

Choosing Virtual Storytime Books

Books that work well in a virtual storytime have many of the same features as books for in-person storytimes.

General Guidelines

- Look for books with vibrant and bold colours. These translate well on screen, and children with low vision need materials presented in high contrast to visually process them with accuracy.
- Look for clear and crisp illustrations. Books with small, busy, or cluttered images are hard to see on the screen and may appear blurry. Think big and bold.
- Choose books with a consistent layout throughout. Having to change the way you hold the book mid-read can be difficult to maneuver and breaks connection on screen.
- Board books shine! The smaller format, rectangular size, and short text works great for sharing online. They are easier to hold up and often feature bright and bold illustrations or photographs.
- Interactive books encourage caregiver participation. Look for repeated phrases, animal sounds, or interactive elements that encourage kids to touch the screen.
- Look for books that feature everyday diversity.
- Keep in mind current events. Take a second look at actions that involve touching the face, text that includes hugging strangers, or activities that involve food. Every caregiver's outlook and situation is different right now and we need to be mindful of that.

Physical Books

- Glossy and shiny pages can give a nasty glare on screen. Choose books with matte pages if possible. If using books with glossy pages practice tilting the book slightly downward to cut back on glare.
- Think about how you hold the book while reading. If you use your right hand, books with illustrations on the right side of the page work well because the text won't get cut off on the screen.
- Look for books that echo the ratio of the horizontal screen size.
- Test the book on the device and platform you plan to use. Does it wash out certain colours on the page? Does the book need to be tilted to avoid glare? Do the pages fit in the screen and how much do they need to be moved around to see the illustrations clearly?

eBooks

- If using books from your library's OverDrive collection, use the "Read Now in Browser" feature.
- Preview the eBook first. Ensure a two-page spread and that text appears correctly.
- Make sure the text flows with images. Sometimes the text appears disjointed from the page on the screen.
- When reading an eBook, give extra time between pages as there may be a slight lag on the other side of the screen.
- Consider doing a short 1-minute demo during the program showing caregivers how find the book on the library's website.

eBook Examples: The Good and the Not-So-Good

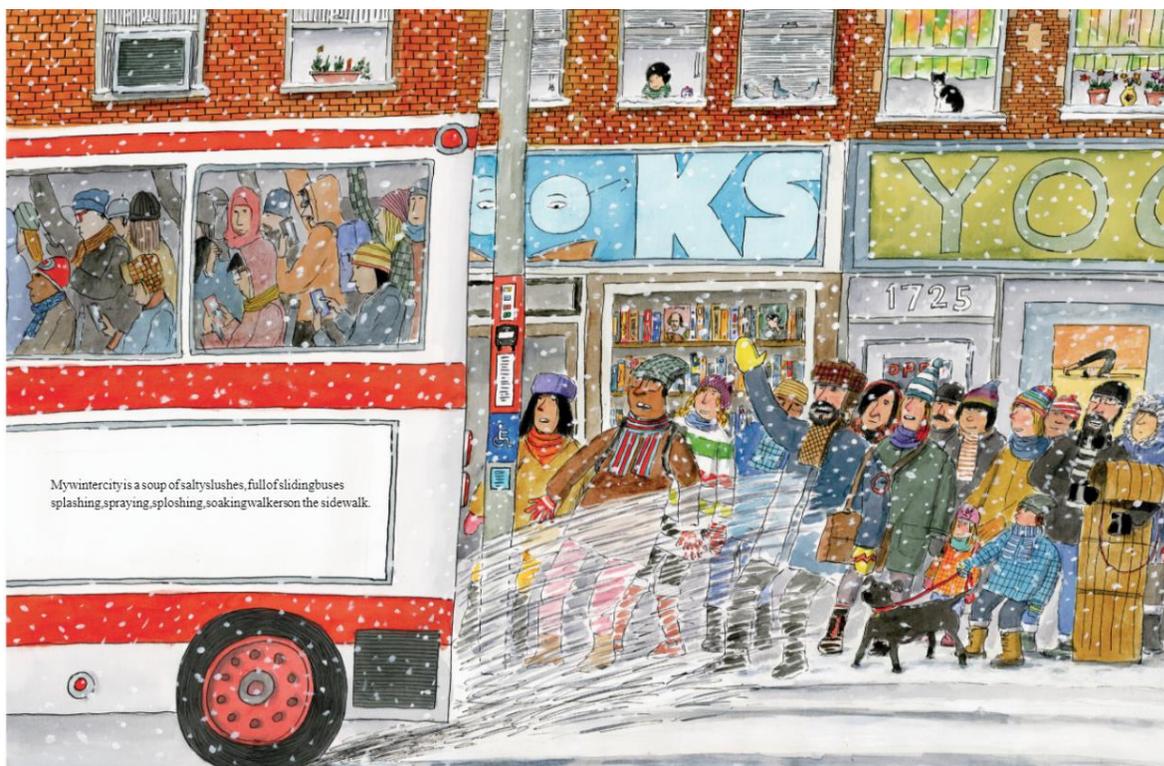
Little Fish by Lucy Cousins

This is an excellent virtual storytime eBook. You can see both pages clearly and the text is a nice contrast colour.



My Winter City by James Gladstone

This book is not a good eBook choice. The text is smashed together, and the illustrations are busy.



Dancing Feet by Lindsey Craig

In the eBook version the illustrations are quite small and there is a lot of white space. It is hard to know where to focus.



Ladybugs are dancing
on *tippity* feet.
Tippity! Tippity!
Happy feet!



Stompity! Stompity!
Big gray feet!
Who is dancing
that *stompity* beat?

Alligator, Bear, Crab by Lesley Wynne Pechter

This eBook board book has big clear pictures and sparse text. You could change it to single-page view if you want to highlight one letter at a time.

