

What to look for in books for little children with albinism



By Elizabeth Beales

I have a soft spot for books, and a softer spot for children's books. I love parents reading to children – partly from the literacy and learning aspect, partly from the bonding and closeness aspect.

Some books, however, aren't as easy for a child with a visual impairment to share-read. (In a group setting or even with one or two siblings) If they have the book in their own hands and can pull it close to their face they might be fine, but at a distance in someone else's hands, big bright and bold is the way to go.

Note – this isn't professional or medical advice, it's just my own observations.

What to look for – pictures with dark / thick black outlines, minimal background “clutter” – (lines and images that make the main story less clear) - bright colours.

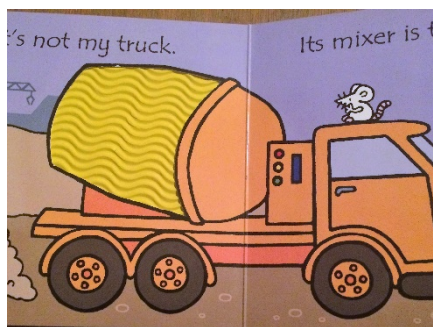
For early readers, look for large bold text that is sans serif (without curls and ‘fancy bits’) – so :

Arial, Century Gothic or TW Cent are easy to read, whereas

Brush Script, Harrington, Papyrus, *Script*, are not so easy to read. Sometimes the thickness of individual letters changes thickness, the curls make a letter look like another, or the letters run into each other, thereby confusing ‘lo’ with a ‘b’ for example.

Interestingly when I searched my own collection of children's books (what, not everyone has shelves of picture books in their child-free home?) – I found most of my collection are VI friendly.

Here's a few to illustrate the idea:



‘That’s not my truck’ – from the ‘that’s not my...’ series.

Bold colour, colourful and uncluttered background, dark outlines and also tactile – one part of each page has a texture - these tick boxes in lots of ways.



'Whose tail' – from the 'whose....' series by

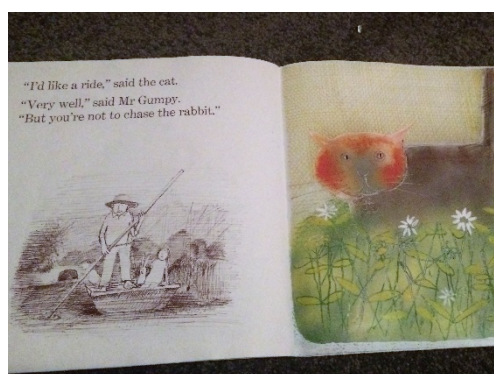
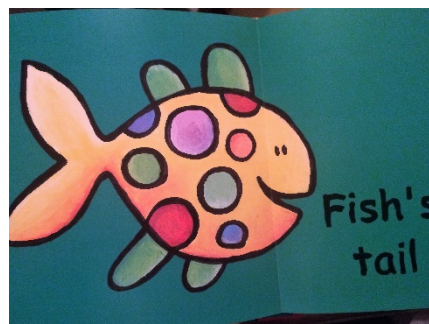
Bold colourful uncluttered picture. Dark outlines.

Large easy to read text. Lift the flap pages, so

Interactive. Another winner.



Jeanette Rowe.



Mr. Gumpy's outing – John Burningham

An older story which is a fun read, but the fine lines on the left hand page can make it hard to determine what the picture is of, and the seemingly smudged picture of the cat on right may be confusing.

Six Dinner Sid – Inga Moore



Another of my favourite stories but the images might not be ideal for a child, especially the detail in the faces, the telephone on the table, the eyes in the box.

I'm not suggesting we vet the books given as gifts, nor that we boycott publishers or even request all books are VI friendly. Let your child be the guide, they'll learn to hold books closer, or under their CCTV, or to adjust in a group setting. (They might like to look at the book alone after a group reading)

Which books worked for your family?

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