

## Book Review by Martha Topol, local children's librarian:

A satisfying way to connect with young children is through a book. There's nothing quite like the cozy comfort that comes from snuggling with your favorite young one while experiencing the best that a good children's book can offer- invigorating, meaningful stories coupled with rich, eye-opening art.

Board books are always a fun choice when it comes to babies and toddlers. The pages are sturdy and thus kid friendly with no need for concern about sticky fingers, ripped pages or teething slobber- just wipe clean and move on! Board books come in all sizes as well, from those small enough to fit in a toddler hand to a larger dimension which more closely emulates the experience of reading a full-sized picture book.

- Several classics have been turned into effective board books. There's Goodnight Moon by Margaret Wise Brown with pictures by Clement Hurd. Published in 1947 this book captures the spirit of bedtime as the light fades and a child settles in for the night.
- The Napping House by Don and Audrey Wood is another bedtime classic that lends itself well to the board book format. This is a repetitive, cumulative story where everyone, a snoring granny, a dreaming child, a dozing dog, is sleeping on top of one another, for a while at least.
- The Little Blue Truck by Alice Schertle with art by Jill McElmurry is another fun rollick, emphasizing animals and their sounds, colors and muddy trucks all set against a lush fall backdrop and concluding with a satisfying nod toward teamwork (and the power of the frog) as the ultimate solution.
- In The Mitten, Jan Brett has turned this Ukrainian folktale into a visual tour de force as animals of ever enlarging size find themselves squished together inside a young boy's lost mitten. Not possible? Jan Brett shows us how.
- If Jan Brett's lush and detailed style of art is not for you, try All in a Day by Cynthia Rylant with art by Nikki McClure. Using a limited palette and bold dynamic compositions the paper cut-out art is perfect for a younger child. The art is eye-catching and full of contrasts while the text, by award winning author Cynthia Rylant, gives readers lots to discuss and ponder while exploring and celebrating a day. "A day brings hope and kindness, too...a day is all its own."
- Another book written by an award-winning author and created in black and white is Kevin Henkes' Kitten's First Full Moon. Henkes is a master at books for young children. He is able to present ideas and concepts with a childlike sensibility that acknowledges the reality of an event, such as a kitten who is hungry, while also exploring the possibilities of one's imaginative interpretation, if a bowl of milk looks like the moon, then it's time to set out on a journey to discover that full bowl. Kitten's First Full Moon garnered Henkes a Caldecott medal, given to an artist for the best illustrated children's book of the year.
- This year's Caldecott medal was given to Michaela Goade for the book We Are Water Protectors written by Carole Lindstrom. This isn't a board book, but if there's one

picture book to consider gifting to a child, this one could be it. Created by this Indigenous artistic team, the book makes a powerful statement bridging the past, presented with authentic cultural sensitivity, to our present, where water and our connection to the earth is central to our continued existence. The art flows with vibrant color and works with the text to create a meaningful and dynamic experience for the reader.

Children's books are inspiring. They can enrich the lives of the child as well as their caregivers. Find a book that speaks to you and let your joy shine as you share that book with others.