



Parents' Guides

Bedtime Stories

We all need a little support and advice, from time to time.

Here are some helpful starting points for parents of adopted and previously in care children.

This guide is not manual for all children, they are there as a starting point to help and assist with some common challenges.

Please seek more specialist support and advice if you have any concerns.



www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/virtual-school

www.iow.gov.uk/virtualschool



support
&
nurture



Bedtime Stories



For bedtime stories to be successful there are some key elements to bear in mind:

- They aid transition not just from the awake world to the asleep world (conscious to subconscious), but away from your presence to isolation for approximately 8- 10 hours
- This needs a careful choice in story as last conscious thoughts can influence the subconsciousness of sleep
- What is the most appropriate vehicle for story, will this be with the Parent/Guardian or via an audio story, or reading by themselves?

Choosing a Story



Think

This should be not just age appropriate, but stage appropriate.

Stage

We acknowledge that our care experienced children are emotionally and socially young for their ages and this affects the way that they absorb or interact with stories as well.

Age

We know that many will need to remain in the "toddler section" for a long time and will not be ready to move on to older fiction until much later.



Language

Many children will have missed out on experiencing a language rich environment in their early years and so we need to allow for them to have some catch up time.



Time

Time to absorb new words of literature, that may take on slightly different language pattern to those they may have had before coming to current placements.

Topic

If you are expecting a child to read a story by themselves, please bear in mind that they may need a simpler text when they are tired.



Content

Save the more advanced reading skills for the stories that the adult can read with them.

Context

If in doubt our recommendation would be to choose a story with a younger target audience.



Things to consider...

- Allow choice and options for self reading
- For younger ones have picture or lift the flap books
- Work to build a love of books and reading
- Take your time and never push reading
- Sometime you could just look at a picture book together, read jokes or share a favourite comic.



Bedtime Stories

Connect

Bedtime stories have many benefits; they are proven to enhance the bond between parent and child, reduce adult and child stress levels and increase their literacy levels, as well as being very enjoyable.



Closeness

They are also a great way of creating memories. Some books will be read hundreds of times, or remembered for "that was the book we read on holiday" etc.



Comfort

Consider the place that you will have your bedtime story. If your child has a high rise bed or sleeps on the top bunk then you will either need a step ladder or agree to read in a more comfortable place together before they go to bed!



Create

Is your child able to manage the closeness that a story brings or do you need to read from a slight distance e.g. sit at the end of the bed and show the pictures at the end of each section.

Bonds

It is possible to read and keep the picture on the previous page showing if you are sitting opposite to the child, so the child has the visuals just after the text. You will need to bend the page backwards. That sounds complicated but it is quite straightforward.

Memories

However you choose please make sure that adult and child are both comfortable.

Repetition

Remember to talk to the Hampshire Library Service for their recommendations. Ask staff at school and preschool for the latest hot hit in young people's literature.

Routine

Some online book shop will allow you to have a preview of the pages so you can see if the book is suitable. Try reading the reviews

Rhythm

Have a good look through your local charity shop, or at a Car Boot Sale for bargains. This is a great source if you are looking for a particular author.

Things to consider...

- What sort of story appeals to your child?
- Do they like stories about animals, dinosaurs, adventures, other children, seaside etc.
- Do they like stories that are mostly in pictures to support their imaginations?
- Do they like a story with a rhythm and a pace to it? Do they like a story in rhyming couplets?
- Do they like to hold a board book that is very sturdy?
- Do they like a book that invites participation, such as "Would you rather?" by John Burningham?





Bedtime Stories



Select Include your child in choosing stories, ask them which books they like best, take them with you when you are selecting new books. Try some out from your library before buying your own copies.

Variety Please remember to not feel guilty if there are some nights when everyone is too tired or emotionally heightened to have a story! On those night use a CD/ Audio story instead.

Classics Know your stories really well before you start to read them aloud to your children. Check the content/ plot/storyline; you don't want to be getting into a great story to find that there is a totally inappropriate situation arising that your child will not be able to manage e.g.:

- Big rejections
- Being left behind
- Not having shelter or food
- Death and bereavement issues
- Running away from home



Buy If you are on a tight budget beware of the school fundraisers through visiting book fairs. This is not the most economic way of purchasing books.

Carefully Shop around locally and online for best prices. Many second-hand books represent excellent value for money if in good condition. Car boot or table-top sales can be a good place to pick up a good value read.

Book You could ask friends and family for Book Vouchers for Birthdays and Christmas.

Tokens Also check the sale sections of local book shops regularly.



Things to consider...

- Look for latest and original classics and trends such as Julia Donaldson, Roald Dahl, Shirley Hughes, David Walliams, Giles Andreae and others.
- Take time to explore what interests your child.
- Use variety and repetition to build language, comprehension, words and creativity.
- Perhaps listen to an audio book on the school run.
- Perhaps watch bedtime stories online, so they can fit with your time frames.
- If you have read the book, perhaps watch the film and talk about differences and similarities.

