

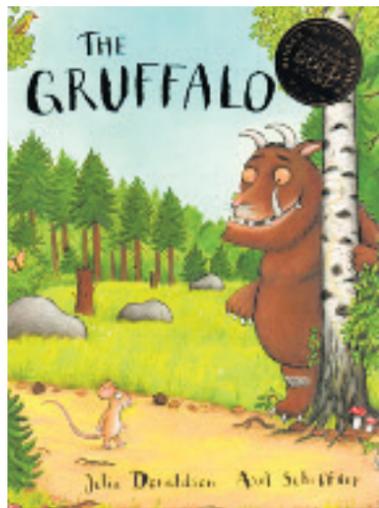
THE 10 BEST BOOKS FOR TODDLERS

# Once upon a time...

From bedtime stories to help with potty training, **Justine East** picks her favourite books for children

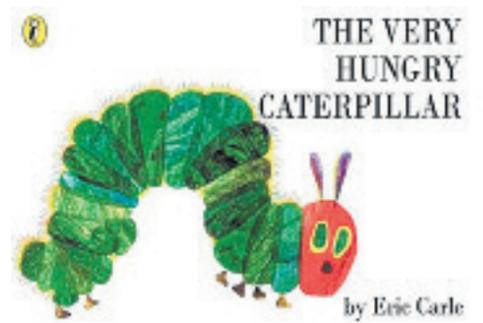
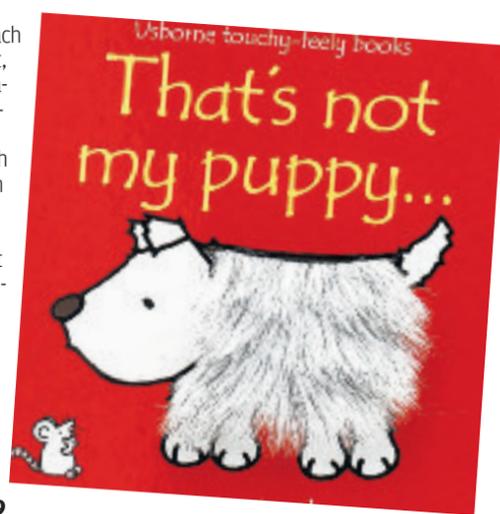
**Best for older toddlers: 'The Gruffalo' by Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler**

Over four million copies of this trickster tale have sold worldwide since its publication in 1999 and with good reason. It is imaginative and magical as well as being beautifully written and illustrated. It is, in short, a modern classic and, as such, has won over a legion of fans young and old as well as numerous awards. Last year, it even made the big screen. Worthwhile investments among the huge array of *Gruffalo* merchandise include the audio-book read by Imelda Staunton, *The Gruffalo Jigsaw Book*, *The Gruffalo Magnet Book* and, best of all, *The Gruffalo Pop-up Theatre Book*.  
**Macmillan: £5.99**



**Best for younger toddlers: 'That's Not My Puppy...' by Fiona Watt**

No child should go through their infancy without at least one of the 31 books in this award-winning series, which ranges from *That's Not My Puppy* to *That's Not My Fairy*. Each combines bright, colourful illustrations with a variety of different textures to touch and feel on each page as well as reassuringly repetitive text. It helps young children to develop important language and sensory skills as well as getting them interested in books generally.  
**Usborne: £5.99**



**Best classic: 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' by Eric Carle**

When *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* burst on to the scene in 1969, children instantly took to it, and while the word "classic" is banded about by publishers, this book genuinely is just that. There are several reasons why: the colourful and now iconic illustrations, the hole in each page that enables your infant to push his or her chubby finger through it to mimic the caterpillar munching through his array of bizarre foodstuffs, and most of all its spirit. Only last year, Carle himself called it "a book of hope. You can grow up and fly into the world with your talents". Many versions have popped up over the years, the most recent being *The Very Hungry Caterpillar Finger Puppet Book* (£7.99).  
**Puffin: £5.99 (hardback, mini-board)**

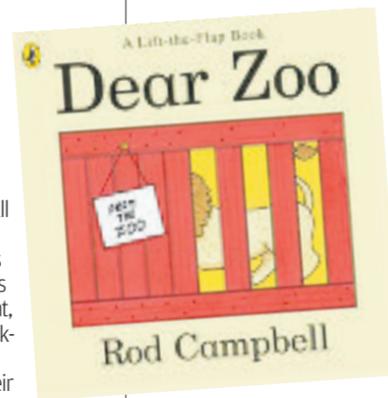
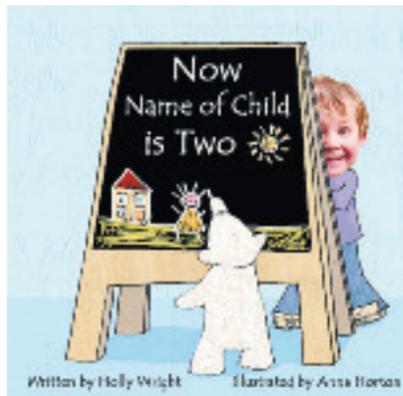


**Best funny book: 'Pants' by Giles Andreae and Nick Sharratt**

This award-winning toddler's book is a celebration of pants - frilly ones, spotty ones, big and small ones and many more. It is a must for any family with a sense of humour. And if you feel you need a tad more educational value in the books you buy for your offspring, fear not as it offers a wider view of the world. We defy any toddler not to adore it.  
**Random House: £5.99 (paperback)**

**Best personalised book: 'Now You Are Two' by Holly Wright**

Toddlers often love nothing more than looking at themselves in a mirror and hearing simple stories about themselves. Itsyourstory was one of the first companies in the UK to offer photo personalised books, and has the largest and arguably the best quality range. An added bonus of their books - which include *The Dressing Up Box* and *A Trip to the Farm*, among many others - is that, once the child has grown out of the book, it becomes a great memento, all the better for being well-thumbed. Better still, all the books have a focus on the child's development, whether making them aware of their surroundings or enhancing their self-esteem. A fabulous gift for any toddler.  
**www.itsyourstory.co.uk: £19.99**



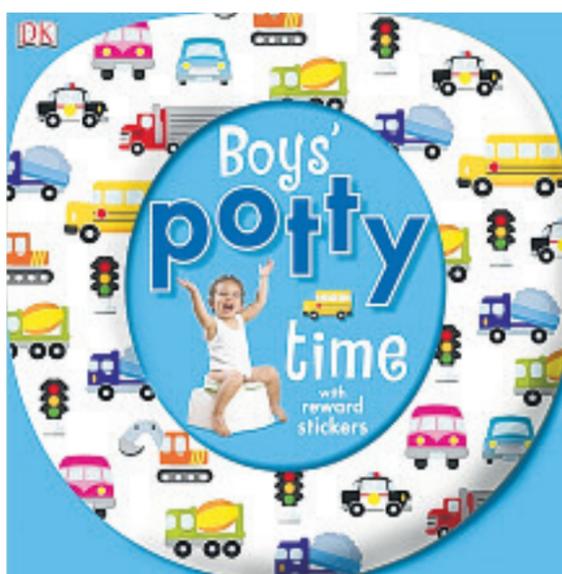
**Best lift-the-flap book: 'Dear Zoo' by Rod Campbell**

Rod Campbell's *Dear Zoo* is simple yet engaging. In short - and it is short (and therefore perfect for a tired toddler's bedtime read) - it is a charming and subtly humorous tale about wanting to find the perfect pet. Kids gain endless delight from lifting the flaps to see the animals, and rare is the

household where this book doesn't become an instant hit and long-time favourite. For other much-loved Rod Campbell books, check out *Oh Dear!*, *Farm 123* and *ABC Zoo*, which have sold millions of copies worldwide.  
**Puffin: £5.99**

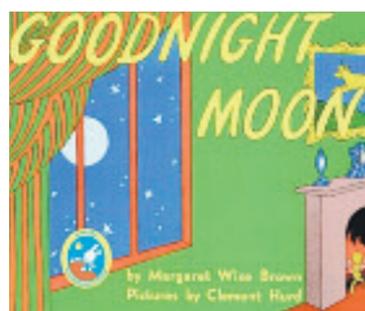
**Best adventure book: 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt' by Michael Rosen**

This book has a charm all of its own. Follow the family's excitement as they wade through the grass, splash through the river and squelch through the mud in search of a bear. What a surprise awaits them in the cave on the other side of the dark forest. Michael Rosen's tale is playfully written and the illustrations by Helen Oxenbury genuinely capture the feeling of being outdoors in all weathers. Magical.  
**Walker: £5.99**



**Best book to help your child through a new experience: 'Boys' Potty Time' and 'Girls' Potty Time'**

With a unique potty-shaped cover, these brilliant toilet-training books are perfect for helping your child make the transition from nappies to pants. Full of fun rhymes and pictures that show your child how to use their potty, the *Potty Time* series is an excellent investment. Bright colours and photography make the books engaging for young children, and fun and friendly advice helps to take the worry out of potty training for parents and toddlers alike. Each book includes a sheet of special reward stickers.  
**Dorling Kindersley: £4.99 each**



**Best bedtime story book: 'Goodnight Moon' by Margaret Wise Brown**

This is the ultimate calming book. By saying goodnight to everything in the room - even the air - children are lulled into a peaceful sleep. It's short enough for toddlers' attention spans, and its rhymes can easily be repeated.  
**Macmillan: £4.99**

**Best heart-warmer: 'No Matter What' by Debi Gliori**

A little fox is in a big bad mood and is worried its mother won't love it forever. In this enchanting picture book, a clever and resourceful mother proves to her child that a parent's love is limitless - no matter what. It's a fresh and creative treatment of the familiar subject of childhood worries that award-winning author and illustrator Debi Gliori seems to perfect - probably because she was inspired to create the book to reassure her daughter of her love for her. It's been called the literary equivalent of a big hug, and rightfully so.  
**Bloomsbury: £4.49 (paperback)**

