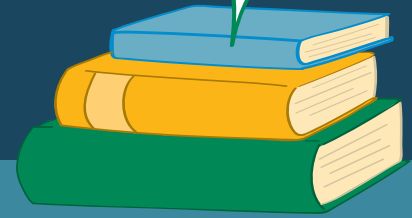


# Growing Readers Review

January  
2023



*Books of Excellence and Notable books are selected annually by a panel of Bright Horizons early childhood experts and represent some of the best new writing in children's literature.*

## Book of Excellence

**NEW!**

Growing Readers  
**Book Club videos!**  
See page 2  
for further details.

PRESCHOOL

Listen



**Written by Gabi Snyder; Illustrated by Stephanie Graegin**

Noise. It's all around us, but what if we could stop and really listen — listen to nature and listen to each other? *Listen* follows a child's typical day through the lens of intentional listening, which transforms an ordinary day into something special.

### Storytelling Tips

- ▶ **Observe the patterns.** Graegin intentionally uses a monochromatic background of blues, grays, and greens to direct the reader's attention, with pops of red, yellow, and brown to highlight characters and words. Notice and point out these patterns, e.g., a red teapot in a window, a red umbrella, or a yellow shadow.
- ▶ **Discuss words' power.** Some words are joyful, and other words can sting, according to the story. Has your child experienced this? How did it feel? How can you choose words that feel good? What can you do to fix words that sting?

### Extend the Learning

- ▶ **Try some monochromatic painting.** Offer one shade of paint such as blue. Show your child how to lighten the hue by adding water or white paint, or darken the hue with a bit of black paint. Create a painting using only these hues. If your child's interested, use a pencil to make light, medium, or very dark strokes.
- ▶ **Go on a sound walk.** Walk through your neighborhood and focus on the sounds you hear. Grab a large piece of paper and make a sound map when you return home. Draw the streets and buildings and write or draw pictures of the sounds you hear.
- ▶ **Be mindful.** Did you know that focusing on sensory feedback is a mindfulness technique that can relieve anxiety and stress? Invite your child to close their eyes. What do they hear? What do they smell? What do they feel? Introduce onomatopoeia. The book mentions *quick* and *snappy* as words that resemble the sounds they describe. Can you think of other words that use onomatopoeia, e.g., *splat*, *bang*, or *buzz*?

We believe that books have the power to build empathy in children, introducing them to new perspectives and ideas. Through stories, children come to understand others' hopes, dreams, joys, and sorrows. We're committed to offering diverse stories and voices to our readers.

# Notable Books

Other great books we recommend.

Point your smart phone camera at the code to link to the Growing Readers website for more book recommendations.



## INFANT & TODDLER

### I Am a Baby

Written and Illustrated by Kathryn Madeline Allen; Photographs by Rebecca Gizicki

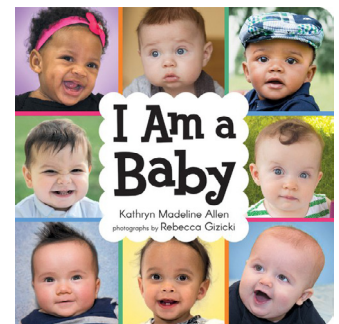
Vibrant, joyful photos depicting babies and their everyday lives will spark the interest of babies and caregivers alike.

#### Storytelling Tips

- ▶ **Go at your child's speed.** Babies love to hear stories over and over again, although their focus and attention can vary from day to day. Adapt your storytelling to your child's interest level. Put the book away if your child seems bored, or add more details if your child is interested.
- ▶ **Make it relevant.** Making text-to-self connections is an important reading skill that builds children's comprehension and increases reading enjoyment. Start here by pointing out relevant aspects of the book, e.g., "Look, this baby has a red crib. You have a white crib." Or "Look at this baby's puppy. He looks like Max, your puppy."

#### Extend the Learning

- ▶ **Make your own photo book.** Take photos of your child, family, pets, and beloved objects. Print the photos on cardstock with a few descriptive words, and put them in a small plastic photobook. Place the book where your child can freely access it.
- ▶ **Practice serve-and-return.** As you read the story, watch and respond to your baby's reactions. Your baby points excitedly at the picture of the rubber duck, for example. You might nod and say, "Yes, this baby has a rubber duck just like you. Where is your duck?" Your baby gestures to the bathroom and you say, "Yes, your duck is in the bathroom. We'll play with it when you take a bath," and so on, continuing the conversational exchange for several turns.



Check it out!

Don't miss this month's riveting video episode of the Growing Readers Book Club! Become Teacher Nate's co-researchers as you and your child are introduced to high-quality children's books along with ideas to explore, create, and investigate further!

*Growing* **Readers**  
Book Club

Join Teacher Nate for this month's video featuring the book "Listen" by Gabi Snyder which shows us how sound impacts the way we interact with others, how we connect with our environment, and how we keep ourselves safe. Then, play the sound identification game to see if you can figure out the three mystery sounds!

[Watch the video here!](#)



We are proud to partner with The Book Vine for Children on our Growing Readers book selections. [Click here](#) to order these books and more.

# Notable Books *Continued...*

## SCHOOL-AGE (K-2)

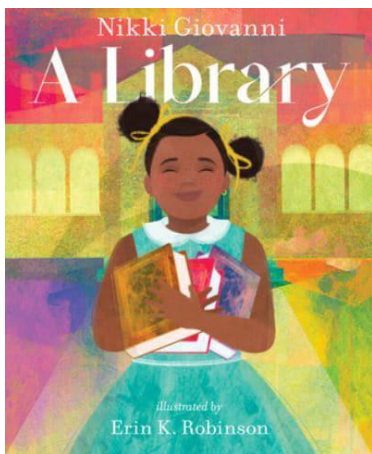
### *A Library*

Written by Nikki Giovanni; Illustrated by Erin K. Robinson

Acclaimed poet and New York Times bestselling author Nikki Giovanni shares the early library experiences that formed her. Inspiring and uplifting, this book offers a new way to look at our libraries.

### Storytelling Tips

- ▶ **Examine the illustrations.** Erin K. Robinson's illustrations are luminously vibrant. Take time to examine each page.
- ▶ **Discuss a library's meaning.** Giovanni writes, "A library is..." Before you turn the page, ask your child what a library is to them. Maybe it's a place to read stories, take classes, or play games. After your discussion, turn the page to continue reading. Do your ideas match Giovanni's?
- ▶ **Offer some context.** On the last page, Giovanni describes her childhood experiences at the public library. Mrs. Long, the beloved librarian, brought books for her from the larger central library, which Giovanni couldn't visit because of segregation. Discuss the policy and practice of segregation. How would that feel? Does it seem fair? Mrs. Long couldn't change the system, but she made a difference for one small girl. How can we make things better for the people around us?



### Extend the Learning

- ▶ **Get a library card.** Visit your local library to meet the children's librarian. Show your child how the library is organized and get a library card for your child if possible.
- ▶ **Create a library at home.** Help your child create a pretend library at home. Place books on a shelf or in a box that's accessible to your child. Create homemade library cards and invite your child to be the librarian, helping stuffed animals, siblings, or friends choose books.
- ▶ **Explore Giovanni's life experiences.** Nikki Giovanni spent summers at her grandmother's home where she helped wash and fold laundry and peel vegetables for dinner. Invite your child to help with similar tasks. These ordinary experiences build children's skills and offer the comforting sense of predictable routines and ritual.

## SCHOOL-AGE (3<sup>RD</sup>-6<sup>TH</sup>)

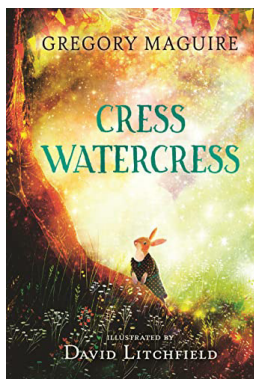
### *Cress Watercress*

**Written by Gregory Maguire; Illustrated by David Litchfield**

When Cress's father goes missing, her mother assumes the worst. After all, a rabbit's life is dangerous. The family moves to a drab apartment in an old oak tree where they meet a host of interesting characters. An instant classic coming-of-age story about friendship, bravery, and family.

### Storytelling Tips

- ▶ **Read together.** Part *Charlotte's Web*, part *The Wind in the Willows*, this book is the perfect read-aloud. Make some time in the evenings after dinner or before bed to share as a family. Short chapters and vibrant illustrations ensure reading enjoyment.
- ▶ **Point out imagery.** *Cress Watercress* is full of imagery, metaphor, and simile. Explain the differences and point examples out to your child. Imagery uses rich language to create a picture in the reader's mind; metaphor figuratively compares two things, e.g., *a wolf dressed in sheep's clothing*; a simile makes direct comparisons with the words *like* or *as*, e.g., *as bright as the midday sun*.
- ▶ **Ask questions.** School-age children are eager to dive more deeply into their reading. Ask thoughtful questions such as, "Why do you think the owl is so grouchy?" "Which character reminds you most of yourself?" "What would you have done if you were Cress?"



### Extend the Learning

- ▶ **Discover real-life woodland animals.** Read books, visit the internet, or conduct real-life research to learn about how real owls, rabbits, squirrels, and birds live. Where do they live? What do they eat? What animals live in your neighborhood? Consider setting up a bird feeder or joining Audubon's Great [Backyard Bird Count](#) to track the birds where you live.
- ▶ **Study shadows.** Shadows figure largely in the story. Try making shadow puppets with your hands and a light at night. Measure your shadows at various times of the day, or trace each other's shadows.
- ▶ **Imitate nature.** Illustrator David Litchfield studied real-life examples of leaves, bark, and trees when doing his illustrations. Gather some natural objects, pull out some art materials, and draw or paint what you see.