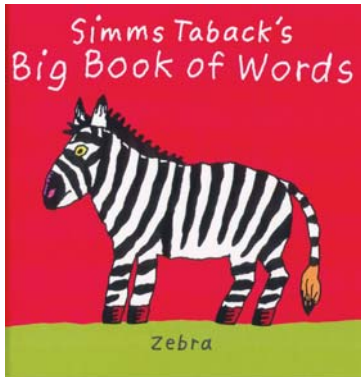




# The Reading Chair

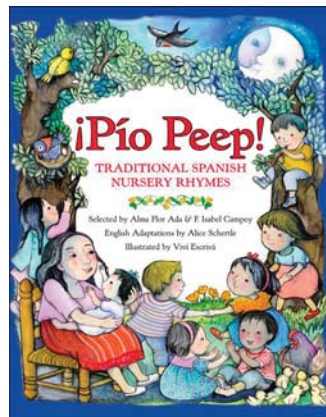


**Simms Taback's Big Book of Words**, by Harriet Ziefert. Illus. by Simms Taback. 2004. Maplewood, NJ: Blue Apple Books. 90 pp. ISBN 1-59354-035-3. Ages birth to 5 years.

Caldecott medalist Simms Taback (*Joseph Had a Little Overcoat*, 1999) has created the perfect browsing book

for young children. The square book is divided into four categories of familiar objects: playthings, clothing, food, and animals. Each page, made of heavy paper, has an identifying word at the top and a wonderful folksy illustration below that fills almost the whole page. The art is colorful and bold with humorous details sprinkled throughout. For the older child who is just beginning to read and decode words, this book is an artistic choice.

**¡Pío Peep! Traditional Spanish Nursery Rhymes [Rimas Tradicionales en Espanol]**, selected by Alma Flor Ada & F. Isabel Campoy. 2003. English adaptations by Alice Schertle. Illus. by Viví Escrivá. New York: HarperCollins/Rayo. 64 pp. ISBN 0-6881-6019-0. Ages birth to 6.

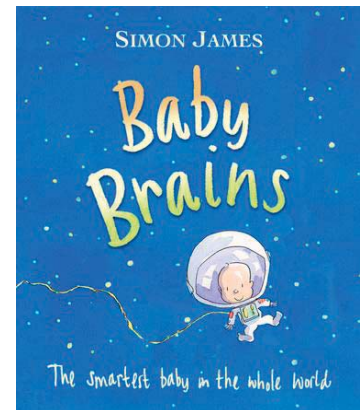


"The words of nursery rhymes and songs gave both wings and roots to my soul," says Alma Flor Ada, one of the book's editors. *¡Pío Peep!* is a compilation of 29 rhymes and nursery songs from Spain and Latin America, lovingly selected favorites of these regions' cultures. Accompanying English versions capture the essence and the beauty of the rhyme rather than being stilted word-for-word translations. As a result,

both English and Spanish versions are poetic and rhythmic, just as nursery rhymes should be.

Having only one rhyme per page, with beautiful illustrations by Viví Escrivá, is age appropriate, without too many visual distractions or clutter. The watercolor illustrations have just the right amount of detail for young children. This nursery rhyme book has it all.

**Baby Brains**, by Simon James. 2004. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick Press. 30 pp. ISBN 0-7636-2507-8. Ages 3 to 7.



Are we surprised that Mr. and Mrs. Brains have the smartest baby ever born? Not really. After all, they read to him in utero and played music and language tapes by placing headphones on Mrs. Brains's belly.

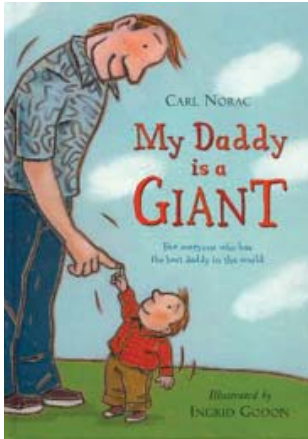
Shortly after birth, Baby Brains reads the newspaper, fixes the car, and declares that he wants to go to school and become a doctor. Word spreads, and soon Baby Brains, who joins the astronaut program, is launched into outer space. All seems to be going well until ground control radios him and asks how he is doing. "I want my mommy!" he cries.

Baby Brains is quickly brought back to his parents' arms, given a warm bath, wrapped in a blanket, and put in a crib. Children will identify with the need for security, and parents will laugh at the over-the-top pride in this new baby. Charming watercolor illustrations and a humorous surprise ending delight readers.

**Isabel Baker, MAT, MLS, is president of The Book Vine for Children, a national company dedicated to getting good books into the hands of preschool children and their teachers. Isabel has worked as a children's librarian and is currently a presenter on early literacy and book selection.**

**Chair illustration by Diane Greenseid.**

***My Daddy Is a Giant*, by Carl Norac. Illus. by Ingrid Godon. 2004. New York: Clarion Books. 29 pp. ISBN 0-6184-4399-1. Ages 3 to 6.**



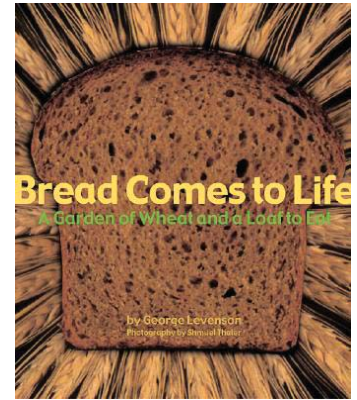
A young boy has his own in-house giant, his father. Birds make nests in his hair, the ground shakes when he runs, and it feels like a hurricane when he sneezes. And the boy feels safe in his arms. The giant dad takes up most of the double-page spread illustrations, helping the reader experience the boy's awe. The book is a lovely, imaginative celebration of an important relationship.

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***Bread Comes to Life: A Garden of Wheat and a Loaf to Eat*, by George Levenson. Photog. by Shmuel Thaler. 2004. Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press/Tricycle. 32 pp. ISBN 1-5824-6114-7. Ages 4 to 8.**



I never really understood “separating the wheat from the chaff” until I read this book. Levenson takes us through the entire bread-making process. He starts by sowing the seeds. Then he gathers the stalks, separates the wheat from the chaff, and grinds the grain into flour. The simple rhyming text complements the clear (and somewhat showy) photographs, helping to make the whole process understandable. Warning: Once you read about punching down the dough and then letting it rise, all mouths will be watering for a fresh piece of bread! Recipes for bread and wheat gum are included.