

# LEARNING TIME

## Hush Say the Stars

By Margaret Spurling and Mandy Foot

*Hush say the stars is a gentle goodnight story, perfect for sharing with young children. With soft friendly illustrations and lovely rhyming text, Hush say the stars will become a firm favourite at rest or bed time.*



### Key Message for Parents | The Best Learning Happens in Nurturing Relationships

Share important information with parents and caregivers about their baby's development, such as:

- Children have better developmental outcomes when they feel loved, secure and supported
- Story time is a shared experience and an ideal way to nurture and build your relationship with your child
- Recognize and celebrate your child's individuality and make time to play, sing and just be together

### Australian Early Years Learning Framework | Outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing

Wellbeing includes social, emotional and physical health. Sleep is essential for wellbeing and all children benefit from a regular sleep routine. Share with parents that a sleep routine doesn't need to be hard work-but it does take time to work out what does work –for every child.

Here are some suggestions:

- Begin the routine one hour before bedtime. Turn off all screens including TV, computers or phones – or at least keep them well out of baby's sight if they must be on.
- Play gentle music or dim the lights to signal that it's time to calm down. A visual or oral clue like this can help switch the brain to relaxation mode.
- A calming bath, quiet song and then story time and cuddles is one simple routine that is widely recommended.

Try your routine for at least a week before deciding to change anything. Predictability is the key-so once you have established what works for you and your family, stick to it

## Welcome

Ask carers to write nametags for themselves and their children.

Welcome everyone, introduce yourself, remind adults to turn their mobile phones off and that there will be time for adults to chat after the story and songs.

## Welcome Song (or your preferred song)

Have the words available as a handout or written on a board or butcher's paper for the adults to read and join in.

### Good Morning

*Good morning to you*

*Good morning to you*

*Good morning everybody*

*and welcome to you!*

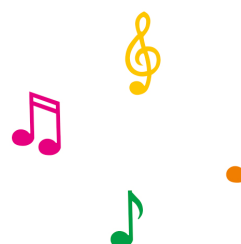
*Welcome everyone – today's story is called Hush say the stars by Margaret Spurling and Mandy Foot. Let's sing some songs about the stars! Singing to your baby encourages language development and builds connection.*

*Ask parents and carers to use eye contact when singing to their little ones. You could perhaps use a doll or Teddy to model this*

## Song

**Twinkle Twinkle Little Star** (sing this song with the actions)

*Twinkle twinkle little star  
How I wonder what you are  
Up above the world so high  
Like a diamond in the sky  
Twinkle twinkle little star  
How I wonder what you are!*



### Before Reading

Encourage parents and carers to get comfortable and try to settle their babies as much as possible.

Babies love sensory experiences! Using a little bell or a toy with a squeaker or puppet will help gain baby's attention. For this story you could use a torch and move the light around the room like a star!

### During Reading

Today's story is a 'goodnight story'. Adopting a gentle reading style for this story would be effective and fitting. The word "hush" could be whispered – encourage the adults to repeat with you.

The setting for this book is a farm, and each verse says "goodnight" to a different animal. Take time to look at the beautiful illustrations – point out the animals and describe what they are doing. Make the animal sounds too. Encourage parents/carers to do so too, looking at their babies as they do so.

If you look very closely at the illustrations you might make out a shape that the stars slowly start to form. As the sky gets darker the shape appears. Can you see what it is?... yes, it's a little rabbit! Older children might like to look for it in the sky, on the pages towards the end of the book.

### After Reading

Babies might need a change of position, so have parents/carers stand up. Depending on the age of the baby they can holding babies facing forward or for much older babies who are able to sit competently they may be able to sit on their parent's shoulders (use doll to demonstrate).

Encourage adults to form a circle and walk around in time to the music as they are singing. This gives babies new things to look at, as well as the feeling of "the beat", as parents move in a circle.

### Song (delete if not required)

#### Old Mac Donald Had a Farm

*Old Mac Donald had a farm....  
E I E I O!*

*And on that farm he had a .....horse!....  
E I E I O!*

*With a neigh, neigh here and a neigh, neigh there ( stop, then walk into circle)  
Here a neigh, there a neigh, everywhere a neigh neigh!*

*Old Mac Donald had a farm (walking around circle again)  
E I E I O!*

Repeat at the suggestion of parents/carers present

## Activity Time

### Animal fun

Have some animal soft toys, blankets and boxes set up on the floor. Encourage playful fun together.

- parents/carers can make animal sounds, moving the animals
- hide the animals under blankets and say Peekaboo!
- say “goodnight” to the animals by tucking them into bed
- lie animals on the blankets and lift them up, swaying them gently from side to side, like a cradle

## Extension Ideas

- Play some gentle music and blow bubbles
- Parents/carers could work together in pairs to gently rock babies in large blankets

## Goodbye

Conclude the session with some suggestions of books that parents might want to share with their children. The Little Big Book Club suggests the following books to support learning in this area. If your library has copies, make them available for families to borrow or include them in your story time session.

For more stories to share, we recommend the following titles:

- **Spot at the Farm** by Eric Hill
- **Farm Babies** by Rod Campbell
- **Time For Bed** by Mem Fox

An Activity Time for this book is available to download for FREE from our website. This is a great resource to share with families, you are welcome to print and distribute as necessary.

## Goodbye Song

Depending on the size of your group, you may wish to insert each child’s name in the place of ‘you’ as it develops a more personal relationship between yourself, the child and the family.

Sung to the tune of (Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush) or your preferred choice.

### Goodbye

*This is the way we say goodbye (use a waving action) Say goodbye, say goodbye*

*This is the way we say goodbye*

*To all our library friends (or) (to our friend.....)!*