- Smart KIM SLATER
- Loser JERRY SPINELLI
- Mockingbird KATHRYN ERSKINE
- Marcelo in the Real World Francisco x Stork
- The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time MARK HADDON

SEE ALSO: different, feeling . routine, unable to cope with a change in the

awkward

SEE: shyness • tall, being





baby, being a

We've all been there - some more recently than others. See our lists below.

THE TEN BEST BOOKS FOR BABIES

- The Baby's Catalogue Allan Ahlberg, Illustrated by Janet Ahlberg
- FB Each Peach Pear Plum Allan Ahlberg, Illustrated by Janet Ahlberg
- FB Forever EMMA DODD
- Ten Little Fingers and Ten Little Toes MEM FOX, ILLUSTRATED BY HELEN OXENBURY
- Mother Goose KATE GREENAWAY
- PB Peek-a-Who? NINA LADEN
- Faces JO LODGE
- Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See? BILL MARTIN JR, ILLUSTRATED BY ERIC CARLE
- PB Tickle Tickle HELEN OXENBURY
- PB On the Night You Were Born NANCY TILLMAN

THE TEN BEST PICTURE BOOKS FOR RHYTHM AND RHYME

- The Witch with an Itch helen baugh, illustrated by deborah allwright
- PB Mister Magnolia QUENTIN BLAKE
- FB Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed EILEEN CHRISTELOW
- PB Hairy Maclary from Donaldson's Dairy LYNLEY DODD
- The Snail and the Whale Julia donaldson, illustrated by axel scheffler
- PB Oh, No! candace fleming, illustrated by eric rohmann
- Pl Chicka Chicka Boom Boom bill martin jr and john archambault, illustrated BY LOIS EHLERT
- Little Rabbit Foo Foo michael rosen, illustrated by arthur robins
- PB Sing α Song of Bottoms Jeanne Willis, Illustrated by Adam Stower
- ER Green Eggs and Ham DR SEUSS

AWKWARD BABY, BEING A

THE TEN BEST TOUCHY-FEELY BOOKS

- There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly PAM ADAMS
- PB Fuzzy Fuzzy Fuzzy! sandra boynton
- The Very Hungry Caterpillar ERIC CARLE
- Feely Bugs DAVID A CARTER
- PB In My Tree SARA GILLINGHAM AND LORENA SIMINOVICH
- PB I Love to Eat amelie graux
- PB Pat the Bunny DOROTHY KUNHARDT
- PB Animal Kisses BARNEY SALTZBERG
- PB Wet Pet, Dry Pet, Your Pet, My Pet DR SEUSS
- That's Not My Puppy fiona watt, illustrated by rachel wells

SEE ALSO: small, being • understood, not being

baby talk

SEE: grow up, not wanting to • small, feeling

babysitter, not liking your

Sometimes a bad babysitter just needs a mentor or two. Leave a stack of these stories around the house and ask the babysitter to read them aloud to the kids. The children will thank you for it.

THE TEN BEST BABYSITTERS IN THE BUSINESS

- PB Benjamin McFadden and the Robot Babysitter TIMOTHY BUSH
- PB Good Dog, Carl ALEXANDRA DAY
- PB Be Good, Gordon angela mcallister, illustrated by tim archbold
- PB How to Babysit a Grandma JEAN REAGAN, ILLUSTRATED BY LEE WILDISH
- PB No Babysitters Allowed amber stewart, illustrated by Laura rankin
- CB Kristy's Great Idea ANN M MARTIN
- Mrs Noodlekugel Daniel Pinkwater, Illustrated by Adam Stower
- Mary Poppins PL TRAVERS
- The Mysterious Howling (The Incorrigible Children of Ashton Place) MARYROSE WOOD, ILLUSTRATED BY JON KLASSEN
- The Manny Files CHRISTIAN BURCH

bad loser, being a

SEE: loser, being a bad

bargaining, endless

PB Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!

With some grown-ups, a 'no' is final. But with others there's a small chink of doubt in the 'no', and if a child is quick about it (and they always are) they'll stick the end of a chisel into this chink and start

wiggling until the 'no' gives way. If this sounds familiar, pull out *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!*, one of the first books to bring the child into the story – and make them the responsible one. The experience will change them forever.

When the bus driver asks the reader to keep an eye on his bus while he goes away – and not, on any account, to let the pigeon drive it – no child, fluffed up with self-importance as they by now will be, can resist. The pigeon gets straight to the point. 'Hey, can I drive the bus?' he asks, innocent as you please. When the child says 'no', the wily pigeon deploys every tactic in *The Children's Handbook of Manipulation** to get an affirmative answer, from compliance-through-distraction ('Hey, I've got an idea. Let's play "Drive the bus!'") to bribery ('I'll be your best friend!') and emotional blackmail ('I have dreams, you know!'). Never was a simply drawn pigeon (round head, round eye, two stick legs) more expressive than when Willems lowers the shutter of the pigeon's eyelid to fit a simmering, tight-lipped 'Fine.' Most children find this book so absolutely hilarious that any attempts at bargaining thereafter will quickly slide into a parody of the bargaining pigeon – and become a lovely, happy shambles.

SEE ALSO: adolescence

bath, not wanting to have a

PB I Don't Want to Have a Bath!
JULIE SYKES,
ILLUSTRATED BY TIM
WARNES

(continued)

Every parent should keep a clutch of nakedly pro-bathing propaganda under the bathroom sink for when their sticky infant, smeared with jam, glue, sand, glitter, orange juice and beetroot purée needs convincing that having a dunk in a bathtub

BABY TALK
BAD LOSER, BEING A

^{*} Only available to the under-18s.



The Pigeon Needs a Bath!

MO WILLEMS

Bathwater's Hot

is a good idea. A stalwart staple is *I Don't Want* to Have a Bath! from the appealing and brightly illustrated Little Tiger series, in which the mischievous bundle of orange-and-black stripes cavorts with each of his animal friends in turn, getting muckier and muckier in the process. It's quite

plain to the little tiger that being dirty is synonymous with having fun – and who would want to put an end to that? And then, thankfully, he meets an animal who won't play with him unless he's clean . . . Soap dodgers take note! The Pigeon Needs a Bath!, featuring the argumentative pigeon of Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus! fame (see: bargaining, endless), is guaranteed to contain more objections to bathing than your recalcitrant toddler could ever come up with by themselves, and effectively makes them all redundant. And the enticing illustrations in Bathwater's Hot make the idea of being wrapped in a warm, fluffy towel at the end impossible to resist.



CURE FOR GROWN-UPS The Witches ROALD DAHL, ILLUSTRATED BY QUENTIN BLAKE

Clever-clogs kids of chapter-book age will, of course, counter your request that they take a bath with the argument that, in Norway witches can smell a clean child more easily than a dirty one – and that regular baths put you at greater risk of being 'squelched'. (And, as you know, witches must squelch at least one child per week if they're to avoid getting grumpy.) Rather than suffer the lecture, keep your copy of this terrifying but brilliant story under lock and key – and only bring it out once the boy narrator and his cigar-smoking grandmother have finished turning every witch in the world into a mouse.

SEE ALSO: body odour • hands, not wanting to wash your • swim, inability to • told, never doing what you're

beards, horror of

PB The Runaway
Beard
DAVID SCHILLER,
ILLUSTRATED BY MARC
ROSENTHAL

Unless they have been raised in close proximity to one, small children frequently burst into tears at the sight of a beard. A razor is one way of dealing with it. Another is to bring out this surreal board book,

best friend, falling out with your

brainchild of an American paediatrician (see: tummy ache). Max is a streetwise-vet-sensitive trilby-wearing dude in the mould of Chandler's detective. Philip Marlowe. Having suffered from bed-wetting himself until he was eleven, Max now helps others kick the habit on a paying basis. When he takes on eight-year-old Billy as a client, Max gives him his usual spiel: these are the causes of bed-wetting, and here are some ways to help your body wake itself up if your bladder becomes too full. The snappy prose skims the embarrassment off all this talk of bodily functions, and the clear explanations and suggestions allow the child to assume responsibility for their issue themselves.

If bed-wetting persists in older children, it may be an indication of emotional upset, trauma or abuse - as it is for Willie in Goodnight, Mister Tom. A wartime evacuee, Willie arrives in the village of Little Weirwold malnourished and with his underwear sewn to his shirt. Though eight years old, he wets his bed every night and expects to be beaten for it. Tom Oakley, the elderly man who takes him in, shows great tact in his handling of the wet sheets: and as Willie discovers what it is to be treated with kindness and patience rather than hostility and suspicion, he gradually escapes the habit. Magorian writes with such hope, such positive energy and light, that one feels the real possibility that Willie will recover from the life he led with his over-zealous, religious mother and could even achieve his dream of becoming an actor one day. Sharing this encouraging story with a bed-wetting older child may help initiate discussions about what their underlying trigger may be.

Of course, for children just discovering the mixed pleasures of growing up, it may be that something else is going on . . . (see: periods; wet dreams).

SEE ALSO: abuse • baby, being a • embarrassment • trauma

bedroom, having to share your

SEE: alone, wanting to be left • share, inability to

bereavement

SEE: death of a loved one

PB Gossie & Gertie OLIVIER DUNREA

PB Mv Best. Best Friend (Charlie and Lola) LAUREN CHILD

Roller Girl VICTORIA JAMIESON

Having a best friend is a high-stakes game. Bliss while it lasts: torment when there's a bust-up. Prepare toddlers to ride the ups and downs by introducing them to Gossie and Gertie. These two yellow goslings do everything together: splash in the rain, dive in the pond, play hide-and-seek in the daisies. They even wear the same boots (Gossie's red, Gertie's blue). But then one day one of them decides not to follow the

other, but to go in the opposite direction . . . A lovely little board book* for reassuring a child that even when your shadow wants to branch out, it doesn't mean the friendship's gone awry.

My Best, Best Friend begins with Lola and Lotta doing everything together. They swap their fruit at lunchtime, and whenever Mrs Hanson says 'Get into pairs', they don't have to think twice about who to choose. But then a new girl, Evie, arrives and Mrs Hanson asks Lotta to look after her. Those downwardlooking eyes of Lola's really capture how bad it can feel to be left out for a while. Happily, she and Lotta re-establish their special connection just as Evie finds a new bestie, too.

The transition from primary to secondary school offers a child the chance to shuffle their deck of friends. But deciding where they belong can be nervewracking, especially for girls. Will they and their friends go girly, geeky or sports-crazy? Or will they, as many of the boys seem able to do, try to remain neutral and independent? For those left in the lurch when their old friends leap elsewhere, bring in the graphic novel Roller Girl.

Nicole and Astrid are 'still best friends' when the story opens, with Astrid's impressive mum in the habit of organising an 'Evening of Cultural Enlightenment' for them both on Fridays - often one that takes them out of their depth. We see them snoozing at the opera, standing blank-faced before a piece of abstract art, and laughing in all the wrong places at poetry readings. But this particular night she takes them to something unexpected: the Roller Derby. The players bowl Astrid over with their punky hair, tattoos and make-up - as well as their other-worldly, streetwise names (Scrappy Go Lucky, Scald Eagle, Pandemonium) - and she signs up for Roller Derby camp on the spot. She takes it for granted that Nicole will come too, and she's gutted when Nicole says she's already signed up for ballet camp.

Roller-skating turns out to be much harder than it looks, and Astrid spends

^{*} The Gossie & Gertie books are also available as early readers.

В

bookworm, being a

FIND FICTIONAL FELLOW-OBSESSIVES

One minute all they want to do is play with their friends.

The next their face has been replaced by the cover of an open book. Your previously sociable child has become a silent semi-presence, blind and deaf to the goings-on in the actual world. They walk to school

and deaf to the goings-on in the actual world. They walk to school without looking at their feet; they fork food into their mouth sight unseen; and when they come home, they're a guided missile locked on their reading nook. Your child has been bitten by the bug.

But that doesn't mean they're not being social. Ensure they meet people of like mind in the books they read by scattering some of the titles in the following list in their path. Here they'll find characters who, like them, devour books – and not just the words and the stories, but the paper they're printed on. Here they'll meet people who inhabit books, lose themselves in books, live through books and have their lives invaded by the characters in their books. Even as a bookworm they can be surrounded by soulmates. One day they will emerge from their chrysalis with new wings, enriched by their understanding of narrative, psychology and the world.

THE TEN BEST BOOKS ABOUT BOOKWORMS

- Beware of the Storybook Wolves LAUREN CHILD
- Charlie Cook's Favourite Book Julia donaldson, illustrated by axel scheffler
- [PB] The Incredible Book Eating Boy OLIVER JEFFERS
- [PB] The Fantastic Flying Books of Mr Morris Lessmore WE JOYCE
- The Boy Who Loved Words roni schotter, illustrated by giselle potter
- The Wishing Spell (The Land of Stories) CHRIS COLFER
- ${\tt CB}\,Matilda$ roald dahl, illustrated by quentin blake
- Inkheart cornelia funke
- CB Story Thieves JAMES RILEY
- The Book Thief MARKUS ZUSAK

boots, being too big for your

Shola and the Lions
BERNARDO ATXAGA,
ILLUSTRATED BY MIKEL
VALVERDE

Children who think they are particularly wonderful inspire a mixture of admiration and horror. Their confidence will no doubt take them far, but one can't help notice the disparity between the size of their

ego and the size of, er, them. Basque author Bernardo Atxaga visits this idea in his story about the inflated Shola. When a well-travelled friend visits Shola's human owner, Señor Grogó, and shares his tales of African kings and voracious wild animals, he leaves a book behind: The Lion, King of the Jungle. Shola laps it up, recognising herself in the description of the powerful, noble beasts who hunt for their food rather than suffer the indignity of being served ready-made mince (aromatic and alluring though mince is). Off Shola then heads to the jungle – er, park – to track down her next meal. Unfortunately all she finds is rotten food from the bins, a rather terrifying Burmese cat, and an impertinent duck. Slowly, she begins to see the truth for what it is and goes home to Señor Grogó, who, fortunately, has the mince still waiting. Valverde's quirky line-and-watercolour drawings perfectly capture the contrast between Shola's view of herself and the real her – a small and somewhat unimpressive white dog. Those with a bit of Shola in them will be nudged very gently into the appropriately sized boots.

SEE ALSO: bossiness • in charge, wanting to be • precociousness

bored, being

PB Harold and the Purple Crayon
CROCKETT JOHNSON

PB Journey, Quest and Return (Journey)

AARON BECKER

In these days of electronic devices – eagerly waiting to occupy the slightest unfilled moment – it's rare to catch sight of a bored child wandering disconsolately from room to room, complaining to whoever will listen that 'there isn't anything to do' and occasionally kicking the cat. In the circumstance that you find

one, seize the opportunity to re-set expectations with the ultimate paean to making something out of nothing, *Harold and the Purple Crayon*.

It's over half a century since Crockett Johnson's onesie-clad toddler went for a walk in the moonlight and, realising there was no moon, drew one into existence. He draws the path he's walking on and everything it leads him to – including, eventually, his room and his bed, when it's time to go to sleep. The fetching shape of the toddler as he reaches up to the far corners of the

page with his crayon pulls us ineluctably in; as does the fact that the crayon is presented as just an ordinary crayon. Bring this classic out for entertainmentchallenged kids of all ages, together with pens and a pad of white paper - or, even better, a wall - and encourage them to invent what they will.

Older kids can graduate to Aaron Becker's sumptuous graphic trilogy. beginning with Journey, which plays on the same idea. A little girl sits on the steps of her sepia-tinged house, fed up. We can see a man at a computer upstairs, a woman stirring something on the stove downstairs, and a sister lying on the sofa engaged with - you guessed it - a screen. When the little girl's attempts to lure each of them out to play come to nothing, she drifts to her room and slumps on her bed. But then she notices a stick of crimson chalk . . .

The wood she finds through the door she draws on her wall is enchanting: lanterns swing from the branches and a river threads between the trunks. At the end of a dock, she draws a crimson boat that carries her downstream to a city full of spires and domes. Uniformed guards welcome her in with waving arms. Architectural complexities abound as we follow her across a raised canal, complete with locks, down which city-dwellers are propelled in Venetian-style gondolas, shaded by fringed parasols. Waterfalls cascade from great heights. When her canal ends, mid-air, it catches her out - but she quickly draws a hot-air balloon as she falls . . . The absence of words makes this picture book and its sequels gloriously untaxing for the irritable brain, while there's enough detail in the watercolour fantasyscapes to warrant a careful poring-over of each page. A cure for boredom in itself, Becker's work is also brilliant for launching kids into their own inner landscapes.

boring relatives, having

SEE: bored, being • grannies, having to kiss



CURE FOR GROWN-UPS B Harry and the Wrinklies

ALAN TEMPERLEY

If you're the boring relly, do everyone a favour and read this hilarious romp. When Harry spots his two 'decrepit' great-aunts on the station platform, he thinks, 'Please let it not be them!' One is thin and tall with a large straw hat and looks like a standard lamp. The other is short, plump and looks like a pink meringue. But Harry is in for a big surprise. Aunt Bridget and Auntie Florrie - with whom he has come to live - immediately suggest they drive home by

way of the aerodrome. 'Seat belt fastened safely?' Auntie Florrie asks, before snapping a switch beneath the dashboard of the ancient Mercedes. A powerful roar throbs to life and, as the car gathers speed on the disused runway, the speedometer edges up: 90, 95 . . . 130 . . . Harry feels the leather press against his back as the wind slams in and the countryside turns to a blur. 'Lovely! Blow the cobwebs away!' cries Aunt Bridget.

Afterwards, Harry's two wrinkly aunts take him home for a nice glass of sherry (he's ten), and show him his tower room at Lagg Hall, the stately home they share with various other 'prehistoric' folk. As Harry luxuriates in the space, the woods and the dog, it soon becomes clear that these two old biddies are far from innocent and are, in fact, incapable of being dull. Read this, and you won't be dull either.

bossiness

The Willoughbys LOIS LOWRY

Bossy children will squirm in the presence of twelveyear-old Tim, the eldest of the Willoughby children in this delightful parody of literary children's classics.

The Willoughbys are an 'old-fashioned family': and as befits an old-fashioned eldest boy, Timothy makes all the decisions for his siblings, ten-year-old twins 'Barnaby A' and 'Barnaby B', and six-year-old Jane: what game they'll play, what the rules are, how they will behave in church and whether or not they will like the food on their plates. According to Timothy's design, they each start the day with fifty points, which are then deducted if they do anything he doesn't approve of. The other children are so much in his thrall, they even ask if they can ask a question.

You can see how he got to be this way. The kids are landed with terrible parents who have a poor opinion of their offspring. Tim, they say, is 'insufferable', the twins are 'repetitive' and Jane - well, they seem to be unaware that they have a fourth child at all. The children have begun to realise they'd be better off without their parents, and when Mr and Mrs Willoughby, having reached more or less the same conclusion about their children, abscond on a global adventure, hiring a nanny (see: babysitter, not liking your) and putting the house on the market (see: moving house), the four siblings prepare hopefully for imminent orphanhood (see: orphan, wishing you were an). Meanwhile, Tim puts himself in charge.

Luckily, their firm and capable nanny sees how to help, first relieving Tim of his point-system duties, then finding a way to integrate households with

BORING RELATIVES, HAVING BOSSINESS

bruises, cuts and

Nurse Clementine

Keep a copy of this in the medicine cabinet, along with the plasters, Savlon and Wasp-Eze. The fetchingly drawn story of a little girl whose grown-ups buy her

a nurse's outfit and a first-aid kit for her birthday ('You can call me Nurse Clementine from now on!'), it'll provide an excellent distraction while you clean and disinfect the wound. Clementine's approach to on-the-spot care is to wrap the hurting part copiously in bandages, adding a firm instruction to keep them on for a week. When there's no one left in the family requiring treatment, she wonders what on earth to do with herself. And then, thankfully, her brother gets stuck up a tree . . . The pen and wash illustrations – majoring in cream, peach and the gentlest of apple greens – are as soothing to the eye as is the sight of a top-to-toe bandaged little brother to Nurse Clementine at the end.

SEE ALSO: cheering up, needing • pain, being in

bullied, being

PB One
KATHRYN OTOSHI

It Was a Dark and Stormy Night ALLAN AHLBERG, ILLUSTRATED BY JANET AHLBERG

Is Jane, the Fox and Me
FANNY BRITT,
ILLUSTRATED BY
ISABELLE ARSENAULT

Being bullied is a grim ordeal and one which every grown-up hopes their child will be spared. If it does happen, it's helpful to have some stories to hand which offer practical solutions as well as solace. One captures the complex group dynamics involved in bullying with striking clarity by casting splodges of colour as the characters, set against spanking white spreads. 'Blue' is quiet – not outgoing like orange, or regal like purple, or sunny like yellow; and Red, a 'hot head', likes to pick on Blue. When Red taunts Blue, Red gets bigger; and though sometimes the other colours comfort Blue, telling him what a nice colour

he is, they don't ever dare say it in front of Red . . . It's hard to triumph over a bully by yourself, and how Red is brought into line by the power of the group provides an inspiring model. Read it to the bullied, to those on the sidelines, and also to the bully themselves. After all, what Red really wants is a friend, just like everyone else.

A bully can often work their way into a position of power without anyone noticing. If this happens in a classroom, share *It Was a Dark and Stormy Night*. A bunch of moustachioed brigands have kidnapped eight-year-old Antonio

and carried him off to a secret cave. There they demand he tell them a story – being, actually, a bunch of overgrown kids. Brave Antonio takes a big breath and launches in with 'Once upon a time', but he hasn't got much further before the brigands interrupt with their own ideas of what should happen next – none more so than the Big Chief himself, who wants to be the hero and sulks when he's not. The brigands know better than to argue with the Big Chief and they let him have his way. But when Antonio gets to the bit where the brigands share the treasure out equally among themselves, and the outraged chief insists that he would take all the treasure himself, they begin to shuffle uncomfortably. Never has the unfairness of their situation been pointed out to them so clearly. Antonio soon has them turning on their chief for his domineering, bullying ways, upsetting the stewpot in all the commotion. Get a discussion going about how sometimes it takes an outsider – or the right story – to overthrow the narcissistic bully in a group.

The misery of being ostracised by a gang is captured with great sensitivity in the Canadian graphic novel *Jane, the Fox and Me.* Teenager Hélène is persecuted by the hip clique at her Montreal school. 'She smells like BO,' they write on the washroom door. No one will sit beside her on the bus, and though her mother stays up all night making her a new dress (last year's fashion, alas) Hélène finds she can't bring herself to confide in her. When a school trip is announced, everyone is thrilled. But for Hélène the idea of being cooped up with 'forty kids . . . not one of them a friend' is pure torture.

Sensibly, Hélène escapes into a book at camp – Jane Eyre – where she finds another lonely girl, but one who grows up 'clever, slender and wise' nonetheless. When Jane finds Mr Rochester ('how wonderful, how impossible', thinks Hélène, wise to easy romanticism), only to lose him again, Hélène is about to tear up the book in despair. But just then a dark-haired girl she's never noticed before walks into her tent – and changes everything. It's only when colour starts to splash the pages that we realise how monotone Hélène's world has been until now; and how quickly joy, when it sees its chance, rushes in. A fine fictional example of bibliotherapy at work, this gem of a book is the ideal cure for a teen getting back on the road once bullying has come to light.

SEE ALSO: anger • anxiety • good at anything, feeling like you're no • heard, not feeling • loneliness • loser, feeling like a • mistake, frightened about making a • nightmares • parents who can't talk about emotions, having • role model, in need of a positive • run away, urge to • sadness • scared, being • self-harm • sleep, unable to get to • stand up for yourself, not feeling able to • stuck • suicidal thoughts • trusting, being too • worrying • wrong, everything's going

BRUISES, CUTS AND
BULLIED, BEING