

## 7 Must-Have Books for 3-Year-Olds

by Iva-Marie Palmer



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My once-upon-a-time three-year-old is now a big ol' five-year-old (correction: he'd say "five-and-a-half") but I still remember our go-to picture books from that age. Now I look forward to the days when I can trot out the same reads for my toddler, who will be three before I know it! And if we're lucky, my older son will be the one pulling these from the bookshelf to read to his baby brother and me.



### **Llama Llama Red Pajama**

by Anna Dewdney

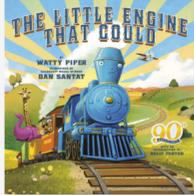
A delightful and prolific series, Anna Dewdney's *Llama Llama* is a reader favorite. The magic began back in 2005 with *Llama Llama Red Pajama*, a rhyming read-aloud that finds young Llama Llama feeling nervous about falling asleep by himself - and Mama Llama coming to the rescue. This extra-special edition includes a CD audio recording of Dewdney reading the story, bonus *Llama Llama* tales, and even a keepsake print. It's the perfect place to start with the beloved series, or an exciting new addition to your collection.



### **The Very Hungry Caterpillar**

by Eric Carle

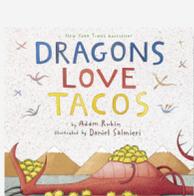
Every family needs a copy of Eric Carle's classic, and three is the perfect age to start fully appreciating the voracious caterpillar who snacks his way through every day of the week (including one epic picnic that will have you itching to plan a picnic yourself!). Even better, this 50th anniversary edition is stuffed with special bonus content, including a letter from Eric Carle, rare peeks of his original sketches, and more.



### **The Little Engine That Could: 90th Anniversary Edition**

by Watty Piper, illustrated by Dan Santat

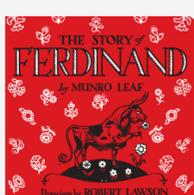
An absolute classic since it was first published in 1930, *The Little Engine That Could* is still charming readers worldwide. We love this 90th anniversary edition, which features illustrations by Caldecott Medal winner Dan Santat and an introduction by Dolly Parton. It pays homage to the original illustrations while adding even more life and cheerful triumph to the timeless story of perseverance.



### **Dragons Love Tacos**

by Adam Rubin, illustrated by Daniel Salmieri

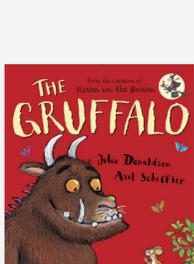
This silly book about, you guessed it, dragons that love tacos (and parties!), is a huge hit with the preschool set. The illustrations are entertaining and include subtle jokes that are fun to find as the storyline becomes more familiar.



### **The Story of Ferdinand**

by Munro Leaf, illustrated by Robert Lawson

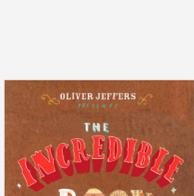
If it's been a while since you read *The Story of Ferdinand*, prepare to be won over again. Ferdinand isn't like the other bulls - he prefers smelling flowers to locking horns - so what's he to do when expected to fight? The story's message of nonviolence made it a favorite of Gandhi's, and it's also a valuable entry point for discussing themes of masculinity with young boys and girls.



### **The Gruffalo**

by Julia Donaldson, illustrated by Axel Scheffler

Ooh, I don't want to spoil *The Gruffalo* if you haven't read it, because it's kids' storytelling at its finest. The wonderfully rhymed tale of a mouse who invents a fearsome creature called the Gruffalo to ward off enemies is both amusing and a marvelous lesson in quick-thinking and imagination.



### **The Incredible Book Eating Boy**

by Oliver Jeffers

Charmed by the illustrations, my son chose this read as a vacation souvenir from City Lights Bookstore in San Francisco. The story of a boy who eats books — and gets smarter as a result — quickly became my son's most-read picture book, causing us to seek out Jeffers's other picture books. As a book-loving mama, you can imagine my heart-leaping delight when I overheard my son tell friends at a bookstore that Oliver Jeffers is his favorite author. So, as you seek books for your child at any age, I mostly recommend letting them lead the way!

### **Iva-Marie Palmer**

Iva-Marie Palmer lives with her family in a book-laden house just outside Los Angeles. She is the author of two YA novels, *The End of the World As We Know It* and *The Summers*. She doesn't need to write a letter of advice to her 9-year-old self because that 9-year-old had already discovered the works of Judy Blume.