# **User’s Manual Ballyland Keyboarding © 2017 Sonokids**

Ballyland Keyboarding is fun, early learning software for all children. All children can share this play experience together - on a level playing field - including children with disabilities. Particular attention has been given to the support and building of foundation keyboarding skills by children with vision impairment.

## Before you start

* Ballyland was designed for use with a standard English language QWERTY keyboard. Other keyboard types and language versions, as well as extra and alternative keys or control buttons, may respond differently and produce different sounds than listed below, produce no sound at all, or execute an action. Sonokids strongly advises users of different keyboards to check the keys' responses before the child starts to play
* When playing Ballyland on a laptop, the child may accidentally hit the touch-pad or touchpad buttons which may cause unwanted interference with the keyboard’s functioning. You can cover the touchpad by sticking a piece of cardboard over it. To technically disable the touchpad on your laptop, please check your laptop manual or follow online instructions;
* Encourage the child to explore the computer by touch and ear, including the screen, sound speakers and (when the computer is shut down) the connection cable and the mouse.
* Introduce the child to different types of balls, with different textures and sounds, before playing Ballyland.
* If you as an educator are using a screen reader, please turn it off, to avoid interference. Ballyland is completely self-voicing, and the Menu and Settings control panel are fully accessible. Please refer to the specific instructions’ document on the use of Short Keys in Ballyland Keyboarding.

## Special Features

* Self-voicing
* Audio based gameplay, supported by simple graphics and animations Spoken feedback
* Easy recognisable sounds and images
* Adjustable colour contrast
* Adjustable response time
* No literacy skills required
* No assistive technology required
* Menu and Settings control panel accessible  
  for users who are blind
* Supportive audio feedback and Spoken description of each sound(effect) in Any Key Goes
* Switch accessible Key Games

## Quick Start

### Any Key Goes

Press any key, for sounds, stories and songs.

### Keygame 1: Ballicopter Flies

Press Spacebar to make Ballicopter land and take off again.  
Listen out for the duck - and score how many times you find him!

### Keygame 2: Babballoony on the train

When the train stops, press the Escape key on time, to let Babballoony get off the train.

### Keygame 3: Tinkleball opens doors

Press the Enter key if you want the door to open.

### Keygame 4: Squeaky prefers quiet

Press Left arrow key to bring down the music, until you reach Squeaky.

### Keygame 5: Wheelie likes it loud

Press Right arrow key to add to the music, until you reach Wheelie.

### Keygame 6: Squeaky and Wheelie battle it out

Use the Right and Left arrow keys to move around this game.

### The Sun Game

Use the five keys that you have learned in the Keygames.  
At the end, listen to the song!

## Ballyland Keyboarding Full Instructions

### Entry Level: Any Key Goes

Press any key, for sounds, stories and songs.

This level is specifically designed to put the child in control and to enable him or her to play independently, explore, have fun, and learn. All standard functions of the keys are disabled, and now all that keystrokes do is to produce sounds and images, or mini animations. The keys open up a world of sounds, stories, music and songs. Every child will recognise familiar situations and enjoy the funny and surprising sound effects and animations. Active play is encouraged via audio feedback.

The sounds are not based on an alphabetic structure, which makes Ballyland very special. It was designed for very young children, with no literacy skills. The sounds are not randomly chosen. They are all familiar, everyday sounds. Also, in order to support young children who are blind in their efforts to ‘map’ the computer keyboard without sight, categories of sounds/images correspond with categories of keys. Please refer to the separate document with a list of all the sounds used with the keys in the software.

In the Settings you can:

* Set the number of seconds it takes before the child is encouraged to press a key;
* Turn on a spoken descriptions of each sound;
* Adjust the colour contrast to suit special needs. Default setting is automatic, standard colours. Turn manual colours ON to access the colour control panel in order to adjust the colours to suit special needs. OFF resets the images to the automatic standard colours.

*Tips:*

1. Give the child time to play and explore on his/her own, without too much interference;
2. As soon as another key is pressed, the sound of the previous keystroke stops;
3. If a child uses the whole hand to ‘hit’ the keyboard, only the single key that the hand touches first will give a response, and no cacophony will ensue;
4. Turn the spoken description ON (Settings) so that if you press one key and then wait before pressing another key, you can listen to a spoken explanation of what the sound was. This feature supports understanding and speech development and is also useful for non-native speakers;
5. If – in the manual colour control panel - you set the outline and fill to the same colour, for example: white, the result is a simple, uncluttered effect that may be suitable for some children;
6. Introduce the child to the real situation or object represented by the sounds in Any Key Goes. Tie the program in with hands-on educational materials, themes and every-day experiences. Build a tower. Find a ball that squeaks or has a little bell in it. Splash in the bath; Let the child explore a balloon and experience its behaviour and sound when it is blown up and tied up, when air escapes, etc.
7. All the sounds used in the stories and songs can be found under different keys of the keyboard;
8. The voice-over is professionally recorded by Natalija, a young Australian girl who is blind.

*Extra learning opportunities: Let the child…*

* describe all the sounds that you hear or the images that you see;
* press a key, listen to the sound, and then go back to the same key again;
* find all five Ballylanders on the keyboard, all the animals, the musical instruments, human sounds, household sounds and stories;
* create his or her own story, or recreate one of the existing stories, by pressing keys;
* create a tune with the keys of the musical instruments;
* play with real musical instruments;
* discover matching pairs of keys;
* talk, telling you what he or she thinks that each key represents;
* listen to the spoken description of each sound(effect)
* count the farm animals, musical instruments, etc…

### Key Games

In each Key Game one special key is introduced at a time, while all other keys on the keyboard have been disabled. Key Games are advised to be played under supervision and with support from a parent/carer/teacher.

It is important to note that in the Key Games, the Ballylanders’ keys are used in their formal function, as Escape key, Spacebar, Enter key, right Arrowkey and left Arrowkey. Through playing the Key Games, the child is introduced in a playful way to how these particular keys’ function in a formal computer environment, as specified in each Key Game below.

*Tips:*

* The keys that are used in the Key Games are the same keys that in the “Any Key Goes” Entry Level correspond with the signature sounds of the five Ballylanders. Taking the child back to the sounds from the Entry level will assist with locating and memorising where each Ballylander’s key is on the keyboard;
* It depends on the child’s development, skills and understanding whether you should use the Ballylanders’ names, or the real names to address the five special keys.
* To play with Single Switch, set the switch to mimic the one key that is used in each Key game

#### Key Game 1: Ballicopter flies

Find Ballicopter’s key on the keyboard (Spacebar).

This is the only active key in this game.

Pressing **Spacebar** **formally** means: toggle on/off; stop – go – stop - go etc.

When the game starts, Ballicopter flies high up in the sky over the fields of Ballyland.

Press Ballicopter’s key to make him land.

Press Ballicopter’s key again to let him take off again.

Listen out for the animals that meet him when he lands.

If you are in luck, you will hear the duck.

The game will be different every time you play it.

In the Settings you can set how fast Ballicopter moves.

*Tips:*

1. The animals appear in a random order;
2. Make the child aware of the different shape and size of the Spacebar as compared to the rest of the keyboard keys;
3. Make the child aware of the difference in sound when the helicopter lands and/or takes off again;
4. Inspire the child to imagine being the pilot of the helicopter, controlling landing and take-off.

*Extra learning opportunities: Let the child…*

* enjoy listening to the animals that Ballicopter meets when he lands;
* try to recognise the animal sounds;
* try to find as many ducks as possible (and count them);
* predict which animal will be there.

#### Key Game 2: Babballoony on the train

Find Babballoony’s key on the keyboard (Esc key).

This is the only active key in this game.

Pressing the **Escape key formally** means: cancel, quit, exit; leave the train.

Babballoony goes on a train ride.  
The train pauses at every station.

When the train has come to a complete stop, you can press Babballoony’s key.

By pressing Babballoony’s key on time, he will get off the train.

A new ride will start automatically.

If you prefer not to press the key this time, or if you press too late, Babballoony will continue his train ride.

The train runs in a loop and you can play as long as you like.

In the Settings you can adjust the amount of time the Escape key is enabled at a station, giving the child more time to press the key to make Babballoony exit the train.

*Extra learning opportunities: Let the child…*

* try to let Babballoony leave the train at different stations;
* listen carefully and guess why the station has this particular name.

#### Key Game 3: Tinkleball is on a roll

Find Tinkleball’s key on the keyboard (Enter key).

This is the only active key in this game.

Pressing the **Enter key formally** means: Yes, OK, select; Enter!

Tinkleball rolls around Ballyland.

She stops when she comes to a door, and then knocks on the door.

Listen carefully so that you hear what is behind the door.  
Press Tinkleball’s key (Enter) if you want the door to open.

If you decide not to press, or if you press the key too late, Tinkleball will continue to roll until she comes to the next door.

You can play as long as you like.

In the Settings you can set how fast Tinkleball moves, and how many seconds to wait before you hear the "knock-knock" again.

*Tip:*

It is important to listen first, and then decide whether to open the door or not.  
Note that the Enter key will remain inactive until the information has been given what is behind the door.

*Extra learning opportunities: Let the child…*

* discover what is behind each and every door;
* make Tinkleball’s journey different every time, by choosing which door to open, and which not (yet);
* decide on what is his or her favourite place for Tinkleball to visit in this game.

#### Key Game 4: Wheelie likes it loud

Find Wheelie’s key on the keyboard (Right arrow key).

This is the only active key in this game.

Pressing the **Right arrow key formally** means: make the sound louder, move forward, move to the right.

You start this game from where Squeaky is.

Wheelie loves loud noise. Every time you press Wheelie’s key, the music gets louder.

Press the key until you reach Wheelie.

You will hear “hurray!” when you have arrived.  
Then the game starts again.

*Tips:*

1. If the child wears stereo headphones, he or she will hear the sound move to the right when pressing Wheelie’s key
2. Discuss what happens with the sound, how does it change?
3. Discuss the concept of direction and movement.

*Extra learning opportunities: Let the child…*

* try to hear which instruments appear one by one;
* learn about volume, and how the sound of an object or a person gets louder as you come closer.

#### Key Game 5: Squeaky prefers quiet

Find Squeaky’s key on the keyboard (Left arrow key).

This is the only active key in this game.

Pressing the **Left arrow key formally** means: make the sound softer, move backwards, move to the left.

You start this game from where Wheelie is.

Squeaky has a soft voice and so he does not really like loud noise. Every time you press Squeaky’s key, the music gets softer.

Press the key until you reach Squeaky.

You will hear “hurray!” when you have arrived.  
Then the game starts again.

*Tips:*

1. If the child wears stereo headphones, he or she will hear the sound move to the left when pressing Squeaky’s key
2. Discuss what happens with the sound, how does it change?
3. Discuss the concept of direction and movement.

*Extra learning opportunities: Let the child…*

* try to hear which instruments disappear one by one;
* learn about volume, and how the sound of an object or a person gets louder as you come closer.

#### Key Game 6: Squeaky and Wheelie battle it out

This game combines Keygame 4 and 5. It is the only Keygame in which two keys are enabled at the same time (left and right arrowkeys).

Squeaky wants the music softer because he has a weak voice.

Every time you press Squeaky’s key, the sound gets softer.

Wheelie loves loud sounds because his engine is always louder.

Every time you press Wheelie’s key, the sound gets louder.

*Tip:*

If the child wears stereo headphones, he or she will hear the sound move to the right when pressing Wheelie’s key and to the left when pressing Squeaky’s key

#### The Sun Game

This is the Grand Finale. Recapitulate while the sun sets over Ballyland.

You have now learned five important keys. They all return in the Sun game, which consists of a mini version of each of the Key Games.

Spacebar (Ballicopter’s key)

Escape (Babballoony’s key)

Enter (Tinkleball’s key)

Right arrow (Wheelie’s key)

Left arrow (Squeaky’s key).

Listen carefully to the story and press the correct keys when asked to do so.

Keep trying until you find the correct key.  
Perhaps you need help the first time, but as you learn more of the Ballylanders’ keys, you will be able to do this game better and better.

Don’t forget to listen to the Sun Song, and enjoy this great Finale to your play experience in Ballyland.  
  
*Tips:*

* The song refers to putting all your toys back into a basket or box when you are done playing;
* To support children with low vision, use the Zoom function (right mouse click) and drag the image so that the bottom of the grass is aligned with the bottom of the screen. This positioning enables you to see the end result in close-up;
* This game can be played to practice or assess the keys that the child has learned;
* Note that unless the child presses each key at the correct time, the game will not continue, so please provide help if needed.

## Lyrics Ballyland songs

### Intro song

Warm and gentle

a basket in the sun

opens to a land of stories

songs and fun

Where nothing moved

a world has come alive

Where all was quiet

sounds you know and like arrive

Ballyland Ballyland

The key to it is in your hand

Ballyland Ballyland

Come and play, my friend

### Sun Song (Grand Finale)

It is time

The Sun has set

But our story

Doesn’t end

In our basket

We will wait

Till you come back

To Ballyland

## Learning Outcomes

### Special education

* Ballyland enables safe and easy play and learning by all children
* The 'Any Key Goes' game is specifically designed to assist children who are blind to develop essential foundation keyboarding and keyboard ‘mapping’ skills that will benefit their future use of computer technology
* The Key Games gamify the formal use of Enter key, Spacebar, Escape key and Left and Right Arrowkeys. While useful for all children, these keys have particular importance for children who will in the future rely on the keyboard to navigate and control the computer by way of screen reading software. The keys that are used in the Key Games are the same keys that in the "Any Key Goes" Entry Level correspond with the signature sounds of the five Ballylanders, which makes it easier for children to memorize their location.
* It's important to note that the sounds are not based on an alphabetic structure, but certainly not randomly chosen either. In order to support young children who are blind in their efforts to ‘mentally map’ the computer keyboard without sight, categories of sounds/images correspond with categories of keys. Please refer to the list with sounds for more details.
* The inclusive design helps young children with general learning disabilities also interact more effectively with the computer.

### General skills development

The program enables young children to play independently for a short period of time, and to safely explore the keys of the QWERTY computer keyboard. Ballyland Keyboarding supports:

* Inclusion
* Active and experiential play
* Early keyboard awareness
* Preliminary keyboarding skills
* Spatial awareness and 'mapping'
* Cause & Effect concept
* Early literacy and numeracy skills
* Listening skills
* Speech development
* Fine motor skills
* Sorting and Matching
* Concentration
* Memory
* Creativity
* Understanding the world