Let's count'. Every page offers chances for counting up to 10. It also explores concept of pairs, left and right, male and female, young and old.

Oral language for threes – 'Talking with children'. Talking about books page 17. Simple text and bubbles with animal sounds allow for joining in. 'Things to talk about' – it features lots of everyday sights, e.g. ducks and dogs as well as farm sights.

Reading with fours – 'Sharing books with children'.

Writing with fours – Bubbles show children that writing can be spoken words written down.



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Water PEEP – what books to choose

During the summer, we tested out a whole series of books as we ran Water PEEP sessions. This section is ideal for early years' settings thinking of introducing Water PEEP (at any time of year) or simply to talk about books that could be used at bathtime. Below is feedback from parents, adults and children alike as they put the books to a watery test. However, before dipping a toe in the water, it's worth exploring the following two volumes.

Going Swimming

ISBN: 9781845077228

Frances Lincoln £6.99

By Sarah Garland

Going Swimming is an old favourite (first published in 1990) but it is just as relevant today especially when trying to recruit families to Water PEEP sessions. It explores the topic of baby's first time going swimming and the fear that young children sometimes have when going to the pool. Garland's glorious illustrations document step-by-step the stages of visiting a swimming pool, from buying tickets, getting undressed to testing the temperature of the water. For any family that has never been to a swimming pool, it's the ideal guide. The baby is eventually persuaded to enter the water and as ever with Garland, there is a happy ending with the baby demanding 'more' when it is time to leave. This book was given to a mum whose child was very uncertain about going to the local pool and soon after, she gave the book back to the practitioner saying they had read it every night and her child was growing in confidence and no longer cried on their swimming trips.



Teach your Child to Swim

ISBN: 978-0-7460-7317-9

Usborne Parents' Guides £9.99



Teach your Child to Swim is the most comprehensive book around on this topic with information on everything from increasing a baby's confidence in the water to supporting children to learn to swim. It's overflowing with detail and has a strong focus on fun. It's a must if you are thinking of running Water PEEP and parents/carers would return to this book over and over again throughout their offspring's childhoods. When reviewing the book, adults were impressed with its layout with well designed pages of text, pictures and illustrations; sub-headings are particularly useful for ease of finding subjects. There is also plenty on rhymes and songs for the water but nothing on waterproof books for the pool or bath.

Quack, quack, quack

ISBN: 978 07460 96857

Usborne Waterproof £5.99

This book went down well in a Water PEEP session with children who liked the squeaker (although the sound – a squeak – doesn't sound like a duck's quack). The clear illustrations make it useful for whole group work and the context works well with such songs as 'At the bottom of the pond', the second verse of 'Over in the meadow' as well as 'I went for a walk in the park' and the old favourite 'Five little ducks'. Adults and children liked exploring words, such as waddle, splash, flap and quack.



Suggested use

Oral language for babies – 'Books for babies' page 28, a safe book for a baby to explore alone and page 25 lots of chances for a baby to join in.

Oral language for ones – 'Amazing noises'. with lots of opportunities for quacking, splashing and flopping.

Reading for ones – 'Sharing books' page 27 showing the value of water proof books and page 29 introducing very young children to the variety of duck species, babies/adult birds, etc.

Reading for twos – 'Making the most of favourite stories' pages 28-29 with lots of extra things to look for on each page, e.g. dragonfly, worm, etc.

Song reference:

'At the bottom of the pond' – Singing Together Book 1: song 29.

'Over in the meadow' – Singing Together Book 2: song 47.

'I went for a walk in the park' – Singing Together 2: song 63.



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Freddy the Frog ISBN: 978 0 230 74269 7 **and Katie the Kitten** ISBN: 978 0 230 74270 3
Campbell Books £6.99
Illustrated by Axel Scheffler

Unlike other bath books, these two are really well-designed picture books made waterproof. Scheffler's illustrations are detailed, attractive and first class for discussion while the rhyming text contains broad and wide-ranging vocabulary. Both books follow their creatures during an average day and night with the frog book introducing small children to the variety of life in the river. The kitten book delves into the fascinating world of the domestic cat and it even answers the question, where do cats go at night? Linked songs could be 'This little kitten', 'Pussycat, pussycat' and 'A hedgehog is very prickly'. They make great session books for Water PEEP. These have built in squeakers.

Suggested use (Freddy the Frog)

Self-concept and disposition for babies – 'Look what I can do' page 28. Lots of opportunities for sounds and actions.

Oral language for babies – 'Books for babies'.

Self-concept and disposition for ones – 'Movement patterns' pages 2-3. A lovely book to encourage movement in water, i.e. jumping, bouncing, flapping feet.

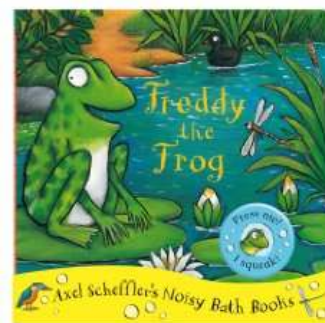
Reading for ones – 'Sharing books' page 27 and page 29.

Reading for twos – 'Making the most of favourite stories' pages 28-29.

Great illustrations would encourage talking with children.

Reading for threes – 'Talking books' pages 17.

Reading with fours – 'Other worlds in books' pages 7-8. 'Sharing book with children' page 11, value of rhyming text.



Suggested use (Katie the Kitten)



Oral language for babies – 'Books for babies' pages 28-29. Can be easily handled by a baby.

Oral language for ones – 'Amazing noises' with lots of chances to join in.

Reading with ones – 'Sharing books' page 27 stresses value of plastic books in the bath while page 29 explores children finding out about the world through books.

Reading for twos – 'Making the most of favourite stories' pages 28-29.

Reading with threes – 'Talking with children' page 17.

Reading with fours – 'Other worlds in books' page 7-8. 'Sharing books with children' page 11, value of rhyming text.

Song reference:

'This little kitten' – Singing Together Book 1: song 18.

'Pussycat, pussycat' – Singing Together Book 1: song 52.

'A hedgehog is very prickly' – Singing Together Book 1: song 62.



The Jolly Pirate

ISBN: 978 07460 9769 4

Usborne Waterproof £5.99

While this bath book is aimed at babies, its content concerning pirates, treasure maps, treasure and desert islands would probably go down better with bathers aged three and four-year-olds. It looks a useful book to have around in any Foundation Stage setting when introducing the concept of pirates. Boats and sea songs such as 'Row, row', 'A sailor went to sea, sea, sea' and 'My big blue boat' would link well. It's worth having this around during a Water PEEP session due to its pirate theme. It has a parrot squeaker as well but again this one squeaks like a mouse!

Suggested use

Reading for ones – 'Sharing books' page 27.

Reading with fours – 'Other worlds in books' page 7.

Song reference:

'Row, row' – Singing Together Book 1: song 30 or Singing Together Book 2: song 4.

'A sailor went to sea, sea, sea' – Singing Together Book 2: song 35.

'My big blue boat' – Singing Together Book 1: song 48.



Tweet tweet

ISBN: 978 07460 99544

and Toot toot

ISBN: 978 07460 99575

Usborne Waterproof £4.99

These are designed to be waterproof buggy books (with clips attached) but they could equally be used in the bath or during Water PEEP. The first follows a blue bird as it flies around a park and could easily be used to start a conversation on what birds eat and food chains. This would link to songs such as 'Two little dickybirds', 'The north wind doth blow' and 'Wiggly Woo'. The second book focuses on a train and highlights geographical awareness as well as beloved animal and transport noises. Both are too small to be used as session books in a group.



Suggested use

Oral language for babies – 'Books for babies'.

Oral language for ones – 'Amazing noises' with transport noises.

Reading for ones – 'Sharing books' pages 27 and 28.

Reading for twos – 'Making the most of favourite stories'.

Song reference:

'Two little dickybirds' – Singing Together Book 1: song 76.

'The north wind doth blow' – Singing Together Book 2: song 34.

'Wiggly Woo' – Singing Together Book 2: song 66.



Splish..splash..splish

ISBN: 978 07460 77375

Usborne Waterproof £5.99



Part of the baby's first bath book series, it has clear, interesting illustrations with holes to explore; these also make page turning easier. There is much to look out for and to talk about with many boats and sea creatures featured to support a child's early learning or increase knowledge of the sea. There are excellent links between the text and the illustrations with onomatopoeia vocabulary ideal to engage children. A useful linking song would be 'Fish alive'. This is really useful for a Water PEEP session either as a session book or for book sharing. Look out for the attached fish complete with squeaker noise!

Suggested use

Oral language for babies – 'Books for babies'.

Oral language for ones – 'Amazing noises'

Reading for ones – 'Sharing books'.

Reading for twos – 'Making the most of favourite stories'

Numeracy for twos – 'Let's count' page 17 – lots to count on every page.

Song reference:

'Fish alive' – Singing Together Book 1: song 45/Singing Together Book 2: song 43



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Letter from a practitioner

Hello everyone at PEEP!

I've just been looking at the book review page. What a good idea!

The book I would recommend for parents is: *Entertaining and Educating Babies and Toddlers* (Usborne Parent's Guides £12.99). It has seven chapters and works through the various ages and stages from birth to 2 - 2 ½, concluding with 'Useful Information'. It discusses topics, such as getting to know baby, toys and teeth, making music, the great outdoors, toddlers and TV, rainy days and dozens more subjects. Each section is short but packed with ideas, thoughts and how babies/young children learn.

Two more books I would recommend for babies are by Jez Alborough. The first is *HUG* (Walker Books, Paperback, £5.99). and it tells the story of Bobo, a baby chimp who has lost his mummy. He goes to look for her and sees all the animals hugging and repeats the one word, 'hug', getting more and more upset, until his mummy eventually sees him and calls his name, 'BOBO!' They have a wonderful reunion. This is great for talking about the various animals where they live, big and small, babies/children and parents. It is simply illustrated and can be looked through quickly if children need to be refocused or slowly, talking about the pictures and asking open ended questions with older children.



In the second book, *YES*, (Walker Books, Paperback, £5.99) we meet Bobo again but this time he is with his mum and it is bath time. He jumps in the water shouting 'yes'. Mum says it is bedtime at which he protests with, 'no' which gets louder and louder. Mum says 'goodbye' to him but watches when a friend jumps in the water with him, much to his consternation. Then another friend, a baby elephant joins them and they both shout, 'no', then 'yes!' Bobo ends up very tired and falls asleep. As with the first book it is simple and can be extended in the same way.

Hope this is helpful!

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Teach your Child to Swim	978 0 7460 7317 9
Quack, quack, quack	978 1 4063 1927 9
Freddy the Frog	978 0 2307 4269 7
Katie the Kitten	978 0 2307 4270 3
The Jolly Pirate	978 0 7460 9769 4
Tweet tweet	978 0 7460 9954 4
Toot toot	978 0 7460 9957 5
Splish..splash..splosh	978 0 7460 7737 5



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