

Submission Guidelines

Tiny Seed Publishing is one of Starfish Bay Publishing's two imprints, dedicated to publishing children's picture books and board books. From 1 September 2025, Tiny Seed operates under a Traditional Publishing Programme and accepts submissions for children's picture books only from solicited authors.

Traditional Publishing Programme

Under our Traditional Publishing Programme, Starfish Bay covers all costs—including editing, illustration, design, printing, sales, marketing, and distribution. Authors receive royalties with no financial contribution required.

Every year, all books published under our imprints are showcased free of charge at our stand at the Bologna Children's Book Fair—the world's premier international rights fair for children's publishing. This event brings together publishers from across the globe to sell translation rights, discover new talent, and celebrate the best in children's literature.

Starting January 2026, Starfish Bay will transition to an in-house sales and marketing team. This change will enable us to manage promotions and retailer relationships more directly and efficiently. We expect this shift to significantly boost sales of new titles, resulting in stronger royalty returns for our authors.

Please note that 30 publishing slots will be available for solicited authors and 70 publishing slots will be available for signed authors under our Traditional Publishing Program in 2026.

About our Traditional Publishing Process

We understand that traditional publishing can be a complex process, especially for new writers. Therefore, we would like to provide some general information about our traditional publishing process.

During publication, we oversee a range of processes including editing, design, proofreading, printing, sales, marketing, and distribution to ensure our books are professionally produced and widely available. In general, it takes a traditional book publisher 24 months to complete the publishing process. Here is the schedule we work to when publishing a children's picture book:

Step 1: Editing

After signing a publishing agreement with us, our editors will review the manuscript and provide feedback. In general, two editorial rounds will be required to ensure the book reaches its full potential. For each editorial round, our editorial team can deliver a line-edited manuscript including comments. The author can use this feedback for their revision. In general, this process should be completed within two months. Once a story is to a satisfactory standard and the editorial process is complete, no further changes can be made. Only errors related to grammar can be highlighted and corrected after this process. All editorial rounds are free of charge.

Step 2: Contracting an illustrator

Once the editorial process is complete, we will begin sourcing a suitable illustrator. We believe it is essential to select an illustrator whose style complements the story. Working with illustrators from around the world, we carefully match each manuscript with the most fitting artistic style. We do not want to rush this process, which can take up to five months to complete.

Step 3: Illustrations

Authors should be aware that a professional illustrator is a co-creator of the picture book and will interpret the text in their own way. Once an illustration agreement is signed, our Art Director and art team will work closely with the illustrator to ensure a smooth process. Authors are not required to contribute to the illustration process, and we are unable to provide specific updates during this stage.

Step 4: Design

After receiving the final illustrations, our designer will begin preparing the layout. A full PDF of the picture book will be created. This process takes roughly one month to complete.

Step 5: Proofreading

After the layout has been finalised, we will need to proofread the book. We will provide authors with a full PDF of their book. Authors are not asked to participate in the proofreading process as this is looked after by our editors. Please note that only grammar and spelling mistakes can be changed during this process and there will be no further changes to the illustrations.

Step 6: Teacher Notes

Teacher notes are a valuable resource for educators, helping to create discussion and deepen awareness of the themes and characters in our books. We welcome our authors to assist in creating these notes. Teacher notes typically include questions about the themes or situations, as well as simple activities inspired by the book – everything to encourage learning through fun.

Step 7: Submission of new title information to our sales and distribution partners

When the above processes have been completed, we will set a publication date and submit the new title information to our sales and distribution partners. They require new title information five to eight months prior to publication.

Step 8: Printing

We usually begin printing a picture book five months before its publication date.

Step 9: Book sales and marketing

There is no need for our authors to promote their books themselves. We have sales agencies based in the US, UK, and Australia. Each has its own sales and marketing plans for our books. Our sales agents and distributors sell our books to bookshops (online and in-store), wholesalers, and library vendors. If you view the Sales and Distribution category on our website, you will gain more information on where our books will be sold.

Step 10: Selling subsidiary rights

In addition to selling and distributing books, we actively sell translation rights to non-English language publishers through foreign rights agents and international book fairs. This helps maximise the potential reach and readership of our titles.

Starfish Bay regularly exhibits at international book fairs, showcasing our titles to publishers from around the world. Translation rights are bought and sold at exhibitor stands, which will enable our stories to travel the world.

You can find us at Bologna Children's Book Fair and Frankfurt Book Fair each year.

Author Testimonials

We love hearing from our authors and illustrators about their experiences publishing with us.

Karen Hendriks, author of *Vesper Jones and Marshmallow*, shared the following after attending the 2025 Bologna Children's Book Fair, where she met her book's illustrator, Francesca Corso, and our Deputy Publisher, Matthew Long:

"I am beyond excited. I was lucky enough to meet Francesca at the Starfish Bay stand. I am so excited about Vesper. Lots is happening but I am so pumped for my books with Starfish. I love how you get me and my writing. It is awesome seeing our world in action. You are my book family. All my interactions have been great, and I have really enjoyed everything so far."

Elsa Spagnol, Illustrator of *Mallee and the Blue Gum*, also shared her thoughts when receiving copies of her book which was published in June 2025:

"The copies you sent arrived two days ago and I'm so in love with everything, the colors, the paper... wow! I was really impressed because the print quality and the paper are so good, and the colors are so brilliant :)"