

How to Choose Read Aloud Books: Babies to Third Graders

By: [Reading Rockets](#), [Rachael Walker](#), [Maria Salvadore](#)



How do you choose books to read aloud with your child? There are many things to think about: how interesting the topic or characters might be for your child; an intriguing setting, time period, or plot; the liveliness or beauty of the language; or how engaging the illustrations are. Some books are more appropriate based on social and emotional development at each stage of a young child's life. Find guidance here in choosing great read alouds.

Read alouds for babies and toddlers

It's never too early to start reading to young children. Babies and toddlers are listeners, building their vocabulary before they can even talk.

What to look for in choosing books for babies and toddlers:

- Brightly colored pictures of simple objects.
- Simple texts, rhyming, and repetition.
- Books that introduce colors, shapes, counting, and letters.
- Lift-the-flap and sturdy pop-up books to encourage exploration.
- Board books and cloth books — perfect for young hands to manipulate.

See some of our favorites:

All Fall Down by Helen Oxenbury

All of Bab, Nose to Toes by Victoria Adler

Diggers Go by Steve Light

I Kissed the Baby by Mary Murphy

Lots of Lambs by Laura Numeroff

Lullaby & Kisses Sweet: Poems to Love With Your Baby Edited: Lee Bennett Hopkins

Maisy's Animals/Los animals de Maisy by Lucy Cousins

Max's First Word by Rosemary Wells

One, Two, Buckle My Shoe by Jane Cabrera

Peek-a-Who? By Nina Laden

Say Goodnight by Helen Oxenbury

Tickle Tickle by Helen Oxenbury

Read alouds for preschoolers

Preschoolers are acquiring language skills quickly. They enjoy the sound of language — even nonsensical words — and a good laugh; after all, they're developing a sense of humor!

What to look for in choosing books for preschoolers:

- Bright, big illustrations.
- Simple stories with basic plots.
- Books that help answer a preschooler's "why?" questions about their world.
- Rhyming text, including the classics like Mother Goose and Dr. Seuss.
- Classic stories with universal themes such as friendship and generosity.
- Activity books that encourage exploration, observation, and play.
- Bedtime stories to calm preschoolers after their busy days!

See some of our favorite:

Froodle by Antoinette Portis

If Your Were a Dog by Jamie Swenson

Kitten's First Full Moon by Kevin Henkes

Llama Llama titles by Anna Dewdney

Tippy-Toe-Chick Go! By George Shannon

Whistle for Willie by Ezra Jack Keats

Yoo-Hoo, Lady Bug by Mem Fox

<http://www.readingrockets.org/booklist/great-read-alouds-for-preschoolers>