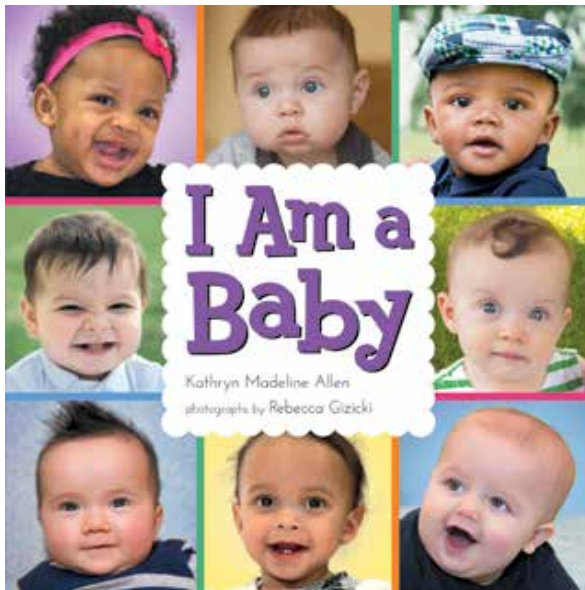


The Reading Chair

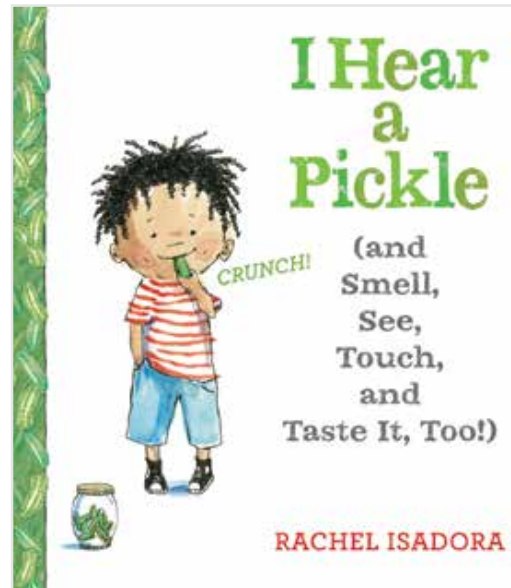
New children's books too good to miss and one forever favorite



I Am a Baby

by Kathryn Madeline Allen. Photographs by Rebecca Gizicki. 2016. Park Ridge, IL: Albert Whitman. 24 pp. Ages birth to 3.

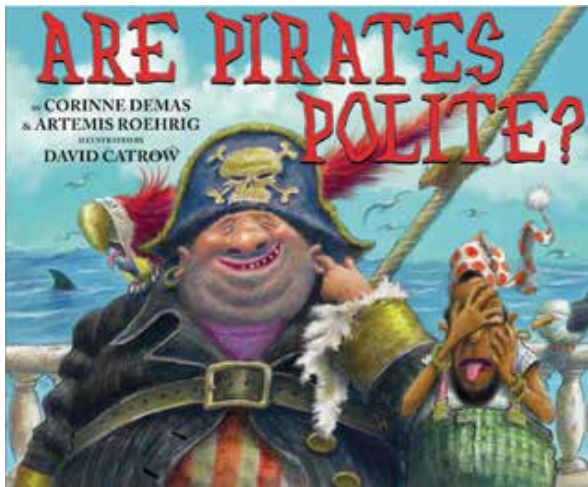
Babies love looking at other babies, and this book is a feast for their eyes. Using free-flowing rhyme, it covers all the essential elements of babyhood—daily routines, body parts, family members, pets, and everyday objects. Large, expressive photographs feature parents, grandparents, and siblings. The book includes multiracial families, interracial families, and a family with two moms as well.



I Hear a Pickle (and Smell, See, Touch, and Taste It, Too!)

by Rachel Isadora. 2016. New York: Nancy Paulsen Books. 32 pp. Ages 3 to 7.

Jump into this masterful book, and explore the many things we can hear, smell, see, touch and taste—even a pickle! Rachel Isadora (creator of the Caldecott Honor book *Ben's Trumpet* and 200 other titles) offers interesting examples (“I hear the birdie. ... I hear the ocean in the shell. ... I *don't* hear the worm.”). Stellar illustrations bring humor, emotion, and the magic of childhood to vignettes about each of the senses. Accessible and entertaining, this is a STEAM book at its best. Extension activities abound.



Are Pirates Polite?

By Corinne Demas and Artemis Roehrig. Illus. by David Catrow. 2016. New York: Orchard Books. 40 pp. Ages 3 to 7.

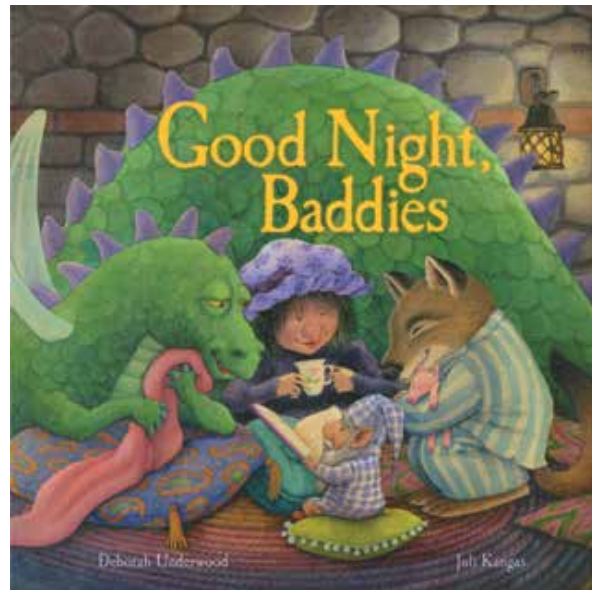
Who knew that pirates, for all their grotesque ways, are quite polite? This funny book shows the cultivated side of the disorderly bunch. “Pirates are unruly and pirates love to fight, but pirates still say ‘please’ and ‘thanks’ ‘cause pirates are polite.” Told completely in rhyme, humorous text flows from page to page. Entertaining examples show pirates acting civilized in uncivilized situations. For example, after a noxious belch, they kindly say “excuse me” to their suffering mates.

The illustrations showcase Catrow at his best. Children will be drawn right into the pictures, which always show the eye where to go.

By reminding readers of mannerliness (like using inside voices, sharing, and chewing with your mouth shut) while also letting them enjoy the spectacle of characters who struggle between being naughty and being kind, the book offers much more than rules. It expands readers’ sense of self and makes them feel understood. And maybe they’ll remember to say *please* and *thank you*, too.

About the authors

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.



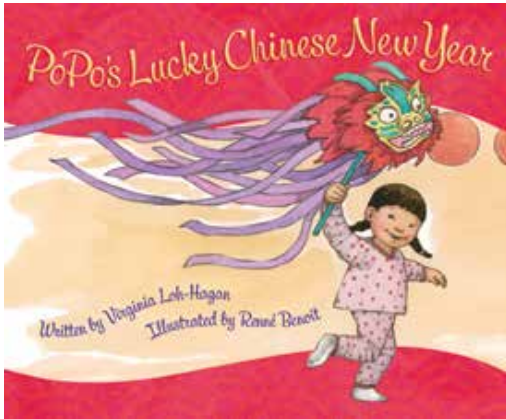
Good Night, Baddies

by Deborah Underwood. Illus. by Juli Kangas. New York: Beach Lane Books. 32 pp. Ages 3 to 8.

After a long and challenging day, everyone needs the safety and comfort of home—even the naughty characters in nursery tales, whom Underwood has delightfully labeled *baddies*. Witches, wolves, dragons and trolls return to a shared castle at night and console each other about the troubles they’ve faced: “Poor old troll, your life is tough: a muddy wait for three goats gruff.” How empowering for young children to see the vulnerable side of life’s scary figures!

Underwood’s text and Kangas’s excellent illustrations work well as a stand-alone book about life’s unsavory characters. And they’ll be even more powerful to children who are familiar with nursery tales.

Miriam Baker Schiffer, MFA, is a writer in Brooklyn, New York. She consults on book selections for The Book Vine, in McHenry, Illinois. Miriam’s children’s book, *Stella Brings the Family*, was published by Chronicle Books in 2015.



PoPo's Lucky Chinese New Year

by Virginia Loh-Hagan. Illus. by Renné Benoit. 2017. Ann Arbor: Sleeping Bear Press. 28 pp. Ages 4 to 8.

PoPo (Grandma) comes from China to prepare for and celebrate Chinese New Year with her family in America. Told from the perspective of her young granddaughter, who learns from her and helps with the preparations, this book offers rich detail about Chinese New Year customs and values. Readers learn about the cleaning rituals and what they mean, why red is an important color, what types of red clothing people wear for the holiday, and the intention behind traditions such as dragon dances and handing out oranges. Making sure the year ahead is a lucky one takes hard work! A charming and relatable multigenerational story.

Forever Favorites

Each month we feature a classic book to (re)introduce teachers to old favorites.



Madeline

by Ludwig Bemelmans. 1939. New York: Viking Press. 54 pp. Ages 2 to 6.

For generations, the Madeline series has enchanted readers by following a group of girls from a French boarding school as they traversed the world. None of the books has had the staying power of the original *Madeline*, which focuses on the everyday richness of school life, communal living, and being brave in the face of danger. That's ultimately Madeline's appeal—she exhibits courage and spunk, whether facing a tiger at the zoo or having her appendix taken out. The book's longevity is largely due to Bemelmans's magnificent rhyme, which is pleasing to the ear. Longtime fans continue to quote the book today.