

10 Books for Baby's Bookshelf

Help baby develop pre-reading skills with a variety of books.

by Kate Wynn

Sharing books with your baby or toddler is not about teaching him or her to read (yet), but the benefits are certainly many. If story time is a positive experience, in which parent and child enjoy pictures and books together (with lots of cuddling), you can help foster an early love of reading. Your little one will naturally start to pick up important pre-reading skills, such as looking at pictures to determine meaning, and turning pages to continue the story, and you'll quickly find yourself treasuring the time as well.

Here are 10 types of books that are worthy of sharing with your tot:

1. **Touch and Feel:** These books engage the sense of touch and make reading an interactive experience for baby. The tactile aspect keeps little ones interested, and also teaches them the meanings of adjectives like soft, bumpy, etc.

What's On Our Bookshelf: *Thumper's Fluffy Tail* by Laura Driscoll and Lori Tyminski

2. **Counting:** One-to-one correspondence (the ability to match numbers with quantities) will come later, but for now, little ones get accustomed to the rhythm of counting.

What's On Our Bookshelf: *Daddy Hugs* by Karen Katz ("One 'I'm so glad you're my baby' hug, two teeny tiny finger hugs", etc.)

3. **First Word Books:** These titles encourage little ones as they begin to develop their vocabulary at an amazing rate. Start with the basics (family, home), and work your way up to themed books that suit your child's interests (animals, transportation).

What's On Our Bookshelf: *Baby Talk: A Book of First Words and Phrases* by Judy Hindley

4. **Rhyming Pattern:** Safe and predictable, rhyming stories help keep babies' attention, and give them an



early introduction to phonemic awareness (the ability to distinguish and manipulate individual sounds) – a key pre-reading skill.

What's On Our Bookshelf: *Welcome, Baby! Baby Rhymes For Baby Times* by Stephanie Calmenson

5. **Lift the Flap:** Another interactive choice, these books get little ones involved in reading, and it's fun to watch their delight as they use their fine motor skills to discover (yet again) what's hiding under each flap.

What's On Our Bookshelf: *Where's Spot?* by Eric Hill

6. **Cultural/Religious:** No matter what your family's background and beliefs are, you can find a book to introduce your child to a subject you value, whether it is a holiday, religious celebration, or a foreign language.

What's On Our Bookshelf: *What Is Easter?* by Michelle Medlock Adams. She has also written books on Christmas, Halloween and Thanksgiving, which skilfully combine the religious and secular beliefs about these holidays.

7. **Favourite Character:** Like it or not, your little one will soon become enamoured of a licensed character, whether through toys, clothing, or television. Why not take advantage of this interest (okay, possibly obsession) and incorporate it into story time?

What's On Our Bookshelf: *Dora's Sweet Adventure* by Brooke Lindner and Tom Mangano – a board-book with the added attraction of scratch and sniff pages.

8. **Song:** There's nothing better than music to accompany pictures, and little ones love to hear Mommy and Daddy singing! Books that play music are also a big hit.

What's On Our Bookshelf: *Sing A Song of Mother Goose* by Barbara Reid – includes Reid's trademark plasticine illustrations. Sing along to Baa Baa Black Sheep, Mary Had a Little Lamb and more!

9. **Classic:** Everyone has a different idea of what classic children's stories are, but some undisputed titles include *Pat The Bunny*, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, and *The Runaway Bunny*. It's wonderful to be able to pass along stories you remember from your own childhood.

What's On Our Bookshelf: *Goodnight Moon* by Margaret Wise Brown

10. **Family Favourite:** It's hard to predict what book your child may connect to, but once he or she develops a favourite, be sure to read it often! Repetition means comfort and security to babies.

What's On Our Bookshelf: *Snuggle Puppy* by Sandra Boynton

When you're not reading to your child, be sure to provide him/her with sturdy books (board, cloth or plastic, which is perfect for the tub) for exploring, piling and dropping – there's no wrong way for a baby to play with a book.

Of course there is no required reading list for kids, but sharing books from all of these categories will certainly help in your efforts to raise a positive and enthusiastic reader!

Kate Winn is a teacher and freelance writer. Check out her new blog at www.thismomloves.blogspot.com.



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