

## Early literacy development

The development of early literacy skills and enjoyment of reading depends on the development of language and communication.

The National Deaf Children's Society has produced a really helpful resource called *Helping your deaf child to develop communication and language, for parents with a 0 – 2 year old*, available [here](#).

### **Other ideas to help develop early literacy**

1. Make photo diaries and experience books – a labelled pictorial record of what your child has been doing and learning:
  - helps your child recall concepts and vocabulary
  - provides a prompt for practising language
  - provides a basis on which to extend language
  - is a fun way of repeating and extending language

2. Use routine and repetition

The use of routine allows the repetition of language and actions that help your child to learn how to use language. A regular sequence or pattern of events enables a deaf child to:

- predict and be ready for what is coming next when they find it difficult to pick up on incidental cues
- practise the same words or phrases in the same context over and over
- understand the context of what is being said so they can begin to link new words and ideas to what they already know

Deaf children benefit from opportunities to repeat language patterns such as:

- learning action rhymes that use the same words with gradual additions
- sharing story books that have their own routine (i.e. the pictures are in sequence, flaps need lifting and simple phrases are repeated, which can be predicted and said aloud)
- games that require each child to follow the same pattern, where it is clear when it is your turn and what you are expected to do

### 3. Read, read and read with your child

- When reading a book with your child, think about how you sit together. For instance, try and sit face to face or slightly sideways. You also need to be within touching distance so that you can touch them to get their attention from time to time.
- Like all children, your child needs time to look at pictures and to take in the information. It is a good idea to look at books beforehand to see if the pictures alone can make sense. Some pictures may be a bit fuzzy or have too much detail, which makes it difficult for a child to follow the main character through the story.
- Use a lot of facial expressions and ask questions such as “What do you think will happen next?”

### **Some books to try with deaf characters or a deaf focus**

Can Bears Ski? Raymond Antrobus and Polly Dunbar

At the Bottom of my Garden. Sue Earle, Chris Hammond and Cath Smith

Out of My Window. Sue Earle, Chris Hammond and Cath Smith

Our Farmyard Friends. Sue Earle, Chris Hammond and Cath Smith

Leo the Lion’s Birthday. Mark Mitchell

Ranvir Cannot Hear. Genevieve Yusuf and Shermain Philip

Dachy’s Deaf. Jack Hughes

Freddie and the Fairy. Julia Donaldson and Karen George

Elephant and the Lost Blanket. Alex Naidoo

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