

# The 20 Best Books for Baby

by Chazda Albright -

<http://greatstorybook.com/the-20-best-books-for-baby/>

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If you want to be in a market, you need to know what is on the market. In order to tackle any kind of project, you need to do your homework, meaning: find out what is out there, what is quality work, what is shoddy work, and what you can bring that no one has really done (or done that well) as yet.

Here are some of the best baby books on the market today. The twenty-or-so best. In following articles, I'll hit upon other age groups - one by one.

## First, know the buyer.

Once your readership hits around twelve years of age, you can think about them as the buyer as well. For a younger audience, the buyer is someone else. It's usually Mom or Dad.

Something to know about the buyers: some parents are concerned about the safety – or possible health risks involved in letting a child chew on a board book. After all, what exactly are these baby-safe books glossed over with? That's right, plastic. Not quite what we want our child digesting. That said, half of the

titles on this list are board books simply because they *are* really good and aren't available in a different baby-proof format.

The one thing that holds true for any child teething is that it can get a thing into its mouth much faster than you can prevent the baby from even grabbing for it in the first place. This is known. And yet, if you give your child books from day one, and simply make books a part of life, the child will grow up naturally with the joy of reading. No "learning to love to read" necessary. This is known also.

Fortunately, makers of books and of baby toys have taken notice of this, and now there are some really great baby books on the market today, ones that take this into account while at the same time including not only safety features, but images and concepts that are captivating and even educational for a baby.

### What NOT To Get in a Baby Book.

There are also a lot of really bad, ultimately throw-away baby books. It isn't enough that the book be safe for the baby, it should also be actually *for* the baby. **Before I hit my list of Top 20 baby books, let me first explain the six reasons why some books you might have expected are not on the list. Here's what you don't want in a baby book:**

1. Stay away from the light pastels. Baby cannot see pastels. The first color a child can see is red, so brightly colored books that are heavy in red and black are the ones that really have a tiny baby in mind. Contrary to what I grew up with, the really bold and dynamic designs are what appeal most to a baby. Pink? Sure. But bright pink. Not powder pink.
2. Fabric books, also known as rag books, are great - but not if they're made out of *felt*, which will be ruined and falling apart within a day (and most of it probably in baby's tummy). It makes me cringe when I see a rag book with felt details, when it would otherwise be a perfect baby book if they had simply used some other material.
3. Images of famous princesses, puppets or cars (emphasis on famous) also won't do much for baby because a child that age shouldn't be watching television in the first place. It's worth noting too that when stories of blockbusters are adapted to illustrated stories, they tend to be really poorly done. There's no reason to get that kind of thing when there are so many books that are much, much better.
4. Four pages or less? It isn't enough for a baby to consider it anything more than a chew toy. Babies love to turn pages. If the "baby book" has only four, even baby will find it too short and decide to grab for something else.
5. Hard plastic teething rings attached to the book and that often look like a handle. I know these are really popular, but I would stay clear of designing a book with one of those because of one personal experience. Two years ago I was sitting with a friend of mine at a café. Her baby was old enough and she was fit enough to meet me at an outdoor café. My friend had a great summer dress on and her baby boy was in the buggy with one of these teething-ring books. Her son was a strong little bugger and he was rattling his rattle and then trying to rattle the book. Looking at his face, I could see he was getting frustrated by this, trying to get the book to rattle for him. His movements became so excited, he thwacked

himself in the eye with the teething thing. There was a stunned pause and then a scream and then much crying. His eye was cut, and within the hour it was starting to bruise. Babies have to learn coordination - they just don't have it yet, so they often accidentally hit or scratch their faces. My friend's baby was strong, but only a few months old. It's because of this that I highly recommend NOT getting one of those teething-ring books. But even if your baby isn't built like a mini-Hulk, I tend to think that these hard rings would likely get ripped away from the book relatively soon anyway. It just isn't a good design concept.

6. Overly cutesie booksies with strange rhymes that come across as creepy more than anything else. You *might* know what books I'm thinking of in particular. (Her books are not on my list of recommendations.) I'll just say here: there is no reason to get annoying books for a child. It astonishes me that parents subject their child to things they themselves cannot stand. Why would you do that? Just because a thing is for babies doesn't mean it has to be anti-adult.

"Make it a rule never to give a child a book you would not read yourself." -George Bernard Shaw

## Here's My Top 20+ Baby Books.

Sandra Boynton books rock. They're great for babies and toddlers love them too. Honestly, a child who grows up with these will still, every so often, pull out one of these gems years later with a strong sense of nostalgia.

What I am really excited about now is that she has two non-toxic books that can be taken into the bathtub. I wish all of her books were made for the bath! Drum roll please...

1. [Bath Time!](#) This is a bath book (completely non-toxic) that has a bound-in squeaker! So at the end, both baby and the book are squeaky-clean. I love this. It rhymes (as do all her books, which is great for language development), and the pictures are clean and easy for the child to see – plus, they're funny. So adults like them too.

2. [Barnyard Bath](#). This is the bath-worthy version of the traditional stand-by, Barnyard Dance. If you don't know this book, get to know it. It's a classic. I'm not sure I would take this into the tub, but I'd get this edition anyway because it's soft and washable – which is the only way to top the original board book.

## Going to Bed Books

3. [Good Night, Teddy](#) by Francesca Ferri is a cuddly book. In it, Teddy gets ready for bed, and there is a tiny teddy attached to the book. He can be brought into the pages of the book. You can put him in the tub, and later into bed. This is an excellent exercise for fine motor skills, and it will get baby in the mood for cuddling into bed just like Teddy.

4. [My Quiet Book](#). This is another interactive rag book. It has snaps, a shoelace, a zipper. This is a nice book for babies, one soft enough to play and play with until you can't hold your head up anymore and you just sack out right on top of it.

5. [Time for Bed](#) by Mem Fox and Jane Dyer. This is a lovely, rhyming book about animals cozying down and going to bed. It's soothing and repetitive, with pleasing illustrations. This is a highly regarded board book.

Lamaze creates some great peek-a-boo soft books. They're bright and colorful so that baby can see the images clearly, and the lift-flaps crinkle to the touch, which is a really great learning feature for a baby. (The baby learns that if they grab the flap and only the flap, they can make a crinkling noise. Hand-eye-coordination, sense of baby empowerment - it's all good.) Big bonus: machine washable! You can let baby munch and drool all over these books and it won't matter a bit. These three are my personal favorite from what Lamaze has to offer:

6. [Peek-a-Boo Forest](#).

7. [Panda's Pals](#). and [Emily's Day](#).

## Traditional Board Books

I just want to say a word about some of the classic illustrated storybooks that have been coming out as board books. Please think twice about getting these. The reason I say this is because the artwork for the books was designed to be seen in a certain format. This isn't about respect for the artist, either – more about respecting the artist's abilities and the decisions they made about the product they created.

The most glaring example I think is [Goodnight Moon](#) by Margaret Wise Brown and Clement Hurd. This is a great book that kids love, but in the board book version, good luck trying to find the little mouse. In some of the pictures it looks more like a whitish blob. Too, the color quality page to page has been greatly compromised. If you want your child to have the classics, go with their original, classic format.

Here are some board books I highly recommend.

8. [Fuzzy Bee and Friends](#) by Roger Priddy, who is famous for knowing how to put some great learning books together for toddlers. This book is for babies; it rhymes and has bright colors that babies love. I love it too. The colors are terrific.

9. Anything by [Sandra Boynton](#), obviously. This amounts to perhaps 25 solid baby books for your child's library. Some are for going to bed, some are for storytime in the middle of the day. They are always great and well loved.

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10. [The Very Hungry Caterpillar](#) by Eric Carle. This classic has been well converted into a board book for babies. There is also a large-format board book that is really cool (but for older children, due to its size).

11. [Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes](#) by Annie Kubler. This is an illustrated adaptation of the traditional song, so it makes for a fun little book to sing with baby.

12. [Goodnight, Gorilla](#) by Peggy Rathmann. While this is about going to bed, I would not consider this a going to bed type of book. This is for looking intently and exploring together whilst wide awake. At least, that's my take. This is a really funny book and an excellent example of storytelling through pictures.

13. [Black on White](#) by Tana Hoban. This is a lovely, bold board book. The images are striking and captivating - for any age group, really. She has several other books on the market, but this is my favorite.

14. [Richard Scarry's Cars and Trucks from A to Z](#). Maybe I'm a little old school, but no library is complete without Richard Scarry. This is a really good one that baby can grow with very well.

If you don't know who he is, [check here](#).

15. [What Shall We Do With The Boo-Hoo Baby?](#) by Cressida Cowell and Ingrid Godon. You might recognize the name of the author from her extremely popular How To Train Your Dragon book series, feature animated films and animated t.v. series. This is without doubt one of the best little books on the market. I've probably read it hundreds of times because it is a favorite.

16. [Chicka Chicka Boom Boom](#) by Bill Martin et al. This is a bright, graphic book with a fun alphabet rhyme that is very contagious. Rhymes support language development! This is a GREAT book.

17. [The Little Mouse, the Red Ripe Strawberry, and the Big Hungry Bear](#) by Don Wood and Audrey Wood. This is a sweetly illustrated book co-created by a couple. It's very funny and will entertain for many years.

18. [Whose Toes Are Those?](#) By Jabari Asim and LeUyen Pham. This is a sweet book with a clear climactic moment that babies and toddlers love.

A wonderful book with a superb sequel, [Whose Knees Are These?](#) (This one is my personal favorite.)

19. [Mercer Mayer](#) is the creator of the Critter books, and while most are illustrated stories, he has a few

board books as well. Go check his list, these are solid stories that are especially great if you have more than one child. It will appeal to kids in different ways from 0-8 years. Many of the stories are about being siblings, about helping and sharing – good stuff.

20. [Harold and the Purple Crayon](#) by Crockett Johnson. This is another great classic. It's a whimsical story about imagination, with simple line and words. It's sort of an M.C. Escher for babies, because the flat lines create sudden depth and the little boy can walk into the drawing.

21. Mouse Paint by Ellen Stoll Walsh. This classic little book that cleverly teaches about mixing colors is finally available as a board book or ebook. There are a lot of color books on the market for babies, but none of them are as good as this one.

This is my list of 20+ top baby books. I did not include books that are only ebooks, just because I'm not convinced there are many parents who let their baby play with the ebook reader. I've created a baby book as an ebook and it has done surprisingly well, so somebody is happily proving me wrong. If you're curious, you [can check it out here](#). Everything I know about how to entertain and educate a baby was dumped into this little book.

What is your favorite baby book? Is it on my list? If not, let me know. Leave a comment below!

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