



Guidelines for Choosing Read-Aloud Books

Infants

Infants are stimulated by sight and sound. Choose books with:

- ⇒ Bright, colorful illustrations (with or without words).
- ⇒ Familiar people, animals, and objects (e.g., family members, other infants, pets, toys).
- ⇒ Rhythmic sounds and exciting words (e.g., Mother Goose rhymes and Dr. Seuss books).
- ⇒ Short, easy-to-listen-to texts.
- ⇒ A heavy-duty board or cloth construction.

Toddlers

Toddlers like books about things that spark their curiosity. Choose books with:

- ⇒ Rhymes and silly nonsense words or phrases.
- ⇒ Phrases that are repeated predictably.
- ⇒ Engaging illustrations.
- ⇒ Familiar themes (e.g., exploring feelings, learning to do things themselves, performing daily routines).
- ⇒ A sturdy board or paper construction (as toddlers gain skills with handling books and turning pages).

Preschoolers

Preschoolers are an ideal audience for read-aloud activities. Young preschoolers still favor stories about children and families, while older preschoolers enjoy humor and fantasy. Many preschoolers who are pre-readers even enjoy hearing chapter books read to them. Choose books:

- ⇒ That have diverse subjects.
- ⇒ In poetry and nonfiction formats.
- ⇒ With rich language, meaningful plots, compelling characters, and engaging illustrations.





Also consider the following questions when choosing books to read aloud with preschoolers:¹

- ⇒ Is the book worthy of both the reader's and listener's time?
- ⇒ Does the story sound good to the ear when read aloud?
- ⇒ Will the child find the book relevant to his or her culture and life?
- ⇒ Will the book spark conversation?
- ⇒ Will the book inspire the child to find or listen to another book on the same topic? By the same author? Of the same genre?
- ⇒ Is the story memorable?
- ⇒ Will the child want to hear the story again?

¹ Questions suggested by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory [NWREL].

