

Let's Talk About Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day

By Judith Viorst

When Alexander wakes up with gum in his hair and his brother gets the prize from the cereal box, the bad luck is just beginning. One thing after another just seems to go wrong for him. By the end of the story though, Alexander learns that sometimes we all just have 'bad days' "even in Australia."

You can use this opportunity to share with your child about when you or they have had a 'bad day' like Alexander. Some books are easier to relate to when you have experienced something similar to the character in the book. One of the Le Clerc Centre's principles for reading to deaf children is just this—**"to connect concepts in the story to the real world."** So if your child has ever woken up with gum in her hair or got pushed into a puddle by her sibling or the store was sold out of the one thing she absolutely wanted, you can remind her "That is just like what happened to Alexander..." and it can make the story more meaningful to your child.



Language and Learning

[Lexicalized Fingerspelling](#) (or loan signs) are fingerspelled words that take on the look of a sign because of the way they are signed. Sometimes letters are omitted or there is a particular movement. Kathy uses the lexicalized fingerspelling of "NO GOOD" in this DVD. Can you and your child think of any other signs that you know like this? What about OK, BACK...

Let's Be Together

You can use this book to help your child recognize and express their feelings. For younger children, start with labelling facial expressions. Look at Alexander's face in the book and ask your child how it looks like he is feeling. Ask your child to make their grumpy face. Look in a mirror and make different faces with your child—happy, sad, tired...and help them label them.

For older children, help them make the connection between what their body's response is to their feelings. If your child notices that she tightens her fists when she gets angry, she will learn that when that happens she can tell herself, "Okay, I'm angry about something. I need to take a few deep breaths and count to 10", for example. It will help her in the future to recognize how she is feeling and moderate her reaction.

Let's Play Together

Try using the signs on below to sign this popular song with your child. You could also try using some of the other emotions signs to make up different verses. For example, "If you're **angry** and you know it, **Stamp your feet**" ...**sad**—cry...**tired**—yawn...

English

If you're **happy** and you know it,
Clap your hands.

If you're **happy** and you know it,
Clap your hands.

If you're **happy** and you know it,
Then your face will surely show it.
If you're **happy** and you know it,
Clap your hands.

ASL

You **happy** know-know
Clap Clap.

You **happy** know-know
Clap Clap.

You **happy** know-know
Face expression. (*match to emotion*)
You **happy** know-know
Clap Clap.

You

Happy

Know

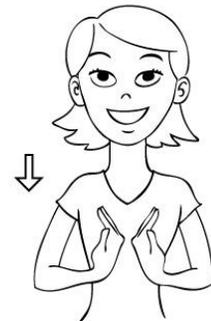
Angry

(tap forehead)



Sad

Tired



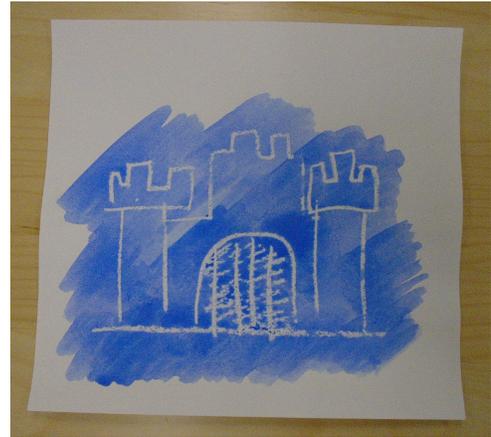
Let's Create

Invisible Picture

Your child can make an invisible picture just like Alexander. All you need is white paper, a white crayon or wax candle (a birthday candle works well!), watercolor paint, a paintbrush and water.

What to do:

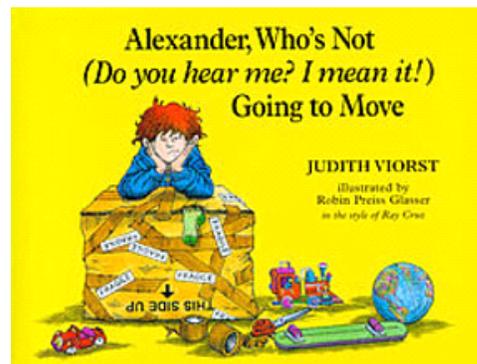
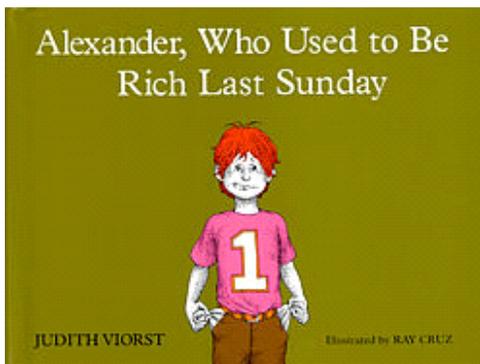
1. Draw a picture on the white paper with the crayon or candle. It will work better if your child presses hard on the candle. This is your invisible picture!
2. Brush the watercolour paint over your invisible drawing to see what you made.



There are many ways to extend this activity. For example, parents can draw pictures of things for their child to count or write a secret message for their child to discover.

Read More About It!

Judith Viorst has written a couple of other books featuring Alexander. If you liked this book, you might also like *Alexander, Who Used to Be Rich Last Sunday* and *Alexander, Who's Not (Do you hear me? I mean it!) Going to Move*.



Let's Be Together

Below are several images that have to do with the 'bad' things that happen in the story. Cut out the images and figure out how they relate to the story. For younger children you can choose some of the images and use the book to help find when they happen. Older children can use more or all of the images, and for an added challenge, ask them to put them in order of when they appear in the story.

