

# Communications Series

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## 'All about me' personalised books

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There are many reasons why making personal books is a particularly good thing to do for children with Down's syndrome. Sharing personal books is a fun way to engage with children. As most children understand more than they can say, using personal books can help them to communicate – they can use the book to tell people about themselves and the things they do. Sharing books can also help them learn to understand language and to practise saying words. Seeing words in print also introduces reading, which is an activity enjoyed by many people with Down's syndrome.

### **Creating an 'All about Me' or Personalised Book can support:**

- Attention and listening
- Vocabulary development
- Initiating communication with others
- Information sharing
- Recognising written words

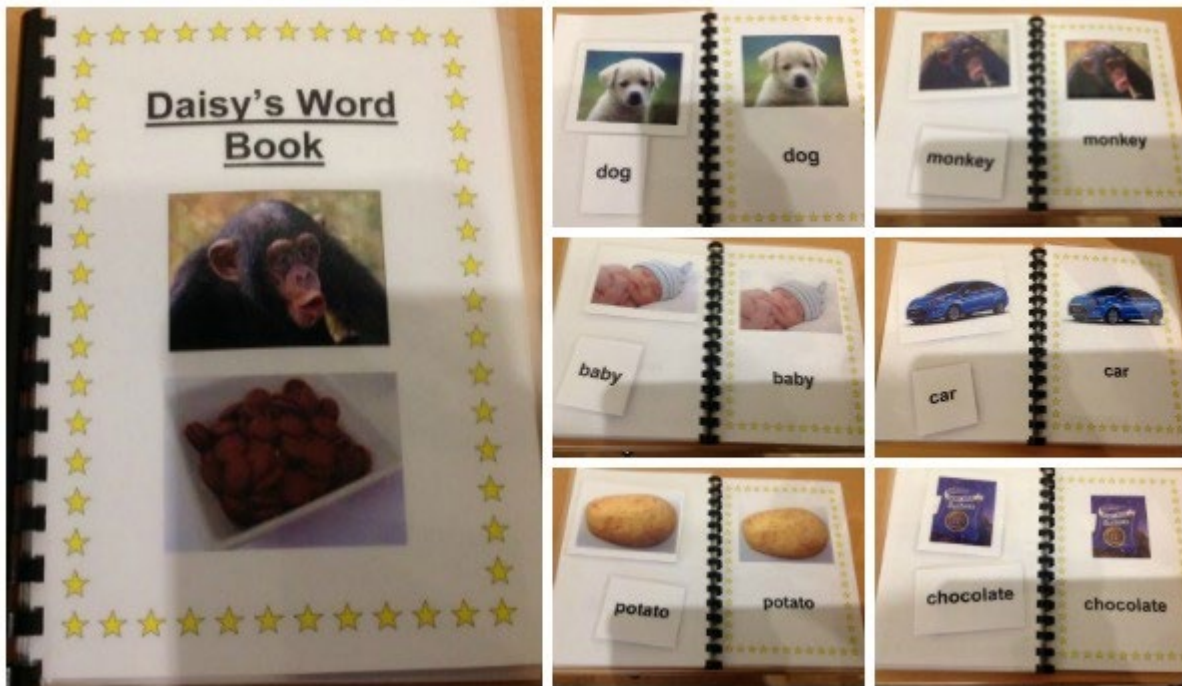
If your child is learning about single words, follow the instructions that follow.

You can create these on a computer, tablet and some phones. A useful app to create All About Me Personalised books is ['Special Stories'](#).

If you don't have access to these then printed photographs stuck onto pages with clearly, hand written words underneath are just as good.

If your child is learning about single words, make books that use single words, to practice vocabulary. It can be helpful for the vocabulary in your child's book to overlap with the vocabulary you have chosen to target for teaching.

Early All About Me Personalised Books should include photographs of things that are important to your child, such as real life objects, toys, people, pets or animals in your child's life. These first books designed to teach vocabulary should have a photograph and single written word on each page. Early books may only have four or six pages. As your child matures you can build up to having more photographs on each page.



As your child's vocabulary understanding grows, you can make books that include action words as well as naming words, e.g. if your child enjoys kicking a football you could have a picture of him or her kicking a ball. To begin with you might just have the word "kicking" written under the photograph, but as your child's language develops you could expand this into short sentences, such as "Tom is kicking the ball".



## Using All About Me/Personalised books

Children can also learn about speech sounds using 'visual supports'. These include 'Jolly Phonics' pictures and gestures, 'See and Learn' speech resources, and 'Cued Articulation' by Jane Passy.

1. Share your child's personalised book, talk about the photographs. Say and sign the word. Point to the written words. Familiarise your child with the words in the book.
2. See if your child can match the real object (e.g. favourite toy) to the photograph in the book. To do this have the page open with the picture of the object. Give your child two toys to choose from and see if he or she can match or point to the one in the book.
3. See if your child can match a photograph to one in the book. To do this make a second, loose copy of each photograph. See if your child can match the loose photograph with the ones in the book.
4. Make a second copy of the written word. Encourage your child to look at the word, then help match the word to the word in the book. Initially use words that look visually different, e.g. "dog" and "Mummy" or "ball" and "tractor". Visually similar words can be words of a similar length or words that start or end with similar shaped letters. These are harder for your child to differentiate between.
5. Take your child's personalised book out and about. Encourage him or her to share it with other people, at playgroups and nursery or with family members. This will encourage your child to initiate communication, communicate independently of you and share information about what is important to her or him.
6. When your children go to school, their personal book can be extended into a communication or conversation diary.

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