

Reviews

Reviews by Jenny Blanch

Tickle, Tickle

Written and illustrated by Helen Oxenbury
Walker Books £3.99 ISBN: 978-1406319477



This perfect book for babies has been around for over twenty years. With short, rhyming text and pictures of comfortable, round babies, the five thick pages create a loving and warm mood whenever they are shared. Lovely.

Sing-along Nursery Rhymes



Edited by Fiona Watt
Illustrated by Chiara Bordon
CD produced by Anthony Marks
Usborne £9.99
ISBN: 978-0746097762

Singing and talking with babies before they have language of their own is both stimulating and potentially soothing. Babies never mind repetition so this selection of well-loved, tuneful rhymes will be shared over and over again. They provide a perfect, non-demanding way of communicating with very small children, while also creating a happy and relaxed atmosphere. An added extra are the marker tabs on the sturdy pages to make turning the pages very easy for little fingers.

My Animals

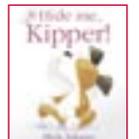
Written and illustrated by Xavier Deneux
Bloomsbury £6.99 ISBN: 978-0747597100



This stylish board book will entrance very young children. It is foam padded with a different animal presented on each page. A high contrast book, mainly black and white, with just a flash of brilliant colour – a flower, a starfish, a carrot – which entice the reader to look carefully and closely. The playful cut-outs encourage even more interaction – including stroking!

Hide Me Kipper!

Written and illustrated by Mick Inkpen
Hodder £10.99 ISBN: 978-0340970454



Kipper the dog features in lots of story books – but this one is very different. He's joined by a squeaky mouse who pleads for help. Kipper obliges several times, but ends up looking rather silly. The exuberant illustrations tell their own story – Mick Inkpen is adept at conveying feeling not just through facial expressions, but also from his characters' body language. Sheer delight for sharing one to one, or with a larger group.

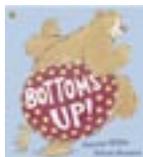
Bottoms Up!

Written by Jeanne Willis Illustrated by Adam Stower
Puffin £5.99 ISBN: 978-0141502137

This infectiously joyful book says good-bye to nappies and hello to bare botties! The parade

Babies ...

Books to catch, and hold, baby's attention ...

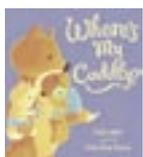


of baby protesters, followed by hilarious animals showing off their pants, will entertain everyone. The words have a pleasing, rollicking rhythm and an ability to stick in the mind

after only a few repetitions.

Where's My Cuddly?

Written by Gill Lobel Illustrated by Sebastian Braun
Orchard Books £10.99 ISBN: 978-1846161025

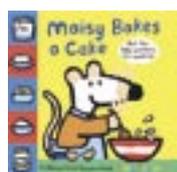


A familiar theme for young children – a favourite toy goes missing. Little Fox is tucked up in bed but his very special cuddly toy, Cuddly-Boo, is not under the blankets with him. His little

baby brother is keeping rather still and quiet – does he know something? The colourful illustrations show the family doing ordinary things – climbing the stairs, cleaning their teeth, searching in the cupboards ... Small children learn a great deal from picture books – it's much easier to gaze at a static page than the moving objects of a television screen – so when Cuddly-Boo is finally found, Little Fox forgot his anger and was sad that Baby Fox was left feeling upset and lonely. Solving that problem resolved the story in a most satisfactory way.

Maisy Bakes a Cake

Written and illustrated by Lucy Cousins
Paper engineering by David Hawcock
Walker Books £8.99 ISBN: 978-1406314786



Maisy is everyone's favourite! Vibrant colours and child friendly forms – each surrounded by a thick black line – introduce young children to some early scientific experiences.

Fascinating paper engineering produces cupboards to open, hands to wash, mixing and weighing activities which bring the actions to life. Simple, appropriate language is used, and the text builds to a wonderful end-product, and climax – gulp!

Happy Birthday Chimp and Zee



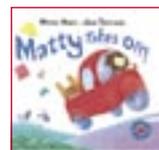
Written by Laurence Anholt
Illustrated by Catherine Anholt
Frances Lincoln £6.99
ISBN: 978-1845075972

Birthdays are great occasions for young and old, and these two mischievous twins go absolutely bananas – they are so excited! The fun and vitality erupts on every page as predictable – and unpredictable – surprises delight the youngsters. Their journey to Jungletown is eventful but all ends happily when one huge fold-out celebration welcomes them both. Colourful and witty, this storybook reads aloud well, revolving

around a typical family situation which young children recognise and love.

Matty Takes Off!

Written by Miriam Moss Illustrated by Jane Simmons
Andersen Press £5.99 ISBN: 978-1842707586



This simple story follows Matty preparing to go away on holiday to his sister's house. All the pleasure and anticipation is shown as he packs his

belongings in a red truck, and eventually sets out on the journey. Young children enjoyed following his belongings as they were flung out on to the road, and hooted with laughter when they saw him wearing his sister's pyjamas. The peaceful resolution made this a lovely 'just before bedtime' book to share.

A Small Surprise

Written and illustrated by Louise Yates
Jonathan Cape £10.99 ISBN: 978-0224083416

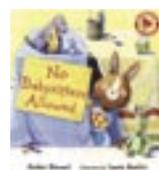


A tiny rabbit has fun hiding from the company of grotesquely drawn and permanently worried looking ape, giraffe, lion, rhinoceros, snake and baby bear on stilts. All these larger animals see it as their task to help him

out whatever he tries to do; he, in his turn, takes joy in concealing himself from them, with his final hiding place only revealed on the last page. Affectionate, inconsequential, quirky and constantly inventive, this eccentric picture book is truly something different and well worth searching out.

Nicholas Tucker

No Baby-Sitters Allowed



Written by Amber Stewart
Illustrated by Laura Rankin
Bloomsbury £5.99
ISBN: 978-0747598473

Hopscotch the rabbit's bravery appears to know no bounds – visiting spiders – not a problem, sticking plaster on his leg – no trouble there either. Baby-sitters? Well... that's a different thing. Hopscotch is anxious about what bedtime will entail with neither his mum nor dad around. Hiding under the table Hopscotch hopes to sit out the baby-sitters' stay, but when she begins reading his storybooks and gets her beginnings back-to-front, her endings all over the place and middles in a muddle, Hopscotch has to help out. So begins a friendship and an acceptance that although the baby-sitter's presence is a break from routine, it is not frightening. This affirming picture book cleverly establishes the rabbit's bravery by making his fears feel credible and at the same time providing a satisfying story with practical applications.

Jane Hall

and Toddlers

Having FUN with words and pictures!



Where's the Bus?

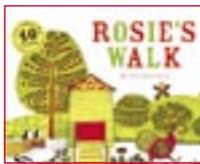
Written by Eileen Browne
Illustrated by James Croft
Piccadilly Press £11.99
ISBN: 978-1848120051

Rabbit and Mouse have been invited to tea with Duck. It's too far to walk so, excited, they set off for the bus stop. Once there, they become restless and bored for there's no bus in sight. To pass the time, they allow themselves to be caught up in a series of distractions - the enticing scent of strawberries just a short distance away, the deafening cackle of geese overhead. But still the bus doesn't come. Or does it? Both the storyline and illustrations are simple and highly effective, working together to tell two different stories, and the deadpan, patterned text contrasts delightfully with the images of the buses meandering across the pages. Young children will take great pleasure in spotting the difference in words and pictures while also developing vital visual literacy skills. This is a humorous and charming story.

Anne Faundez

Rosie's Walk

Written and illustrated by Pat Hutchins
Red Fox £5.99 ISBN: 978-1862308060



Surely it cannot be forty years since *Rosie's Walk* first appeared! This marvellous, perfect, utterly simple book has achieved iconic status, a true

classic. What's more, its form, the image of Rosie walking home utterly impervious to the stalking fox and then the fox's satisfying comeuppance, has sired several effective reworkings, notably Colin McNaughton's wonderful Preston Pig and the Wolf's vain attempts to catch him. So there's something archetypal about it. This is a celebratory edition, complete with gold badge announcing such a notable anniversary. We are all thrilled to see it and look forward to introducing a whole new generation of children to its beguiling simplicity.

Dennis Hamley

Follow that String

Written and illustrated by Deborah Brown and Kathy Bacovitch
Red Fox £6.99 ISBN: 978-1862304352



Made up from black and white photographs of a small boy surrounded by full colour artwork, lift-up flaps, doors that open on the page and a real piece

of string with a toy paper key attached, this is no conventional picture book. Ning, the little boy in the photos, follows the string from page to page in

the company of his toy rabbit Keppy. Finally they arrive at a box which, when the flap is opened, reveals a smaller version of another book, this time made up of pictures of Ning's favourite toys. Ning himself finally goes to sleep, always a potentially useful note on which a picture book can end. Dream-like and unpredictable, this one-off picture book has a very definite sense of its own style.

Nicholas Tucker

Miaow said the Cow

Written and illustrated by Emma Dodd
Templar £10.99 ISBN: 978-1840111682



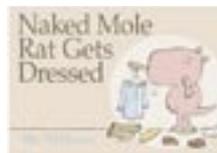
The farmyard cat is fed up with the morning chorus and decides to play a magic trick on the other animals by changing their voices. So, with increasing bedlam, the

pig clucks, the sheepdog says baa and the horse quacks! Simple rhymes increase the pleasure of this storybook which is perfect for noisy joining-in... and there is a nice reversal for the wicked cat at the end of this extremely jolly book.

Enid Stephenson

Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed

Written and illustrated by Mo Willems
Hyperian Books £10.99 ISBN: 978-1423114376



Mole Rats never wear clothes: apart from Wilbur who likes to try out apparel which makes him look fancy or funny, or cool, or

adventurous. His friends and family are opposed to Wilbur's outlandish dress sense and, in an attempt to shame him into conformity, they show him a portrait of Grandpah, the oldest, greatest and most naked Mole Rat ever. When Wilbur is summoned to meet the revered ancient a very important *Proclamation Ceremony* is arranged. Mo Willems (who is almost always fully dressed) has come up with a splendidly anarchic tale for curious toddlers, in a book where the simplicity of the layout, illustration and text conceal quite complex ideas about identity and individuality.

Jack Ousbey



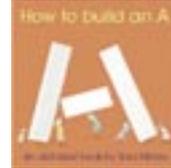
Tiger

Written by Chuck Gonzales
Illustrated by Dave Klug
Price Stern Sloan *Snappers*
£4.99 ISBN: 9780843133172

The appealing, moving eyes tempt everyone to look inside the mouth of this shaped book to discover some information about these giant cats. Brief facts about their rarity, appearance and eating habits fascinate children of three plus. As the chances of seeing a tiger in the wild are getting slimmer by the

day, this little book will always be a reference and a reminder of the beautiful beast. Other titles include *Crocodile, Shark* and *Gorilla*.

Mike Simkin



How to build an A

Written by Sara Midda
Artisan £10.99
ISBN: 978-1579653731

This is a beautiful alphabet book and puzzle, simply and cleanly illustrated, with the added attraction of a bag of eleven safety-tested pieces that can be pushed together to make all the letters, both uppercase and lowercase. Colourful pages show each letter - A is for Apple, B is for Boy - and facing is the picture. Also included are tiny drawings of little workmen hauling and heaving the pieces to form the letter. Some children enjoy recognising certain letters early on - especially their own names - and this game can help to form a useful bridge between home and school later on.

Jenny Blanch



How to be a Baby

Written by Sally Lloyd-Jones
Illustrated by Sue Heap
Walker Books £10.99
ISBN: 978-1406316964

For any child facing the emotional challenges that accompany the arrival of a new sibling, this book addresses the most common with warmth and humour. Written from the perspective of an older sister, it is basically a long illustrated list of all the things a baby can't do (with an occasional boast about what she *can* do), as if to reassert her position in the family hierarchy. Jolly, childlike illustrations, lots of detail, little notes and the odd contribution from baby make it all very light-hearted and interactive. A positive ending sees the little girl softening towards her baby sibling and looking forward to all the fun things they can do together.

Rowan Stanfield

Where is the Cake Now?



Illustrated by T.T.King
Abrams Books £7.99
ISBN: 978-0810989269

A wonderful wordless picture book to stimulate discussion and concentration. A group of charming, clothed animals decide to have a picnic. They prepare food and collect all the gear they need to have fun then start to tramp uphill, down dale and across a river before finally settling in an ideal grassy area. Disaster! The all important cake is missing! Observant youngsters can help to retrieve the cake in this story that rewards multiple reads.

Jenny Blanch