

When bedtime rolls around, everyone in the house is often *done*. Energy is low, patience may be thin, and few minutes of quiet at the end of the day is needed. Adding one more step before lights-out may sound daunting, but taking even 10 minutes to read aloud to your child can be a developmental game-changer and may quickly become the highlight of your bedtime routine.

When you read a book out loud with a child, you are modeling expression, articulation and emphasis of written language. Because their plots often take us outside our family routines, bedtime stories expose our children to new vocabulary words and concepts and offer a welcome opportunity to introduce other people, cultures and foreign places to your home.

Here are some tips for making the most out of read-alouds with your child, as well as some book recommendations in a variety of formats to support a range of readers (if your maturing reader protests, try pointing out the popularity of audiobooks among adults).

**Take Turns Choosing Books:** Allowing your child to choose one or more of the books you share empowers them and increases the likelihood of their buy-in to the reading routine. Build your home bookshelf with a mix of comfortable favorites and new titles, and browse your local library to add constant variety to the mix.

Look for:

- “Sam and Dave Dig a Hole” by Mac Barnett and Jon Klassen (2014)
- “La selva de Zonia” by Juana Martinez-Neal (2021)
- “A Greyhound, A Groundhog” by Emily Jenkins and Chris Appelhans (2017)
- “Jabari Jumps” by Gaia Cornwall (2017)

**Ask Questions, Both Prompting and Open Ended:** Your reader may prefer to linger over detailed illustrations rather than rush to the ending. Ask questions as you read together. What do you think will happen next? What would you have done in that character’s situation? Do you have a favorite on this page?

Look for:

- “The Very Impatient Caterpillar” by Ross Burach (2019) (Also available in Spanish as “La Oruga Muy Impaciente”)
- “The Many Colors of Harpreet Singh” by Supriya Kelkar and Alea Marley (2019)
- “Pierre & Paul: Dragon!” by Caroline Adderson and Alice Carter (2021)
- “Bear Came Along” by Richard T. Morris and LeUyen Pham (2020)

**Break Out of Bedtime:** For many reasons, storytime at night won't work for all families. Find a time that works for you! Read aloud during breakfast or dinner, when you have a captive audience, over an after-school snack, or while little hands are busy with blocks or artwork. Any time spent reading aloud with your child is a win and keeping joy in the routine will help ensure its success and longevity.

Look for:

- "Rita and Ralph's Rotten Day" by Carmen Agra Deedy and Pete Oswald (2020)
- "Another" by Christian Robinson (2019)
- "Who Wet My Pants?" by Bob O'Shea and Zacariah O'Hora (2019)
- "Bowwow Powwow" by Brenda Child, Jonathan Thunder, and Gordon Jourdain (tr.) (2018)

For examples of picture book read-alouds check out your local library storytimes, or take a look online at [Read Brightly](#), which adds a new video to its collection each week, and [Storyline Online](#), which features celebrated actors reading books aloud along with creative illustrations. Your PTA can also host re-alouds for your community, check out this guide to get started.