

Books Recommended for Reading Aloud to Young Children

Why read to young children?

Children who are read to in the pre-school years have many advantages. (Refer to <https://www.education.vic.gov.au> *Reading to Young Children: A Head-Start in Life*, a summary of research findings about the connections between parents reading to their young children and their child's later reading and other cognitive skills, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Victoria).

One of the key findings in this research is:

- 'The frequency of reading to children at a young age has a direct causal effect on their schooling outcomes regardless of their family background and home environment.'

Other findings in this research document include:

- 'Children who are read to more frequently at an early age enter school with larger vocabularies and more advanced comprehension skills.'
- 'Reading storybooks to children is one of the most important activities for developing the knowledge required for eventual success in reading.'

What can children learn if they are read to frequently?

Children love the sound of language when they are being read to, long before they even notice any of the features of a book. The rhythm and melody of the language when reading aloud from a book is quite different from the sound patterns of oral language and very young children who are read to frequently can mimic the read-aloud intonations even before they can speak in sentences.

Children can learn many important aspects of reading by being read to, including general knowledge about print such as:

- knowing the front and the back of a book,
- that we read from left to right and top to bottom (in English),
- the difference between the print (the part we read) and the artwork (which provides information related to the print)
- opportunities for children to learn the meaning of 'page', 'sentence', word, letter, sound, 'author' and 'illustrator',
- hear the structures of written language compared with oral language.

Discussion about the print can also lead to children learning how to recognise and name the letters of the alphabet and to identify sound in words.

They also learn that reading books is an enjoyable experience because of the interesting stories and information about the world. It's important to read a wide range of nonfiction books to children to build world knowledge, which helps them to understand the content of other books, including stories. All children love stories, and in particular they love books that have a predictable plot or pattern, with repetitive text that they can soon join in with.

Some of these books with a repetitive element usually become their favourites and children request them to be read over and over again. This enables children to join in with the reading and perhaps memorise the whole book. So the children perceive themselves as successful readers, which is a great start if we want them to have a lifelong love of reading.

There are many wonderful books to choose from and the following is a list of those that tend to be loved by all children. The rich language and strong storylines are excellent models for children's language

development. The books stimulate discussion between the child and the adult reader, which is a crucial part of the read-aloud experience.

A special note for teachers

Some children do not have the rich experience of these books being read to them frequently in the pre-school years so it is extremely important that such children are not further deprived when they begin school. These books or similar ones should be read aloud many times over and children should be encouraged to join in and make comments or ask questions as part of the discussion about the books.

In the home situation children often have easy access to the books being read aloud and love to spend time browsing through them and reading or pretending to read them. To allow children in Foundation and Year 1 to have the same experiences your classrooms need to have multiple copies of the class favourites.

Where to find the following books

They will most likely be available at public libraries and children's book shops or online booksellers.

The following lists of books are organised in alphabetical order according to the author's last name.

Janet and Allan Ahlberg:

Title	Comments
Each Peach Pear Plum	Several well-known rhymes and traditional tales are mentioned in this clever book, so it's worth reading those to children prior to the reading of this title. This allows children the delight in recognising familiar texts.
Peepo!	Children love the hole in the page to predict what's coming up next. This book has the same illustrations as <i>Peek-a-boo!</i> but with more text. Available read on YouTube.
Peek-a-Boo!	This is the same book as <i>Peepo!</i> but with different text. Available read on YouTube.
The Jolly Postman	When children start school, they will also love these titles. They have pockets containing letters and cards as part of the stories.
The Jolly Christmas Postman	
The Jolly Pocket Postman	
Burglar Bill	Great books for years 1 and 2
Funnybones	
The Happy Family series	

Pamela Allen:

Children will love the rhythm of the language in Pamela Allen's books. There are many other titles and they are all excellent so when children start school they will love all of them.

Title	Comments
Fancy That!	Available read on YouTube
I Wish I Had a Pirate Suit	
Shhh! Little Mouse	
A Lion in the Night	Some very young children are frightened by the lion so think about whether this one suits your child. On YouTube.
Mr Archimedes' Bath	This one is more suitable for children in years 1 and 2

Mr McGee	It's fabulous when children can meet the same character in lots of books, like they can with Mr McGee.
Mr McGee Goes to Sea	
Mr McGee and the Blackberry Jam	
Mr McGee and the Perfect Nest	
Mr McGee and the Biting Flea	
Mr McGee and the Big Bag of Bread	Simple language and with repetitive phrases and sentences. Suitable for independent reading for beginning readers.
Bertie and the Bear	
Who Sank the Boat?	
Belinda	Available read on YouTube
Alexander's Outing	Available read on YouTube

Nick Bland:

Title	Comments
The Very Hungry Bear	Children love collecting the series of the Bear books.
The Very Itchy Bear	
The Very Cranky Bear	
The Very Noisy Bear	
The Very Sleepy Bear	
The Very Brave Bear	
The Wrong Book	On YouTube and as award winning interactive app. A very clever book.
The Unscary Book	

John Burningham:

John Burningham's books have a 'softer' feel about them, particularly because of the style of his illustrations. His books encourage imagination.

Title	Comments
Avocado Baby	
The Way to the Zoo	
Oi, Get off our Train	Suitable for independent reading for beginning readers
Would you Rather	
Mr. Gumpy's Motor Car	Simple language and with repetitive phrases and sentences. Suitable for independent reading for beginning readers.
Mr. Gumpy's Outing	
Cannonball Simp	These titles will be enjoyed by children as they begin school.
The Magic Bed	
The Shopping Basket	
Edwardo	

Eric Carle:

Title	Comments
The Very Quiet Cricket	
Rooster's off to See the World	
Do You Want to be my Friend?	
The Tiny Seed	
The Very Hungry Caterpillar	Simple language and with repetitive phrases and sentences. Suitable for independent reading for beginning readers.
Have You Seen my Cat?	
Do You Want to be my Friend?	
Today is Monday	
The Very Busy Spider	

Bill Martin Jnr. and Eric Carle:

Chicka Chicka Boom Boom	
Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What do you See?	All bear books are very easy for beginning readers
Polar Bear, Polar Bear, What do you See?	
Baby Bear, Baby Bear, What do you See?	

Lynley Dodd:

Title	Comments
Hairy Maclary from Donaldson's Dairy	The repetitive and rhyming language in this title makes it a very popular book with very young children. There are many other great titles about the dog Hairy Maclary and his animal friends which children can then enjoy when they are ready for longer stories
Hairy Maclary's Bone	
Hairy Maclary and Zachary Quack	
Hairy Maclary Scattercat	
Hairy Maclary Hide and Seek	
Hairy Maclary's Rumpus at the Vet	
Hairy Maclary's Show Business	
Hairy Maclary's Hat Tricks	
Hairy Maclary's Catawaul Caper	
Slinky Malinky Early Bird	
Slinky Malinky	
Slinky Malinky Catflaps	
Slinky Malinky Open the Door	
Scarface Claw	

Julia Donaldson:

This author has written many more books young children enjoy when they are reading independently.

Title	Comments
Toddle Waddle	This book is available on YouTube
The Gruffalo	On YouTube. Easy to read.
The Gruffalo's Child	
Snail and the Whale	
Room on a Broom	Much more text but children love it.

Mem Fox:

All of these titles are suitable for beginning readers. Other favourites such as *Possum magic* are more suitable for year 2 and beyond for independent reading.

Title	Comments
Hello Baby!	
Sleepy Bears	
A Particular Cow	
Night Noises	
Bonnie and Ben Rhyme Again	
Harriet, You'll Drive me Wild	
Hattie and the Fox	Simple language and with repetitive phrases and sentences. Suitable for independent reading for beginning readers.
Ten Little Fingers and Ten Little Toes	
Where Is the Green Sheep?	
Time for Bed	
Goodnight Sleep Tight	
Boo to a Goose	
Zoo-looking	
Nellie Belle	
Ducks Away	
This and That	

Emily Gravett:

Dogs	
Baby and Me	
The Odd Egg	This book is available on YouTube
10 Cats	

Eric Hill:

Title	Comments
Where's Spot? Spot's Fun in the Sun Spot's Birthday Party Spot Goes to the Farm Spot Goes to School Spot's First Walk Spot Loves his Dad Spot Goes Shopping Spot's New Friend Who's There Spot? Where are the Yellow Chicks Spot?	This one is easy to read with repetition and children love the idea of lifting the flap to find answers. There are many other titles about Spot the Dog. A sense of character in stories is developed when children meet the same character in several books.

Pat Hutchins:

All titles have repetitive refrains. Great for developing prediction strategy.

Title	Comments
Rosie's Walk	Suitable for beginner readers.
Good-night Owl!	
Where Oh Where is Rosie's Chick?	
Don't Forget the Bacon!	Year 1
The Doorbell Rang	
Titch	Great for maths
Ten Red Apples	
The Surprise Party	These are great for 6 – 8-year-olds
The Wind Blew	
The Very Worst Monster	
You'll Soon Grow into them Titch	
Tidy Titch	
Happy Birthday Sam	

Alison Lester:

Title	Comments
Noni the Pony	A sense of character in stories is developed when children meet the same character in several books.
Noni the Pony Rescues a Joey	
Noni the Pony Goes to the Beach	
Noni the Pony Counts to a Million	
Kissed by the Moon	Simple language and with repetitive phrases and sentences. Suitable for independent reading for beginning readers.
I'm Green and I'm Grumpy	

Who's that Knocking	
Roar	
The Very Noisy Baby	Children love joining in the refrain
Sing me the Summer	
My Dog Bitsy	
Crashing and Splashing	Board books for babies
Happy and Sad	
Bumping and Bouncing	
Bibs and Boots	
Clive Eats Alligators	Alison has written many other excellent books for children to enjoy when they are independently reading or are ready for read aloud with more details. Her illustrations have great detail so children continue to notice items each time the books are read.
When Frank was Four	
Rosie Sips Spiders	
Tessa Snaps Snakes,	
Ernie Dances to the Didgeridoo	
Celeste Sails to Spain	
Are We There Yet?	
My Farm	
Magic Beach	
Imagine	

Dr. Suess:

The Cat in the Hat	The fun with sounds of language makes these titles popular with young children, but they are longer stories than most other picture books for this age group. There are many other titles suitable for years 4-8 approx. Note: available as animated movies on Youtube.
Green Eggs and Ham	
One Fish Two Fish Red Fish Blue Fish	
Hop on Pop	
Fox in Sox	

Margaret Wild:

This Little Piggy Went Dancing	
Goodbye House, Hello House	
First Day	
On the Day You Were Born	

More titles to explore with young children:

Title	Author	Comments
Goodnight Moon	Margaret Wise Brown	
Runaway Bunny	Margaret Wise Brown	
Ten Little Pirates	Mike Brownlow	
Ten Little Dinosaurs	Mike Brownlow	
Ten Little Princesses	Mike Brownlow	
Dear Zoo	Rod Campbell	
Five little monkeys jumping on the bed	Eileen Christelow	
Are You my Mother?	P.D. Eastman	
The Tiger who Came to Tea	Judith Kerr	
Guess How Much I Love You	Sam McBratney	
The Lion in the Meadow	Margaret Mahy	A fabulous author of books for all ages
We're Going on a Bear Hunt	Michael Rosen	This is a fabulous story to act out and will introduce children to an author whose other stories and poetry they will love when they are older
One is a Snail and Ten is a Crab	April Pulley Sayre and Jeff Sayre	A brilliant book about numbers
Where the Wild Things Are	Maurice Sendak	Be sure your children won't be frightened by the 'monsters'
Sheep in a Jeep	Nancy Shaw	
My Cat Likes to Hide in Boxes	Eve Sutton	
The Pig in the Pond	Martin Waddell	
Farmer Duck	Martin Waddell	
Owl Babies	Martin Waddell	
I Went Walking	Sue Williams	Very easy for beginning readers.

Useful websites:

Author/topic	Website	Comment
Trevor Cairney	www.Trevorcairney.com	Trevor's blog is one of the best for parents and he is Australian!
Storytime Anytime	www.youtube.com/channel/UCKt0xucHzm75HOF4eSxG0ow/videos	The librarian from the Wodonga Library (VIC) reads a picture book
StorylineOnline	www.StorylineOnline.net	On this website actors read popular children's books, suitable for a variety of age groups
Nursery Rhymes and Songs	www.kidspot.com.au	This site has the words for the most popular nursery rhymes.
Nursery Rhymes and Songs	www.bussongs.com	This site has the words and the music for over 2000 children's songs and nursery rhymes and you can download both and print the words.
Nursery Rhymes and Songs	www.moothergooseclub.com	This site has nursery rhymes (the rhymes being shown on the screen and a voiceover reading them), video clips of nursery rhymes being sung and acted out and children's songs being sung. Adobe Flash is required so you cannot view this on an iPad.
Nursery Rhymes and Songs	www.songsforteaching.com	This site has the lyrics plus someone singing the rhymes.
Joyful Soul Storytime	https://www.youtube.com/c/JoyfulSoulStoryTime	This site has many great stories to share
CVS 3D Rhymes	http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCsPF3cApzCohxPp5oKdoWSQ	On Youtube there are several suitable sites for nursery rhymes, finger plays and songs Picture books YouTube Kids
Magic Box English	www.youtube.com/user/MagicboxEngRhy	
Children's Rhymes	www.youtube.com/channel/UCpglvSB-aSv5S7-fVLBduMQ	
Muffin Songs	www.youtube.com/user/muffinsongs	
Super Simple Songs	https://supersimple.com/super-simple-songs/	