

**Release date: Monday October 11**

**ITV opens up access to very special stories!**

ITV is working with Special Stories Publishing to help raise disability awareness and celebrate diversity through children's books.

*A Birthday for Ben* is now available in British Sign Language, animation, text and sound via the unique online library [www.signedstories.com](http://www.signedstories.com):

*It's Ben's 7<sup>th</sup> birthday but he really doesn't want a birthday party. But when his friends surprise him, he learns just how easy it is for everyone to join in the fun.*

Written from Ben's perspective, the story introduces the themes of deafness, hearing aids and sign language and celebrates inclusion and diversity. Caroline Carswell the founder of Irish Deaf Kids said: "*A Birthday for Ben* is a very welcome resource for parents and teachers as it introduces the whole concept of hearing and deafness to young children."

*A Birthday for Ben* is one of a collection of books from Special Stories Publishing, which addresses a range of disabilities, and health and social issues – including dyslexia, autism, learning difficulties and Down's Syndrome,

**About Signed Stories**

Launched in February of 2009 as part of ITV's Corporate and Social Responsibility programme, Signed Stories offers children, their families and teachers all around the world the opportunity to enjoy some of the best contemporary children's stories for free.

More than 200,000 children every month enjoy and benefit from the site – deaf and hearing children, those with special educational needs including autism and dyslexia and those learning English as a second language.

Signed Stories is not a commercial venture for ITV and does not provide an income. The website needs the support of companies, private individuals and public sector organisations if it is to continue to grow and make a real difference to children's lives.

**For more information on the project, or if you're interested in sponsoring a story please contact:**

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