

Bookbug Explorer Bag Handbook



Old MacDonald Had a Farm

Old MacDonald had a farm,
E-I-E-I-O.
And on his farm he had a cow,
E-I-E-I-O.
With a moo moo here,
And a moo moo there.
Here a moo, there a moo
Everywhere a moo moo.
Old MacDonald had a farm,
E-I-E-I-O.



Seashell

Holding up a seashell
(hold fist to ear)
Tightly to my ear.
Shh! It's telling me a secret,
(other hand holds finger to lips)
That only I can hear!

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Welcome to your Bookbug Explorer Bag Handbook

Bookbug is Scotland's national book gifting programme. The Bookbug Explorer Bag is given to all 3-year-old children in Scotland, and is the third Bookbug Bag a child should receive.

Bookbug aims to inspire a love of books and reading in every child across Scotland by encouraging parents and children to share stories together. Reading with children from an early age, both at nursery and at home, helps to support children's early learning, development and wellbeing. Sharing stories, songs and rhymes can also help to support family relationships, bonding and attachment.

This handbook contains information about the Bookbug Explorer Bag, along with practical ideas for gifting events, nursery activities and ways to engage with parents. Research into bag gifting programmes indicates that the way the bags are gifted makes a difference to how the books and the other materials in the bag are used in the family home.

Get in touch

We hope that this handbook will help you to plan fun and effective ways to gift the Bookbug Explorer Bag to families. We would love to hear about your experiences of gifting the bag in your nursery. Please email bookbug@scottishbooktrust.com. You can find more information and resources about everything you find in this handbook at scottishbooktrust.com/explorergifting.

You can also contact your local Bookbug Co-ordinator for information about Bookbug in your area or for queries about bag deliveries. Find their contact details on our website.

Happy gifting!

Bookbug programme information

Scottish Book Trust's Early Years programme provides free bags of books for every child in Scotland from birth to Primary 1.

Bookbug Bags

Bookbug Baby Bag

Usually gifted by the health visitor at 3–5 weeks



This bag encourages families to share books, sing and talk with babies from birth. Included are board books, a calendar with song ideas, book recommendations and space to record appointments and milestones and a CD, all within a strong canvas bag.

Please note the canvas bag is for parents and carers and not suitable for babies to use unattended.

Bookbug Toddler Bag

Usually gifted by the health visitor at 13–15 months



This bag aims to boost a child's language and listening skills with engaging books and resources including a CD and song and rhyme book, to encourage families to share stories, songs and rhymes every day. The canvas bag also includes a drawing pad and jumbo crayons to support the development of motor skills and creative play.

Please note the canvas bag is for parents and carers and not suitable for toddlers to use unattended.

Bookbug Explorer Bag

Usually gifted at nursery at 3 years



The Explorer Bag builds on the book sharing messages of the first two bags. Young explorers will receive a canvas bag with books as well as other materials such as coloured pencils to allow them to practise mark making, a CD and printed resources to encourage them to talk about the books in their bags with their friends and family.

Bookbug P1 Family Bag

Gifted at school in Primary 1 or via the library

This bag contains the three books shortlisted for The Bookbug Picture Book Prize, and all P1 children are encouraged to vote for their favourite title. As well as the books, the bag contains an activity book and coloured pencils to encourage children to talk about the books and read them again and again.



Bookbug Sessions

Bookbug Sessions are free song, rhyme and story sessions, which take place across Scotland in libraries and community venues. Sessions last around 30 minutes and use stories, songs and rhymes to encourage positive interaction between parents or carers and their children.

Bookbug in other languages

Gaelic versions of each of the Bookbug Bags are available for interested families and can be supplied in addition to the English versions. Children receiving a Gaelic bag should also get a bag in English, as some resources are not replicated. Our general Bookbug information leaflet is available in nine community languages on our website.

Support for children with additional needs

CALL Scotland have created symbolised resources to accompany the Bookbug Explorer Bag, available at symbolsforall.org.uk/bookbug. Bookbug can also provide tactile books which you can request from your local Bookbug Co-ordinator.

Bookbug's Library Challenge

Children collect a stamp every time they visit the library and are presented with a beautifully illustrated certificate when their Collector's Card is full.



Bookbug Week

Bookbug Week is Scottish Book Trust's annual celebration of the Bookbug programme and takes place in May. Each year hundreds of free themed events, including special Bookbug Sessions, take place in every local authority in Scotland. During Bookbug Week we reach out to new audiences and encourage parents, grandparents and carers to have fun with their children through stories, songs and rhymes.

Bookbug Training

Scottish Book Trust offers free courses to support practitioners who gift Bookbug Bags, deliver Bookbug Sessions or use Bookbug in their Early Years setting. We work with a wide range of professionals including health, social care, education and a range of voluntary sector family support workers. There is a vast Bookbug community in Scotland!

Bookbug's Song and Rhyme Library

Bookbug's Song and Rhyme library has lots of great video and audio tracks of songs and rhymes. Get new ideas, learn a new song or rhyme, or remind yourself of the words or actions. There are lots of ideas to support your practice, including tips on adapting for different ages and making songs and rhymes multi-sensory and even more enjoyable for all children, particularly children with additional support needs.

You can:

- Use the 'Surprise Me' function to pick a song or rhyme every day
- Let parents know what songs and rhymes the children have been doing in nursery. Share a link by email or on social media so that if families don't know it, they can watch and learn and sing it with their child at home

scottishbooktrust.com/songandrhymer

Bookbug app



Our free Bookbug App has lots of great features for early years practitioners and families. Save your favourites and keep up to date with new Bookbug blogs and resources.

🎵 Themed songs and rhymes

You can search video and audio by theme to learn something new and discover new favourites:



Playtime



Mealtime



Travelling



Night-time



Bathtime



Instrumental versions

You'll also be able to see the words and find tips on using the song or rhyme with children.





No Wi-Fi? No problem!

Most content can be downloaded so you can still use it if you're offline. You will need to be online to download it the first time, then it will be saved on your device.

Find your nearest Bookbug Session

Families can find their local Bookbug Session by using their device location services or their postcode. We do our best to keep these details up to date but advise users to get in touch with the venue to ensure the session is running.



Recommend the Bookbug app

We'd love it if you could tell families about the Bookbug app. Encourage them to download the app to keep in touch with all the Bookbug news – including competitions, book lists and songs and rhymes. The app is a great way to support families to spend more quality time singing and rhyming.

Introducing the Bookbug Explorer Bag

Every 3-year-old child is entitled to a Bookbug Explorer Bag. Nurseries that provide the ante pre-school place funded by the Scottish Government give out the Bookbug Explorer Bags, and they are also available in local libraries. Every year, your local area Bookbug Co-ordinator will contact you to arrange delivery. If you would like to contact your local area Bookbug Co-ordinator, you can find their details on the Scottish Book Trust website.

Explorer Bag contents

It's important to know what's inside the Bookbug Explorer Bag before you give it to the children. The contents of the bag will change every year.

The Bag

The canvas bag features Bookbug all ready to go exploring. This is the child's third Bookbug Bag, so Bookbug will be a recognisable and well-loved character and children might recognise Bookbug from the library.

Books

Each year we include books chosen to reflect a range of interests and abilities. Spend time reading the books in the bag before you gift the bags to the children and familiarise children with the stories before they take their bags home.

How are the books chosen?

The books in all of the Bookbug Bags are chosen by an independent book selection panel. This panel consists of various early years professionals from education, health, social work, libraries and third sector organisations. The volunteers on our book selection panel also share the books with parents and children and collect their feedback to ensure the books chosen are suitable and appeal to a wide range of families.

My Bookbug Explorer Pad

Children and their parents can enjoy completing this activity book together. Children can draw a picture and personalise the front cover. Inside, there are questions to encourage parents and children to talk about the books in the bag and plenty of blank pages so children can draw their own pictures. There are also lots of great book suggestions; you could plan a class visit to the library to borrow some of the books.

My Bookbug Explorer CD

Little explorers will love the different styles of music featured on this CD. There are instrumental tracks to encourage listening and dancing, a variety of songs and rhymes to join in with, plus two stories written especially for Bookbug.

scottishbooktrust.com/songandrhyme

Leaflet for parents

This leaflet includes information about Bookbug and provides ideas for families to help them make the most of the Bookbug Explorer Bag at home.



Impact of the Bookbug Explorer Bag

The Bookbug Impact Study shows that the Explorer Bag has had a positive influence on the way that families read with their children at home. Parents reported that they spent more time reading with their children, talking about the story and the pictures and making up games based on the stories they were reading, after receiving their Bookbug bag. The bag was also a useful reminder of the importance of reading with their child at home.

Read the full study on our website.

'We recently received our Bookbug Bag at my child's nursery and have absolutely LOVED this one! We've enjoyed writing and sending the postcards, reading the books and currently filling in the explorer activity book. It's pitched just right.'

Forgot to mention we love the CD too. Leads to impromptu dance parties when you least expect it!'

Parent

'Books are amazing and I've seen how they have impacted my children's understanding, communication and articulation abilities!'

Parent



'We've found that parents love to share memories of their own favourite childhood stories, and often don't realise that a simple activity like reading a story or singing a nursery rhyme can have a profound effect.'

Alison Smith,
Stanwell Nursery, Edinburgh



Gifting the Bookbug Explorer Bag

The Bookbug Explorer Bag builds on the message from the first two Bookbug Bags about the value of families sharing books at home and making stories, songs and rhymes part of their daily routine. The bag is an ideal opportunity to build links between home and the nursery.

Building the excitement

Before you gift the Bookbug Explorer Bags, spend some time building the excitement with children in the nursery. Nursery staff have told us that they notice a difference in children's excitement and engagement if they've been able to share the books in advance and let children know they will receive their own books in their Explorer Bag.

'Exploring' is a broad theme, and you can adapt it to whatever you feel would work best in your setting and for your families. You could focus on adventure, sea, space, travel, food, bugs and beasts – there are lots of things to explore! The books in the bag can also inspire a variety of activities to engage children. You can find suggested activities for Explorer Bag books on our website. Activities and play opportunities based on the books can help deepen children's understanding and engage them even further with the joy of stories.

Before the bags go home:

- Read the books with the children several times
- Tell the children that Bookbug has a special gift for them and they will be taking home their own Bookbug Explorer Bag with copies of the books and other exciting things
- Follow the children's interests from the books and provide play and learning opportunities linked to the stories or on the broader theme of exploring
- Involve children in planning a special gifting event. (Don't forget to invite parents to join you!)
- Talk to parents about the Explorer Bag and how they could use the bag at home to support their children's learning



Getting parents involved

Research has shown that the bags are most effective when gifted to parents with a consistent message about the importance of reading, writing, singing and rhyming at home. Several book gifting studies have highlighted the importance of involving parents in the gifting experience, including going through the bag contents with them as well as talking to them about the benefits of book sharing. By sharing your enthusiasm with parents, you will encourage them to use the bags and its contents at home with their children.

Look for opportunities to talk to parents about the bag. You may be able to share information during enrolment, at parent information sessions, in newsletters or via social media. Please let parents know about the bags before they go home. We have created a template letter (opposite page) which you could include in a newsletter or email. You can also download the letter from our website.



Why involve parents in bag gifting?

A longitudinal research study, Growing up in Scotland, has highlighted the importance of the home learning environment for children's cognitive development, including their vocabulary and problem-solving abilities. Home learning activities include activities such as parents reading to their children, playing games and painting. The study findings suggest that the home learning environment can moderate the effects of socio-economic disadvantage (*The Scottish Government, 2015*).

Inviting parents in to nursery when you gift the Bookbug Explorer Bag provides an opportunity to talk to them about their children's learning and ways they can support this through everyday activities at home. It's also a chance for parents to join in with songs and rhymes or a story session. Parents may not always be aware of the difference they can make to their child's development by spending just a few minutes every day singing songs or sharing stories. Giving them some simple, practical ideas based on the Bookbug Explorer Bag and encouraging them to join in with some songs, rhymes and stories can make all the difference.



Dear mum, dad or carer

Your child's free Bookbug Explorer Bag

Nursery is an exciting time for your child. Your support and encouragement at home makes a real difference to their learning and simple activities like sharing books, songs and rhymes helps support your child's speaking, listening and understanding – an important part of getting ready for school and helping children learn. That's why we're getting in touch to let you know about a free bag of books and activities your child will soon receive from Bookbug.

Your child's Explorer Bag will contain:

- **Three picture books**
- **An activity booklet with fun ideas to enjoy and talk about the books together**
- **A set of coloured pencils**
- **A CD with songs, rhymes and two stories to listen to together**
- **A leaflet with more ideas for using the Explorer Bag together**

Help your child get the most out of their Explorer Bag by looking at the books together, talking about them, and singing the songs and rhymes on the CD. Encourage your child to draw on the postcards, or perhaps you could write one together and send it to a friend or family member? On our website you can find videos of families reading the books together, as well as tips on sharing stories together, and more recommended books for your child's age in our themed booklists.

For children with additional support needs, CALL Scotland produces accessible versions of the Explorer Bag books along with symbol resources to support sharing the books at home. Please ask your nursery for more information if your child would benefit from these or visit symbolsforall.org.uk/bookbug.

You can also download our new free Bookbug app! Share songs and rhymes on the go, look up the words or make up your own rhymes to our new instrumental versions. Apps can be great for supporting children's learning and encouraging play and creativity. Our Bookbug app is one more way to fit songs and rhymes into your day.

Get involved and have fun with your child!

Love from Bookbug

Scottish Book Trust

Scottish Book Trust is a national charity changing lives through reading and writing. Our many programmes for adults and children include working with teachers to inspire children to develop a reading culture with innovative classroom resources, children's book prizes, book lists and live author events brought directly to schools all over Scotland.

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Scottish Charity No: SC027669



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

Practical gifting ideas

There are many ways to gift the Bookbug Explorer Bags. Tailor your gifting activities to suit the needs and interests of the families in your setting. Here are some ideas that have worked for other settings.

Explorer story session

Plan a special story session based on the books in the Explorer Bag. This is a great opportunity for parents to see how you read the books aloud and how you can extend the themes of the stories into play. You could set up different games or activities based on the stories, for children and parents to enjoy together.

Plan a party

Celebrate the gifting of the bags with a party at nursery. Perhaps the children could be involved in planning games, activities and food. They could create invitations for their family to come along to their special event. If you cook or bake with the children then they could create some tasty treats for the event.

Story, song and rhyme session

Plan a session for parents and children that includes a range of songs and rhymes, plus one of the Bookbug Explorer Bag stories. Maybe the children could pick their favourite for you to read aloud, or they could be involved in the telling of the story for their parents. Think about what songs and rhymes parents might know and try to include some well-known songs and rhymes that are easy to join in with. Visit the Bookbug Song and Rhyme library for ideas.



Stay and Play

If your nursery runs Stay and Play sessions for parents, then you could plan your Bookbug Bag gifting event to take place during one of these sessions.

Have a treasure hunt

Make a map and ask the children and their parents to help you follow it to discover the treasure. This could be in the grounds of the nursery, or in your local area. The treasure could be a big box full of Bookbug Explorer Bags. Mapping activities are great to help children develop spatial awareness and an understanding of simple directions.

Visit your local library or invite the library to visit you

Ask your local library if they could host a special Bookbug Session to help you gift the Explorer Bags. Alternatively, you could ask if a member of library staff could come to your nursery. This would be an ideal opportunity to encourage parents to sign up for their child's free library card.

Tips and advice from nursery practitioners

We asked practitioners what advice they would pass on to other nurseries to make their gifting event a success. We would love to hear your tips too! Email your suggestions to bookbug@scottishbooktrust.com.

- Build your relationship with parents and invite them to join you at your gifting event
- Think about different times to engage parents in conversation. Chat to parents at drop-off and pick-up. Share information on the noticeboard, via social media, children's learning journals, and newsletters
- Give parents lots of notice to enable them to attend. Encourage them to invite another family member or friend if they cannot make it
- Plan well in advance so that you have time to share the stories and sing some of the songs and rhymes from the CD before gifting the bags. Children will become familiar with the stories and songs which will boost their excitement and engagement with the Bookbug Explorer Bag
- Take each item out of the bag, show it to parents and give them ideas about how they could use it at home. You may also want to share information about how it supports children's learning
- Involve the children in creating the invitations e.g. by drawing a picture
- Show parents how enthusiastic you are about stories, songs and rhymes! Tell them what you love about the Bookbug Explorer Bag
- If parents can't attend, find a way to share information about the event and the Bookbug Explorer Bag. Share photos online, create a display on the noticeboard or add something to a newsletter
- Attend Bookbug Explorer Bag Training. This training session offers staff practical ideas on how to make best use of the Explorer Bag in their setting and engage with parents.

Key gifting messages for parents and carers

The Bookbug Explorer Bag provides an excellent opportunity to talk to parents about the benefits of sharing stories, songs and rhymes with their children at home.

It's never too early or too late to start sharing books with your child

Babies and children of all ages enjoy stories. If your child isn't used to sharing books, try short, simple books and get them involved in turning pages and joining in with the story. Children need to hear a lot of stories before they learn to read themselves. Listening to stories helps children's speech and language development, understanding and also encourages creativity.

Stories, songs and rhymes lay the building blocks of learning to read

Children develop an awareness of different sounds and how these work together when they are listening to stories, or joining in with songs and rhymes. One of the best things parents can do to support their children's reading development is share books with them.

Try something new!

Try different books and find out which stories your child loves. Your child might enjoy poetry, non-fiction, rhyming books or themes like adventure, pirates, travel – you could start with the books in the Bookbug Explorer Bag. There are book suggestions in My Explorer Activity Book and themed book lists on the Scottish Book Trust website.

Make it a habit

You just need a few minutes every day to share a story with your child. A bedtime story is a great way to end the day, but books can be read at any time. Some books are more adventurous and active which makes them ideal to read during play time. You can also tell and make up stories on the go!

Talk about the pictures with your child

Chat about what you see on each page, take turns to describe what characters are doing or ask what might happen next.

Visit the library

Children of all ages are eligible for a library card, which allows them to borrow books for free. Families can also take part in events and activities organised by libraries, including free Bookbug Sessions.

The importance of play: play@home

This can also be an ideal opportunity to remind parents about play@home. The play@home programme provides all families in Scotland with free books, gifted at different stages that offer ideas for simple play and activities using recycled or home-made materials. Evidence shows that parents are more likely to use their books if they are actively shared with them, rather than just handed over. Linking play@home activities to activities children participate in whilst at nursery is a great way to develop some shared activities from nursery to home and enrich the child's home-learning environment.

play@home pre-school books should be given to parents and children when they enrol for their ante preschool place at the term after their third birthday. Please email nhs.HealthScotland-Playathome@nhs.net for more information.





Gifting in practice: Case studies

**Nikki Glass,
Easter Carmuir's Nursery, Falkirk**

We started offering regular weekly Bookbug Sessions to families as part of our plan to improve parental engagement. During conversations at drop-off and pick-up, we found out when parents would be most likely to come and encouraged them to join us. Most parents had never been to a Bookbug Session before, and we hoped that coming along would encourage them to sing, rhyme and read with their children at home. The response was really positive, with mums, dads and grandparents coming along each week. We repeat many of the songs and rhymes throughout the session so that families become familiar with them. Our Explorer Bag gifting event took place during one of our Bookbug Sessions. We built up the excitement with children and families by letting them know that they would be getting a special gift from Bookbug. The children were also involved in planning the event and baking tasty treats for their guests.

On the day of the gifting event, which we held during Book Week Scotland, parents were invited in for a short stay and play session beforehand. Refreshments were available and they were able to sample the children's delicious home baking. As we have a large number of children, we ran two gifting events to ensure that there was space for everyone to join in. Before gifting the bags, we sang some of the

children's favourite songs and then read one of the books from the Explorer Bag. As many of the parents and grandparents had already come along to one of our sessions, they were familiar with songs and joined in with the singing. After our story, we brought out a basket of Bookbug Explorer Bags and showed everyone what's included in the bag and talked a little bit about each item to encourage families to use them at home. Children were then called up one by one to get their bag. They were so excited, and rushed back over to their parent or grandparents to show them what was inside. So that our pre-schoolers felt involved too, we managed to source some picture books to gift to each of them. It was fantastic to watch all the children looking at their bags or books and many parents and grandparents started to read the stories with their children. We've had really positive feedback from parents following the event. One parent told us that she and her daughter enjoy singing the songs and rhymes at home. They now take turns to tell the story, which has made reading at home more fun.

Frequently asked questions

What about the 4-year-olds in my nursery who don't get bags?

The Bookbug Explorer Bag is for 3-year-old children in their funded ante-preschool place. Some nurseries gift their Explorer Bags in the last term and plan their gifting event while the older children are doing something else such as a P1 transition visit.

What if I need to gift the bags with the 3 and 4-year-olds together?

You can have an event where all the children can join in with the stories, songs, rhymes and explorer games and activities. After the event, you could take the 3-year-olds to a different space to receive their bag. Other practitioners tell us that the pre-school children remember getting their own bags, and accept the fact that it's the younger children's turn. In the case study featured on page 17, the nursery staff were able to source a supply of books to gift one to each pre-schooler.

How do I get the bags?

Contact your local Bookbug Co-ordinator to find out when and how you get your bags.

When should I gift the bags?

You can choose how and when you gift the bags, as long as children receive them in their ante pre-school year. Some settings gift each term, while others have one big gifting event in the final term. You could gift the bags during events such as Book Week Scotland (November) or Bookbug Week (May), or plan your gifting to fit with other nursery activities.

Do I gift Gaelic bags in the same way?

Yes! The Gaelic Bookbug Explorer Bag contains Gaelic editions of the books along with useful information from Bòrd na Gàidhlig for parents and carers who want to share Gaelic with their children. Remember to gift an English bag too.

There are Gaelic songs and rhymes on all of the Bookbug CDs as well as in our Song and Rhyme Library.



Veronica Vasquez, St Serfs Nursery, Clackmannanshire

When we gifted the Bookbug Explorer Bag, the children were involved right from the start. We read the three books several times before the gifting event and planned activities and play opportunities based on the books. One of the books was *The Something*, a story about a little boy who finds a mysterious hole in his garden. Digging our own hole in the nursery garden enabled the children to talk about what could be down there. They could put their hands inside and feel the start of a tunnel, which sparked many conversations and suggestions including dragons and other creatures!

Having attended Bookbug Explorer Bag training, we were very keen to involve parents in our gifting event and invited them to join us for the last 45 minutes of our nursery session. To encourage as many as possible to attend, the invitations were personalised and came

from the children themselves. The key information was printed by staff, and then children drew a picture for their parents, inspired by the books and activities we had been exploring. We had also discussed the gifting event with the children, which really built their excitement. When they took the invitations home, they were able to tell their family all about the event; what was planned and why they should come. Children were keen to tell their parents about the books, the gift they were going to get, as well as the fact that drinks and biscuits would be available. It's hard to say no to such enthusiasm and there was a great turnout on the day. Some parents could not attend, but other family members came in their place.

Our gifting event was for all the ante-preschool children and their families. We planned outdoor games and activities for the pre-school children whilst the gifting event was taking place.

On the day, we set up a large area with cushions to make a comfortable space to welcome everyone in. Whilst parents were arriving, we played a few circle games. Once everyone was ready, we explained what we had planned and then we read the stories to the children and their families. Afterwards, we spent time talking about each story and asking children questions, to allow parents to see how familiar their children had become with them and how much they enjoyed listening to stories. Afterwards, the bags were gifted to each child. Time was spent exploring the bags and we took out each item to ensure that parents knew what was in the bag and why. We linked the items in the bag to ideas for using them, for example we suggested that the children could draw on the postcards and then parents could take their child to post the card to a relative or friend. It was also an opportunity to discuss the benefits of books and stories, and to encourage families to read the books in the bag again and again at home.

Feedback from families was really positive both during and following the event. One grandparent came in to show the staff the postcard she had received from her grandchild, with a picture and a message written by the child's parent about how much the books were being enjoyed at home. Parents also told us that the Bookbug Explorer CD was popular and enabled younger siblings to join in with songs and rhymes at home.

The gifting event was a great way to engage with parents. They were able to see how much their children enjoy the experience of sharing a story and could share their child's joy in receiving the gift of a Bookbug Explorer Bag.



Linking the Explorer Bag to the Curriculum for Excellence

The Bookbug Explorer Bag supports the four capacities of the Curriculum for Excellence:

Successful learners

- Sharing stories, songs and rhymes inspires a love of reading and helps build the language and listening skills that support learning
- Participating in stories and book related activities in nursery encourages a child's interest in books, stories and reading

Confident individuals

- Sharing stories, songs and rhymes helps to develop our vocabulary, understanding and our ability to confidently express ourselves
- Sharing books, looking at the pictures and talking together helps build strong relationships and good communication skills
- Children feel valued and appreciated when they spend time with adults who are engaged and responsive to their needs and interests



Responsible citizens

- The Explorer Bag has small handles so that children can hold themselves and take responsibility for it
- Joining the library is an important step for children into community and cultural life

Effective contributors

- Children can help plan the gifting event for their Bookbug Explorer Bag
- Joining in with songs, rhymes and stories at a celebratory event encourages children to interact and contribute positively to their nursery community
- My Bookbug Explorer Pad encourages children to share their opinions about the books in the bag

Bookbug aims to support national early years policies and objectives. Information about how the Bookbug programme links with current early years policies can be found on our website: scottishbooktrust.com/explorergifting.

Using the Explorer Bag in your nursery

There are lots of ways to use the explorer theme, and the Explorer bag to support outcomes from across the Curriculum for Excellence. Here are a few ideas to help you with your planning:

Use parent and staff expertise

Do you have parents and staff in your nursery who can help children explore another country, culture or language? Think about the local expertise and how you can use this to help children explore new things.

Use local resources

Get in touch with museums and galleries to enquire about programming and activities for pre-schoolers. Even if you are unable to attend a museum, many of them will have travelling collections that you may be able to borrow.

Other ideas

You could also use the Explorer Bag to support outcomes from other areas of the curriculum. Here are a few ideas to help with your planning:

Literacy and English

- Discuss the books in the Explorer Bag – which is their favourite (*LIT 0-01b*)?
- Make your own treasure maps. You could also stain them with cool tea bags to make them look authentically old (*LIT 0-21b*).
- Explore stories and making up your own stories. Bring in some props and ask children to help you tell a story. Prompt the children as necessary (*LIT 0-09b*).



Numeracy and Maths

- Go on an adventure walk. Ask the children to follow simple instructions and get them to count their steps (*MNU 0-02a*).
- Have a discussion about currency and money from around the world (*MNU 0-09a*).

Health and Wellbeing

- Captain Says (Simon Says) game – leader calls out the actions and the children have to do the actions – but only if Captain Says (*HWB 0-22a*).
- Try different foods of the world (*HWB 0-29a*).



Sciences

- Explore objects that float. Bring in different objects and ask the children to think about which ones will sink and which ones will float (*SCN 0-15a*).
- Make different sound effects to enhance reading the stories from the Explorer Bag (*SCN 0-11a*).
- Show the children some animals, and get them to match the animals to their habitats (*SCN 0-01a*).
- Explore space and space travel (*SCN 0-06a*).

Social Studies

- Discuss travel and different people that explorers would meet on their adventures (*SOC 0-04a*).
- Discuss what areas of your nursery or community you would take an explorer to see (*SOC 0-07a*).

Technologies

- Using an online mapping program, create a map. You could map a route from the nursery to the library (*TCH 0-03a*).
- Take photos of your explorer event and turn them into a slideshow for parents (*TCH 0-04b*).
- Find out about some countries with the children. Show them some famous buildings from different countries. Encourage them to build their own buildings and structures using a variety of materials and blocks (*TCH 0-12a*).

Expressive Arts

- Sing songs and rhymes and participate in music making activities. Use the CD in the Explorer Bag (*EXA 0-16a, 0-17a*).
- Learn a dance from a different part of the world (*EXA 0-08a, 0-10a*).
- Use loose parts for explorer-inspired building activities – you could build a boat, a spaceship or another way to travel (*EXA 0-06a*).

Sharing books with children

Introduce children to a range of different books such as stories, poetry, non-fiction and wordless books. Share the books with children and also give them the opportunity to explore books independently. This will help children to find something that they love and capture their attention and imagination. Being interested in books and enjoying the experience of a story is a critical part of a child's literacy development and will impact on their motivation to learn to read.

As an early years professional, you will know what kind of books appeal to children at different ages and stages of development. Parents may struggle to know what to read with their children. This could be due to the overwhelming choices available or parents' own confidence levels.

You could:

- Create a display of some of the children's favourite books and have these available in a family lending library
- Tell parents which stories you're reading in nursery each week. This could be shared on social media, notice-boards or parent newsletters
- Make book bags or story sacks to lend to families
- Plan a trip for families to visit the local library together



Tips for sharing books at home or in your setting

Let the children choose

Ask the children to help you choose a book. If children are involved in the choice then they will be more engaged in the story.

Share your favourite stories

Children will follow in your enthusiasm when they see you enjoy reading a book. Think about ways to bring the book to life when you read it. Your facial expressions and voice are a great way to engage children. You could also try books where children can join in with a repeated phrase or actions.

Familiarise children with the book

Before reading a book, give the children a chance to look at the cover and pictures – what can they see? What do they think the book is about? Don't forget to tell them the author and illustrator of the book.

Read it through first

Familiarise yourself with the story before you read it with the children. The first time you read it with the children, read through without asking questions or pointing out too many things in the pictures. Too many interruptions make it difficult for children to follow the story.

Question time

After you have read the story, ask children some simple recall questions to help them tell the story back to you. Encourage children to ask you questions about it too. The more familiar they are with the story, the more in-depth the questions can be. This conversation will help further their understanding and you'll also get an insight into their experience of the story.

Read it again!

Children love hearing the same story over and over again. Each time they hear the story, they will be noticing or learning something new. Take the time to re-read children's favourite books as this will deepen their understanding and also help them grasp new words.

There are reading tips available on the Scottish Book Trust website, as well as themed book lists and videos of families reading the books from each of the Bookbug bags.



Developing activities around the book

You can use stories to inspire different learning activities in your nursery. Extending the story in to play will help engage children and also develop their overall learning. Activities could include discussions, crafts, inquiry-based learning, active games and drama. Observe children's play and follow their interests.

Try some of the following activities

Free play

If children are enjoying a book you might see their interpretation of the story in their play. Leave prompts from the story around the nursery so children have an opportunity to freely incorporate ideas from the story into their play.

Song and rhymes

After reading the book, do some songs and rhymes which link to the story or to the characters. For ideas visit scottishbooktrust.com/songandrhyme.

Act it out

Encourage the children to act the story out with you. This could include actions, retelling the narrative and taking on the roles of different characters.

Play a game

Some books will inspire ideas for game. Traditional games such as Simon Says or I-Spy can work well with many picture books. To play Simon Says, use a character's name from the book instead. The actions called by the leader can be based on the story.

For more resources to help you plan activities, visit our website.

Book recommendations

Here are some books which you may wish to explore with children in your setting



Lost and Found
by Oliver Jeffers

One little boy sets sail on a wonderful adventure to return a lost penguin to the South Pole in this beautiful tale of friendship and discovery.



Grandma Bird
by Benji Davies

Little Noi isn't sure about going to stay with Grandma – but when curiosity leads to a stormy adventure at sea, Grandma Bird is straight to the rescue in this reassuring tale.



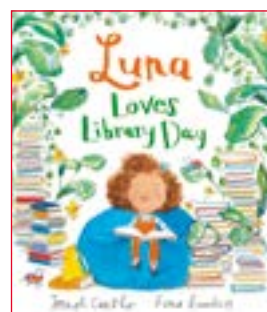
The Lion Inside
by Rachel Bright and Jim Field

Mouse is tired of being small and quiet – he wants to learn to roar like Lion! But soon he discovers that even the biggest, bossiest creatures are scared sometimes... and even the smallest creatures can have the heart of a lion.



Hansel and Gretel
by Bethan Woolvin

When Hansel and Gretel chew holes in the good witch's gingerbread house and wreak havoc with her spells, can she stay a good witch for long? A superb cautionary tale with an unexpected twist.



Luna Loves Library Day
by Joseph Coelho and Fiona Lumbers

Luna loves going to the library because it's the day she gets to meet up and spend time with her dad. Full of magic and imagination, this is a lovely celebration of libraries and a great book for pre-schoolers.



Look Inside Nature
by Usborne

Discover the magical world of nature in this interactive book for curious little minds. Lift the flaps to find out how plants grow, where animals live and much more!



My Book of Birds
by Geraldo Valério

Vibrantly illustrated with easy-to-read text – all your favourite birds come alive in this beautiful compendium.



Lifesize
by Sophy Henn

Can you high-five a polar bear? Can you spot a hummingbird amongst the flowers? This lovely interactive book encourages wee ones to compare their size to a variety of different creatures.



Once Upon a Raindrop
by James Carter and Nomoco

A poetic story of water – learn all about H2O from snowflakes to great waves, with bright watercolour illustrations and rhythmic prose.



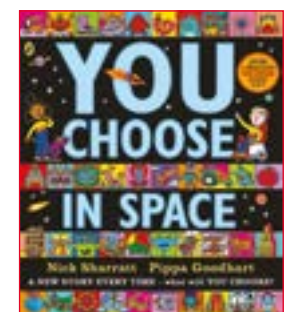
Moon
by Patricia Hegarty and Britta Teckentrup

Explore the phases of the moon and a host of nocturnal animals in this visually stunning book. The rhyming text and gentle flow make it the perfect story to read aloud.



Bobo & Co. Colours
by Nicola Killen

Bobo the panda and friends want to paint a picture but things are about to get very messy! Children will have great fun exploring colours in this sweet lift-the-flap story.



You Choose in Space
by Pippa Goodhart and Nick Sharratt

Children will blast off into a new story with every reading of this book. Let them choose their own space clothes and make friends with aliens in this imaginative journey into space.

Songs, rhymes and musical activities

Including songs, rhymes and musical activities in your setting has many benefits for children. Not only are such activities fun and engaging, they also support children's all-round development. Songs, rhymes and musical activities develop children's language and literacy skills, whilst also supporting their physical and social development.

Music games that involve actions, or keeping a steady beat, can help children to develop their motor skills, co-ordination and balance. Movement also encourages the development of spatial awareness, which is an important skill for learning to read and write.

Social skills such as listening, waiting and turn-taking can be developed by participating in music, games and songs. Children who have participated in music-making activities together have been found to have more co-operative behaviour (*Kirschner and Tomasello 2010*).

Music and language development: what's the link?

Babies, children and even adults learn the structure of spoken language better when they're taught through songs, as opposed to plain speech (*Francois and Schon, 2011*).

Singing with children is important because it gives us exposure to the sounds and makes the sound and structure of our language much easier to hear. Children respond better to singing than to speaking voices. Our language skills rely on two different systems – one that interprets the structure and form of language and one that interprets the meaning. These systems constantly

work together. Participating in musical activities helps connect these two areas and encourages the learning connections between the two systems to develop (*Henriksson-Macaulay, 2014*).

Music facilitates reading skills by helping to develop our phonological awareness. Phonological awareness is the ability to hear sound as individual units. This is important because when we're learning to read, we need to be able to hear the sounds of the words and then blend them together. Reading is the process of moving from sound to meaningful words.

Children's shared participation with adults in music making activities can have positive benefits for their numeracy and literacy development. Music strengthens learning because it provides a holistic learning experience also involving emotional responses. Simple and fun activities are the most effective and the benefit is in the interaction, the creativity and the experimenting with sounds (*Williams, Barrett, Welch, Abad and Broughton, 2015*).

Children with music training, or vast experience of music, have better ability to hear sounds. This experience helps our reading development. A study with pre-schoolers found that children's musical skills corresponded to their reading development (*Anvari, Trainor, Woodside and Levy, 2002*).

Practical ways to include more music activities in your nursery

There are lots of ways to include more musical experience for children in your nursery. Here are a few ideas:

- Play the Bookbug Explorer CD. The CD features a range of music styles and includes songs, rhymes and instrumental music
- Make your own instruments such as simple shakers or drums. Tap along as you sing or listen to music
- Sing to get children's attention! The change in tone from a speaking to a singing voice can work really well and a singing voice is easier to hear above the noise of playing and chatting
- Songs or instrumental music can be used to signal routine activities like tooth-brushing or tidying up. They're also great to signal a transition to a new activity
- Add singing to your story. Use your voice in a sing-song way and play around with volume and pitch. Try singing a repeated phrase – or even the whole book!
- Bring your book to life with sound effects. Shakers and other homemade props are a great way to really engage children and keep their attention when reading a story



Explorer songs and rhymes

Three Crows

Three crows sat upon a waw,
Sittin on a waw, sittin on a waw,
Three crows sat upon a waw,
On a cauld and frosty mornin.

The first crow wis greetin for his maw,
Greetin for his maw, greetin for his maw,
The first crow wis greetin for his maw,
On a cauld and frosty mornin.

The second crow fell and broke his jaw,
Fell and broke his jaw, fell and broke his jaw,
The second crow fell and broke his jaw,
On a cauld and frosty mornin.

The third crow couldnae flee at aw,
Couldnae flee at aw, couldnae flee at aw,
The third crow couldnae flee at aw,
On a cauld and frosty mornin.

The fourth crow wisnae there at aw,
Wisnae there at aw, wisnae there at aw,
Wisnae there at aw,
On a cauld and frosty mornin.



Hey, Pey Pey!

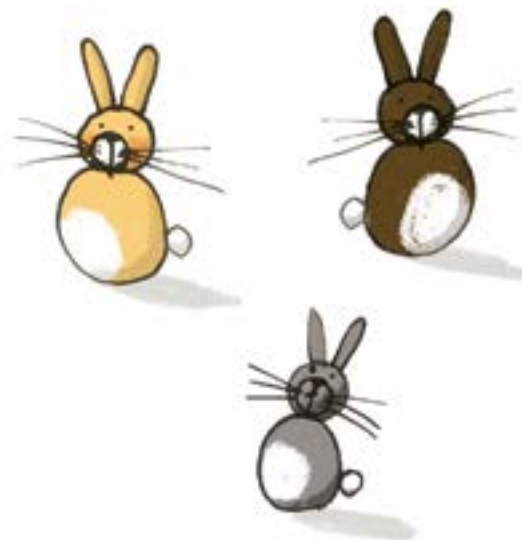
Hey, pey pey!
Hey, pey pey!
Hey, pey pey!
Hey, pey pey!
Hey, pey pey!
Hey, pey pey!
Jambo, jambo!

Jambo everybody
Jambo everybody
Jambo, everybody
Jambo, jambo!

Sleeping Bunnies

See the little bunnies sleeping 'til it's nearly noon.
Shall we wake them with a merry tune?
They're so still, are they ill?

Wake up soon
Wake up bunnies!
Hop little bunnies, hop, hop, hop
Hop little bunnies, hop, hop, hop
Hop little bunnies, hop, hop, hop
Hop and stop.



The Jeely Piece Song

I'm a sky scraper wean, I live on the nineteenth flair
But I'm no goin' oot tae play any mair.
'Cause since we moved to oor new house I'm wastin' away
Cos ahm getting wan meal less every day.

Chorus:

Oh ye cannae fling pieces oot a twenty story flat.
Seven hundred hungry weans'll testify to that.
If it's butter, cheese or jeely, if the breid is plain or pan,
The odds against it reaching earth are ninety-nine to wan.

On the first day my Maw flung me oot a daud o' maltit broon
It came skitin' oot the windae and went up instead o' doon.
Noo ev'ry twenty-seven hours it comes back into sight
Cause my piece went intae orbit and became a satellite.

On the next day my Maw flung me oot a piece wance again
It went up and hit a pilot in a fast, low flying plane.
He scraped it aff his goggles, shouting through the intercom
The Clydeside Reds have got me wi' a breid 'n jeely bomb.

Extract from 'The Jeely Piece Song' by and reproduced here with kind permission of Adam McNaughtan.



Pirate, Pirate, Dressed in Blue

Pirate, Pirate,
Dressed in Blue,
These are the actions you must do.

Stand at attention,
Stand at ease.
Bend your elbows,
Bend your knees.
Salute to the Captain,
Bow to the Queen,
Turn your back on the submarine.



Little Pebbles

One little, two little, three little pebbles,
Four little, five little, six little pebbles,
Seven little, eight little, nine little pebbles,
Ten little pebbles sitting in my hand.

Bobbing Up and Down

Sons of the sea,
Bobbing up and down like this.
Sailing the ocean,
Bobbing up and down like this.

They may build their ships my lad,
Bobbing up and down like this.
But they can't beat the boys of the Old Brigade
Bobbing up and down like this.

Pirates so free,
Bobbing up and down like this.
Searching the ocean,
Bobbing up and down like this.

They care naught for wind or rain
Bobbing up and down like this.
For they rob the gold on the Spanish main,
Bobbing up and down like this.



Ickle Ockle Blue Bottle

Ickle Ockle, Blue Bottle,
Fishes in the sea,
If you want a happy friend,
Just choose me!



Èisg bhig

Èisg bhig, èisg bhig,
nach tu tha math air snàmh.
Gu dearbha feumaidh mise sin
oir bidh mi snàmh gu bràth.

Èisg bhig, èisg bhig,
am fairich thusa fuachd?
Chan fhairich idir, 'ille chòir,
ged tha mi measg nan stuadh.

Èisg bhig, èisg bhig,
a bheil thu idir sgìth?
O chan eil, chan eil, chan eil,
cha toil leam bhith air tìr.

Èisg bhig, èisg bhig,
a leig thu idir d' anail?
Is math a dh'fhaodas mise sin
a-staigh am measg an fheamainn.

Èisg bhig, èisg bhig,
dè a dh'ith thu an-diugh?
Lugaichean is boiteagan,
is smodal anns an t-sruth.

Èisg bhig, èisg bhig,
càite bheil do dhachaigh?
Tha mo dhachaigh anns a' chuan
mìle mach on chladach.



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Row, Row, Row Your Boat

Row, row, row your boat,
Gently down the stream,
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily
Life is but a dream.

Row, row, row your boat,
Gently down the stream,
If you see a crocodile,
Don't forget to scream!

Zoom, Zoom, Zoom

Zoom, zoom, zoom
We're going to the moon!
Zoom, zoom, zoom
We'll be there very soon

If you want to take a trip
Come on board my rocket ship
Zoom, zoom, zoom
We're going to the moon!

5, 4, 3, 2, 1....Blast off!



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