

Reviewed by Sinéad and Martin Kromer, with a little help from Louise Mundford and daughter, Lydia (aged 2½ yrs)

Sturdy, well-constructed books, ideal for little hands. These titles should capture attention and stimulate imagination, whilst surviving the sometimes unforgiving play. Choose with care as they are often a child's first experience of books.



My Busy Day

Little Tiger £5.99 ISBN: 978-1848957992

Described as 'My First Jumbo Tab Book', this is a bright, colourfully illustrated guide to everyday items. The unusually curved board book encourages babies to point and name. The photographs make it easy to identify the objects that they might see around the home and the questions on each page stimulate carers to talk about likes and dislikes and the baby's own experiences. The book has been divided into sections so that parents can select relevant pages and the brightly-coloured tabs make it easy to select a section of the book to read. This little book should be on every baby's first bookshelf.

This is me, Dressing Up!

ISBN: 978-1406349436

This is me, Eating!

ISBN: 978-1406349443

Written and illustrated by Neal Layton Walker £5.99

Part of the *Baby Walker* series, these titles each have seven simple, but amusing, spreads, with a fold-out flap as a surprising climax. Bold, high-contrast illustrations, together with the very short, clear, free-hand text, will attract, and sustain, a baby's attention. *This is me, Dressing Up!* comically depicts items worn by different members of the family whilst *This is me, Eating!* shows their favourite snacks. Granny's choices will certainly raise a smile! Googly, moving eyes on the front cover will grab the baby's attention before you even open the book. Good to see an acknowledged author/illustrator using his talents to delight this age range.



A New Day

ISBN: 978-1782500438

Rain or Shine

ISBN: 978-1782500445

Written and illustrated by Ronald Heuinck

Floris Books (R) £5.99



This delightful pair of classic, much-loved picture books, by an established Dutch illustrator and designer, contains no words. However, the detailed illustrations include many new and interesting items to be identified and named, extending ever-growing vocabularies. These sturdy board books illustrate routines and establish sequences to life. In *A New Day* we begin with waking up in the morning and finish with having a story at bedtime; the pictures carrying us along through the day. *Rain or Shine* focuses on the types of weather and seasonal changes that we see, with relevant children's activities beautifully depicted: feeding the ducks, visiting the beach, playing in the falling leaves and sledging in the snow. Children will be able to relate the illustrations, in both titles, to their everyday experiences, possibly identifying the different clothing being worn. Enchanting.



Roar

Written by Jonathan Litton Illustrated by Fhiona Galloway
Little Tiger £5.99 ISBN: 978-1848957596

Beginning with the front cover, concentric, rainbow-coloured peepholes lead you through the pages. The lion is frightened by the monkey, the monkey by the goat ... until we come to the frog who is frightened by the smallest, and most unexpected, creature of all. On each page both bold, bright illustrations and rhyming, wavy text give clues to what is to follow. Babies will enjoy guessing what comes next by imitating the sounds of the different animals. Young children love to hear and mimic animal noises making this a book of choice to be read and enjoyed over and over again.

My Pop-Up World – Weather

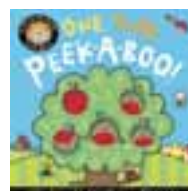
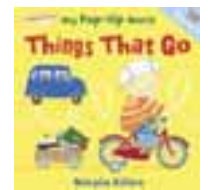
ISBN: 978-1405268608

My Pop-Up World – Things that Go!

ISBN: 978-1405268615

Written and illustrated by Nicola Killen Egmont £7.99

Simple, yet stunningly effective, pop-ups on every page bring these titles to life. Babies can visually relate to the 3D illustrations whilst developing awareness of the world around them and learning the relevant vocabulary. In *Things that Go!* each of the double-page spreads allows us to travel the world as we ride on a train, fly in the sky, shoot into space or sail the sea. In *Weather* we learn what we need when the rain and snow falls, the sun shines or the wind blows. Children will love to unfold these pages again and again!



One, Two, Peekaboo!

Written by Annette Rusling Illustrated by Katie Saunders
Caterpillar £7.99 ISBN: 978-1848573789

This colourful, rhyming, lift-the-flap book promotes both one-to-one correspondence and counting. Curious little ones will enjoy lifting the flaps and peeping through; at first listening to the numbers, but later joining in. They may be able to name the animals and creatures in the tale and will certainly love the bright, bold illustrations. This is a good tool for all little ones just beginning to become aware of the concept of counting.

Off to the Park!

Written and illustrated by Stephen Cheetham
Child's Play £12.99 ISBN: 978-1846435027

Sensory stimulation is abundant on every page as you leave home to go to the park to play. You can tie your shoelaces, stop the traffic at the pedestrian crossing, open the gate and follow the path, bounce the ball, have a swing or a slide, and finish with a cool refreshing 99! Few items are actually named, encouraging interaction and vocabulary development. With tactile illustrations and punchy, rhyming, active text on every page the child will enjoy this book on so many levels. Unusually, page numbers are provided in both simple nursery-style and Braille. More of an experience to enjoy than simply a book to read! As noted, this is "an exciting and unique collaboration between Bookstart and Child's Play".



...Toddlers

More FUN!

The stories and concepts within these larger, and more complex, picture books make them appropriate for young children already beginning to appreciate the value and enjoyment to be gained from books.



Happy Street: Toy Shop

Written and illustrated by Simon Abbott
Egmont £5.99 ISBN: 978-1405270564

The *Happy Street* series of titles are ideal for stimulating discussion as they are packed with detailed, busy, cartoon-type illustrations, numerous captions, speech bubbles and two lines of text on each page. Although produced as board books they are not for the very young – more for the toddler needing additional motivation. Mr Ted runs the toy shop which all the children love to visit to buy new toys and where Sam chooses his perfect birthday present. Complete with a 3D shop included in the last few pages to build and play with. Great value! Look out for *Pet Shop*, *Supermarket* and *Cafe* in the same series and you will be able to begin building your very own Happy Street.

I Totally Don't Want to Play!

Written by Ann Bonwill Illustrated by Simon Rickerty
OUP (eB) £6.99 ISBN: 978-0192735003

Hugo, the hippo, and Bella, the bird, are back in another lively tale. Bella has found a new friend in Cressida, the crocodile, leaving Hugo feeling left out. But, when Cressida persuades Hugo to join in, Bella feels left out. It seems that all the games are only for two and three's a crowd! Until, at last, they find a game that needs all three friends to play together as a team. Very bold, colour-block illustrations work well with the large clear text in this cleverly constructed, yet simple, story about friendship and inclusion. Perfect for reading aloud and sharing.



How to Catch a Star

Written and illustrated by Oliver Jeffers
HarperCollins (R) (eB) £12.99 ISBN: 978-0007536597

This edition of Oliver Jeffers' wonderful award-winning debut picture book has been published to mark its 10th Anniversary. His unique and stunning illustrative style was apparent even at the very beginning of his career. A boy loves stars and wants to have one of his own. He devises numerous plans to catch a star – all without success. But then, thinking it will never happen, new hope surfaces, floating on the sea. Will he succeed in his unlikely quest? All his waiting is rewarded giving the story a very satisfying conclusion.

The New Kid

Written and illustrated by Marie-Louise Fitzpatrick
Hodder £11.99 ISBN: 978-1444908183

There's a new kid on the block and, at first, all the other children start to make fun of her and call her names. However, her wonderfully imaginative games capture their attention and interest and they are soon all playing happily together. The full-page, eye-catching illustrations together with the concise, snappy text are real page-turners making you want to see where the story goes. A poignant story about overcoming bullying, fitting-in and making friends.



Don't Spill the Milk!

Written Stephen Davies Illustrated by Christopher Corr Andersen £6.99 ISBN: 978-1849395311

This is a wonderfully bright and colourful introduction to life in an African village. Penda offers to take a bowl of milk to her father who is out in the fields looking after the sheep. A variety of obstacles stand in her path but she lovingly carries it all the way, without spilling a drop. But, as she hands it to her father, disaster strikes! A gentle, heart-warming story, accompanied by detailed, authentic illustrations which will inspire much close observation and discussion.

Where's Tim's Ted? It's Time for Bed!

Written by Ian Whybrow Illustrated by Russell Ayto
HarperCollins (eB) £6.99 ISBN: 978-0007509560

Tim is staying on the farm with his Grandad and Granny. It is time for bed but Tim's old pink Ted is nowhere to be found. Unable to sleep he sneaks out of bed to search for his favourite toy. Will Tim, with the help of all the wacky farmyard animals, be able to find Ted and will he be able to get to sleep? Lively, zany illustrations complement the clever, rhyming text which bounces along the pages, carrying you through the story. Another successful Tim and Ted adventure from a talented duo.



Baby's Got the Blues

Written by Carol Diggory Shields Illustrated by Lauren Tobia Walker £11.99 ISBN: 978-1406351545

We tend to think a baby's life is wonderful, having everything done for them all day long. But, this picture book shows that not being able to walk, talk, or chew and having to spend much of the day behind bars is not much fun and can really make you blue. Taking a baby's-eye view, the narrative carries you through a normal day showing how it really feels to be a baby – wearing soggy nappies, eating mushy food, not being able to run and play, and sleeping in a cot. The illustrations are cute and comical and the text is written in the rhythm of the blues – you may even want to sing it! Tongue-in-cheek and very entertaining! A refreshingly, light-hearted point of view.

Stanley's Garage

Written and illustrated by William Bee
Jonathan Cape (eB) £8.99 ISBN: 978-0857551108

Stanley, the hamster, is working in his garage. It turns out to be a very, very busy day as Hattie needs petrol for her new red sports car, Shamus and Little Woo have a flat tyre, Charlie's yellow car is overheating and Myrtle's purple car has broken down on her way to the shops. Designed for toddlers who have an understanding of motoring terminology such as jack, radiator and ramp. Look out for more attention-grabbing titles about Stanley and his hardworking friends: *Stanley the Builder*, *Stanley's Café*, and *Stanley the Farmer*. Very sturdily bound with soft cushioned covers, they all have the same attractive illustrations which are bold and uncluttered on a clear white background together with just enough appropriate technical language in the text to challenge a toddler's imagination and vocabulary. Stanley is certainly a very friendly, helpful little hamster who will appeal to, and be loved by, many young readers.

