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by Jean Reagan, illustrated by Lee Wildish Available from: If your four-year-old spends any time with the grandparents, these books are a must. They're each written in the form of an instructional manual for kids who are looking after their grandpa or grandma. I love the way they flip the babysitting duties from child to adult, and they always get my daughter cracking up. Also available from: by Jenny Offhill, illustrated by Chris Appelhans Available from: This story is all about a girl trying to make the best of her very lazy pet sloth. Sparky! is amusing and offers up beautiful illustrations. At its core, this book is all about accepting individuals for who they are. (Also, who doesn't love a sloth?) Also available from: by Richard Scarry Available from: Richard Scarry is a favorite in our house and this particular title really delivers. Be prepared though — these books are a treasure trove of information and will likely stir up a lot of questions. My daughter can spend hours with this one and we discover something new each time we read it. Also available from: by Stan Berenstain and Jan Berenstain Available from: Friendships can be pretty complicated at age four and this book is a great way to cover this territory with your budding child. The Trouble with Friends introduces us to Sister Bear's new neighbor, Lizzy, who has strong opinions. When Sister Bear and Lizzy get into an argument, they need to learn how to problem-solve. Lessons around sharing, getting along with others, and negotiating are the themes here — practical tools for your preschooler! Also available from: by Drew Daywalt, illustrated by Oliver Jeffers Available from: This hilarious story kicks off when Duncan opens his box of crayons, only to find that the crayons have gone on strike! Duncan will have to figure out a way to make his crayons happy again so they can all go back to making art together. Highlighted by Oliver Jeffers's trademark illustrations, expect to read this one on repeat. Also available from: by Jacqueline Woodson, illustrated by Rafael López Available from: The Day You Begin is essential reading to start the conversation about those moments when we feel different than everyone else, and the magic that can happen when we tap into our bravery anyway. On the flip side, it's also a great way to talk about empathy and reaching out to others who might feel out of place. Also available from: by Cort Dorrfield Available from: Another one that scores big points in emotional literacy, this sweet picture book finds Taylor on a difficult day. All of her animal friends have ideas for how Taylor should respond to her sadness, but the rabbit just listens, which is often the best gift we can give to our friends. Also available from: by Suzanne Lang, illustrated by Max Lang Available from: We all wake up on the wrong side of the bed sometimes, and Jim Panzee is having one of those days. But the more his friends try to shake the doldrums out of Jim, the grumpier he gets. An important (and amusing) reminder that it's important to feel our feelings. Also available from: A book's total score is based on multiple factors, including the number of people who have voted for it and how highly those voters ranked the book. You must have a goodreads account to vote. To vote on existing books from the list, beside each book there is a link vote for this book clicking it will add that book to your votes. To vote on books not in the list or books you couldn't find in the list, you can click on the + tab add books to this list and then choose from your books, or simply search. "Will you read me this book?" That one sentence is a symphony to my ears. So, what are the best books to read with your preschoolers? Here are my kids' favorite boos from when they were four as well as some newer releases that will hit its ton. I present the best books for 4-year-olds for you. Best Books for 4-5 Year-Olds As I started to prepare this list, I noticed some things about the reading taste and habits of 4-year-olds. They still love picture books and prefer books that make them think and broaden their horizons. Many 4-year-olds are ready to listen to chapter book read-alouds. Preschoolers love to ask questions and hypothesize answers. Repetition is still key. They love to return to their favorite books over and over. I hope that your 4-5 year-olds will love each of these titles as much as we have. Enjoy These Picture Books With 4-Year-Olds Full Disclosure: This post contains affiliate links. If I Built a House by Chris Van Dusen has spurred huge remodeling plans in our house. Almost daily, my son shared his grand drawings and ideas for knocking down walls in our home. I love that this book inspires kids to dream big and think creatively. Imagine a house with an entire room dedicated to a fish tank. Or, a kitchen that will make whatever dish you can think of each day. Those are just some of the fun things you will find in this book. We also enjoyed Van Dusen's If I Built a Car. Also, check out If I Built a School. (One of My Son's Favorites) Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus by Mo Willems is great for eliciting lots of participation and giggles. That silly pigeon wants to drive the bus, but the bus driver has asked the reader to make sure that doesn't happen. Land Shark by Beth Ferry was an instant hit. Most kids would be super excited to get a puppy for their birthday. But, Bobby had his heart set on a shark so he is pretty disappointed when the new puppy arrives. Will Bobby grow to love his new puppy? (One of My Son's Favorites) Everybody in the Red Brick Building by Anne Wynter starts with everyone asleep in the red brick building while...the baby howls. "Waaaaahh" which makes someone...and before you know it everyone is awake. This one tops my list. Also, check out the Book Dive I had for you to use with this book -> Everybody in the Red Brick Building One of my son's favorite authors was Bob Slatoff. I think it is so cool that he can find a book in the library and recognize the illustrations being Slatoff's work. It was hard to pick just one of the books for this list, but we are going with The Red Lemon Farmer McPhee loves his prized yellow lemons. One day he discovers a red lemon tree and immediately assumes that it is awful and not worthy of being in his grove. So, he tosses it away. Fast forward 200 years and McPhee's farm is now a pile of weeds. On another island is a flourishing community complete with red lemon trees. My son wanted me to make sure that I understood Bluebird by Staake in this too. (One of My Son's Favorites) Shifty McGifty by Tracey Colterroy is the story of two burglars who aren't the best at their chosen profession. They end up deciding on a "sweet" career alternative after several mishaps of being a burglar. There are also other books in the series. (One of My Son's Favorites) What Do They Do With All That Poop? by Jane Kurtz will capture the interest of students because it's all about poop. Yep, I said it. POOP. Kids will learn why poop comes in different shapes and sizes. And, what do zoos do with all the poop? Rufus the Writer by Elizabeth Bram is a great book to motivate young children to write and share their writing. My son was even inspired to set up his book stand outside of our house. (One of My Son's Favorites) Chick Chak Shabbat by Mara Rockiff is the story of Goldie Simcha who makes her wonderful chulent for neighbors each week to celebrate Shabbat. But, one day Goldie is ill and unable to send the aromas of chulent throughout the apartment building. Her neighbors come together to bring chulent dishes to the table that are reminiscent of the ingredients in chulent. It's a wonderful story of diversity, being a kind neighbor, and saving time. Marigold is a cat with a personality. Marigold Bakes a Cake by Mike Malbrough is a funny tale of a cat who just wants to spend his Monday making a cake. But, things don't go according to plan. The Book Bugs' In by Cynthia Cotten is another delightful book that celebrates books. Imagine living in a community where a book boat sails into town each week. One little boy has his heart set on a copy of a certain book and works for a week to earn enough money to buy it. Will the book store be there when he gets ready to buy it. (One of My Son's Favorites) You Choose by Nick Sharratt is one of those books that both of my kids come back to over and over again. On each page, there are lots of pictures and the kids get to pick which ones they would want. For example, one page asks where you would want live. Just a few of the choices include the beach, rainforest, rural, urban, etc. Each time the kids interact with the book they can create a new story. It is so much fun! (One of My Son's Favorites) The Wartville Wizard by Don Madden is one I've mentioned before on our Earth Day book list. It's a book with a great message of taking care of our planet. (One of My Son's Favorites) Farewell to Shady Glade by Bill Peet is the tale of a group of animals driven from their home due to construction and deforestation. The animals travel on top of a train across various landscapes until they land in their new home. (One of My Son's Favorites) I loved the James Herriot's Treasury for Children just as much as my son did. This collection is full of warm and wholesome stories. My son learned about love, loyalty, friendship, and more from this book. The audio version is also delightful. (One of My Son's Favorites) Read Graphic Novels and Chapter Book Read-Alouds With 4-Year-Olds When my kids turned four they were ready for chapter book read-alouds. Each night I would read a chapter to my son in bed. It was our nightly ritual. Picking chapter book read-alouds for young listeners can be a bit challenging. I wrote a guest post on This Reading Mama sharing some tips for picking books and some of our favorites. I'd also like to include a few more favorites too. Socks by Beverly Cleary Dominick by William Steig Zoey & Sassafras by Asia Citro Chick & Brain Smell My Foot by Cece Bell is laugh-out-loud funny. Brain thinks he's pretty smart but he has a lot of misinformation with Chick which is what makes this whole graphic novel side-splitting funny. This is book one in the series. For more graphic novel recommendations, check out this list --> Easy Graphic Novels Printable List of Best Books 4-Year-Olds Grab a printable list of the books shared above. Just click the purple "get your printable" button below to download. So fill your 4-year-old's head with the best read-alouds you can! RELATED POSTS Favorite Books for Preschoolers That Teach Basic Concepts 2004 Book Lists for Kids "This book first appeared on Growing Book by Book on 10/16/15 and has since been updated to include my kids' favorite preschool books! Good books for 4- and 5-year-olds? As a former teacher, preschool worker, mom, and book blogger, I have recommendations with reviews of picture books that your preschoolers will adore! (And so will you!) Discover kids' favorite picture books: good books you can read aloud to your preschoolers. Because, at this age and stage, children love the humor and learning ALL THE THINGS. It's such a blast, right? Children grow out of easy toddler books like Eric Carle's Brown Bear. At preschool age, children want to read more complex picture books like fractured fairy tales, silly stories, thought-provoking tales, and nonfiction books. Here are my favorite read aloud books for your preschool-age kids and students... that they will LOVE! Also, I update this list every month when I find new books. And don't worry, there are PLENTY more amazing preschool books than on this list. If you want more book ideas by topic, go to this comprehensive book list by topic. Download the free PDF printable book list! Every Monday Mabel written and illustrated by Jashar AwanBrightly colored illustrations and masterful writing build suspense as we watch Mabel get prepared for something special because it's Monday. What is it? Whatever it is, her dad thinks it's funny, her sister thinks it's boring, and her mom thinks it's cute. Finally, Mable plunks down her chair and waits for THE BEST THING IN THE WORLD! Did you guess it yet? A perfect read aloud celebrating the wonder of a child's favorite thing. How to Count to 1 by Casper Salmon, illustrated by Matt HuntCan you count to 1? And no higher? Silly illustrations and humorous writing will surprise and engage growing mathematicians as they follow the directions and count to ONE. One worm in disguise, one giraffe (among other African animals), one duck rollerballing, and well, you get the idea - ONE! What's even better is that the illustrations often mislead you to think you might be counting higher. Except you are not. Brilliant! Pretty Ugly written by David Sedaris, illustrated by Ian FalconerGet ready for some surprising surprises! When Anna Van Opre is good, she stomps on flowers and talks with her mouthful. I mean, she is an ogre, right? But something terrible happens when Anna is acting bad her face gets stuck in a smile! She's horrified! Luckily, her family accepts her and says her beauty is on the inside. That gives her an idea! She finds a way to turn herself inside out. Now she's beautiful again. Hilarious. Version 1.0.0 Bearsturtle Turtle Makes a Friend written and illustrated by Bob Sheal adore the quirky, weird humor in this story — and so will kids! One turtle meets another turtle in a bearstul who boasts that he is "for-real bear" and has the evidence to prove it. Where is the honey? He ate it! Plus, he can hibernate like five times a day. And can forage for ice cream and ride bikes. Hilarious from start to finish with a heart-tugging, satisfying ending. Who Ate Steve? written by Susannah Lloyd, illustrated by Kate HindleyAn exuberant (voicy!) narrator welcomes us to an "extremely interesting" book about SIZE with Popers Marcel, the bird, and Steve, the worm. Marcel is BIG. But Steve is — ut-oh. Marcel just ate Steve. The narrator demands Marcel spit out poor Steve. But it seems that Marcel just can't resist eating Steve, no matter how many times the narrator tells him not to. Can you guess what will happen in this silly book that is not really all about size? Help! Goes the Nursery Rhyme written by Betsy Bird, illustrated by Andrea TsurumiThe mischievous weasel interrupts the endings of ALL the nursery rhymes with, you guessed it, his familiar refrain: "POPI goes the weasel". An increasingly exasperated bird narrator tries to get things back on track, but there are weasels everywhere and Bird LOSES HER TEMPER. Bird just wants ONE nursery rhyme without a weasel. Is that so hard? Action-packed illustrations and so much silliness make this perfect read aloud for multiple readings with kids cracking up every time. Duckie & Snaps We Cannot Be Friends written by Ame Dyckman, illustrated by Tim MillerWith adorable art and a cute-as-can-be story, this is sure to be a new read aloud favorite. When Duckie and Snaps (the crocodile) eggs crack open at the same time, Duckie suggests that they can play and be friends. But they can't according to the grown-up alligator. Want to know why? Because crocodiles EAT duckies! The back and forth of the characters from this point on is hilarious as they argue one way or the other. Will the grown-up convince Snaps to eat Duckie or will something else happen? The Night Tent by Landis BlairReminiscent of Maurice Sendack's Where the Wild Things Are, this beautifully illustrated bedtime story is about Watson, a boy who worries about monsters in the closet. When he sees a light under his covers, he discovers a beautiful night sky with twinkling stars... UNDER HIS COVERS! He wanders down a path and through the forest. He plays with the forest creatures and rides a trolley to a tall tower which he climbs. When he crawls back out from under the covers, he's so sleepy that he falls fast asleep without any worries about monsters. Enchanting and atmospheric! Dog Vs. Strawberry written by Nelly Buchet, illustrated by Andrea ZuilHILARIOUS CAT x million! An car racing announcer gives readers the play-by-play scoop as this dog races...a strawberry. "A strong start for Dog, leaning left, while Strawberry, impassive, doesn't take the bait." As there's mayhem, there's a quick nap, and the finish is...too close to call, but wait— can Dog win after all? I laughed out loud and so will you! Scaredy Cats by Jeff MacKWhen a wrapped gift arrives, the kittens imagine what it could be...Maybe a cake? Or a hungry crocodile? Or a cake and a crocodile? They continue to wait if- which is hilarious— as are the exuberant illustrations. What do you think is in the box? This is a perfect read aloud for preschoolers who will love to guess along with the kittens. Come Out. Come Out, Chameleon! written and illustrated by Jonty HewleyKids will LOVE this hilarious and interactive book about an old man who can't find his lost chameleon that he's never actually seen. Will readers find it on each page? Look closely! Yes, you will find him. But will the man ever find his chameleon? This is the perfect book to read aloud to preschoolers! StinkBird Has a Superpower by Jill Esbaum, illustrated by Bob SheaGet ready for a new read aloud favorite about the many wonders of the stinkbird! The hoatzin papa narrates about his amazing superpower while his baby bird interrupts. Their dialogue is hilarious, and we learn factual information about their clever nests, avoiding predators by swimming and climbing! Oh, also- their poop STINKS! I Am Dog! written by Peter Bentley, illustrated by Chris ChattertonPlayful rhyming, simple text shares a day in the life from a dog's perspective. "I am a dog. Dog is me. I like walking. I like tree." Dog likes to chase, splash, dig, and bark... among other things like searching for the smell he sniffs which makes a big mess! The illustrations are essential to this story of the dog's day — and what is really happening. This is the perfect read aloud for 2 - 5 year olds! Mr. Fox's Game of "No!" written by David LaRochelle, illustrated by Mike WohnoutkaPerfection for preschool readers—this book will crack kids up as it proposes that readers must say NO to everything that Mr. Fox asks. Of course, Mr. Fox asks if they want ice cream, to go swimming with dolphins, and if they are wearing underwear. Hilarious! King Hugo's Huge Ego by Chris Van DusenMY preschoolers LOVED this funny rhyming book about a king who thinks very highly of himself and, as a result, is cursed by a witch. The curse means that whenever he utters self-important words, his head grows bigger. Surprisingly, the king doesn't mind because that means there is more of him to love! Will the king ever learn his lesson? (We read this book EVERY night at bedtime for months.) Twenty Yawns by Jane Smiley, illustrated by Lauren CastilloLucy yawns while her mother reads her a bedtime story and goes to sleep. Later, she wakes up, realizing she doesn't have her special stuffed bear, Molasses. As she makes her way back to bed with Molasses and her friends, help count her yawns. Beautiful illustrations perfectly set the tone for this comforting bedtime story. Hipoos Are Huge! by Jonathan London, illustrated by Matthew TruemanExcellent writing and illustrations make this one of the best nonfiction animal picture books for preschool age kids. Bigger text pairs with smaller factual text to give younger readers tons of information. Pete the Cat: I Love My White Shoes by Eric Litwin and James DeanPreschoolers love to sing along with Pete's song: "I love my white shoes. I love my white shoes. . . ." It will get stuck in your head. This story is about going with the flow . . ."cause it's all good." One of the best preschool read alouds! Looking for a Jumble by Tracey Baptiste, illustrated by Amber RenOne of my favorite preschool books, this is a story about biological monsters, friendship, and bravery! Naya searches in the dark of night for a jumble...even though her Mama says that jumbles are not in series. "I'm looking for a jumble. I'm going to find a scary one." The refrain repeats as Naya meets a jumble and other mythical creatures. When Dinosaurs Walked the Earth written by Sean Taylor, illustrated by Zehra HicksHilarious and subversive— this is the story of a little plant-eating dinosaur called Smallasaurus and Badasaurus who wants to eat Smallasaurus for breakfast. What will Smallasaurus do? Encourage Badasaurus to run off a cliff, of course! But what if he comes back? It's a good thing that Smallasaurus has a bigger brain than Badasaurus— she knows what to do next! A great read aloud for preschoolers. This Sheep Needs Your Help written and illustrated by David LaRochelle and YOLOUIE THIS BOOK! Kids will, too. Readers get to help Sheep return to his flock using their drawing skills and the attached dry-erase marker. First, the Sheep asks readers to draw a boat to cross the lake, then help with skis and warm clothes for the next, snowy setting, and after that, a big flower to distract a bee. But there are more adventures and drawings on each subsequent page. Eventually, you will help Sheep's return home AND become an honorary Sheep! HOW CUTE IS THIS?! Everyone's Awake by Colin Meloy, illustrated by Shawn HarrisIt's a crazy night because the entire family is awake and doing all sorts of imaginative, random things. "Grandma's at her needlework. Dad is baking bread. My brother's making laundry lists of every book he's read." The rollicking, rhythmic verses plus neon-bright action-packed illustrations capture the exuberance and activity of this busy night. Jabari Jumps by Julia CornwallJabari is ready to jump off the diving board. Sort of. His dad tells Jabari that he feels scared too, and a deep breath and telling himself that he is ready helps him turn something scary into a fun surprise. Beautiful illustrations in a helpful, relatable story make this book a must-read preschool book for 4 and 5-year-olds Good Night, Baddies by Deborah Underwood, illustrated by Jill KangasThe famous baddies head for home at the end of the day. They eat dinner together -politely! The troll takes a bath, the evil queen puts away the poisoned apple, and they all snuggle into their beds. Good night, sour dreams! Alphabet Mystis by Audrey WoodThe lowercase letters find the uppercase capital letter "M" — this is a four- and five-year-old favorite. In a hilarious role reversal, Roderick gets Sleepy a glass of water, reads him a bedtime story (The Day the Crayons Quit), checks the closet, and does all the things that Roderick's parents used to do for him...until Roderick is exasperated and falls asleep! The Whole Story by Vivian McInerney, illustrated by Ken LamugZia falls through the hole in her pocket. She makes the hole into whatever she needs — a fishing hole, a swimming hole, a watering hole (for the cloud animals), and even an elephant trap. It's a twisly-turny, creative adventure that your kids, ages 4 and 5, will adore! Old Tracks, New Tricks by Jessica PetersenSnubbed by the trains, the new wooden train tracks decide they'll show the other tracks fun ways to play — like hide-and-go track, tick-track-toe, tracks stack towers, dominos, and so much more. These creative play ideas will get your kids thinking of their train tracks in many new, inventive ways. One of my kids' favorite picture preschool books for 4- and 5-year olds! Unicorn Think's He's Pretty Great by Bob SheaGoat is very irritated when Unicorn moves to town and seems to show up Goat. Goat made marshmallow squares but Unicorn makes it rain cupcakes. That makes Goat feel very jealous. But when Unicorn prances by, he's amazed by Goat's cheese, goat's ability to eat garbage, his ability to head-butt the soccer ball, and his cloven hooves. And before you know it, the two are best friends. Goat says, "You know something, Unicorn? I had a feeling we'd be friends." HA. We Don't Eat Our Classmates by Ryan T. HigginsAfter a rough first day at school, where she eats her classmates, gets scolded by the teacher, spits them out, and doesn't make any friends, Penelope's dad explains that "children are the same as us on the inside. Just tastier." HA. The next day, Penelope eats her classmates AGAIN! However, when the class goldfish chops on Penelope's finger, and it HURTS, she realizes that it's no fun to be someone else's snack. The Leaf Thief by Alice Hemming, illustrated by Nicola SalterA worried squirrel who thinks that SOMEONE is stealing his tree's leaves. HIS leaves! Even though his friend Bird tries to help him, Squirrel doesn't seem to understand the changes that the fall season brings changes like leaves changing color and wind blowing them off the trees. It's funny and illuminating — and will spark helpful discussions about the characteristics of fall— with a hint of a winter surprise at the end. The Book with No Pictures by B.J. NovakThis is a must-read-out loud book because it's all about pictures. Everything on the page goes wrong, but the mom and child acknowledge it's all okay still because...they're together. That an important message about spending time with someone you love. Also, the ART — I can't get enough of Mora's collage artwork, it's vibrant and beautiful. Chicka Chicka Boom Boom by Bill Martin Jr. & John Archambault A classic favorite of children, this picture book is a rhyming story of alphabet letters having fun. Are You Scared, DARTH Vader? by Adam RexIf you like funny preschool books, read this one next! The narrator wants to know if Darth Vader is scared of anything. Maybe when this wolfnan pops out? Or bites him? Or a vampire? I AM NOT SCARED. I WILL NEVER BE SCARED. WHO COULD POSSIBLY SCARE LODR VADER? That's a surprise ending shows what displeases, not scares, Darth Vader. What do you think it is? Another by Christian Robinsonthis exuberant celebration of the imagination, a little girl is in bed when an oval door opens into the wall. She follows the cats into what seems to be another world of colorful topsy-turvy dots and rectangles, more oval doors, many diverse kids, and another girl and her cat that look exactly like them. The white space and repetition of shapes feel playful and fresh. You might also like: Meaningful Activities with Wordless Picture Books. Sam and Dave Dig a Hole by Mac Barnett, illustrated by Jon KlassenPreschool readers immediately "get" the humor in the illustrations. As Sam and Dave dig their hole and dig and dig, they find nothing. But their dog, he's sniffed out the world's biggest diamond. Dogs know what's up. Your kids will giggle their way through this favorite story! Claymates by Dev Petty, illustrated by Lauren EldridgeAfter reading this picture book, will your preschoolers want to make their own clay story? Two clay blobs, a gray and a brown blob, meet in an art room. A girl arrives to make the gray clay into a wolf and the brown clay into an owl. When she leaves, the two clays play around. They transform into their own creature and objects until they hear the artist return. Can they fix each other? Beware of the Crocodile by Martin Jenkins, illustrated by Satoshi KitamuraIntroduce preschool kids to the crocodile in this picture book that could double as an easy nonfiction reader. Informative and awe-inspiring. Giddy Lumpy by Grace Zongola, illustrated by Grace ZongolaThe author says this is SO fun to write and the original Goldilocks and the Three Bears is based on this story of a young Chinese girl named Giddy. Giddy reads the story of the time to apologize and help fix things. This is a better ending. I agree! It's Not Jack and the Beanstalk by Edwardian TaylorThe narrator of this hilarious story tries to boss Jack around, which Jack doesn't like. In fact, he doesn't want to be a thief and murderer. So at the giant's house in the sky, Jack stops following the story. He befriends the giant, makes him a taco salad, and goes to Cinderella's house for a party. It's the perfect updated preschool version of Jack and the Beanstalk with a take-charge hero and curmudgeonly narrator. Festival of Colors by Kabir Sehgal and Surishtha Sehgal, illustrated by Vashti HarrisonSiblings gather flowers for the upcoming festival of color. Hollis. Each two-page spread is a different flower and color. "They gather irises because irises make BLUE." When the flowers are gathered, they're dried and pressed into fine powders of color. Then, the family and friends come together and they throw the brilliant colored powders into the air and onto each other. Bear Come Along by Richard T. Morris, illustrated by LuEyen PhamBever discovers that observation of small moments can turn into big adventures with friends. He isn't aware that he's on an adventure until he's floating down the river on a log with Froggy on his head soon to be joined by Turtles, Beaver, and Racons, who don't know they need to be careful until they run into Duck. With a wonderful circular ending and after a fun-filled fall of the waterfall, the friends realize they're sharing life together...because the river came along. KEEP READING! What Should Be the Goal of Preschool? Good Nonfiction Books for Ages 2 - 5 Bookclub for Preschoolers Activity Books for Preschoolers Picture Book Scavenger Hunt Good Books About Colors

Melissa Taylor Melissa Taylor, MA, is the creator of Imagination Soup. She's a mother, former award-winning teacher & literacy trainer, author, author coach and publicist at Imaginarium Author Solutions, and freelance education writer. She writes Imagination Soup, supports authors, and freelances for publications online and in print, including Penguin Random House's brightly website. She is passionate about matching kids with books that they'll love. Evergreen by Matthew CordellNow 46% OffCredit: AmazonThe most beloved new picture book in our 2023 Good Housekeeping Best Book Awards, according to reader Karen Cicero, who works with the librarians and families who judge the awards, is about a squirrel's delecting soup to her sick grandma. The brave yet scared squirrel traverses Buckthorn Forest, showing readers that helping others is worth conquering their fears. It's pure fiction and fairytale with a sweet message and a twist ending for the 4-year-old set. Librarians, parents and children all gave a high praise and its author, Matthew Cordell, previously won the 2018 Caldecott Medal for Wolf in the Snow.There is a Bird On Your Head! by Mo WillemsNow 37% OffCredit: AmazonDoes your 4-year-old show interest in sounding out words? They might be able to pick out a few in any of the 25 simple — and simply hilarious — Elephant and Piggie books. Author and illustrator Mo Williams uses the most basic of language and repeats words to tell stories of happy Piggie and grumpy, worried Elephant. Show your preschooler the word "bird," for instance. This one won the 2008 Theodor Seuss Geisel Award, named for Dr. Seuss, an award that goes to the year's most distinguished book for early readers.Advertisement - Continue Reading BelowPete the Cat and His Four Groovy Buttons by Eric Litwin and illustrated by James DeanNow 81% OffCredit: AmazonHere's another great book series for age 4, and if your kid likes it, buckle up. There are more than 50 Pete the Cat books. "They're all a big hit with us," says Apparel Lab Executive Director Lexie Sachs, a mom of two who also helms our Family Travel Awards. This title incorporates the concept of subtraction and gets kids counting in a sing-song way. It earned a Theodor Seuss Geisel Honor in 2013. The Pout-Pout Fish by Deborah Diesen and Illustrated by Dan HannaNow 40% OffCredit: AmazonExpressive, shimmery fish rule this fun read-aloud picture book that ultimately helps 4-year-olds deal with their feelings. "The Pout-Pout Fish offers a creative way of teaching kids about emotions and how to turn 'drea-y-wearies' into 'cheery-cheeries,'" says one mom of a 4-year-old, echoing others who enjoy this read. "My son loves pointing out all the different sea creatures — squid, jellyfish, octopus, clam. He especially gets a kick out of Pout-Pout Fish's catchphrase, 'bluh, bluhb, bluuuuuh,' and insists I say it with an exaggerated 'pout-pout' frown. Admittedly, the rhyming and alliteration can get kind of tongue-twisty to read but that's all part of the fun."Advertisement - Continue Reading BelowI LOVE Strawberries! by Shannon Anderson and Illustrated by Jaclyn SinnettCredit: Feeding Minds PressThe one got top marks from librarians and families in our 2022 Good Housekeeping Best Book Awards. Done as a series of handwritten diary entries, along with a bit of regular text, you can follow one girl's efforts to convince her parents that she's hard-working enough to grow a garden of berries. "This book explores themes of responsibility, passion and entrepreneurship while explaining the process of growing one's own food," said our judge Sandhya Nankani, founder of The Story Seeds Podcast. Bonus: The publisher is a nonprofit! Nothing Rhymes with Orange by Adam RexAll the other fruit have rhyming words — why not Orange? Orange is feeling super sorry for itself, as noted in many asides across these imaginative pages. But this book has a happy ending, and is a hoot to read aloud, says our Good Housekeeping Parenting & Relationships Editor Marisa LaScala. "The first time I read this through with my daughter, we were laughing so hard we had to wait to turn the page," she says.Advertisement - Continue Reading BelowThe Day the Crayons Quit by Drew Daywalt and illustrated by Oliver JeffersNow 47% OffCredit: AmazonWe're suckers for funny books, as are 4-year-olds — and this one's got more than 23,000 five-star Amazon reviews to boot. The crayons are mad, each for their own reason. They've gone on strike and have issued their grievances to their young-boy owner, Duncan. It's up to him to convince each crayon to come back, a lesson in unity and recognizing worth. The illustrations are child-like to depict the kind of drawings that kids really do. This was Goodreads' Best Picture Book of the Year when it came out in 2013.Little Faces Big Feelings: What Emotions Look Like by Amy Morrison Now 21% OffCredit: AmazonSocio-emotional learning is a hot topic and rightly so — kids have a lot of feelings to process that go way beyond just happy and sad. We put this book on our 2023 Best Book Awards list, noting how helpful it is for neurodiverse children who struggle to read other's body language. Instead of demonstrating each feeling with a single picture, this book utilizes 10 inclusive images to show a range of what, for instance, frustration might look. A mirror on the final page lets your kids make their own faces.Advertisement - Continue Reading BelowNibbles: The Book Monster by Emma Yarlett Credit: AmazonOne of the testers for our Parenting Awards turned us onto this inventive book, which starts with your child letting Nibbles out of his cage by opening up a flap. He then runs rampant through the book. "Nibbles like to eat books so the way the book is built, there are lots of holes in the pages," she says. "Then he starts eating his way through fairy tales and changing the stories. At the end he escapes so there's a big hole in the back of the book. We have lots of laughs with this, and it's interactive. Sometimes I see my daughter just paging through it on her own, looking at the pictures."We're Going On A Bear Hunt by Michael Rosen and Helen OxenburyCredit: AmazonIf you don't yet have this classic in your library, get it while your 4-year-old is still young enough to love the delicious anticipation of finding and escaping from the bear. It also introduces sequence: Readers follow the family swishy-washingy through grass and splash-splashing through water on their way to a cave, then going in reverse order on their way out. "It's still a big hit in my son's Pre-K 4s class," says our Executive Technical Director Rachel Rothman, a mom of three young kids.Advertisement - Continue Reading BelowHair by Matthew A. Cherry and Illustrated by Vashti HarrisonNow 44% OffCredit: AmazonIt can be tough to find a father-daughter tale. In this book, a tie-in to Academy-Award Winning Short Film "Hair Love," a girl named Zuri describes all the different ways her hair can look. Then her Daddy does it for you through some trial and error to give her yet another hairstyle she'll love. It's a message about self-confidence and loving the hair that you're born with. What Happens to a Hamburger? by Paul Showers and Illustrated by Edward MillerNow 20% OffCredit: AmazonOne of 93 books in the Lets-Read-And-Find-Out Science series. This shows kids, with simple illustrations, the journey their food goes through, beginning with chewing food and breaking it down in their mouth. They learn how the body digests — changing food into fuel. It ends, naturally, with food coming out as poop. It's an educational read for 4-year-old who questions how things work (especially their own body!) and, perhaps, for those picky eaters and reluctant potty-users. Not only that, but it's all part of the process of living, kids!Advertisement - Continue Reading BelowNina and the Dinosaur by Sid HoffNow 20% OffCredit: AmazonThis oldie but goodie first published a couple of generations ago, is just a simple tale of friendship that also tickles a 4-year-old's imagination. What dinosaur-loving child wouldn't want a playdate with a dino? It's a level-one reading book, which means you can read it to your preschooler now and in a few short years they should be able to read it to you.Just One Flake by Travis JonkerNow 15% OffCredit: AmazonThis new story also made our 2023 best-of-list. "This book celebrates the uniqueness in all of us," said our judge Jenna Bush Hager. "My youngest, Hal, laughed out loud." The boy, Liam, comes up with inventive ways to try and get snow on his tongue, a lesson in creativity. In the end, he gets more snow than he bargained for!Advertisement - Continue Reading BelowThe Bad Seed by Jory John and Illustrated by Pete OswaldCredit: AmazonThis naughty seed's list of naughty deeds spells out what people shouldn't do — things like being late, not putting objects back where they belong, not washing hands, and so on. At the end, after some misadventures, he decides he wants to be happy and good. If your 4-year-old enjoys this, there are six more in the series including one about a good egg and one about a cool bean. I want to be Spaghetti! by Kiera Wright-Ruiz and Illustrated by Claudia LamNow 37% OffCredit: AmazonHere's our final new-to-2023 release: A book about ramen that serves as a lesson in self-love. A package of ramen sitting in a grocery store wishes to be more like spaghetti, all "thin" and "popular," but learns from other pasta that they're all just perfect being themselves. Once the ramen is cooked that it realizes "being yourself is tasty."Advertisement - Continue Reading BelowJust Go to Bed by Mercer MayerCredit: AmazonThe books in the extensive Little Critter series are inexpensive and reliably entertaining. This one sees Little Critter go through a bedtime routine, which he pretty much fights all the way. (Sound familiar?) The little guy's preoccupation is impressive, and the parents do their best to stay calm before finally losing it with one final, "Go to bed!" It ends sweetly with him tucked in and dozing off while his parents sneak a peek from the door to make sure he's gone to bed for good. Advertisement - Continue Reading BelowThe Good Housekeeping Institute has tested and ranked the best quality products. You've probably heard of the Good Housekeeping Seal but might not know about our extensive "best" lists such our Best Car Ornaments for Busy Families and our Best Bedding Awards.This list was compiled by Contributing Writer Jessica Hartshorn with insight from our kids' book-award series, done in conjunction with librarians and families, as well as recommendations from our Lab pros who are also parents. Hartshorn previously worked for Parents magazine and is a mom of two boys.Jessica HartshornContributing WriterJessica (she/her) is a freelance writer with several decades of experience writing lifestyle content and evaluating home and parenting products. A mom of two teens and two cats, her previous work can be seen in American Baby and Parents.Watch Next Advertisement - Continue Reading Below