

Fox Bird River Sing!

Welcome to your interactive sensory guide to accompany the audio play
Fox, Bird, River, Sing!

Created by artists Orla Kelly and Thomas Johnston, Fox, Bird, River, Sing! is a wonderful story made rich with sounds of the Irish landscape and traditional Irish music. This audio play and sensory pack was commissioned by Fingal Arts Office, with funding from Creative Ireland on the occasion of Cruinniú na nÓg 2021.

A little introduction

Fox Bird River Sing! is an interactive story, which means that the narration will encourage you to do actions that accompany the story. This guide aims to support parents of children who experience the world primarily through their senses by engaging in the narrated actions of this audio play in a more sensorial way, by suggesting ways to use items that may be in your home or natural environment. We have tried to focus on items that explore and support sound, touch, movement, smell, eye tracking, hand-eye coordination and fun, and we hope that suggesting some items may inspire you to explore others.

The audio play was not written especially for children with special needs but we think the story, sounds and music will delight all.

The audio play is 33 minutes long but can be broken into six sections, each one with a new animal who helps us along that bit of the journey. We have used these sections to group our suggestions of how you may start your explorations.

We start our guide with a selection of suggested items for you to gather, and follow with suggested ways to use these items within each part of the story.

We hope you all enjoy the adventure!



This story is one that has nature at its heart. We begin at the sea and travel to a meadow, we smell flowers and dance in a shadowy cave. We cross a river and listen to the singing trees.

There are a range of sounds and experiences that you may want to focus on to enhance your shared experience of the story according to your child's nature. You may know from reading this list what may and may not suit your child. If a suggestion doesn't suit, perhaps it might inspire another idea that would be perfect for your child. We don't suggest that you use every suggestion here in one go, as that may be overwhelming, but with your understanding of your child, choose items that may suit you both to explore initially and perhaps develop your shared experiences over time as you return to the story.

Here are our few starting suggestions.

Suggested Items to gather before we start

- For the sea, river and rain: A box or bag of rice, cornflakes, rice crispies or similar that when you tilt the box or bag you can hear the particles move from one end to another. This is helpful for the sounds of the sea and river. A jar or tin of coffee is also great for this but you might want to stay away from glass containers if your child wants to try. You can also make your own shaker with a plastic container with dried lentils, coffee, dry beans or rice. Make sure the top is secure if your child wants to try. We will call this the rain maker.
- For the sun, flowers and dancing: A light fabric scarf or light fabric pieces - ideally more than one and bright colours if possible as we have the sun and flowers in our story. We also have a dance and light fabric scarves are great fun to wave about in a dance.
- For the sun: A fresh orange. If you score the skin of the orange slightly you will release the wonderful orangy scent.
- A torch (ideally not your phone) that can be held in the hand.
- Scented herbs, flowers or essence. lavender is a rich and calming scent. If you have time and some growing lavender, pick some stems. If you have some extra time, sew or use a mini fabric pouch for the lavender, big enough for the lavender to move around in. You may have lavender essence. Place a few drops on a piece of fabric to use in our story. A nice floral scented herbal tea bag can be beautifully fragrant. If you have herbs such as mint, bay, rosemary or lemon balm these can also be a wonderful addition to a range of smells as we travel across the meadow as Bee.
- For Bee: A lemon - score a lemon twice around its middle and set some black wool into the scores. Tie to secure well. Score the lemon lightly in other places to release its fragrance. You could add some wings made from a clear plastic bag tucked under the wool. To make some eyes, cut away the yellow skin to reveal the white pith. With a coloured marker draw some eyes.
- For Crane Bird: Sock puppet - Use a long sock to place over the arm. Push the sock end between your fingers and your thumb to create a mouth. Add a few feathers to the head with strong glue or by sewing. You could make a little hole in the sock if this is helpful to hide the end of the feathers. You could draw on some eyes with markers or use some, wiggly eyes or fluffy pom poms if you have some. Make it as elaborate or as simple as you like.
- For the rain: Water spray bottle - if you repurpose a spray bottle make sure it is cleaned very well before use.
- For Salmon: Fish sock puppets - using sock puppets on your child's hand can encourage movement of the hand in a way that can be unusual and therapeutic; using the hand to move back and forth like the movement of a fish as example.

Fox Bird River Sing!

Fox

In this section we stand at the edge of the sea and meet wise Fox who helps us start our journey to hear the singing trees.

What we suggest you use:

- The Rain Maker
- A coloured scarf
- A lightly scored orange

Suggestions:

The rain maker /Sea - Use the rice box, rice crispy box or similar to make the sounds of the sea. You can tilt the box slowly to make the sound. Travel around the head of your child by walking around their chair slowly, allowing them to hear the sound moving in space.

Scarf / Sea - place the scarf over your hand. Open and close your hand like the sun is breathing. Use the scarf to wave and encourage tracking. A soft touch over the arm or head can be stimulating. Wrapping a hand in the scarf may be enjoyable for some.

Orange / sun - after scoring the orange, roll the orange in your child's hand. Move along up the arm, over the shoulders and down the other arm, rolling slowly with medium pressure.

Bee

In this section we meet wise bee who helps us on our journey over the meadow.

What we suggest you use:

- Coloured scarves
- Bag of lavender
- Rain maker - Sea
- Lemon Bee
- Lavender pouch

Suggestions:

Wrap your hand in a coloured scarf. If you have yellow and black scarves wrap your hand in both to make a bee. Use the bee to fly around your child while you make an interesting bee sound. This will encourage audio and visual tracking.

Perhaps you could use a lemon bee (outlined above). In a similar way to the orange above, use the lemon to roll in the hand and along the arm to release its scent.

Scarves - Use some coloured scarves as the flowers and petals in the story.

Try use a scarf that is light and floats when you throw it in the air and watch it fall gracefully. Use the scarf to wave slowly in the air or trail it along the skin. Using two or three colours together may be visually interesting and encourage tracking and reach.

Give one scarf to your child. Try waving at each other with the scarves or allowing the child to hold one edge and you the other as you waft it up and down. Try a little scarf dance to some music.

Lavender - the lavender can be beautiful to smell. Hold it close to the ear to hear it rustle and as you do the smell will activate also.

Rain maker - Close to the end of this section the rain comes to the meadow. Use the rain maker to voice the sound of the rain by drumming your fingers lightly on the top of the box. Move the sound around the children's heads, encouraging sound tracking.

Crane-Bird

In this section we meet crane-bird, she helps us fly over the meadow and get closer to the singing trees.

What we suggest you use:

- Bird - sock puppet for your hand
- Coloured scarves

Suggestions:

Sock puppet - Try using the mouth of your sock puppet to pick up items or playfully hold the child's hand, nibble their fingers, their knees and generally have fun. If your child is very keen on the puppet you could use it to encourage their reach and visual tracking in all directions.

Coloured scarves - In the story we transform into cranes as Crane-Bird brings a rainbow from his bag. Using all your scarves together make a rainbow that waves in big arcs.

The sock puppet could bring the scarves to your child in its beak as you encourage them to wave the scarves with big arm movements as we begin to fly.

Hare

In this section the Hare brings us into the fairy cave and we dance with the fairies.

What we suggest you use:

- Torches
- Coloured scarves
- Sun - Orange or scarf

Suggestions:

Torches - It's dark in the cave. Why not turn off the lights in your room and use your torch to make some small shadows on tables, or simply use the torch to point out things by shining the light at it. Your child could point at something in the room with the torch and you could bring that item to them or vice versa, you could point the torch and they could find it with their eyes. Point at your hand with the torch and grab the light. Hold the light under your coloured scarves and see how they glow. If your torch is small enough for your child to hold in their hand, allow your child to explore you; the inside of your mouth, your ear, your hand. If your child is mobile, explore dark places with the torch; under the kitchen table or even build a fort and try exploring shadows on the wall and floor.

Scarves - Use the scarves to animate our dance when in the cave.

The Sun - The sun enters the cave as a new morning dawns. Use the sun to suggest a new day as you leave the cave. Roll the orange in their hands and smell the new day.

Salmon

In this section we meet the salmon who form stepping stones for us to cross the river so we can get to the singing trees.

- Rain maker - for the stream
- Water spray bottle
- Sock puppets

Suggestions:

Sock puppets: use the fish sock puppets for salmon swimming in the stream. Encourage hand and arm movements that are not used often; jumping over a rock, swimming in a **wiggly** movement with the hand held on its side.

Spray bottle: Fill a clean spray bottle with water. Spray this in a light spray far over the head of your child. Allow the water droplets to gently land on their head, face and arms. This can be both exciting and soothing, especially if the weather is quite warm.

The rain maker, which we used as we stood by the sea, could animate the sound of the river. Instead of the gentle tilt we used for the gentle waves, try a gentle shake and then a slow tilt to make a long rolling sound, creating a long sound followed by a short sound. Walk around your child's head so they can hear the sound moving and change as it does.

If you are using a box of rice crispies, allow your child to place their ear on the box to listen while the rice are rolling inside. This may be comforting to many children who like white noise.

Trees

We arrive to the forest of the singing trees to hear them sing. We relax to hear the trees first and then we dance!

What we suggest you use:

- Leaves, branches
- Fabric scarves
- Lavender

Suggestions:

This section starts with a gentle relaxing and focus on the body. You might want to use the time to gently animate a breath in and out with your child. You may want to massage their body with a gentle firmness focusing on the area that is suggested by the narration; the toes first, the knees, the fingers and then the head. Using lavender at this point will increase the sense of relaxation. Try rustling the lavender at their ear for a little burst of scent and a nice gentle rustle.

If you have access to leaves or tree branches, bring the branch close to your child so they can touch it. Scrunch the leaves close to your child's ear so they can hear it. If the branch is particularly fragrant like bay, pine or rosemary, rub the leaves close to the ear so the scent and sound will excite the nose as well as the ear. Other nice fragrant leaves that might be helpful here would be mint or lemon balm.

Fabric scarves - as previously mentioned, scarves can be a great addition to a dance. If you have enough scarves for all your hands, place a scarf in each hand and encourage movement as you listen and dance together to the sound of the singing trees.