



Books from birth

Reading books!

Even when babies are little and have no idea what a 'book' is, reading to them is essential. They relate to the changed sound of the voice when being read to. They look at the pictures and, over time, they realise that this activity is different from a conversation. They enjoy the undivided attention and closeness while reading, which makes them feel safe and secure.

They learn:

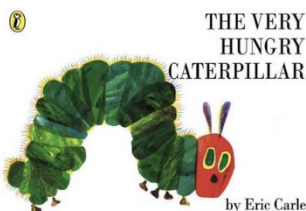
- A book remains constant: the same words/sounds are repeated no matter who is reading it. They memorise the words, which is important for language development
- That the pages turn and that the reader is following something on each page (they are looking and speaking)
- That the shape of the book is a rectangle and that there is a right way to hold it up which those 'colour things' help you to figure out
- That there is a cover
- Over time, they learn to predict what will happen next with a story

From a young age, children who enjoy reading will pretend to 'read' with purpose. They show their interest by holding the book, turning the pages, vocalising sounds they know (ie. 'mmmmm' 'dada') and changing the tone of their voices.

You might find your child has favourite characters too!

At age 1 year, some children recognise discrete pictures in the book: a lion, a bucket, a tree. At 1.5 years they can finish some of the sentences in the book while reading with you. At 2 years, seemingly suddenly, the books they previously recognised by numbers or pictures, 'clicks' in their minds as a full story. It is fascinating to see that sudden recognition in their eyes! The same book can be read at a variety of ages and children will experience the books in different ways as they grow.

Some timeless books to enjoy for children from 0-5 years...

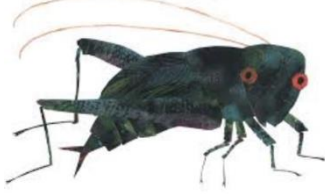


The Hungry Caterpillar, Eric Carle

- Colourful foods the children might recognise
- Learn numbers
- Days of the week
- Life story of a butterfly
- Maths: 'If he ate one ...two...how many ...did he eat?'

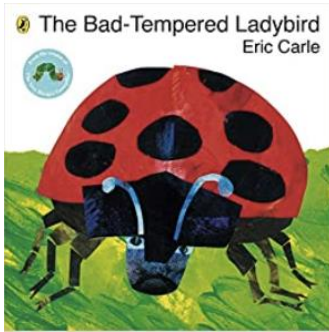


Eric Carle The Very Quiet Cricket



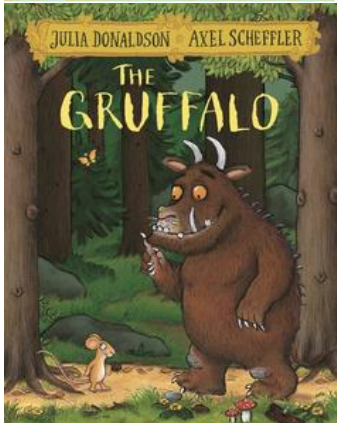
The Silent Cricket, Eric Carle

- A journey about finding your voice
- Illustrations depicting nature from dawn to dusk
- Repetitive phrases
- Learning sounds of nature



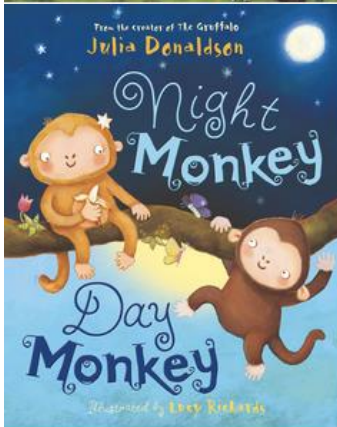
The Bad-Tempered Ladybird, Eric Carle

- repetitive language helps children participate in reading
- recognise land and sea animals
- read the time on the clock as children get older
- social cohesion, sharing, the environment



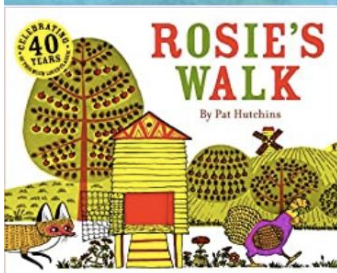
The Gruffalo, Julia Donaldson & Axel Scheffler

- Repetitive language, descriptive words
- Size doesn't matter! The little mouse uses his intellect by being quick witted and outsmarting the bigger animals
- Builds imagination
- Empowers children to confront and overcome something frightening



Night Monkey, Day Monkey, Julia Donaldson

- The difference between day and night
- Friends disagree but their friendship is more important than being right
- Beautiful rhythmic language

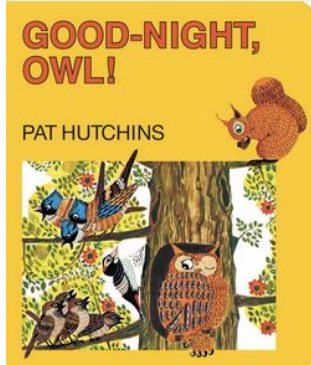


Rosie's Walk, Pat Hutchins

- Book contains only 32 words and half the story is told through the illustrations
- Spatial concepts over/under, up/past etc
- Look at the illustrations very carefully – there is a lot is going on and lots to talk about with your child!

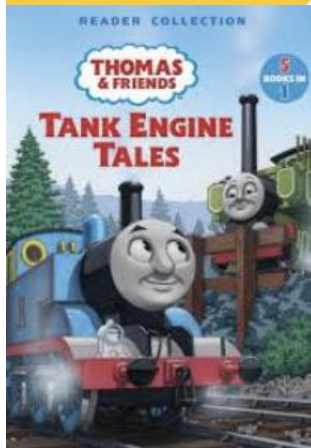


- The ending is open-ended. Children learn endings can be multiple or uncertain



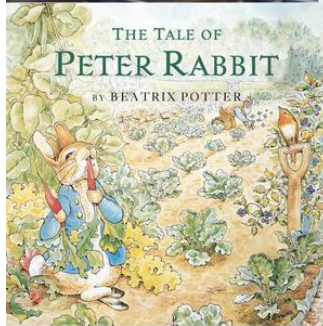
Goodnight Owl, Pat Hutchins:

- Practice bird and animal sounds
- Child-like relatable illustrations to enjoy



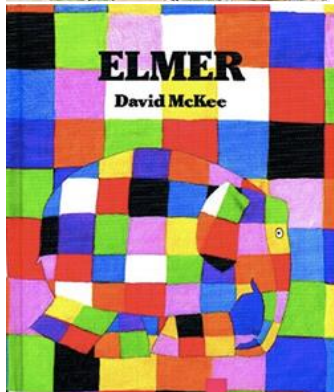
The 'Thomas the Tank Engine' series

- Friendship, teamwork resilience



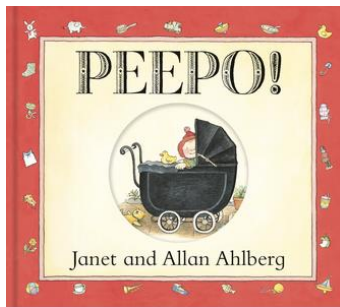
Peter Rabbit, The Beatrix Potter series

- Particularly good for children 2+ years, Peter Rabbit's toys and antics keep children engaged and excited to read more!



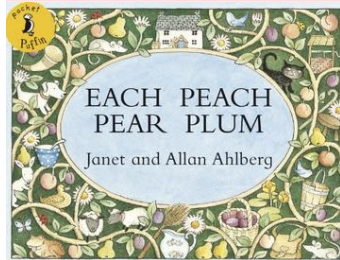
Elmer, David Mackee

- Being different and valuing who you are
- Celebrating diversity
- Unconditional love



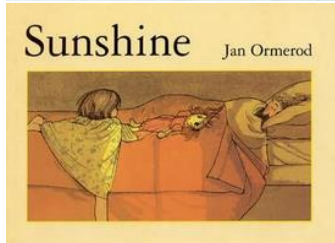
Peepo, Janet Ahlberg and Allan Ahlberg

- Look through the holes in the pictures to predict what's next



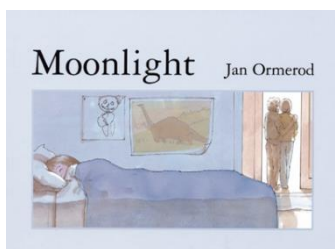
Each Peach Pear Plum, Janet Ahlberg and Allan Ahlberg

- Use the clues to find the hidden illustration on the opposite page
- Familiar nursery characters children may recognise



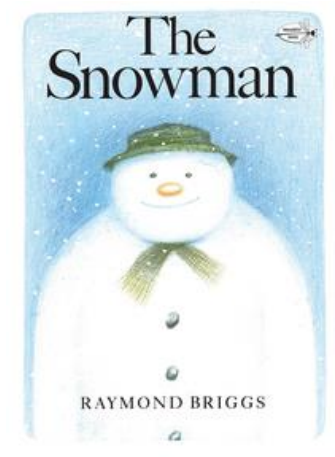
Sunshine, Jan Ormerod

- A picture book depicting a chaotic morning where the main character, a young girl, calmly continues her routine
- Your child can 'tell' the story and develop language as s/he goes through the book



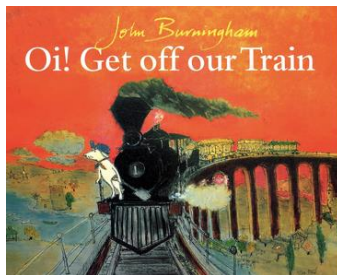
Moonlight, Jan Ormerod

- A picture book depicting an eventful night where the main character, a young girl, calmly continues her routine
- Your child can 'tell' the story and develop language as s/he goes through the book



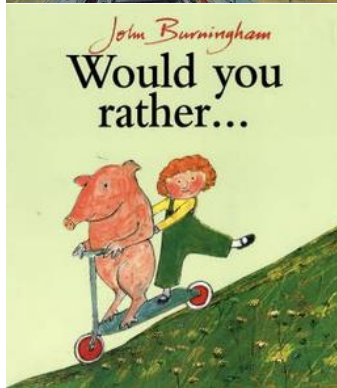
The Snowman, Raymond Briggs

- Appreciating everyday things from a newly built snowman's fresh point of view



Oi, get off my train!, John Burningham

- Climate change and the environment
- Protecting and caring for those in need



Would you rather..., John Burningham

- Silly scenarios to help children learn to make choices and explain their rationale while using their imagination

How to read

Alter your voice to suit the character that is speaking or the mood of the book. Try to make links between what the words, pictures and lessons in a book to daily life. That way the book is 'liberated' from the pages into the child's life. For example, point to images and talk about how the child might have experienced something similar in "real life". For example, if there is a duck in the book, you could talk about ducks you may have seen in the park. Over time, children make connections between their story worlds and the real world. Linking is an important skill that lends itself to thinking laterally as well.

Ask questions that allow children to build their imagination. For example, if reading "Goldilocks and the Three Bears", you could ask, 'Suppose if the bears had come home when Goldilocks was still eating, what would have happened then?'. The 'suppose if' questions allow the child to think about alternative possibilities and to use their imagination. Ask questions that put the child at the centre of a part of the story: 'What would you have done if the lion had said that to you?' 'How would you escape out of the woods?'

When reading with your child:

- Sit close together
- Let your child choose the book
- Look at the pictures, describe what you see
- Ask questions and talk about the book
- Consider starting a family bookshelf so children see reading as an activity that can be enjoyed both individually and as a family