



Bluey

SERIES 3: TURTLEBOY

Early education notes

By [ABC Kids Early Education](#) and [Deaf Connect](#)

In [Bluey Series 3: Turtleboy](#), we meet Dougie and his mum. Dougie visits the same park as Bingo, loves playing with Turtleboy and he is profoundly deaf. Dougie and his mum communicate in Auslan (Australian Sign Language). In addition to usual format, Turtleboy is available to watch on ABC Kids iview with full Auslan translation.

Along with the inclusion of Auslan, one of Australia's diverse community languages, there are many ways watching Turtleboy will spark follow up learning through play in early education settings and at home.



Image: Ludo Studio.

Taking Turtleboy home from the park may 'not be the done thing', but Bingo and Dougie have fun playing with him anyway.

INCLUSIVE PRACTICE IN THE EARLY YEARS

Children thrive in the early years when they are exposed to accessible, language rich environments.

[National Quality Standard 1.2](#) acknowledges that using a range of communication strategies through an intentional teaching approach is vital to promote young children's learning. For deaf and hard of hearing children, this must include access to both Auslan and their home spoken language right from the start.¹



Image: Shutterstock.

Learning sign language has benefits for all children.

From birth, children communicate using gestures, actions, sounds and spoken language. Children's exposure to language during their early development is critical for their future linguistic skills and for the most part is provided by parents and primary caregivers.² The communicative competencies and strategies young children learn has wide implications for future language development and help to set the stage for learning about their world.²

As educators, we play an important role in helping children develop skills that enable them to communicate effectively with others both verbally and non-verbally, for a range of purposes ([EYLF Learning Outcome 5.1, p.43](#)). Many young children often naturally use different methods of non-verbal communication before developing spoken language skills, so it's timely to consider how we might incorporate sign language in early education settings.

Including [Auslan](#) in teacher planning and practice has many benefits for both deaf and hearing children, including stimulating brain development and increasing enjoyment in communicating.³ The evidence is certainly clear that [inclusive practice](#) benefits all children in early learning.⁴

An authentic [Anti-Bias curriculum](#) allows space for diversity to be represented, where both educators and children acknowledge and respect differences.



Image: ABC Kids.

Turtleboy includes characters who use Auslan. Visit [ABC Kids iview](#) to see the episode version with full Auslan translation.

FOLLOW UP IDEAS

Each play-based suggestion is designed to be inclusive and accessible for both hearing and Deaf children.

1. TURTLE SIGN

As you view the episode, look for the TURTLE sign in Auslan. Talk about how the Auslan sign reflects the shape of a turtle; a body, a shell on top and legs/ flippers at the side. Make a resource (such as a poster) to demonstrate the sign by including photos of children making the handshape. Display the poster in your playroom. Try incorporating the Auslan sign whenever you sing a song or read a story with a turtle character!

Watch this [ABC Kids Community video](#) for help learning other Auslan signs from Turtleboy.



2. TAKE A TOY TO THE PARK

Take your favourite plush animal to the local park and recreate activities from the episode. Encourage plenty of joint attention and incidental language learning opportunities to describe what you're doing like 'swinging', 'jumping', 'running', 'climbing'.

3. TURTLEBOY HIDE-AND-SEEK

Use the Bluey: Turtleboy template to make your own hide-and seek prop (see attachment). Take turns to hide Turtleboy around the house or classroom. Children can give each other verbal or non-verbal clues to help friends seek out Turtleboy. See how fast he can be found! This experience supports understandings such as turn taking, cooperation and directional language/communication.

4. WATER PLAY

Fill a large dish or trough with water. Pile rocks on one side so children can take a turtle figurine (or other land and water animal toys) for a dip from 'land' to 'sea/river'. This experience promotes sensory engagement and imagination.

5. UPCYCLED TURTLE CRAFT

Explore real turtle habitats by searching online or in non-fiction books. Gather sustainable natural materials such as sand, rocks and twigs to construct a turtle habitat. Cut the cups from an egg carton and add other bits and pieces to make a crafty turtle to live in the habitat.



Image: Ludo Studio



Images: ABC Kids Early Education.

Try making the Auslan handshape for turtle.



Image: ABC Kids Early Education.

Get crafty with your own turtle creations.



6 SMALL WORLD PLAY

Use loose parts, plastic bricks, pebbles, small plants, fallen twigs and building blocks to make a small world playground like the one in Turtleboy. Attach [printouts](#) of Bluey characters to blocks for children to re-create moments from the episode and tell stories of their own. Small world play supports sustained, shared thinking and ongoing project work in early learning.



Image: ABC Kids Early Education. Background art credited to Channie Kulk, Awabakal artist and educator. Thanks to Kooloora Preschool, Toukley, NSW.

7. PRETEND PLAY

Include dress-up clothes with, [Bluey Paper Masks](#) and props for children to take on the roles of [Bluey Characters](#). Incorporate a tablet or laptop for children to research and watch signing videos, using the [Auslan Signbank](#) to help inform their play.

Educators can check out the [Deaf Connect GIF account](#) for a range of words and phrases in Auslan.



REFERENCES:

1. Deaf Australia Inc. & Grant Thornton. (2013). *Early intervention & education for deaf and hard of hearing children: Addressing challenges in pursuit of better outcomes* (p.5).
2. Levesque, E.M. (2014). *The impact of a bimodal bilingual input on deaf children's communication and language development*. Melbourne, VIC (pp.9,34).
3. Victoria State Government Education and Training. (2022). *A brief guide to Auslan: Early childhood language program*.
4. Early Childhood Australia (ECA). (2016). *Statement on the inclusion of every child in early childhood education and care*. Fyshwick, ACT (p.2)

CREDIT

Notes produced by ABC Kids Early Education and Copybook Design and Print in collaboration with Deaf Connect.



BLUEY



TURTLEBOY

Hide-and-Seek

Decorate and assemble Turtleboy then take turns with a friend to play hide-and-seek. Player 1 hides Turtleboy. Player 2 tries to find him. Player 1 can help Player 2 by giving some clues. Then swap!

1 Print then add colour to Turtleboy.



2 Ask a grown-up to help you cut around the dotted line.

3 Glue Turtleboy to cardboard for strength. Cut around the shape again.

4 Go to the next page! Time to help Turtleboy stand up.



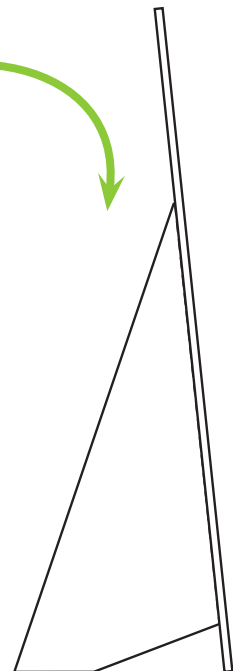
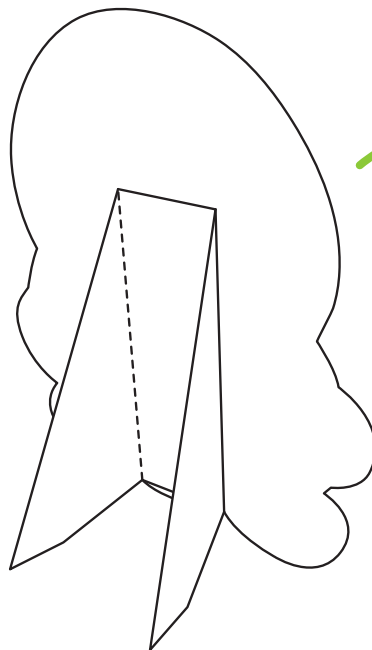
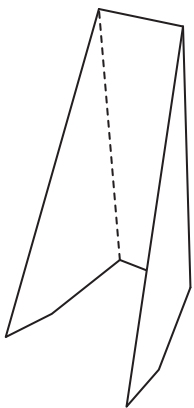
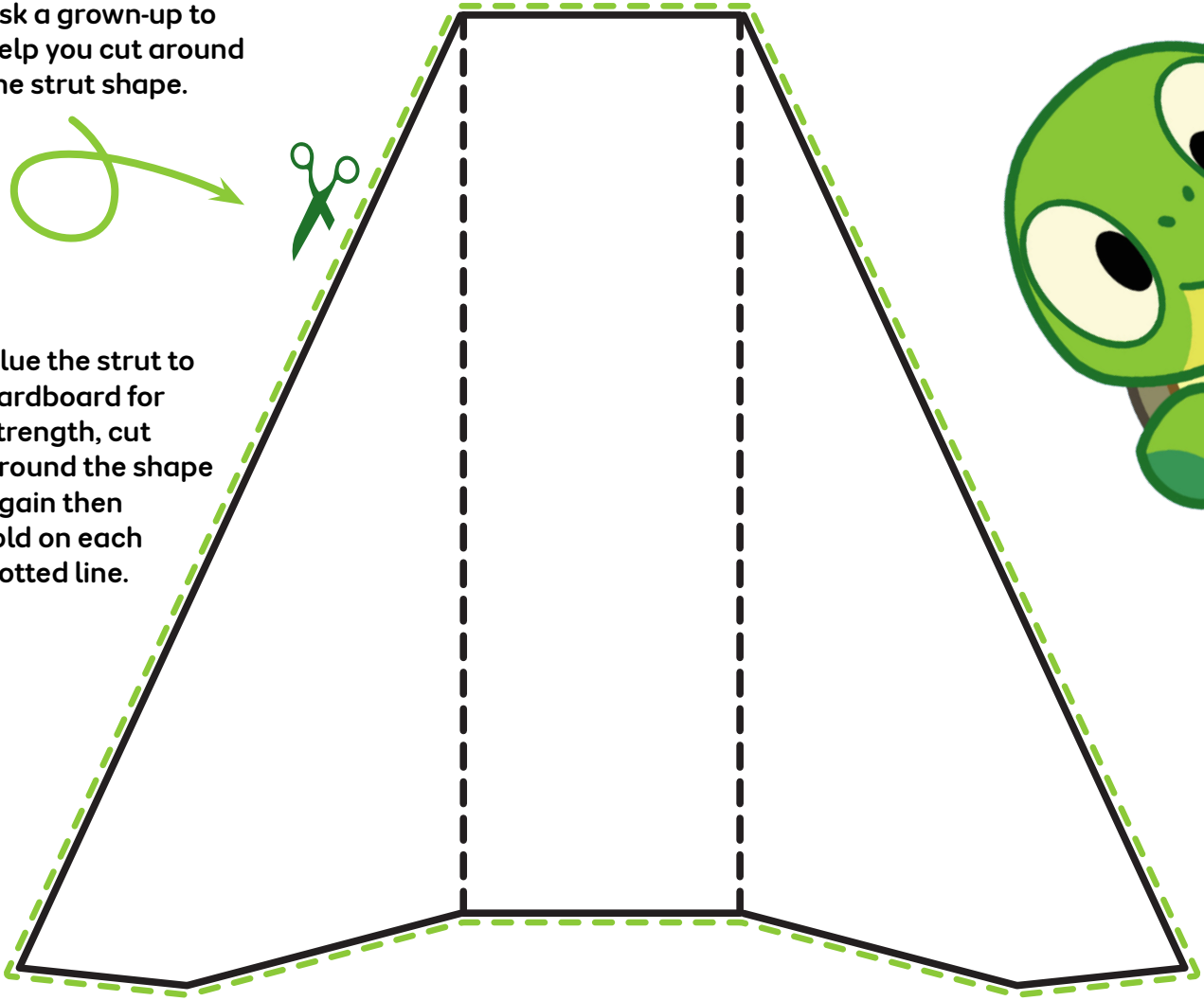
TURTLEBOY

Hide-and-Seek

- 5 Ask a grown-up to help you cut around the strut shape.



- 6 Glue the strut to cardboard for strength, cut around the shape again then fold on each dotted line.



Side View

- 7 Glue the strut to the back of your coloured in cut out Turtleboy like this. Now you can stand him up!