



Picking the Best Books

Birth to 1 Month

During this period, your baby will go from being totally dependent on you to being able to stay alert for two hours at a time. She will explore the immediate environment—reaching, grasping and putting things in her mouth while sitting supported or laying on her stomach with head and chest held high. Over the course of these months, your baby will show how happy she is to be close to those she trusts. Your baby will begin to squeal coo, gurgle and babble to get your attention and/or the attention of those who are familiar to her.

By six months, your baby will have learned how to keep simple games she enjoys such as peek a boo going. At this point, she will start to build a healthy sense of self and although her emotions and moods can change quickly, she is learning how to comfort and soothe herself by sucking or holding onto a special toy.

Developmental Milestones in the First Month of Your Baby's Life

- Vision getting more focused.
- Stares at colourful objects as vision becomes more focused
- Studies caregiver's face
- Responds positively to comfort and soothing
- Cries to let caregiver know she is hungry or uncomfortable
- Enjoys being talked to
- Recognizes and responds to familiar voices
- Beginning to form attachment.

It is important to select the best books available based on a child's stage of development. We hope the information on this page will help you understand how reading can support your baby's development and help you choose the best books for your child too!

The Best Books for Your Baby Are...

Bright

Big

Colourful

Textured, Fabric and/ or Board books

Books with rhymes and rhythm

Point and say books with minimal text

Full of playful sounds

Books with nurture, attachment and lullaby themes



Picking the Best Books

1 Month to 2 Months

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Developmental Milestones in the Second Month of Your Baby's Life

- Turns his head to both sides.
- Follows objects and people with his eyes.
- Smiles when others talk to him and smile at him.
- Shows excitement or delight with small throaty sounds.
- Increasingly recognizes familiar voices and people.
- Further development of attachment relationship.

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2 Months to 3 Months

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Developmental Milestones in the Third Month of Your Baby's Life

- Holds his head up with more control.
- Plays with his hands by clasping them and bringing them to his mouth.
- Stops sucking so that he can hear sounds.
- Uses his voice in response to adult talk and smiles.
- Coos with open ('aaaah') and closed ('eee') vowel sounds.
- Responds to speech stimulation by gurgling, cooing, and squealing.
- Expresses himself regardless of what else is going on around him.
- Distinguishes speech from sounds you make.
- Expresses different cries for different needs.
- Further development of attachment relationship.

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Picking the Best Books

3 Months to 4 Months

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Developmental Milestones in the Fourth Month of Your Baby's Life

- Lifts her head and chest when she's on her tummy, and extend her arms.
- Tries to grasp objects with fingers and palm now that her hands are open.
- Laughs out loud when tickled or during social games.
- Shows anticipation and excitement by breathing heavily.
- Turns his head to find out where a sound comes from.
- Babbles strings of syllable-like sounds.
- Experiments with sounds using variation in pitch and tone.
- Communicates pain, fear, and loneliness through crying; joy or interest by cooing sounds.
- Uses his own special kind of cry when hungry.
- Makes babbling sounds when looking at toys or people.
- Listens to music or a music box.

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4 Months to 5 Months

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Developmental Milestones in the Fourth Month of Your Baby's Life

- Rolls from stomach to back and over again.
- Uses hands to bang and splash objects.
- Prefers to play with people, especially games like 'peek-a-boo.'
- Vocalizes both pleasure and displeasure.
- Studies objects for a long time, even turning them upside down to get another view.
- Makes some vowel-consonant sounds using such consonants as f, v, th, s, sh, sz, m and n.
- Has a 'conversation' by babbling with family members.
- Begins to understand some words by tone of voice, intonations and a look on your face.
- Turns when he hears his name to show understanding.

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Picking the Best Books

5 Months to 6 Months

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Developmental Milestones in the Sixth Month of Your Baby's Life

- Rolls from stomach to back and over again.
- Uses hands to bang and splash objects.
- Prefers to play with people, especially games like 'peek-a-boo.'
- Vocalizes both pleasure and displeasure.
- Studies objects for a long time, even turning them upside down to get another view.
- Makes some vowel-consonant sounds using such consonants as f, v, th, s, sh, sz, m and n.
- Has a 'conversation' by babbling with family members.
- Begins to understand some words by tone of voice, intonations and a look on your face.
- Turns when he hears his name to show understanding.

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Picking the Best Books

6 Months to 9 Months

By the end of the first year your baby will be an active learner, increasingly using her gross and fine motor skills. As her coordination improves, her curiosity will prompt her to find out what different objects can do, and what she can make them do. Although she shows signs of independence, such as trying to feed herself, the security of your presence is still vital to help her discover her world with confidence. She learns by repetition and likes when you repeat familiar songs, finger plays, stories and games. She will also respond to her name by turning and looking when called for, and will babble sounds that are her words for certain things.

Developmental Milestones from 6-9 Months

- Moves either by crawling, bum shuffling, or pivoting on the tummy.
- Uses her first and second fingers with her thumb – even feeds herself a cracker.
- Copies actions he sees others do, such as waving bye-bye.
- Clearly attaches to familiar caregivers and stays close.
- Shows intention when exploring objects to understand what they do or sounds they make.
- Says several sounds like ma, mu, da, di, and ba all in one breath as well as multi-syllabic babbling, e.g., da-da-da or ga-ga-ga.
- Recognizes some words; shows excitement when she hears “bottle” or some other familiar word; looks toward mommy when asked, “Where’s Mommy?”
- Can do simple things when asked, for example, “Show me the ball” or “Wave bye-bye”.
- Turns to listen when she hears familiar sounds like her name.
- Uses special words meaningfully, example, dada and mama as specific names.

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Picking the Best Books

9 Months to 12 Months

By the end of the first year your baby will be an active learner, increasingly using his gross and fine motor skills. As his coordination improves, his curiosity will prompt him to find out what different objects can do, and what he can make them do. Although he shows signs of independence, such as trying to feed himself, the security of your presence is still vital to help him discover his world with confidence. He learns by repetition and likes when you repeat familiar songs, finger plays, stories and games. He will also respond to his name by turning and looking when called for, and will babble sounds that are his words for certain things.

Developmental Milestones from 9 - 12 Months

- Walks while holding onto furniture.
- Pinches fingers neatly to pick up the smallest items.
- Repeats sounds or gestures if laughed at.
- Displays affection with hugs, kisses and pats.
- Understands simple sentences, questions and requests, for example, 'Give the book to me,' 'Find your ball', 'Where's your shoe?'
- Learns words and appropriate gestures like saying 'no' and shaking his head, saying 'bye-bye' and waving, also exclamations such as 'oh-oh!'
- Starts to anticipate when a surprise happens in a song.
- Takes turns making sounds with you.

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Picking the Best Books

12 Months to 18 Months

The last part of infancy is a time when great strides are made in motor skills like walking, climbing, stooping, even dancing. Your baby's dexterity is amazing. She'll stack a few blocks, play with shape-form puzzles, and even scribble with a large crayon. She is truly becoming a social creature and loves to be the centre of attention. And though she enjoys being with other children, she is not ready to share or play with them. This is also the time your child will start putting sounds together to make words, point with her index finger to let others know what she wants and begin to respond to simple requests such as "Come" or "Go get...". She is ready to move to the next stage - toddlerhood.

By 24 months, your toddler plays on her own, uses her new motor skills to run, kick balls, jump and climb. She also can tackle fine motor tasks such as large puzzles, taking lids off jars, using a fork, pulling off shoes and socks and building bigger and better block towers. Language is exploding at this time, even though her favourite word is "No!" When she talks, you should be able to understand her about half the time. And more and more, she will express her feelings, interests and needs in words.

Developmental Milestones from 12-18 Months

- Pushes and pulls toys while walking.
- Turns pages of a book.
- Shows a sense of humour.
- Identifies herself in the mirror or photograph.
- Realizes that things are still there, even when they are out of sight.
- Points to show you something.
- Understands far more words than can speak, e.g., can point to at least 3 different body parts when asked, "Where's your mouth?"
- Uses "no" correctly, often with a shake of the head.
- Uses 5 or more words to express needs, desires or expressions such as "all gone".
- Tries to sing songs.

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The Best Books for Your Baby Are...

Repetitive and predictable

Books about daily routines and other topics familiar to your child

Full of real photo illustration

Books that explore body awareness

Books with nursery rhymes

Centered around colours, letters and numbers

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Picking the Best Books

18 Months to 2 Years

The last part of infancy is a time when great strides are made in motor skills like walking, climbing, stooping, even dancing. Your baby's dexterity is amazing. He'll stack a few blocks, play with shape-form puzzles, and even scribble with a large crayon. He is truly becoming a social creature and loves to be the centre of attention. And though he enjoys being with other children, he is not ready to share or play with them. This is also the time your child will start putting sounds together to make words, point with his index finger to let others know what he wants and begin to respond to simple requests such as "Come" or "Go get...". He is ready to move to the next stage - toddlerhood.

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Developmental Milestones from 18-24 Months

- Kicks a ball.
- Takes off shoes, socks and hats.
- Shows ownership or possession of objects.
- Shows fear, but is able to be settled down.
- Uses two word sentences, e.g., "more juice" or "want cookie".
- Asks for help using words or actions.
- Jabbers in run-on flow of words while talking to stuffed animals or self.
- Names some pictures in a book.
- Imitates new words and phrases, e.g., "Go bye-bye" and "Mommy's car".

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Repetitive and predictable

Books about daily routines and other topics familiar to your child

Full of real photo illustration

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Picking the Best Books

2 Years to 30 Months

The toddler stage is a hugely exciting time, as you begin to get a real sense of your child's personality, especially with your toddler learning to do so many things. Your child will try to be independent but will still be a bit scared of it all. At this stage, it's common for her to cling to you one minute; afraid you will leave, and then want nothing to do with you the next. These sudden shifts of emotions, tantrums and bouts of helplessness are all part of her becoming her own person.

In the final phase of toddlerhood, your child's mental abilities show dramatic growth. She explores the more abstract concepts of shapes, colours, size and quantity by playing with puzzles, paints, water and sand, and, of course, books. She may be able to match objects, sort clothing, count and tell the difference between "one" and "many." Although she is more sociable now and enjoys playing with other children, she is still not great at sharing or cooperating. These days, your toddler is spending a lot of their time building confidence and self-esteem, ready to enter the world of the preschooler.

Developmental Milestones from 25-30 Months

- Walks upstairs and downstairs alone, with both feet on one step.
- Scribbles, clutching the crayon in her whole hand.
- Shows she can be attached to a cuddly or favourite toy.
- Expresses feelings through language and pretend play.
- Better understands the similarities and differences of shapes and sizes.
- Uses "self-centered" pronouns like 'I', 'me', 'mine', 'you'.
- Puts together simple, two-word sentences.
- Answers simple questions like, "What's your name?", and performs simple tasks when asked to.
- Enjoys looking at books and talking about the pictures.
- Sings parts of songs.

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Picking the Best Books

30 Months to 3 Years

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In the final phase of toddlerhood, your child's mental abilities show dramatic growth. She explores the more abstract concepts of shapes, colours, size and quantity by playing with puzzles, paints, water and sand, and, of course, books. She may be able to match objects, sort clothing, count and tell the difference between "one" and "many." Although she is more sociable now and enjoys playing with other children, she is still not great at sharing or cooperating. These days, your toddler is spending a lot of their time building confidence and self-esteem, ready to enter the world of the preschooler.

Developmental Milestones from 30-36 Months

- Runs without falling.
- Removes lids from jars, rotating her wrist.
- Enjoys playing near other children, but he is not yet able to play co-operatively.
- Enjoys looking at books and talking about the pictures.
- Matches shapes, pictures, and some colours.
- Uses "self-centered" pronouns like 'I', 'me', 'mine', 'you'.
- Puts together simple, two-word sentences.
- Answers simple questions like, "What's your name?", and performs simple tasks when asked to.
- Enjoys looking at books and talking about the pictures.
- Sings parts of songs.

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The Best Books for Your Toddler Are...

Wordless books that allow you and your child to build your own story

Books that focus on values and character

Books that address issues such as fear, conflict, love and safety

Books with colours, letters and numbers

Books with nursery rhymes

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Picking the Best Books

3 Years to 4 Years

Your preschooler is a pretty capable person by now. In her third year, your child shows more self-esteem, confidence, optimism and enjoyment of daily activities. She is becoming her own person and standing up for what she wants. She is quite an accomplished negotiator and tries to make things go her way. Your child will have endless questions about how things work and why things happen. Language development is still on the fast track and most three-year olds will have a vocabulary of over 700 words. Three-year olds are better at understanding and following simple rules and controlling their impulses. Toilet training is usually completed (with the exception of night time for some). She is quite adept on the playground, climbing up and sliding down equipment, and has good control over her fine motor skills. At the end of the third year she may have started using safe scissors, copying letters and even printing some letters of her name.

Your four-year old is more even-tempered and cooperative with you though she still stands up for what she wants. Your four-year old is full of energy and loves testing her body with climbing, jumping, skipping and even pedaling a tricycle. She can now focus for longer periods on activities like cutting and pasting, drawing and creating interesting projects. Her imagination is developing with make-believe play and she enjoys playing out situations that are familiar in her life.

Developmental Milestones from 3-4 Years

- Climbs, slides and swings on playground equipment.
- Handles child's scissors and cuts out simple designs.
- Enjoys playing with other children and socializes well.
- Becomes less self-centered and more able to understand feelings and point of view of others.
- Starts to count objects.
- Enjoys books, simple songs, nursery rhymes, nonsense words and stories.
- Uses a vocabulary of about 900 words.
- Uses sentences with five words.
- Uses plurals and pronouns, e.g., 'I, you and me'.
- Understands position words, such as 'in', 'out', 'behind'

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The Best Books for Your Preschooler Are...

More complex stories with a hero, complication and resolution

Books that show the diversity of others and that it is OK to be different

Full of play, humor and fun

Books with nursery rhymes and poetry

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Picking the Best Books

4 Years to 5 Years

Your preschooler is a pretty capable person by now. Your four-year old is more even-tempered and cooperative with you though he still stands up for what he wants. Your four-year old is full of energy and loves testing his body with climbing, jumping, skipping and even pedaling a tricycle. He can now focus for longer periods on activities like cutting and pasting, drawing and creating interesting projects. His imagination is developing with make-believe play and he enjoys playing out situations that are familiar in his life.

By his fifth year, your child is embracing life fully. He is learning to cope with frustration and to understand rules. With the emergence of a conscience, he adopts rules, accepting them as his own. He is much better at taking turns and playing cooperatively, as well as planning and problem solving with others. Now your child can speak almost like an adult, using correct grammar 90% of the time. He uses language to describe objects, events and sort out the past, present and future. By the end of the year, your five-year old knows “left” from “right”, can identify colours, shapes and sizes and can copy patterns and sequences. He is ready to conquer new worlds – like school!

Developmental Milestones from 4-5 Years

- Starts running, then stops and changes direction smoothly.
- Draws a person with head, arms, legs and trunk.
- Begins to grasp the concept of sharing.
- Uses pretend play to gain control of frustrating and frightening experiences.
- Tells long stories about her own experiences.
- Plays with words in silly rhymes.
- Loves to recite and chant jingles and rhymes.
- Talks about imaginary situations.
- Uses new and unfamiliar words.
- Tells long stories about own past experiences.
- Uses an average vocabulary of 1500 words.

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The Best Books for Your Child Are...

Books about school preparation and readiness

Books that use rebus (pictures used for words)

Books with about science

Folk tales

Books with concepts such as saying thank you and appreciation

Books with rhymes and poetry

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