

Characteristics of Good Story Time Books

Baby:

- Large, simple illustrations.
- Bright colors (not pastels), high contrast, lots of white space.
- Limited language helps, but not necessary -just don't feel obligated to read every word.
- Diverse, rhythmic language is a plus (like Mother Goose rhymes).

Toddler:

- Large illustrations.
- 1-2 sentences per page.
- Familiar subjects and concepts.
- Avoid stressful, abstract or obscure subjects.
- Look for stories that invite participation (movement, animal sounds).
- Plot not necessary, but don't shy away from one if the book is short enough.

Preschool:

- More detailed illustrations are fine, but make sure they can be seen in the back of the room.
- 1-4 sentences per page.
- Familiar subjects work well, but abstract subjects like friendship, emotions, and pretend situations are great now too.
- Preschoolers love stories with a clear beginning, middle and end. Look for ones you can read in about 5 minutes.
- Avoid subjects that won't make sense yet or are better handled by parents.
- It's ok to use books with advanced humor. Children will learn by hearing when their parents/caregivers laugh.

Tips:

- Take time to find books you love - your passion will show through.
- But, be prepared to put aside books that don't strike a chord with your audience.
- Don't be afraid to try new things.
- *Always* ask yourself if your chosen books represent a diverse spectrum. Diversity means different genders, different cultures, different skin colors, different approaches to subjects. Are you enforcing stereotypes?