



Early Childhood Recommended Reading List 2021-2022 | oppl.org/kids-lists

Babies & 1-year-olds

Baylis, Aless. *ABCs Spanish*. A is for ardilla! This playful book is a wonderful introduction to the Spanish alphabet, complete with pronunciation for grown-ups learning along.

Beer, Sophie. *Love Makes a Family*. What is love? It can be expressed in lots of different ways with so many different people. This makes for a lovely bedtime story and opportunities to share stories about love experienced in your own day.

Burton, Jeffrey. *The World Shines for You*. There's so much to look at and point to over and over in this simple story that connects the world, the seasons, change, and all that shimmers in life.

Gravett, Emily. *Bear and Hare: Where's Bear?* (series). This is a sweet and fun way to introduce numbers and counting to 10 as Bear and Hare play hide-and-seek. Read in English or Spanish!

Grover, Lorie Ann. *I Love All of Me*. Big, bright, beautiful toddlers dance around the page, celebrating their favorite parts of themselves, from blinky eyes to brain so wise. This is a great book for talking about body parts and even better—acting out the words to explore and learn language.

Hughes, Susan. *Up! How Families Around the World Carry Their Little Ones*. An Upsy-Daisy refrain connects families throughout the world, and beautiful collage art styles will make this one for kids and caregivers to pore over.

Matsuoka, Tatsuhide. *Jump!* Lots of animals jump, with fun expressive BOINGS! Babies and toddlers will love jumping along with creatures big and small, and shouting along with the refrain. How high can you jump?

Van Camp, Richard. *Kiss By Kiss/Ocêôwina*. Introduce your children to counting in English and the Plains Cree language, while sharing lots of opportunities for smooching. Beautiful photographs showcase a variety of loving families and appeal to the youngest of babies, too.

Stevenson, Robin. *Pride Colors*. Babies and toddlers will love the bright vibrant colors and gorgeous photographs of children and families enjoying time together. Go on color walks to extend the learning fun!

2-year-olds

Atinuke. *Baby Goes to Market*. Kids will cheer for cheeky Baby, who counts his way through free gifts given to him by kind merchants in their Nigerian market.

Beer, Sophie. *Kindness Makes Us Strong*. Two-year-olds are learning how to be friends and develop empathy, so share this book to talk about ways to be kind. It can look like taking turns and saying hello!

Kenko, Doug. *My Mama is a Mechanic*. Mamas are a lot of things: surgeons (of toys), architects (of blocks), and superheroes to their sons (and daughters). Celebrate all of the fun things moms do in this delightful book.

Gates, Mariam. *Goodnight Yoga*. This beautifully illustrated book doubles as bedtime story and gentle wind down bedtime stretches.

Grimes, Nikki. *Bedtime for Sweet Creatures*. This darling bedtime story will feel familiar to kids and caregivers alike, from a NO NO NO drumbeat to a clingy koala who doesn't want to say goodnight and sly wolf getting one last glass of water. How do you and your toddler act like different animals throughout the day?

Jackson, Richard. *All Ears, All Eyes*. This book is filled with animal sounds as they start settling in for the night, but can you find where they are resting?

Leung, Hilary. *Will Ladybug Hug?* Everyone has boundaries, from babies up to grown-ups. Help your little one practice setting theirs along with Ladybug, who wants to hug her friends. But not every friend wants a hug, and that's okay!

Rosen, Michael. *Tiny Little Fly*. This delightful adventure is great fun to interact with—trace Fly's progress, wink your eye, act out the animal responses and more!

Sammurtok, Nadia. *In My Anaana's Amautik*. Babies and toddlers all over the world know the comfort of being carried, and this book is an ode to the warmth and joy of feeling safe and cozy with a loved one. What words does your two-year-old use to express their thoughts? This is a lovely conversation starter.

Smith, Lane. *A Perfect Day*. What does a perfect day mean to your child? See what these animals think, and then talk about your answers.

Wan, Joyce. *Dream Big*. This is not only an ode to dreams of the future, but also to the women who have come before us. What will you dream?

Wenzel, Brendan. *Hello, Hello!* Sometimes it's easy to see how animals are different, but can you find all the similarities, too? This is a great conversation starter with wildly engaging art.

Whittingham, Jane. *Wild One*. The text is filled with active fun that kids love at the playground, paired with animals to imitate. Get your wiggles out!

Williamson, Sarah. *Where Are You?* Can you spot the pink snake hiding on each page? This book encourages interaction with the text and images in a fun way.

3- & 4-year-olds

Barnett, Mac. *Triangle*. Kids will appreciate the sly humor of the art and words as Triangle tries to play a trick on Square—but who really comes out on top?

Burach, Ross. *There's a Giraffe in My Soup*. All this boy wants is tomato soup, but animals keep arriving in the bowl instead! Continue the story by coming up with your own silly soups.

Castillo, Lauren. *Nana in the City*. Cities can feel big and overwhelming to a lot of kids. This grandmother shows a little boy the joy and fun a city can bring, without shaming his fears. What are you afraid of?

Cornwall, Gaia. *Jabari Jumps*. Who's the real star—Jabari, who is working himself up to try the high diving board, or his dad, who validates his fear and supports his efforts? Both make this book a delight.

Cotterill, Samantha. *This Beach is Loud!* This little boy has been waiting forever to visit the beach, but when he gets there, it's loud and busy and overwhelming. Luckily Dad is there for support. This is a great book to talk about preparing for hard moments, and developing empathy.

Deedy, Carmen Agra. *The Rooster Who Would Not Be Quiet*. Kee-kee-ree-KEE! This folktale brings humor to the lesson that it's important to speak up against injustices and inspire others to your cause.

Doerrfeld, Cori. *The Rabbit Listened*. Well-meaning friends try to cheer Taylor up, but all they need is someone to be there with them. An important lesson for kids and caregivers to learn!

Gonzales, Mark. *Yo Soy Muslim*. This poem to the author's daughter is a gorgeously illustrated ode to pride in yourself and your heritage, and a window to a different culture for some children.

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3 & 4-year-olds cont.

López, Rafael. *We've Got the Whole World in Our Hands/Tenemo el Mundo entero en las Manos*. This familiar song is paired with gorgeous art showing kids from all around. Sing together and start conversations about families who don't look like your own. Research shows it's best to name differences in skin tone, disability, dress, etc., and normalize different ways of experiencing the world. This is a beautiful place to start.

Maillard, Kevin Noble. *Fry Bread*. Fry Bread is not only delicious, it's an important part of cultural history. What food is important to your family? Talk about it and cook it, along with the included fry bread recipe!

Maier, Brenda. *Little Red Fort*. Little Red Hen gets an update with enterprising Ruby, who asks her friends to help build a fort with her, but is turned down every step of the way. Will she share her cool new space when it's finished?

Makatini, Bella. *The Big Five*. Danny loves the big African animal masks his grandfather displays on the wall, and his grandfather teaches him about one every day they spend together. How can you describe animals for your kids to name and learn?

Murray, Lily. *Hello Hot Dog*. This zany story about a hot dog who realizes their fate is to be lunch will keep everyone in tears of laughter.

Pumphrey, Jarrett. *The Old Truck*. A little girl grows up on a farm with an old truck, and then becomes the farmer with the old truck. What old things do you have in your family?

Roderick, Stacey. *Bugs From Head to Tail* (595.7 ROD). Gorgeous collage art matched with introductory facts about eight fascinating bugs. Kids can learn scientific vocabulary in an age-appropriate way.

Smith, Alex T. *Little Red and the Very Hungry Lion*. This retelling of Little Red Riding Hood will delight the whole family. Can you create your own version too?

Thompkins-Bigelow, Jamilah. *Mommy's Khimar*. This delightful ode to imagination and love is filled with gloriously bright and cheerful illustrations that will delight kids and caregivers alike.

Woolf, Julia. *Duck & Penguin are Not Friends*. Children Betty and Maud are best friends and they assume their stuffed animals are, too. *WRONG*. It's okay not to like everyone all of the time, and it's also okay to change your mind.

7 days / 7 ways with the Very Ready Reading Program

Sharing these seven ideas with kids will help them grow into readers. Focusing on one a day will keep it fun. Here are some of our favorite tips.

Share Books: Always keep reading fun, not a chore or punishment. Flashcards can take away from the fun and make kids less likely to enjoy learning to read or reading independently later. Avoid asking questions on every page—it breaks the flow of the story and makes it less enjoyable. Try 1 or 2 per book, or ask questions after you finish. And don't force it—better to read one or two pages without a struggle than a full book that is miserable for everyone.

Share Songs: Sharing songs is more than fun—music's rhythms and rhymes help children develop the vital knack of hearing differences between different sounds. When we sing "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star," kids love doing the finger actions, but they're also hearing the subtle distinctions between "star" and "are," and "high" and "sky." So find a book to sing out loud, or sing your directions to a task. Each syllable has a note, making it easier to hear how words break down to sound them out, an essential skill.

Share Rhymes: Rhymes don't need to make sense! They still help kids hear patterns of words and speech. So make up silly rhymes and act them out, dance with your child while reciting them, and play rhyming games: "I spy something that rhymes with the word hook!"

Share Sounds: Share books and tunes that encourage sound effects, silly noises, or animal sounds—they are fun and help you and your child interact with the books together. Encourage your children to help with any noises that may occur. Is a lion roaring? Is the wind howling? Is someone snoring?

Share Words: Kids love big, fancy words. Use them all the time and kids will too! Talk about the indigo sky, the gigantic stack of books, and so on. New experiences mean new words: at the zoo, read words on animal exhibit signs. At the store, read words on packages. The more words kids hear, the more they understand and will be able to figure out when they learn to read. Narrate your days!

Share Stories: Practice telling stories and connecting them to your lives at the same time. Tell your kids stories about how you used to celebrate special days as a child, and let them tell you memories of their own past celebrations. Family pictures are a great way to share stories about when you or their grandparents were younger. Make your own books! Use photos to tell the story of a favorite day or vacation, or make a touch-and-feel book with fabrics and other items.

Share Play: Play with your kids as often you can. It's the basis of all learning for kids! It fosters creativity and imagination, bonds you, and gives your child confidence when they are in charge of the game. Pretend play is the best for reinforcing new words and vocabulary and allowing kids to practice telling stories. Act out stories, have a tea party, visit a pretend zoo—anything is possible!

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