

Making Reading Relevant: Read, Learn, and Do!

If you are taking a trip to a new place, you may pick up a travel book to learn more about your destination. Reading makes our real-world experiences more meaningful. It gives us historical perspective, a sense of other cultures, and an introduction to the symbols and viewpoints we may encounter. Books help us make sense of what we see around us.

Books do the same thing for children. Fictional stories help children work through fears and desires, and nonfiction helps them understand processes and observe patterns. Every time you pair a book with an experience, you are giving your child an opportunity to learn more about their world.

Here are some suggestions for 3-4 year olds:

Animals

Fiction: *The Tale of Rabbit and Coyote*, by Tony Johnston, or *Velma Gratch and the Way Cool Butterfly*, by Alan Madison

Nonfiction: *First Animal Encyclopedia*, by DK Publishing, or *Kingfisher First Encyclopedia of Animals*, by Kingfisher Publishing

Activities: What do animals do? (Jump like a rabbit! Howl like a coyote!) Take a nature walk and talk about the animals you see.

Nature

Fiction: *Leaves*, by David Ezra Stein, or *Shell Crazy, Snow Crazy, Stone Crazy, Tree Crazy*, by Tracy Gallup

Nonfiction: *A Seed is Sleepy*, by Dianna Hutts Aston, or *Nature's Art Box*, by Laura C. Martin

Activities: Plant a seed in a cup and watch it grow. Find a tree in your neighborhood and watch how it changes with each season.

Art

Fiction: *Scribble*, by Deborah Freedman, or *The Art Lesson*, by Tomie de Paola

Nonfiction: *Frida*, by Jonah Winter, or *Henri Matisse: Drawing with Scissors*, by Jane O'Connor

Activities: Have your child draw a self-portrait, and then have him or her tell you about it. Find examples of art in your community, such as murals or sculptures.

For more information on reading with your preschooler, visit:
www.readingrockets.org/article/7833

